

**Implementation of Policy for Socially Vulnerable Children in Gifted Schools:
Perspectives from Principals in the Pavlodar Region**

Darkhan Sadyrbayev

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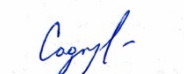
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Ethical Approval



53 Kabanbay Batyr Ave.
Astana 010000
Republic of Kazakhstan
Date: 23 of October, 2024

Dear Darkhan Sadyrbayev,

This letter now confirms that your research project titled: “Implementation of Policy for Socially Vulnerable Children in Gifted Schools: Perspectives from Principals in the Pavlodar Region” has been approved by the Graduate School of Education Ethics Committee of Nazarbayev University.

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

Yours sincerely,

Sourav Mukhopadhyay

On behalf of:

Dr Syed Abdul Manan, *PhD*
Chair, GSE Ethics Committee
Graduate School of Education
Nazarbayev University

Block C3, Room 5011
Office: +7(7172)6016
Mobile: +77079240053
email: syed.manan@nu.edu.kz, gse.irec@nu.edu.kz

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**Implementation of Policy for Socially Vulnerable Children in Gifted Schools:
Perspectives from Principals in the Pavlodar Region**

Abstract

This study explores how school principals in the Pavlodar region of Kazakhstan perceive and implement the 2022 inclusive education policy, which mandates that 15% of student placements in gifted schools be allocated to socially vulnerable children. The research focuses on understanding how principals conceptualize inclusion in the context of selective education, the barriers they encounter, and the strategies they employ to support these students. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, interviews were conducted with six principals, each with a minimum of five years of leadership experience. Thematic analysis revealed diverse interpretations of the policy: while most principals supported the reform as a step toward equity, others expressed concern about its compatibility with the academic expectations of gifted schools. Key challenges included lack of academic preparedness among students, insufficient teacher training, and limited systemic support. Nevertheless, several principals implemented innovative practices such as mentoring programs and psychological support services.

The findings highlight the critical role of school leaders in shaping policy outcomes and underscore the need for clearer policy guidance, leadership training, and resource allocation. This research contributes to understanding the dynamics of inclusive education in selective school contexts and offers recommendations for more effective policy implementation in Kazakhstan.

Дарынды мектептердегі әлеуметтік осал топтағы балаларға арналған саясатты іске асыру: Павлодар облысындағы директорлардың перспективалары

Аңдатпа

Бұл зерттеу Қазақстанның Павлодар облысындағы мектеп директорларының 2022 жылғы инклюзивті білім беру саясатын қалай қабылдайтынын және жүзеге асыратынын зерттейді. Ол дарынды мектептерге оқушыларды орналастырудың 15%-ын әлеуметтік осал топтағы балаларға бөлуді міндеттейді. Зерттеу директорлардың таңдаулы білім беру контекстінде инклюзивті қалай тұжырымдайтынын, олар кездесетін кедергілерді және осы студенттерді қолдау үшін қолданатын стратегияларды түсінуге бағытталған. Сапалы феноменологиялық тәсілді қолдана отырып, әрқайсысында кемінде бес жыл көшбасшылық тәжірибесі бар алты директормен сұхбат жүргізілді. Тақырыптық талдау саясаттың әртүрлі түсіндірмелерін анықтады: директорлардың көпшілігі реформаны теңдікке қарай қадам ретінде қолдаса, басқалары оның дарынды мектептердің академиялық үміттерімен үйлесімділігіне алаңдаушылық білдірді. Негізгі қиындықтарға студенттердің академиялық дайындығының жоқтығы, мұғалімдердің жеткіліксіз дайындығы және шектеулі жүйелі қолдау жатады. Соған қарамастан, бірнеше директорлар тәлімгерлік бағдарламалары мен психологиялық қолдау қызметтері сияқты инновациялық тәжірибелерді енгізді.

Нәтижелер мектеп басшыларының саясаттың нәтижелерін қалыптастырудағы маңызды рөлін көрсетеді және нақтырақ саясатты басшылыққа алу, көшбасшыларды оқыту және ресурстарды бөлу қажеттілігін көрсетеді. Бұл зерттеу таңдамалы мектеп контекстінде инклюзивті білім беру динамикасын түсінуге ықпал етеді және Қазақстанда саясатты тиімдірек енгізу бойынша ұсыныстар ұсынады.

Реализация политики в отношении социально уязвимых детей в одаренных школах: взгляд директоров Павлодарской области

Аннотация

В этом исследовании изучается, как директора школ в Павлодарской области Казахстана воспринимают и реализуют политику инклюзивного образования 2022 года, которая предписывает, чтобы 15% мест размещения учащихся в школах для одаренных детей были выделены социально уязвимым детям. Исследование фокусируется на понимании того, как директора концептуализируют инклюзию в контексте селективного образования, барьеров, с которыми они сталкиваются, и стратегий, которые они используют для поддержки этих учащихся. Используя качественный феноменологический подход, были проведены интервью с шестью директорами, каждый из которых имел не менее пяти лет опыта руководства. Тематический анализ выявил различные интерпретации политики: в то время как большинство директоров поддержали реформу как шаг к равенству, другие выразили обеспокоенность по поводу ее совместимости с академическими ожиданиями одаренных школ. К основным проблемам относились недостаточная академическая подготовленность среди учащихся, недостаточная подготовка учителей и ограниченная системная поддержка. Тем не менее, несколько директоров внедрили инновационные практики, такие как программы наставничества и службы психологической поддержки. Результаты подчеркивают важную роль руководителей школ в формировании результатов политики и подчеркивают необходимость более четкого политического руководства, обучения лидерству и распределения ресурсов. Данное исследование способствует пониманию динамики инклюзивного образования в условиях селективных школ и предлагает рекомендации по более эффективной реализации политики в Казахстане.

Table of Contents

Author Agreement	ii
Declaration.....	iii
Ethical Approval	iv
CITI Training Certificate	v
Acknowledgement	vi
Abstract.....	vii
Андатпа	viii
АННОТАЦИЯ.....	ix
List of Tables	xii
Chapter 1: Introduction to the study	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background to the Study.....	2
1.3 Statement of the Problem.....	4
1.4 Purpose of the Study	7
1.5 Research Questions	7
1.6 Significance of the Study	7
1.7 Outline of the Thesis.....	8
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	10
2.1 Introduction.....	10
2.2 Theoretical Framework.....	10
2.3 Conceptual Framework.....	11
2.3.1 Definition of Giftedness.....	12
2.3.2 Definition of Inclusive Education.....	14
2.4 Socially Vulnerable Children in Gifted Schools.....	17
2.5 The Role of School Principals in the Implementations of Policies	19
2.6 Conclusion	22
Chapter 3: Methodology	23
3.1 Introduction.....	23
3.2 Research Paradigm.....	23
3.3 Research Approach	24
3.4 Research Design.....	25
3.5 Research Settings	26
3.6 Site and Sample.....	27
3.7 Data Collection Instruments	28
3.8 Data Collection Methods	29
3.9 Data Analysis.....	30

3.10 Interview Analysis	31
3.11 Ethical Considerations	32
3.12 Conclusion	33
Chapter 4: Findings.....	34
4.1 Introduction.....	34
4.2 School Principals' Conceptualization of the Policy.....	34
4.2.1 General Understanding of Inclusive Policies.....	38
4.2.2 Implementation of Policies	40
4.3 Exploring Barriers Faced by Principals in Policy Implementation	42
4.4 Strategies to Support Adaptation of Socially Vulnerable Students	48
4.4.1 Strategies of School Principals	48
4.4.2 Evaluation and Feedback	52
4.4.3 Future Prospects.....	53
4.6 Conclusion	55
Chapter 5: Discussion	56
5.1 Introduction.....	56
5.2 School Principals' Conceptualization of the Policy.....	56
5.3 Exploring Barriers Faced by Principals in Policy Implementation	57
5.4 Strategies to Support Adaptation of Socially Vulnerable Students	59
5.5 Conclusion	62
Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations	63
6.1 Introduction.....	63
6.2 Summary of Key Findings and Their Implications.....	63
6.3 Recommendations for Policy and Practice in Gifted Education.....	64
6.4 Limitations of the Study.....	65
6.5 Directions for Future Research	66
6.6 Conclusion of the Study.....	67
References.....	68
Appendices.....	75
Appendix A.....	75
Appendix B	79

List of Tables

Table 127

Implementation of Policy for Socially Vulnerable Children in Gifted Schools: Perspectives from Principals in the Pavlodar Region

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

1.1 Introduction

Kazakhstan is making significant efforts to create a more inclusive education system for gifted children (Makoelle, 2020). A major step in this direction came in 2022, when a new policy was introduced mandating that 15% of places in gifted schools be reserved for children from socially vulnerable backgrounds. While this initiative aims to promote equity and social justice in elite educational settings, its practical implementation raises important questions, especially in schools traditionally focused on high academic performance and selective admissions.

A key actor in this reform process is the school principal. Given their central role in interpreting and enacting policy, principals are not only responsible for managing schools, but also for shaping inclusive school cultures and ensuring all students—regardless of their socioeconomic status—have access to meaningful educational opportunities. These expert leaders are tasked with creating positive learning environments for both students from disadvantaged backgrounds and those from more affluent families. Their leadership decisions directly influence the degree to which inclusive principles are realized in daily school practices.

In Kazakhstan, the Daryn Centre has been instrumental in supporting the development of gifted education by establishing specialized schools across the country (Yakavets, 2014). As the national conversation increasingly shifts toward inclusivity within these high-performing schools, understanding the experiences and perspectives of

principals becomes essential. This study focuses on how principals in gifted schools in the Pavlodar region perceive and implement the 2022 inclusive education policy. By examining their responses, challenges, and leadership strategies, this research provides insight into the dynamics of inclusive policy implementation in elite academic settings.

The remainder of this chapter outlines the background and context of the study, the research problem, the purpose and significance of the research, and the guiding research questions.

1.2 Background to the Study

Kazakhstan has been actively reforming its education system over the past two decades with the goal of making it more inclusive, equitable, and aligned with international standards. Particular attention has been given to broadening access to quality education for diverse student populations, including within the highly selective sector of gifted education. A significant milestone in this ongoing reform process was the introduction of a new national policy in August 2022, which mandated that 15% of competitive placements in the country's 130 gifted education institutions be specifically reserved for children from socially vulnerable families (Chernenko, 2022). This policy aims to dismantle historical barriers to elite education by ensuring that children from underprivileged and marginalized backgrounds have equitable access to high-quality, specialized learning environments. By doing so, the government seeks to create pathways for all students—regardless of socio-economic status, family background, or prior educational opportunities—to develop their abilities and realize their full potential.

The inclusion of socially vulnerable students in elite educational institutions represents a major step toward promoting principles of social justice, fairness, and equal opportunity within Kazakhstan's education system. However, this reform also brings with

it a range of complex challenges. While the policy's objectives are aligned with broader global trends toward educational equity, its practical implementation raises critical questions regarding student integration, the adequacy of support structures, and the overall institutional readiness of gifted schools to accommodate a more diverse student body (Buienbay, 2022). High-performing, traditionally selective schools now face the dual challenge of maintaining their rigorous academic standards while simultaneously developing more inclusive practices that nurture the varied needs of a broader range of learners.

School principals are central actors in this transformative process. As the primary agents of policy interpretation and enactment at the school level, their leadership, strategic decision-making, and personal attitudes toward inclusion significantly shape how the new policy is realized within their institutions. Principals are tasked not only with ensuring compliance with national directives but also with creating school cultures that value diversity, equity, and belonging. They must balance the pressures of sustaining high academic achievement with the equally important goal of building inclusive, supportive environments that meet the emotional, social, and academic needs of students from socially vulnerable backgrounds. This balancing act requires sophisticated leadership skills, including the ability to mobilize staff, reallocate resources, adapt pedagogical approaches, and foster community engagement around the ideals of inclusion and excellence.

Despite the centrality of their role, there remains a significant gap in the research literature concerning how school principals in Kazakhstan—particularly those in gifted education institutions—are interpreting and responding to this recent reform. Existing studies have largely focused on general inclusive education practices or on the

development of gifted education systems without fully examining how these two domains intersect in practice. The changes introduced in 2022 represent relatively new and largely uncharted territory for educational leaders, making it essential to investigate how principals are navigating the complexities of policy implementation in real-world contexts.

This study addresses this critical gap by focusing on the experiences and practices of school principals working in gifted education institutions in the Pavlodar region of Kazakhstan. It seeks to understand how inclusive practices are being interpreted, adapted, and implemented on the ground, and how schools are developing institutional strategies, facilities, and support mechanisms to aid the successful adaptation and integration of socially vulnerable students. By capturing the voices and experiences of principals, this research aims to contribute to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of inclusive policy implementation in selective education settings. Furthermore, the findings of this study are intended to inform future educational leadership practices and policy development in Kazakhstan and to offer insights that may be valuable for similar educational systems undergoing transitions toward greater inclusion.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The recent policy initiative aimed at integrating children from socially vulnerable backgrounds into specialized schools for gifted students marks a significant and ambitious step forward in Kazakhstan's broader efforts to promote educational inclusion and equity. By mandating that a percentage of placements in elite educational institutions be reserved for students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, the government has taken important strides toward addressing longstanding inequalities in access to high-quality education. This policy reflects a global shift in educational philosophy, moving away from

purely meritocratic models toward more socially responsive frameworks that seek to level the playing field for marginalized groups.

While the inclusive intentions of the policy are clear, the complex realities of its implementation remain insufficiently explored, particularly within the context of Kazakhstan's highly competitive and traditionally selective gifted education sector. Challenges extend across multiple dimensions, from adapting admissions processes to ensuring the long-term academic, social, and emotional integration of socially vulnerable students within environments that historically catered to high-achieving, often privileged populations. These complexities raise critical questions about the readiness of institutions, the adequacy of support systems, and the capacity of school leadership to create truly inclusive school cultures.

As former Minister of Education Askhat Aimagambetov observed, while the principle of meritocracy may appear fair in theory, in practice it often reinforces social inequalities. Students from wealthier families frequently have access to additional educational resources such as private tutoring, specialized preparatory courses, and extracurricular enrichment programs, which significantly enhance their chances of passing competitive entrance exams and succeeding in elite educational settings (Amanzhol, 2022). In contrast, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds often lack similar opportunities, entering the competition at a systemic disadvantage. This dynamic exposes the limitations of meritocratic systems and highlights the need for more comprehensive approaches to equity that recognize and address structural barriers.

Within this context, the role of school principals becomes critically important. As the key decision-makers and implementers of educational reforms at the school level, principals occupy a unique position at the intersection of policy, institutional culture, and

daily educational practice. Their leadership practices, personal beliefs about inclusion, strategic decision-making, and ability to mobilize staff and resources all significantly influence how inclusive policies are interpreted, adapted, and enacted within their schools. Principals are responsible not only for ensuring compliance with national mandates but also for shaping the institutional conditions that either support or hinder the successful adaptation of socially vulnerable students into gifted educational environments.

Despite the crucial nature of their role, there is currently a notable gap in empirical research focusing specifically on how principals in Kazakhstan, and particularly in regions such as Pavlodar, are responding to the 2022 inclusion policy. Little is known about the strategies they employ to balance the maintenance of high academic standards with the need to provide equitable support for disadvantaged students. Moreover, there is a lack of understanding regarding the challenges they encounter, the forms of resistance they may face within their institutions, and the innovative practices they might be developing to facilitate inclusion.

This study seeks to address this important gap by focusing on the experiences and perspectives of school principals in gifted education institutions in the Pavlodar region. Its primary aim is to explore how these leaders interpret and respond to the inclusive education reform, identify the strategies they employ to support socially vulnerable students, and highlight areas where policy frameworks and school-level practices may require further development and support. By examining the lived experiences and leadership approaches of principals at the forefront of this reform, the study aims to contribute valuable insights for policymakers, educational leaders, and researchers, thereby informing future policy refinement and advancing the broader discourse on the challenges and possibilities of inclusion within gifted education contexts.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore how inclusive educational policies are being implemented from the perspective of school principals in specialized schools for gifted students within the Pavlodar region. By focusing on the experiences and insights of these school leaders, the research seeks to understand the practical realities, challenges, and leadership strategies involved in integrating socially vulnerable students into high-performing academic environments. Through this analysis, the study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on educational equity and shed light on the critical role of leadership in fostering inclusive and supportive learning spaces in gifted education settings.

1.5 Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research question: “How do principals in gifted schools in the Pavlodar region perceive and implement the 2022 inclusive education policy for socially vulnerable children?”

And here are sub-questions of the study:

1. How do school principals in Pavlodar conceptualize the policy?
2. What are the barriers experienced by school principals in Pavlodar region?
3. What strategies do principals employ to facilitate the adaptation of these children within specialized schools?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it addresses the critical role of school principals in implementing inclusive educational policies in Kazakhstan, with particular attention to

specialized schools in the Pavlodar region. As frontline leaders, principals play a pivotal role in interpreting, adapting, and operationalizing national policies within their unique institutional contexts. By examining the strategies they employ and the challenges they face, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how educational equity can be realized in high-performing academic settings.

The study explores the vital position of school principals in fostering inclusivity and highlights their influence in shaping school cultures that are responsive to the needs of socially vulnerable students. It underscores the transformative potential of inclusive education in narrowing socioeconomic disparities and provides practical insights that can inform both policy refinement and school-level interventions. By offering a detailed look into the lived experiences of educational leaders, the study provides policymakers, educators, and stakeholders with a guiding vision as they strive to eliminate inequalities and promote excellence in education.

Moreover, the findings of this research contribute to the broader global discourse on inclusive education by offering context-specific knowledge from Kazakhstan, a region often underrepresented in international scholarship. It opens up new perspectives for innovation in both educational leadership and policy implementation, positioning school principals not only as administrators but as key agents of social change within the education system.

1.7 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is structured into six chapters, each contributing to the exploration of how inclusive education policy is being implemented in gifted schools in the Pavlodar region through the perspectives of school principals. The first chapter introduces the study, providing the background, research problem, purpose, significance, and guiding research

questions. It sets the foundation for understanding the policy context and the importance of leadership in inclusive education.

The second chapter presents a review of relevant literature on inclusive education, school leadership, and policy implementation. It examines global and national trends in educational equity and highlights theoretical perspectives and empirical findings that inform the study.

The third chapter outlines the research design, including the constructivist paradigm and qualitative phenomenological approach. It describes the participant selection, data collection procedures, and methods of data analysis, while also addressing ethical considerations and limitations.

Chapter four presents the findings of the study based on interviews with six principals. It explores their understanding of the policy, the challenges they face in implementing it, and the strategies they use to support socially vulnerable students.

Chapter five interprets the findings in relation to the literature and theoretical framework. It discusses the implications of the principals' perspectives for inclusive education policy and leadership practice in gifted schools.

The final chapter summarizes the key findings and their significance. It offers recommendations for policy and practice, outlines the limitations of the study, and suggests directions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines existing research on inclusive education, with a particular focus on the role of school principals in implementing policies aimed at integrating gifted students from socially vulnerable backgrounds. As Kazakhstan advances efforts toward a more equitable education system, especially through the 2022 policy mandating the inclusion of underprivileged students in gifted schools, it becomes critical to explore both the global and local scholarship surrounding inclusive practices. The literature review explores international and national perspectives, highlighting the key challenges, leadership strategies, and systemic conditions that influence the success of inclusive education policies. By analyzing relevant studies, this section provides a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical and practical frameworks that underpin inclusive education, with an emphasis on leadership in specialized school contexts. This academic context helps establish a foundation for investigating the specific dynamics of Kazakhstan's educational reforms and informs the study's approach to understanding the barriers and opportunities faced by principals in the Pavlodar region as they implement these policies in practice.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Transformational Leadership Theory (TLT), which provides a useful lens for understanding how school principals lead the implementation of inclusive education policies in gifted schools, particularly in supporting students from socially vulnerable backgrounds. Transformational Leadership, as described by Bass and Riggio (2006), involves inspiring and motivating followers to achieve collective goals through charisma, a shared vision, individualized consideration, and intellectual

stimulation. Leaders operating within this framework are not merely administrators—they act as change agents who cultivate a positive school culture and mobilize their teams toward meaningful and sustainable reform.

In the context of this study, TLT helps explain how principals in Kazakhstan’s specialized schools respond to the 2022 inclusive education policy that mandates the admission of socially vulnerable students. These principals play a crucial role in shaping school environments that support both academic excellence and social equity. Through transformational leadership, they can influence staff attitudes, promote inclusive values, and implement practices that prioritize the well-being and success of all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background.

By applying TLT, this study seeks to explore how leadership behaviors such as vision-building, empowerment, and responsiveness to individual needs contribute to the effective integration of vulnerable students into gifted education settings. This theoretical perspective not only frames the analysis of leadership strategies but also highlights the potential of school leaders to drive systemic change within the broader goal of educational equity in Kazakhstan.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

This study is based on the idea that giftedness means having high ability in areas like thinking, creativity, or leadership, and that these abilities can be developed with the right support (Gagné, 2010; Renzulli, 2021). Inclusive education means giving all students, including those from socially vulnerable backgrounds, equal chances to learn and succeed (Ainscow, 2020). These two ideas guide the study in exploring how principals apply inclusive education policies in gifted schools in Kazakhstan.

2.3.1 Definition of Giftedness

The definition of giftedness continues to be a complex and evolving concept in educational research, with no universally accepted interpretation (Sternberg & Davidson, 2005; Renzulli, 2021; Gagné, 2010). Scholars have long debated whether giftedness is primarily an innate characteristic, the result of environmental influence, or a dynamic interaction between the two. Traditional views often linked giftedness to exceptionally high intelligence, measured through standardized IQ tests (Terman, 1926). However, modern conceptions have broadened the scope to include creativity, leadership ability, artistic talent, and socio-emotional competencies (Pfeiffer, 2015; Renzulli, 2021).

One influential model is Joseph Renzulli's Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness, which defines giftedness as the interaction between above-average ability, creativity, and task commitment (Renzulli, 2021). Renzulli argues that gifted behavior emerges when these three traits overlap and that schools should identify and nurture this potential rather than focus solely on traditional academic excellence. Similarly, Gagné's Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT) distinguishes between natural abilities (gifts) and systematically developed skills (talents), highlighting the role of educational programs and socio-environmental factors in transforming potential into achievement (Gagné, 2010).

Further perspectives, such as those by Sternberg (2017), advocate for a "successful intelligence" approach, suggesting that giftedness involves the ability to adapt, shape, and select environments to achieve personal goals. Sternberg's WICS model (Wisdom, Intelligence, Creativity Synthesized) emphasizes that gifted individuals are not just academically strong but are capable of using their skills for the common good.

In a global context, definitions of giftedness also reflect cultural values. For example, in collectivist societies, including parts of Asia, giftedness is often tied to social

contribution rather than individual achievement (Phillipson & McCann, 2020). Studies by Dai and Chen (2013) further emphasize that giftedness cannot be separated from cultural, historical, and socioeconomic contexts, as different societies prioritize different traits when identifying and fostering talent.

In Kazakhstan, the concept of giftedness is still maturing. While the Law on Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan underscores the importance of supporting talented and gifted children, a nationally unified and operationalized definition remains absent. Each specialized institution, such as Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS) and regional Bilim-Innovation Lyceums, sets its own criteria based on intellectual aptitude, creativity, problem-solving skills, leadership qualities, and motivation to succeed (Yakavets, 2014).

At NIS, for example, giftedness is not limited to high academic performance alone but encompasses traits such as intellectual curiosity, innovative thinking, and the ability to work collaboratively in solving complex problems. This approach resonates with Renzulli's and Gagné's models, indicating an understanding of giftedness as both multidimensional and developmental.

Recent educational reforms in Kazakhstan have also encouraged a more inclusive view of giftedness, aiming to identify and nurture potential across diverse social and economic groups, reflecting a move away from purely elitist models. However, challenges remain in ensuring equitable identification and support mechanisms, particularly for students from socially vulnerable backgrounds (Daulet & Helmer, 2024).

Thus, Kazakhstan's evolving perspective on giftedness is beginning to align with broader international trends, acknowledging that gifted potential exists in many forms and can be cultivated through supportive educational environments, yet continued efforts are

needed to define, identify, and nurture giftedness systematically across all regions of the country.

2.3.2 Definition of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is recognized globally as a fundamental principle that promotes equal access to quality education for all learners, irrespective of their individual backgrounds, abilities, or socio-economic status (Ainscow et al., 2006). It calls for a fundamental restructuring of school cultures, policies, and classroom practices to accommodate and celebrate diversity rather than treating it as a problem to be managed (Slee, 2011). Inclusive education emphasizes that all students should learn together whenever possible, with appropriate supports in place to meet their individual needs, thus fostering not only academic success but also social cohesion and respect for difference (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010).

In international research, inclusion is increasingly conceptualized not merely as the physical placement of marginalized or disadvantaged students into mainstream educational settings, but as a transformative and dynamic process aimed at achieving genuine educational equity and broader social justice (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2013; Loreman, 2017). This evolving understanding positions inclusion as a fundamental rethinking of educational values, structures, and practices, rather than a superficial act of integration. True inclusion requires deep systemic change at multiple levels — within classroom practices, school policies, leadership strategies, and societal attitudes toward difference and diversity. It demands a collaborative, problem-solving approach among educators, administrators, families, and communities to create learning environments where all students feel valued and supported. Crucially, it also necessitates a paradigm shift from a deficit-oriented view — which focuses on what students cannot do — to a strengths-based

perspective that actively recognizes, appreciates, and nurtures the unique talents, capabilities, and contributions of every learner (Graham & Slee, 2008). Such a shift is essential for building inclusive schools that not only accommodate diversity but celebrate it as a source of enrichment for the entire learning community.

In the Kazakhstani context, the understanding and implementation of inclusive education have historically been narrow, focusing primarily on students with disabilities. Educational reforms throughout the 2010s began to broaden the agenda, but significant systemic challenges persisted, including lack of teacher training, inadequate infrastructure, and societal stigma towards vulnerable groups (Makoelle, 2020). A major shift occurred with the 2022 policy reform initiated by the Ministry of Enlightenment of Kazakhstan, which expanded the definition of inclusion to explicitly incorporate socio-economic vulnerability as a criterion for targeted support in educational institutions (Ministry of Enlightenment of Kazakhstan, 2022).

This expansion of inclusive education to encompass students from socially vulnerable families marks an important evolution in Kazakhstani education policy, aligning more closely with global trends emphasizing intersectionality — the idea that multiple forms of disadvantage (e.g., poverty, disability, ethnicity) must be addressed together (Kozleski et al., 2014). However, implementing inclusion within selective educational environments, such as gifted schools, presents unique tensions. These institutions traditionally rely on meritocratic principles that prioritize high academic performance, often determined through competitive entry exams (Killgore, 2009). Reconciling these selection mechanisms with broader goals of social equity demands a careful balancing of excellence and fairness.

Research suggests that successful inclusive practices in high-performing schools require a comprehensive rethinking of traditional educational approaches. Essential components include differentiated instruction that tailors teaching methods and materials to meet the diverse needs of learners, the development of flexible curricula that allow multiple pathways to learning success, and the establishment of strong socio-emotional support systems to address the holistic well-being of all students (Florian, 2014). In addition, there must be a fundamental shift in school leadership approaches, where leaders actively embrace diversity not as a challenge to be managed but as a strength that can enrich the educational experience for the entire school community. This involves cultivating an inclusive school culture where collaboration, empathy, and respect for individual differences are embedded in daily practice. For socially vulnerable students admitted to gifted programs under the new inclusive education policies, the challenges of adaptation can be particularly significant. These students often face not only academic gaps but also social and emotional barriers that can hinder their full participation and success. Consequently, the need for systemic adjustments extends beyond classroom practices to include reforms in school structures, professional development for teachers, resource allocation, and the creation of inclusive environments that genuinely support the diverse academic and personal development needs of all learners.

Therefore, understanding inclusive education within the context of Kazakhstani gifted education requires a nuanced and comprehensive perspective — one that moves beyond merely ensuring access and physical participation for socially vulnerable students. It necessitates a deeper focus on the deliberate creation of learning environments that genuinely foster the academic, social, and emotional growth of diverse learners. Such environments must be designed to nurture students' well-being, build their confidence, and support their individual pathways to achievement, recognizing that success may look

different for each student depending on their starting points and unique talents. In this context, inclusion must be seen not simply as the presence of different learners within the same classroom but as an active, ongoing process of reshaping school culture, pedagogy, and leadership practices to fully realize the potential of all students, regardless of their socio-economic background or previous educational experiences.

2.4 Socially Vulnerable Children in Gifted Schools

The notion of "social vulnerability" in education is multifaceted, dynamic, and highly dependent on cultural, legal, and socio-economic contexts. Generally, socially vulnerable children are understood to be those who face systemic disadvantages due to factors such as poverty, unstable or single-parent households, orphanhood, disabilities, experiences of migration, or belonging to marginalized ethnic, linguistic, or cultural groups (Mendenhall et al., 2017). These disadvantages often intersect, creating compounded barriers to educational access, participation, and success.

In the context of Kazakhstan, the term "socially vulnerable children" is legally and administratively defined through governmental decrees and social protection policies. Categories recognized under national legislation include children from low-income or large families, children deprived of parental care, orphans, children with disabilities, and children with special social statuses such as those affected by emergencies, migration, or domestic violence (Makoelle, 2020). This broad categorization reflects the government's recognition of multiple sources of vulnerability but also highlights the complexity of addressing diverse needs within a standardized educational system.

The inclusion of socially vulnerable children into competitive, academically rigorous gifted schools presents both significant opportunities and critical tensions. On the one hand, opening access to specialized educational environments promotes ideals of

upward social mobility, educational equity, and broader social justice by enabling talented students from disadvantaged backgrounds to realize their potential (Banks, 2015; Ainscow, 2020). It challenges traditional elitist models of gifted education that have historically favored students from privileged socio-economic backgrounds. By providing access to high-quality education, gifted schools have the potential to serve as powerful engines for breaking cycles of poverty and exclusion.

On the other hand, this process raises substantial concerns regarding the academic preparedness of socially vulnerable students and the readiness of gifted schools to adapt to a more diverse student population. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds often enter with educational gaps due to previous limited access to high-quality early learning experiences, enrichment opportunities, or stable learning environments (Sirin, 2005). Without systemic support mechanisms, such as differentiated instruction, socio-emotional counseling, mentorship programs, and financial assistance, these students may struggle to meet the high expectations of gifted curricula. Research has consistently shown that without deliberate, well-resourced intervention strategies, inclusion efforts may risk becoming symbolic rather than transformative, failing to produce meaningful integration or significant achievement gains for socially vulnerable students (Slee, 2011; Florian, 2014).

Moreover, the challenges are not solely academic. The social integration of vulnerable students into peer groups dominated by higher-income, academically competitive students can be difficult, potentially leading to feelings of alienation, lowered self-esteem, or social stigma (Calarco, 2014). School culture plays a critical role in either mitigating or exacerbating these challenges, emphasizing the need for leadership that

actively fosters inclusive values, promotes diversity as a strength, and creates structures for ongoing support.

Thus, a clear, context-sensitive understanding of who constitutes the socially vulnerable population is essential for assessing the effectiveness of inclusion policies in gifted schools. It is equally crucial for informing the design of relevant leadership practices, pedagogical strategies, and systemic supports that can create genuine opportunities for success. In Kazakhstan's case, where inclusive education is still in the process of expansion and refinement, recognizing the specific vulnerabilities faced by different student groups is fundamental for moving beyond mere access to true educational equity and empowerment.

2.5 The Role of School Principals in the Implementations of Policies

School principals serve as critical mediators between the national education policies formulated by government bodies and their practical enactment within the complex realities of local school environments. Their leadership practices, personal beliefs, interpretations of policy language, and the institutional capacities at their disposal collectively shape how — and to what extent — policies are implemented at the school level (Honig, 2006). Principals are not passive executors of policy mandates; rather, they actively interpret, negotiate, adapt, and, when necessary, reshape policies according to the specific needs and constraints of their school communities (Coburn, 2005).

Research by Day et al. (2016) deepens this understanding by showing that effective leadership practices vary significantly based on school context, highlighting the need for principals to demonstrate flexibility and sensitivity to the diverse backgrounds of students. Leadership behaviors that are contextually responsive allow principals to better support

diverse populations, including socially vulnerable students entering traditionally selective environments.

In the context of inclusive education, the role of the principal becomes even more critical and multifaceted. Principals are expected not only to comply with national directives but also to foster an inclusive school culture, strategically allocate resources, support teacher development, and remove systemic barriers to participation and success (Theoharis, 2007). As Kirby et al. (1992) emphasize, transformational leadership behaviors such as individualized consideration can enhance follower satisfaction and leader effectiveness, suggesting that principals who build empowering relationships are more successful in fostering inclusion and improving school climates.

Lambrecht et al. (2022) further highlight that principals play a key role in creating collaborative environments where inclusive education can flourish. Although their study focuses on leadership training in Germany, their findings underline the universal importance of empathetic, socially responsive leadership practices in advancing the inclusion of socio-economically disadvantaged students, including in gifted education contexts.

In Kazakhstan, principals of gifted schools operate within distinctive institutional settings characterized by a strong tradition of academic excellence, competitive admissions, and a focus on high achievement (Daulet & Helmer, 2024). These conditions can sometimes create tensions when inclusive policies mandate the admission of students who may not fit the traditional profile of a “gifted” learner. In such contexts, principals' attitudes toward inclusion — particularly their willingness to view diversity as a strength rather than a threat to excellence — play a decisive role in either facilitating or resisting the goals of inclusive education reform. Research suggests that principals who exhibit

transformational leadership traits, such as articulating a compelling vision, building consensus among staff, promoting professional learning, and modeling inclusive values, are better positioned to successfully navigate these challenges (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Ryan, 2006).

The theory of policy sense-making offers additional insight into how principals engage with new policy initiatives. According to Coburn (2005), principals interpret policies through the lens of their own beliefs, school culture, and contextual pressures, resulting in significant variation in implementation even within the same educational system (Spillane et al., 2002). This understanding explains why national reforms, such as Kazakhstan's 2022 inclusive education initiative, may yield different outcomes across schools based on leadership approaches and institutional readiness.

Furthermore, McCarley et al. (2016) found that transformational leadership behaviors contribute significantly to positive changes in school climate, suggesting that inclusive leadership can create psychosocial environments where socially vulnerable students are more likely to thrive. Rodríguez et al. (2023) reinforce this perspective, arguing that in high-pressure environments, principals should adopt community-based and empowerment-focused strategies to support disadvantaged learners — approaches highly relevant for fostering inclusivity in gifted education settings.

Understanding the role of school principals is therefore essential for assessing not only the technical aspects of policy implementation but also the deeper cultural and organizational shifts necessary for the true success of inclusion initiatives. In selective gifted education environments, where traditional meritocratic values remain deeply rooted, the principal's ability to balance high academic expectations with inclusive values is crucial. By fostering genuinely supportive and inclusive school environments, principals

can transform ambitious policy ideals into meaningful, sustainable practices that benefit all students.

2.6 Conclusion

The literature reviewed highlights the critical role of school principals in implementing inclusive education policies, particularly in specialized schools serving gifted students. International and local studies emphasize that effective leadership is central to creating equitable learning environments and supporting the adaptation of socially vulnerable students. Research also shows that transformational leadership is a key to fostering inclusive school cultures. However, challenges such as limited systemic support, societal prejudices, and a lack of resources continue to hinder the full realization of inclusive policies. Although global and regional literature provide valuable insights, there remains a lack of research focused specifically on the experiences of principals in Kazakhstan's gifted education sector. Therefore, this study addresses an important gap by exploring how school leaders in Pavlodar's specialized schools interpret and implement the 2022 inclusive education policy, offering contributions both to the national context and the broader field of educational leadership and policy development.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter details the methodological approach used in the study to address the research questions. It is divided into several sections, including the research design, methodology, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and ethical considerations. Each section explains the reasoning behind the selected instruments and approaches, ensuring a thorough and structured research process. Key terms and concepts are defined for clarity, and examples from previous studies on related topics are incorporated to support the methodology with relevant literature.

3.2 Research Paradigm

Adopting a constructivist lens, this study is based on the idea that people create reality by their interactions with their surroundings, and that reality is generated by society (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This philosophical stance is particularly pertinent to exploring the nuanced experiences of school principals in the Pavlodar region, tasked with integrating children from socially vulnerable families into specialized educational settings. Constructivism advocates subjective interpretation of social phenomena, emphasizing the importance of understanding people's perspectives, strategies, and problems in their specific contexts. This approach aligns with the qualitative nature of the study, guiding the investigation towards a deeper, empathetic understanding of the principals' experiences and the socio-cultural dynamics at play in implementing inclusive educational policies. Through this lens, the research aims to uncover the complex interplay between policy directives and the lived realities of school communities, shedding light on the transformative potential and limitations of current approaches to educational inclusivity.

3.3 Research Approach

This study utilized a qualitative research method, which focuses on exploring and understanding the meanings individuals or groups assign to social or human issues (Creswell, 2013). This method was selected to offer a detailed and thorough exploration of participants' experiences and perspectives within the educational context.

There are specific reasons for selecting the qualitative research method. First, it allows for an exploration of complex phenomena within their contexts, capturing the perspectives and lived experiences of participants (Yin, 2018). This is essential for understanding the unique challenges faced by children from socially vulnerable families in specialized schools.

Moreover, qualitative research enables the identification of themes and patterns through methods such as interviews and focus groups, offering a nuanced understanding of the educational landscape. This approach provides insights into how policies and practices impact students, educators, and administrators.

Other studies have also used qualitative methods to investigate similar topics, emphasizing the value of capturing detailed, context-specific information. For instance, Merriam & Tisdell (2015) employed qualitative research to explore the impact of educational policies on diverse student populations, highlighting the depth of understanding that this method provides.

In conclusion, the qualitative approach was chosen to facilitate a comprehensive exploration of the experiences and challenges within Kazakhstan's specialized schools, informed by both the context and previous research in the field.

3.4 Research Design

This study's purpose was to examine the implementation of policy, in perspective of school principals, for socially vulnerable children who are attending Kazakhstan's specialized schools for gifted students. The qualitative approach was selected, to get a deeper understanding of this phenomenon. The rationale for this decision was to thoroughly investigate and comprehend the intricate, situation-specific phenomena of cultural variations, parental engagement obstacles in the educational setting, academic backgrounds, and socioeconomic disparities (Yin, 2018).

For this study, the phenomenology design is especially appropriate since it provides a thorough analysis of the practices, policies, and experiences of these students and their families in the context of Kazakhstan's gifted education system (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Qualitative phenomenology study contributes to the understanding of how educational practices and policies appear in the lives of the people they are meant to serve by capturing the lived experiences of stakeholders, such as students, families, educators, and administrators (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

The choice of a phenomenology over other types of research is justified by the fact that it offers a thorough grasp of the procedures and results of policy implementation at the micro level, enabling the difficulties and chances that these students face to be identified (Stake, 1995). This methodology aligns with the study's objective of providing policymakers with practical suggestions to foster inclusivity and facilitate children from vulnerable backgrounds to obtain high-quality education.

3.5 Research Settings

This section outlines the research settings, including the criteria for selecting school principals, the process of selecting schools, and the readiness of the principals involved in the study.

School principals were selected based on specific criteria to ensure relevant insights into the implementation of inclusive educational policies. Participants needed to be currently serving as principals in specialized schools in the Pavlodar region, with a minimum of three years of experience in managing or implementing inclusivity reforms. They also had to actively engage in the policy implementation process, with firsthand experience integrating students from socially vulnerable families. Principals in temporary positions and those from non-specialized schools were excluded to maintain relevance.

Schools were chosen based on natural selection principles, focusing on geographic diversity within the Pavlodar region to capture a variety of experiences related to inclusive education. Specialized schools that admitted students from socially vulnerable backgrounds since the August 2022 policy were prioritized for examination.

The readiness of principals to participate was assessed through a screening process, emphasizing their willingness to discuss their experiences. Principals demonstrating a genuine interest in educational research and those who had engaged in training related to inclusivity were preferred.

Through careful selection, this research aims to gain insights into the challenges and strategies employed by school principals in the Pavlodar region as they implement inclusive educational policies.

3.6 Site and Sample

This study will focus on the Pavlodar region, known for its variety of specialized educational institutions. Specifically, it will include 14 schools for gifted students, which cater to a diverse student body, including those from socially vulnerable families. According to DeMatthews et al. (2021), school principals play a crucial role in supporting students with special needs and ensuring inclusivity. The selection of these schools within the Pavlodar region will provide a comprehensive view of how school policies and principals' practices impact children from socially vulnerable backgrounds.

A purposive sampling technique will be employed to ensure that participants provide a rich and diverse array of experiences pertinent to the research questions (Tongco, 2007). This method involves selecting five school leaders from the specialized schools in the Pavlodar region. Factors such as school size, the demographic composition of students, and the schools' history of implementing inclusive practices will be considered in the selection process.

This approach is justified as it enables the study to capture a wide range of insights from principals who have direct experience with the challenges and strategies related to inclusive education. By focusing on these specific factors, the study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of school leadership on the educational experiences of socially vulnerable students.

Table 1

Description of the Participants

Participant Code	Age	Years of experience as a school principal
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Participant #1	45	8
Participant #2	35	6
Participant #3	55	15
Participant #4	39	7
Participant #5	61	25
Participant #6	48	10

Source: created by the author

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

Semi-structured interviews with school principals from specialized schools in the Pavlodar region will be the main technique used to gather data in this research study. These interviews will be designed to elicit detailed insights into the principals' interpretations of policies, their strategies for supporting children from socially vulnerable families, and the challenges that these children face. Additional data will be gathered through document analysis, which will include policy documents, admission records, and any available internal evaluations of the inclusivity initiative's outcomes to contextualize the principals' narratives and provide a comprehensive understanding of the policy landscape.

The rationale behind choosing semi-structured interviews is rooted in the constructivist intent to capture rich, contextualized narratives that shed light on the participants' lived experiences. This method offers the flexibility to probe for details and clarification, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). According to Natow (2020), document analysis serves as a means to triangulate the data, adding robustness to the findings by corroborating the interview narratives with written records and policy texts.

3.8 Data Collection Methods

In this study, data will be collected using a mix of semi-structured interviews and document analysis. This methodology is designed to offer a comprehensive insight into the experiences and challenges faced by school principals as they implement inclusive educational policies.

The main method of data collection will involve conducting semi-structured interviews with five school principals from specialized schools in the Pavlodar region. These interviews aim to offer in-depth insights into several important areas. Principals will discuss their interpretations of inclusive educational policies, including their perceptions of policy goals and guidelines. Additionally, the interviews will explore the strategies employed by principals to support children from socially vulnerable families, encompassing any programs or initiatives they have implemented. Furthermore, principals will describe the challenges they face in implementing these policies and strategies, including any barriers or obstacles encountered.

Semi-structured interviews are chosen for their ability to capture rich, contextualized narratives that reflect the principals' lived experiences and personal insights (Creswell, 2013). This method offers the flexibility to delve deeper into specific issues as they arise during the conversation, allowing for detailed exploration and clarification. By using this approach, the study aims to gain a thorough understanding of the principals' perspectives.

Supplementing the interviews, data will be gathered through document analysis. This will involve reviewing official policy documents that outline the inclusive educational policies and regulations applicable to the specialized schools. The analysis will also include admission records to focus on how students from socially vulnerable families are

admitted and supported. Additionally, any available internal evaluations or reports assessing the outcomes and effectiveness of inclusivity initiatives within the schools will be examined. Document analysis provides essential context and supports the triangulation of data by comparing written records with the insights obtained from interviews. This approach helps to contextualize the principals' narratives within the broader policy landscape and institutional practices, thereby adding depth and robustness to the study's findings (Bowen, 2009).

3.9 Data Analysis

The study will use thematic analysis to systematically examine the data collected from semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Thematic analysis is a technique used to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2012). This method aligns well with the study's constructivist framework, as it enables themes and patterns to emerge directly from the data, capturing the participants' perspectives and experiences in their own words.

An inductive coding approach will be used for the thematic analysis. This method involves analyzing the data without any predetermined categories, allowing themes to naturally arise from participants' responses. The process starts with thoroughly familiarizing oneself with the data by reading it multiple times and noting initial insights. This deep engagement aids in identifying key data segments that are relevant to the research questions.

The following stages involve systematically coding the data, where each segment is labeled with a code that reflects its content. These codes are then organized into potential themes that highlight significant aspects of the data. As themes are formed, they are reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represent the data and align with the

research goals. This iterative process allows for a flexible and evolving analysis, where initial findings can shape and guide further stages of data collection and analysis.

The study will use NVivo software to aid in organizing the data, coding it, and identifying themes. NVivo is a powerful tool for managing large volumes of textual data and supports a rigorous and transparent analysis process. It provides functionalities for organizing data, applying codes, and visually mapping themes, which aids in maintaining a systematic approach to analysis. The software also supports the researcher in tracking and revisiting codes and themes, ensuring consistency and depth in the analysis.

In summary, thematic analysis, aided by NVivo, will offer a thorough and detailed understanding of the data, enabling the identification of important themes and patterns that capture the lived experiences of school principals and the challenges they encounter in implementing inclusive educational policies.

3.10 Interview Analysis

The transcribed interviews with six school principals were read multiple times to ensure a deep understanding of the data and to become familiar with the nuances of each participant's responses. The process of data analysis began with open coding, which is suitable for exploratory qualitative studies like this one. As Merriam (2002) explains, open coding enables the researcher to identify emerging themes and patterns that address the research questions by analyzing participants' language and experiences.

The coding began with Interview #1 and continued sequentially. The researcher highlighted frequently used terms, expressions, and ideas that appeared across interviews. Particular attention was paid to principals' descriptions of their perceptions of the inclusive

education policy, the barriers they experienced, and the strategies they employed in implementing the policy within the gifted school context.

Throughout the coding process, a repetitive and iterative approach was used. The researcher moved back and forth through the transcripts to refine the codes, ensuring that they accurately reflected the meaning in the data. Initially, 42 codes were generated. These were then reviewed, refined, and narrowed down to 31 after eliminating overlapping or redundant codes. The refined codes were grouped into three core categories derived from the main research question and sub-questions:

Principals' Perceptions of the Inclusive Policy

Barriers in Policy Implementation

Strategies to Support Socially Vulnerable Students

Within each of these categories, subthemes emerged organically based on the data, such as "meritocracy vs equity tensions," "lack of resources and teacher preparedness," and "peer mentoring and psychological support mechanisms." Quotes from participants were used throughout the analysis to preserve the authenticity of their voices and provide depth to the thematic interpretations.

This thematic structure facilitated a clearer organization of the findings and supported the presentation of principals' lived experiences in implementing the 2022 policy in gifted school settings.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Upholding ethical integrity will be a primary focus throughout the research process. All participants will need to provide informed consent, which includes a comprehensive

explanation of the study's aims, the voluntary nature of their involvement, and the safeguards in place to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Participants will have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without incurring any costs. Data will be treated confidentially to safeguard privacy; personal identifiers will be eliminated, and findings will only be shared in aggregate form. The study will adhere to ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects, ensuring that the principles of beneficence, fairness, and dignity are maintained throughout the process.

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter details the methodology used to investigate the challenges faced by children from socially vulnerable families in specialized schools in Kazakhstan. A qualitative approach was selected, employing purposive sampling to gather in-depth insights from five school principals. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Thematic analysis, facilitated by NVivo software, will be utilized to identify and categorize key themes. This chapter provides a rationale for and defines the methodological procedures implemented in the study.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study, which explored how school principals in gifted schools across the Pavlodar region perceive and implement the 2022 inclusive education policy requiring 15% of student places to be allocated to children from socially vulnerable backgrounds. The chapter is organized according to the main research question and sub-questions, which guided the data collection and analysis process. The three central themes that emerged from the interview analysis are: principals' conceptualization of the policy, barriers faced in its implementation, and strategies adopted to support the adaptation of socially vulnerable students. Where appropriate, direct quotes from participants are used to illustrate key points and retain the authenticity of their perspectives.

4.2 School Principals' Conceptualization of the Policy

The majority of the principals interviewed (4 out of 6) expressed a generally positive understanding of the 2022 policy. These school leaders described the initiative as a timely and morally justified intervention aimed at addressing social disparities within the education system. Participant #2 stated:

For a long time, gifted education in Kazakhstan has been elitist. This policy finally opens the door to those who have the talent but never had the chance.

Participant #3 shared views by stating:

I believe this policy is a critical and progressive step for the future of education in Kazakhstan. Giftedness does not belong only to those with privilege; it is found

everywhere. For too long, access to specialized education was limited by financial or social status. This reform finally recognizes the true meaning of talent — seeing potential where it was often overlooked. It gives these students the environment they deserve to grow, and, frankly, it corrects an injustice that should have been addressed years ago.

Participant #4 also expressed strong support for the initiative, explaining:

This is not just about fulfilling a government requirement or ticking a box — it is about creating real social change. When we open the doors of gifted schools to socially vulnerable students, we are saying that every talented child deserves a chance, regardless of their background. In the long term, this will benefit the whole country by nurturing a generation of leaders who truly reflect the diversity and strength of our society. It is a moral and strategic investment in the future.

Participant #6 reflected thoughtfully on the implementation process and the broader goals of the policy, emphasizing the deeper shifts required for genuine inclusion. Participant #6 shared:

For years, giftedness among socially vulnerable children went unnoticed simply because they did not have the same opportunities. This policy is a bold attempt to bridge that gap. By acknowledging talent across all social groups, we are redefining what it means to succeed in our education system. I believe integrating these students will not only transform their individual lives but also make our school communities stronger, more compassionate, and more dynamic. It's a long-overdue but very welcome change.

These supportive principals emphasized the ethical dimension of inclusion, linking it to broader concepts of social justice and educational equity. They also articulated a clear understanding of inclusivity not merely as integration, but as a systemic shift towards accommodating diversity within the learning environment. For them, inclusivity means equitable access to opportunities, differentiated support, and fostering a sense of belonging for all students, regardless of socioeconomic background.

However, two principals conveyed notable reservations regarding the policy and its long-term implications. These individuals raised concerns about whether students from socially vulnerable backgrounds would be able to meet the high academic expectations and rigorous standards traditionally associated with gifted schools. They questioned whether the policy adequately accounted for the significant academic gaps that might exist and expressed doubts about the feasibility of maintaining the institution's overall academic excellence while simultaneously addressing the complex social and emotional needs of these newly admitted students. Their reflections suggested that, without substantial support structures, the policy could risk setting up students for failure or unintentionally compromising the school's established reputation for academic achievement. Participant #1 expressed serious reservations about the practical consequences of the policy, stating:

While I fully understand the intentions behind this initiative and agree that education should be more inclusive, we cannot ignore the realities of our academic environment. Gifted schools have extremely high expectations, and the pressure is intense. If a student is admitted without the necessary academic preparation, it could actually cause more harm than good — damaging their self-esteem and possibly leading to feelings of alienation. We must be realistic about what success

looks like here. Good intentions alone are not enough; we need to ensure that the students who enter are ready for the demands they will face.

Participant #5 also voiced his concerns in a detailed manner, emphasizing the potential risks that the policy could pose both for the socially vulnerable students and for the schools themselves. He expressed apprehension that without proper academic preparation and targeted support, these students might face overwhelming challenges, leading to frustration, low self-esteem, and academic failure. At the same time, he warned that the pressure to accommodate a wider range of student needs without adequate systemic support could strain teachers and resources, ultimately affecting the overall academic standards and reputation of gifted schools. In his view, the lack of a well-structured, comprehensive support system could undermine both the intended goals of the policy and the long-standing traditions of excellence that these specialized institutions are known for. Participant #5 explained:

Of course, offering more opportunities sounds appealing on paper, but we need to think carefully about the practical side. Our curriculum is designed for students who can handle a very high academic load. If socially vulnerable students are admitted without sufficient preparation or ongoing support, we risk setting them up for failure. At the same time, there is a chance that the overall academic standards of the school could be affected. I'm not saying we should close the doors to these children — not at all — but there must be additional measures in place: bridging programs, mentoring, psychological support. Otherwise, the gap between good intentions and actual outcomes could become very wide.

Their concerns revealed a persistent meritocratic mindset, highlighting a tension between academic excellence and inclusive aims. While not necessarily opposed to the

values of equity, these principals seemed to struggle with reconciling high standards with broader access.

4.2.1 General Understanding of Inclusive Policies

Most participants demonstrated a strong and thoughtful conceptual understanding of inclusive education, particularly in relation to promoting equity and expanding access. Four out of six principals — Participants #2, #3, #4, and #6 — viewed the 2022 policy as a necessary and positive step toward addressing educational disparities and fostering a more socially just school environment. Participant #2 described the reform as transformative, stating:

This policy is not just about quotas. It's about changing how we think of giftedness—not only as high test scores but also as potential that can be nurtured, especially in children who have had fewer opportunities.

Participant #3 echoed this sentiment, highlighting that inclusive education requires a fundamental shift in how talent is identified and supported:

We can no longer limit gifted education to those who had the right circumstances. True giftedness can come from anywhere, and our responsibility is to uncover and nurture it, not to preserve outdated standards of elitism.

Participant #4 emphasized the broader societal value of the policy, remarking:

When we welcome socially vulnerable students, we are not lowering our standards — we are strengthening our community. Diversity brings resilience, creativity, and a deeper sense of purpose to our schools.

Participant #6 added that inclusion challenges schools to improve not only who they serve but also how they serve, stating:

Inclusive education demands that we evolve. It is not enough to open the door; we must also adapt our teaching, our support systems, and our mindsets to truly honor the potential of every student.

These principals acknowledged that inclusion involves far more than simply providing physical access to the school environment; it demands a comprehensive and ongoing adaptation of pedagogical approaches, emotional support systems, and institutional structures to meet the complex and varied needs of a truly diverse student population. They emphasized that successful inclusion requires rethinking curriculum design, classroom management strategies, assessment practices, and the overall school climate to ensure that every student has the opportunity to thrive. In their view, the 2022 policy represents not just a regulatory obligation but a meaningful opportunity to move gifted education closer to its true mission — one that recognizes, nurtures, and develops talent in all its diverse forms, regardless of a student's social or economic background. By embracing this broader vision of giftedness, these principals believed that schools could foster a richer, more dynamic educational environment that benefits all learners.

However, two principals — Participants #1 and #5 — conveyed significant reservations regarding the compatibility of the inclusive education policy with the traditional mission and identity of gifted schools. They expressed concerns that the fundamental academic rigor and elite standards that define these institutions could be compromised if socially vulnerable students, who may not have had access to the same level of prior educational preparation, were admitted without sufficient support. Both principals feared that these students might struggle to meet the high expectations and

demands of the gifted school environment, leading to potential frustration, academic underperformance, and a weakening of the school's overall academic profile. They emphasized that without careful planning, individualized support mechanisms, and realistic expectations, the reform could unintentionally create additional challenges both for the socially vulnerable students themselves and for the broader school community.

Participant #1 voiced this concern, explaining:

I understand the purpose of the policy, but we are a selective school. It's hard to meet high academic standards and at the same time deal with complex social needs. If a child is not academically prepared, the pressure here might end up doing more harm than good.

Similarly, Participant #5 pointed out the risks involved if additional support measures were not adequately implemented:

It's not enough to simply admit socially vulnerable students. Without proper academic and psychological support, they may face overwhelming challenges, and the overall performance standards of the school could suffer. We need more than good intentions; we need concrete systems in place.

Thus, while the majority of principals embraced the inclusive vision of the 2022 policy, a minority voiced caution, emphasizing the need for careful planning, robust support mechanisms, and a clear balance between inclusivity and maintaining academic excellence.

4.2.2 Implementation of Policies

Despite their differing views on the policy's overall desirability, all six principals reported that they had initiated steps to implement the 2022 inclusive education policy

within their schools. However, the depth and nature of these efforts varied significantly depending on individual principal beliefs, available institutional resources, and broader school cultures.

Participants who expressed strong support for the policy described taking proactive and meaningful measures to ensure its successful implementation. Several of them mentioned the introduction of preparatory or bridging programs specifically designed to help socially vulnerable students adapt to the academic rigor expected in gifted schools. Participant #2, for example, explained that her school had developed additional academic support classes, alongside offering targeted psychological counseling, to ensure that newly admitted students could integrate both academically and socially. Participant #4 similarly noted the establishment of mentorship initiatives, pairing socially vulnerable students with older peers to foster a sense of belonging and support.

Participant #6 elaborated that implementation was seen not simply as compliance with a numerical quota but as a deeper transformation of school culture. She emphasized efforts to sensitize teachers to the needs of socially vulnerable students, introducing professional development sessions focused on inclusive pedagogical practices and trauma-informed care.

In contrast, principals who were more skeptical of the policy — Participants #1 and #5 — described a more procedural approach to its implementation. While they acknowledged that they fulfilled the requirement of reserving 15% of new admissions for socially vulnerable students, their accounts reflected minimal structural or pedagogical adjustments beyond what was strictly mandated. Participant #1 remarked that the school “met the numbers” but admitted that no significant changes were made to curriculum design, teaching practices, or student support systems. Similarly, Participant #5 indicated

that although socially vulnerable students had been admitted, there was little institutional effort to address the additional challenges these students might face, largely due to concerns about maintaining the high academic standards of the school.

This divergence in implementation approaches highlights a key finding of the study: the extent to which policy intentions are realized in practice is closely tied to the personal convictions of school leaders, the resources they can mobilize, and the cultural readiness of their institutions to embrace inclusive change. Principals who believed in the broader goals of the policy tended to implement it as a holistic reform, integrating support mechanisms and fostering an inclusive school climate. On the other hand, principals who harbored doubts about the policy's compatibility with gifted education tended to adopt a minimalistic, compliance-driven stance, focusing primarily on satisfying the formal requirements without broader systemic adaptation.

These findings suggest that while national policies can mandate structural changes, the spirit of such reforms often depends heavily on the leadership at the school level. A policy's success is therefore not only a matter of legislation but also one of leadership philosophy, institutional capacity, and school culture. Without strong belief in the value of inclusive education and adequate support mechanisms, the risk remains that policies aimed at promoting equity may be implemented in ways that are superficial rather than transformative.

4.3 Exploring Barriers Faced by Principals in Policy Implementation

All six principals identified significant barriers to the effective implementation of the 2022 inclusive education policy. Although their overall stances toward the policy varied, there was broad consensus that translating the policy's goals into practice presented

considerable challenges on multiple levels, including academic, social, and systemic dimensions.

One of the most frequently reported obstacles in the implementation of the policy was the academic preparedness of socially vulnerable students. Several principals observed that many of the students admitted under the 15% quota, although demonstrating potential, often entered with significant gaps in their foundational knowledge and academic skills. These students, through no fault of their own, had experienced educational disadvantages prior to admission, which left them less prepared to meet the rigorous expectations typically associated with gifted education environments. As a result, pronounced disparities in academic performance quickly became apparent, creating challenges not only for the students themselves, who struggled to keep pace, but also for teachers, who found it difficult to adjust the demanding curriculum to accommodate such a wide range of preparedness levels without compromising the overall academic rigor of the program. Participant #1 emphasized the difficulties this posed, explaining:

In a school where the pace is very fast and the standards are extremely high, it becomes very difficult for teachers to slow down or modify the curriculum without affecting the whole class. These students need much more individual support, but we are not structured for that.

Similarly, Participant #5 raised concerns about the long-term academic outcomes, stating:

We are expected to maintain the tradition of academic excellence that defines our school, but it becomes extremely challenging when students are coming in with such vastly different starting points. The gap between students who have had years of strong academic preparation and those who are just beginning to catch up is very

real. The system, ideally, should be flexible enough to support both groups effectively, but in practice, that flexibility does not exist yet. Right now, the burden of bridging these gaps is falling almost entirely on teachers, who are trying to meet the needs of a much more diverse student body without receiving the additional resources, training, or structural support that such a major change demand.

Another major barrier identified by the principals was the lack of adequate teacher training and preparedness for working within an inclusive gifted education context. Several principals reported that, although their teaching staff were highly skilled in delivering rigorous academic content, they were not sufficiently equipped to address the complex and varied needs of students coming from socially vulnerable backgrounds. These students often faced not only academic challenges but also emotional, social, and psychological difficulties that required more specialized, sensitive approaches to instruction and support. Principals noted that most teachers had not received formal professional development in differentiated instruction, trauma-informed practices, or inclusive pedagogical methods, leaving them feeling uncertain and underprepared. As a result, teachers were often left to rely on intuition and personal experience rather than systematic strategies, making it difficult to fully meet the diverse needs of the newly admitted students. Participant #2 highlighted the gap between policy and practice, noting:

We received the instruction to implement the policy, but no meaningful training followed. Teachers are trying their best, but differentiated instruction, trauma-informed approaches — these are specialized skills. Without proper preparation, even the best teachers struggle.

Parental expectations and resistance also emerged as a significant and recurring challenge faced by principals during the implementation of the inclusive education policy.

In several schools, parents of traditionally admitted students — those who had entered through competitive academic examinations — voiced concerns about what they perceived as a potential shift in the academic culture and standards of the institution. These parents expressed fears that the admission of socially vulnerable students, who might not have had the same level of academic preparation, could lead to a dilution of the school's long-standing reputation for academic excellence. Principals reported that such resistance often stemmed from deep-rooted societal assumptions about merit, privilege, and the relationship between socioeconomic background and academic ability. Managing these parental concerns while trying to foster an inclusive and supportive school environment added another layer of complexity to the already challenging process of implementing the new policy. Participant #4 described instances of parental anxiety, remarking:

We had parents come to us, some quite worried, directly asking whether the introduction of this policy would inevitably lead to a decline in the academic standards that our school is known for. Their concerns were not just about individual students but reflected a broader fear that the overall school culture and reputation could be compromised. Unfortunately, this reaction reveals a persistent and deep-rooted stigma within society — the belief that true academic excellence is something inherently tied to certain privileged social classes, and that opening opportunities to socially vulnerable students somehow threaten that perceived quality. Overcoming such deeply held biases, in my view, is as challenging as implementing the policy itself.

These societal prejudices were identified by the principals as a broader and deeply entrenched cultural barrier to the successful implementation of the inclusive education policy. They reflected longstanding and deep-seated assumptions within society about the

connections between poverty, merit, and giftedness — assumptions that continue to influence perceptions of who is considered deserving of access to elite educational opportunities. Many individuals, both within and outside the school communities, continued to equate academic excellence with socioeconomic advantage, believing, often unconsciously, that students from disadvantaged backgrounds were less capable of succeeding in high-performing academic environments. Such prejudices created not only resistance to the policy among certain stakeholders but also contributed to the broader societal challenge of redefining what it means to be "gifted" in a more equitable and inclusive way. Participant #3 pointedly observed:

We often speak about inclusion when discussing policy changes, setting targets, and introducing new regulations, but changing societal attitudes is a far more difficult and slower process. Many people, even within educational circles, still hold the belief that a child's family background or economic status somehow determines their intellectual potential. This misconception is deeply rooted and continues to influence how students are perceived and treated. In reality, talent and ability are not confined to any particular social group. True giftedness can be found in every part of society, but as long as these biases persist, achieving genuine inclusion will remain an uphill battle.

In addition to these pedagogical and social challenges, systemic issues were widely acknowledged. Principals agreed that the policy had been introduced rapidly, without adequate infrastructural preparation, financial support, or clear implementation guidelines. Participant #6 summarized the frustration felt by many, stating:

We are expected to create truly inclusive environments that meet the needs of a much more diverse student population, but in reality, we have been given no

additional resources to make this possible. There are no extra social workers, no additional psychological support staff, and no specialized training programs provided for our teachers or administrators. We are being asked to meet significantly higher demands without the necessary tools or support structures. This situation places enormous pressure on every member of the school community — from teachers who are trying to adapt their methods without guidance, to students who may not receive the individualized support they need, to administrators who are left balancing ambitious policy goals with limited capacities. While the intentions behind the policy are undoubtedly good and noble, good intentions alone are not enough to ensure success. Without tangible, systemic support, it becomes very difficult to translate ideals into sustainable, effective practice.

The lack of socio-psychological support services within schools further compounded these difficulties. Several principals noted that while socially vulnerable students often required additional emotional and psychological support, many schools lacked dedicated counselors, social workers, or support specialists. As a result, the burden of care often fell informally on teachers and school leaders, stretching already limited capacities.

Overall, the principals' accounts reveal that while the policy was broadly seen as morally and socially important, its successful implementation has been severely hampered by a lack of practical support structures. The barriers they described — ranging from gaps in academic readiness to societal stigmas and systemic underfunding — suggest that achieving meaningful inclusion requires much more than policy directives; it demands a comprehensive, well-supported transformation of school practices, resources, and community attitudes.

4.4 Strategies to Support Adaptation of Socially Vulnerable Students

4.4.1 Strategies of School Principals

Despite facing multiple barriers, the majority of principals — particularly those who supported the 2022 policy — reported implementing a variety of leadership strategies aimed at facilitating the successful inclusion of socially vulnerable students. These principals demonstrated a proactive and transformational approach, seeking not only to comply with policy requirements but to build genuinely supportive and inclusive school environments.

Supportive principals emphasized the importance of reshaping the school culture to foster sensitivity and inclusivity among staff. Participant #2 described her efforts to reframe teachers' perceptions of newly admitted students, explaining:

We organized sessions and open discussions with teachers to talk about inclusivity, equity, and unconscious biases. It was important to challenge the notion of viewing these students as 'others.' A cultural shift among staff is essential if we want inclusion to work not just on paper but in everyday practice.

Several principals also sought to leverage community partnerships to supplement the limited internal resources available within their schools. Participant #4 reported that his school had established collaborations with local NGOs and municipal social services, which enabled them to provide students with essential supplies, psychological support, and access to extracurricular activities. Participant #4 noted:

We quickly understood that we couldn't meet all the needs of socially vulnerable students with only the resources available within the school. So, we reached out to local NGOs and municipal organizations that could offer additional support. Sometimes the help

was simple — providing winter clothing, school supplies, or organizing after-school activities — but even these small efforts made a significant difference. They helped the students feel more secure, more included, and more connected to the school community. It showed us that inclusion is not just about lessons inside the classroom, but also about creating a supportive environment where every student feels they belong.

A distinctive leadership trait among the principals who supported the policy was their consistent reliance on transformational leadership strategies. These principals did more than implement the policy as a formal requirement; they actively worked to inspire their staff by clearly communicating a vision of equity, social justice, and shared responsibility. Rather than presenting inclusion as an additional burden or a disruptive change, they framed it as a collective mission aligned with the school's broader educational values. Through this approach, they encouraged teachers and staff to view the inclusion of socially vulnerable students not as an obligation imposed from above, but as a meaningful and necessary part of the school's growth and development. Participant #6 emphasized this philosophy, sharing:

I keep telling my team: our mission is not only to teach the best, but to believe in those who were never given a chance. It is not enough to identify talent; we must nurture it, especially when life circumstances have hidden it from view.

In contrast, the principals who were more skeptical of the policy — Participants #1 and #5 — tended to adopt more procedural and minimalistic approaches in their implementation efforts. Their focus remained largely on fulfilling the basic formal requirements of the reform, particularly meeting the 15% admission quota for socially vulnerable students. However, they did not actively pursue broader innovations aimed at transforming school culture, teaching practices, or support systems to better accommodate

the needs of the newly admitted students. Instead of viewing the policy as an opportunity for institutional growth or cultural change, these principals treated it as a mandatory administrative task, fulfilling the surface-level obligations without engaging in deeper, systemic reforms that would make inclusion genuinely sustainable and meaningful.

Participant #5 voiced a sentiment of frustration, remarking:

The responsibility for making this policy work has fallen almost entirely on school leadership, without enough systemic support from the authorities. We meet the basic requirement by admitting 15% of students from socially vulnerable backgrounds, but beyond that, there is only so much we can do. Without proper teacher training, additional specialized staff, and sufficient resources, it becomes extremely difficult to provide the level of support these students need. The burden has largely been placed on principals and teachers, who are trying to manage very complex challenges with limited capacity. Good intentions alone are not enough to make real inclusion happen.

Nevertheless, despite differences in enthusiasm and approach, several innovative strategies to support socially vulnerable students did emerge across the participating schools. Three of the principals reported introducing peer mentoring programs, pairing newly admitted students with more experienced peers to facilitate smoother social integration. Participant #3 described the initiative:

Older students were genuinely eager to help. They took on the role of mentors, supporting the new students not just academically but also in helping them navigate the school culture and daily routines. Through their guidance and encouragement, they showed the newly admitted students that they belong here just as much as anyone else, helping to build their confidence and sense of belonging within the school community.

Some schools also sought to strengthen psychological services. In the absence of full-time social workers, a few principals arranged for part-time counselors or collaborated with external psychologists to support students dealing with trauma, stress, or adjustment challenges.

In addition, several principals introduced flexible assessment practices in selected subjects, aiming to shift the focus away from rigid academic benchmarks toward a more holistic evaluation of student progress. These new approaches emphasized individual growth, personal development, and active engagement rather than relying solely on standardized test scores or traditional measures of academic success. By adapting assessment methods, principals sought to create a more supportive environment where socially vulnerable students could demonstrate their abilities in diverse ways, build confidence, and experience success that was meaningful to their unique starting points and learning trajectories. Participant #6 reflected on this approach:

We changed how we measure success for these students. Progress is not just about test scores—it's about building confidence, increasing engagement, and seeing real participation in the school community. That is how we define achievement now.

These emerging strategies illustrate that, while the challenges of implementing inclusive education within gifted schools are substantial, they are not insurmountable. Principals who embraced the inclusive mission demonstrated that with creativity, collaboration, and a commitment to transformational leadership, meaningful support structures can be developed even within constrained environments.

4.4.2 Evaluation and Feedback

Most principals reported that the evaluation of their strategies to support socially vulnerable students is still in its early stages. While there is a strong recognition of the importance of tracking progress, systematic and consistent evaluation practices have yet to be fully established across the participating schools. Several principals mentioned that they currently rely on informal feedback mechanisms, such as regular conversations with teachers, observations of student behavior, and anecdotal reports from staff and students. These informal assessments help school leaders stay attuned to the immediate needs and experiences of the students, but they lack the structure necessary for long-term planning and accountability.

A few more proactive principals described beginning to document student progress more systematically, developing internal records that track both academic achievements and broader indicators of student well-being, such as participation in extracurricular activities and improvements in social interaction. However, these efforts remain largely individual initiatives rather than part of a standardized school-wide or system-wide evaluation framework.

The absence of clear evaluation tools and agreed-upon indicators was highlighted as a major challenge. Principals expressed concern that without shared metrics, it would be difficult to measure the real impact of their strategies or to identify areas needing further support and intervention. Participant #2 articulated this issue clearly, stating:

We need a shared framework to track how these students are doing—not just academically, but emotionally and socially. Without that, we are relying too much on intuition and isolated observations, which makes it harder to see the full picture or adjust our approaches effectively.

Several principals emphasized that for inclusive education initiatives to succeed, evaluation must move beyond traditional academic performance metrics. They called for a more holistic approach that takes into account the emotional resilience, self-confidence, and social integration of socially vulnerable students, recognizing that success in these areas often precedes visible academic improvement.

Overall, while initial steps toward evaluation are underway, the findings suggest that systematic, structured, and comprehensive evaluation practices will be critical for ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of inclusive education strategies within gifted schools.

4.4.3 Future Prospects

When asked about the future of the 2022 inclusive education policy and its long-term impact on gifted schools, four of the six principals expressed cautious optimism. These principals indicated a willingness to continue refining and improving their practices, provided that additional systemic support is introduced. They emphasized that with thoughtful, sustained implementation — including targeted professional development, enhanced resource allocation, and clear policy guidelines — the reform has the potential to fundamentally redefine the nature of gifted education in Kazakhstan, making it more inclusive, equitable, and socially responsive.

Participant #6 reflected on this possibility, stating:

This policy could help us reshape what it means to be a gifted school. It's not only about selecting the best by test scores anymore; it's about nurturing talent wherever we find it. But for that, we need structured support at every level — from training teachers to rethinking how we measure student success.

The optimistic principals stressed that inclusion should be seen as a continuous, evolving process rather than a one-time adjustment. They highlighted the need for patience, sustained investment, and ongoing dialogue between schools, policymakers, and society at large to ensure the long-term success of inclusive education reforms.

In contrast, the two principals who remained critical of the policy were considerably more skeptical about its future prospects. Participants #1 and #5 voiced concerns that unless substantial structural changes occur at the national policy level — including increased funding, clearer implementation frameworks, and better coordination with educational authorities — the reform risks remaining superficial, limited to meeting numerical targets rather than achieving meaningful cultural and pedagogical transformation. Participant #1 emphasized this point, noting:

Good intentions alone will not be enough. If we continue without clarity, without real training, and without long-term systemic support, this policy will struggle to bring about real change. It will become just another formal requirement, not a true shift in how we educate gifted students.

One principal summarized the broader sentiment about future prospects succinctly but powerfully:

We need clarity, training, and long-term support. Inclusion is a process, not an event. It requires commitment over time, not just a policy announcement and a few changes at the surface level.

Overall, the interviews suggest that while the majority of principals are hopeful about the future of inclusive gifted education, their optimism is conditional upon receiving the necessary resources, guidance, and structural backing. Without these, even the best

intentions and initial efforts may fall short of achieving the deeper, systemic change envisioned by the 2022 reform.

4.6 Conclusion

The findings gathered during this study of semi-structured interviews on the implementation of the 2022 inclusive education policy in gifted schools were presented in Chapter 4. The majority of principals expressed support for the policy's ethical goals and demonstrated a commitment to adapting their practices, although challenges related to institutional readiness, teacher training, and systemic support were widely noted. While transformational leadership approaches helped some principals foster a more inclusive environment, others remained cautious, emphasizing the risks of superficial reform without deeper structural change.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the main findings of the study by connecting them with the theoretical framework, existing literature, and broader educational discourse on inclusion and leadership. It explores how school principals in the Pavlodar region conceptualize and implement the 2022 inclusive education policy, the barriers they encounter, and the strategies they employ to support socially vulnerable students in gifted schools. The discussion highlights both the alignment and tensions between global perspectives on inclusive education and the specific realities of Kazakhstan's gifted education system. Through this analysis, the chapter aims to offer a nuanced understanding of the complexities of implementing inclusion in competitive academic environments.

5.2 School Principals' Conceptualization of the Policy

The study revealed that most principals (four out of six) conceptualized the 2022 policy as a morally and socially necessary reform, aligning with global movements toward educational equity (Ainscow et al., 2006; UNESCO, 2017). These principals emphasized that giftedness should not be limited to students from privileged backgrounds, resonating with Renzulli's (2021) and Gagné's (2010) models that advocate for a broader, developmental understanding of gifted potential. Their framing of inclusion went beyond compliance with quotas, focusing instead on systemic change that fosters diversity, equity, and social cohesion within the school community.

Conversely, two principals expressed reservations about the compatibility of inclusion with the traditional mission of gifted schools. Their concerns reflected the persistent influence of meritocratic ideals, where academic excellence is closely tied to

standardized measures of achievement (Killgore, 2009). These principals questioned whether socially vulnerable students, without significant prior academic preparation, could thrive in high-pressure environments designed for the most academically elite. Their stance reveals the tension between maintaining institutional prestige and adapting to new inclusive mandates, a tension also noted in international studies of selective education reform (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2013).

5.3 Exploring Barriers Faced by Principals in Policy Implementation

The findings highlighted several barriers that principals encountered during the implementation process, many of which mirror challenges documented in the broader literature (Slee, 2011; Florian, 2014).

One of the most pressing barriers was the academic preparedness of socially vulnerable students. Principals observed that these students often entered gifted programs with significant learning gaps, making it difficult for teachers to maintain the pace and rigor expected in such environments. This challenge reflects broader concerns in inclusive education research, where initial inequities in early educational experiences continue to impact student outcomes even after access barriers are removed (Reardon, 2018).

A second major barrier identified by the principals was the lack of adequate teacher training and systemic support to accompany the implementation of the 2022 inclusion policy. Although the reform was ambitious in its objectives to expand access to gifted education for socially vulnerable students, many schools reported that they received little to no additional resources to prepare their teaching staff for the challenges associated with supporting a more diverse and complex student population. Teachers, while skilled in delivering rigorous academic content to traditionally high-achieving students, often lacked the specialized knowledge and pedagogical tools required to differentiate instruction,

address varied learning needs, and respond to the socio-emotional complexities that many socially vulnerable students bring with them into the classroom. Without structured professional development opportunities focused on inclusive practices, trauma-informed care, and differentiated instruction, teachers were left to navigate these new demands largely on their own, relying on intuition rather than systematic strategies. This situation placed considerable stress not only on individual teachers but also on the overall school environment, as staff struggled to meet higher expectations without the necessary training or support infrastructure. These findings strongly align with the broader literature, which consistently emphasizes that successful inclusive education efforts cannot be achieved through policy mandates alone. Rather, they require significant and sustained investment in building teacher capacity through ongoing professional development, mentorship, and institutional support systems (Graham & Slee, 2008). Without addressing this critical foundation, attempts at inclusion risk being superficial, leading to frustration for both students and educators, and ultimately undermining the broader goals of educational equity and excellence.

Societal prejudices and parental resistance also emerged as significant challenges. Deeply ingrained assumptions that link academic excellence to socioeconomic privilege complicated efforts to create truly inclusive school environments. Such societal attitudes, identified in previous studies (Kozleski et al., 2014), remain a powerful force shaping the perceptions and acceptance of inclusive reforms, even when formal policies are in place.

Finally, principals pointed to the rapid rollout of the policy without sufficient infrastructural or psychological support systems. The absence of social workers, counselors, and trauma-informed training created additional pressures, limiting the schools' capacity to fully meet the complex needs of socially vulnerable students.

5.4 Strategies to Support Adaptation of Socially Vulnerable Students

Despite the barriers, the study found that several principals adopted proactive, transformational leadership strategies to support the integration of socially vulnerable students. These strategies are consistent with the principles of Transformational Leadership Theory, where leaders inspire change by building a collective vision and empowering their teams (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Key strategies adopted by the principals included a deliberate reshaping of school culture through staff sensitization initiatives, the formation of strategic partnerships with community organizations to enhance material and psychological support for students, and the development of structured peer mentoring programs aimed at facilitating the social integration of socially vulnerable students. The reshaping of school culture involved proactive efforts to raise teachers' awareness about unconscious biases, social inequalities, and the diverse needs of the newly admitted students, thereby fostering a more empathetic and inclusive mindset among staff members. Sensitization sessions, discussions, and professional development workshops were organized to ensure that teachers moved beyond deficit-based perceptions and embraced a strengths-based approach to teaching and mentoring all students. In addition, recognizing that the schools' internal resources were often insufficient to address the multi-faceted needs of socially vulnerable students, several principals actively sought to build partnerships with local NGOs, social services, and municipal organizations. These partnerships provided critical additional support, such as the provision of essential materials (e.g., school supplies, clothing), access to psychological counseling, and opportunities for extracurricular enrichment, which greatly enhanced students' sense of security, belonging, and well-being within the school community. Another important strategy involved the implementation of peer mentoring

programs, where older, more experienced students were paired with newcomers to offer both academic assistance and social guidance. Through these programs, new students were able to develop friendships, learn the informal norms of school culture, and build confidence more quickly, thereby smoothing their transition into a high-pressure academic environment. These combined initiatives closely align with global best practices in inclusive education, which emphasize that fostering a true sense of belonging, providing emotional and social support, and offering differentiated learning pathways are essential to the success of all students, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds (Florian, 2014). Rather than treating inclusion as a peripheral add-on, successful principals integrated it into the very fabric of their school operations, recognizing that meaningful inclusion strengthens not only individual student outcomes but also the school community as a whole.

Moreover, some principals took innovative steps by piloting flexible assessment practices within their schools, aiming to move away from the rigid, traditional reliance on standardized academic benchmarks as the sole indicators of student success. Recognizing that students from socially vulnerable backgrounds often face systemic barriers that affect their initial academic performance, these principals sought to create evaluation systems that captured a broader range of student achievements. Rather than focusing exclusively on test scores or comparative academic rankings, the new approaches placed greater emphasis on individual growth trajectories, student engagement, resilience, creativity, and personal effort over time. In doing so, they acknowledged that academic success can manifest in diverse forms, particularly when students are given opportunities to develop their talents at their own pace and from varied starting points. This shift represents a deeper and more authentic understanding of inclusive education as an ongoing, dynamic process that values and nurtures multiple dimensions of student development, not merely cognitive

performance measured through traditional assessments. By broadening the definition of success, these principals were able to validate the progress of socially vulnerable students in ways that strengthened their self-esteem, motivated continued learning, and fostered a stronger sense of belonging within the school community. Such practices also align with international perspectives on inclusive pedagogy, which advocate for assessment frameworks that are flexible, supportive, and responsive to the diverse needs and abilities of all learners (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2013). In this way, assessment itself became an instrument of inclusion, helping to create environments where every student's growth was seen, valued, and celebrated.

Recent studies further support these findings. Day et al. (2016) deepen our understanding of leadership practices by emphasizing how context-specific differences affect leadership behaviors tailored to diverse student needs. Kirby et al. (1992) validate the importance of transformational leadership behaviors such as individualized consideration, showing their positive impact on student empowerment. Lambrecht et al. (2022) also stress the significance of school leaders' collaboration and inclusive leadership in supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds. McCarley et al. (2016) show that transformational leadership can positively influence the psychosocial climate of schools, facilitating students' academic and emotional development. Similarly, Rodríguez et al. (2023) advocate for community-oriented strategies and empowerment approaches as effective tools for supporting vulnerable students.

However, the study also found that principals who were skeptical of the policy tended to adopt more procedural, minimalist approaches, fulfilling the letter of the policy without embracing its spirit. This divergence illustrates that successful implementation of inclusive reforms is highly dependent on the principal's belief systems, leadership

approach, and willingness to see inclusion as integral to the school's mission rather than as an external obligation.

In summary, while the inclusion policy has catalyzed important changes, its full potential can only be realized through sustained systemic support, ongoing leadership development, and a broader societal commitment to redefining excellence and giftedness in more inclusive terms.

5.5 Conclusion

The discussion shows that principals' conceptualizations of the policy, the barriers they face, and their adaptive strategies are deeply interwoven. The effectiveness of the 2022 inclusive education policy depends not only on structural provisions but also on the beliefs and leadership practices of school principals. This confirms the importance of involving school leaders in policy design and offering them the tools to act as change agents rather than passive implementers.

While the policy aims to expand access to gifted education, its sustainability requires a deeper cultural shift within selective schools, more comprehensive training for educators, and stronger support from the education system. The next chapter will conclude the study by summarizing key findings and offering recommendations for policy and practice.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter brings together the key insights of the study, drawing conclusions based on the perspectives and experiences of school principals implementing the 2022 inclusive education policy in gifted schools in the Pavlodar region. It also offers recommendations for future policy and practice in Kazakhstan's educational system, particularly in the context of selective schools. The chapter reflects on the study's findings, acknowledges its limitations, and outlines potential directions for future research.

6.2 Summary of Key Findings and Their Implications

The findings of this study indicate that principals' interpretations of the inclusive education policy vary significantly, influencing the depth and manner of its implementation. While four out of six principals expressed strong support for the reform, understanding it as a step toward equity and social justice, two principals held a more cautious or critical stance. These two believed that the inclusion of socially vulnerable students could threaten academic standards and challenge the traditional mission of gifted schools.

The principals who supported the policy demonstrated a broad understanding of inclusion, viewing it not merely as meeting quotas but as a long-term commitment to providing opportunity and support to students who had previously been excluded from such environments. They emphasized the importance of recognizing diverse forms of giftedness and potential, particularly among children who have not had access to the same academic resources as others.

Implementation of the policy, however, has not been without challenges. All six principals highlighted significant barriers to effective enactment. These include a lack of academic preparedness among newly admitted students, insufficient teacher readiness, and resistance from stakeholders such as parents and teachers who questioned the compatibility of inclusion with high academic expectations. Moreover, several principals expressed frustration over the limited guidance and support provided by higher education authorities during the initial stages of implementation. They described the rollout as rushed and lacking the necessary infrastructure to sustain meaningful inclusion.

Despite these challenges, four principals described initiatives they have introduced to support socially vulnerable students. These included the development of peer mentoring systems, increased access to psychological support, and the adaptation of assessment strategies to focus on individual progress rather than absolute academic performance. These practices reflected a commitment to fostering not only academic growth but also emotional well-being and school belonging.

The findings underscore the importance of principals as policy actors. Their beliefs, leadership approaches, and willingness to adapt institutional practices have a direct impact on the success of inclusion efforts. The study suggests that inclusive policy implementation cannot be achieved through mandates alone. It requires a culture of support, clear communication, professional development, and collaborative engagement with all members of the school community.

6.3 Recommendations for Policy and Practice in Gifted Education

Based on the lived experiences of principals, it is evident that inclusive education in gifted schools must be supported by a more coherent and realistic policy framework. There is a pressing need for the Ministry of Enlightenment to clarify the objectives and

mechanisms of inclusion in selective schools, particularly regarding how schools should balance excellence and equity.

In addition, professional development opportunities tailored to the needs of school leaders and teachers must be expanded. These should focus not only on inclusive pedagogy but also on how to identify and nurture diverse talents among socially vulnerable students. The principals in this study consistently noted the lack of preparation among staff for the social and emotional realities these students face.

Furthermore, there is a need for increased financial and structural support from the national and regional levels. Schools require adequate resources to provide targeted interventions, such as preparatory courses and counseling services, that can help ensure the success of socially vulnerable students once admitted.

Engagement with parents and community members is also critical. Several principals described the tensions that arose when stakeholders were not adequately informed or involved in the process. Inclusion must be presented not as a compromise of quality but as a redefinition of excellence that is broader, more compassionate, and more socially responsible.

Finally, schools must develop mechanisms to evaluate the impact of inclusion policies. Currently, most principals rely on informal feedback and general observations. Establishing clear indicators and systems for monitoring academic and social progress will be essential for measuring the long-term success of the reform.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

The study has several limitations. First, it is geographically confined to the Pavlodar region, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other areas in

Kazakhstan or globally. Additionally, the research relies on the perspectives of school principals, which might not fully capture the experiences of other stakeholders such as teachers, students, and parents. The constructivist approach focuses on subjective interpretations, which might lead to biases in understanding the effectiveness of policies. Lastly, the study is conducted in a specific timeframe, potentially overlooking long-term effects of the new educational standards.

While the study offers valuable insights, several limitations should be acknowledged. The research was limited to six principals from the Pavlodar region. While they were selected for their experience and leadership in gifted schools, the findings may not fully capture the diversity of perspectives across Kazakhstan's different regions or school types.

Additionally, while the study focused on the principals' perspectives, it did not include interviews with teachers, students, or parents. Their voices would have provided a more comprehensive understanding of how the policy is experienced and perceived across the school community. The depth of the study could also have been enhanced by longitudinal observation of the inclusion process over time.

Nevertheless, the findings provide an important starting point for understanding how school leaders interpret and implement inclusive education policy within the unique setting of gifted education.

6.5 Directions for Future Research

Future research should expand the scope of inquiry to include a wider range of schools and regions to identify how contextual differences influence policy

implementation. Comparative studies between urban and rural schools, or between public and private institutions, could uncover systemic factors that support or hinder inclusion.

Further studies could also incorporate the perspectives of teachers, students, and parents to gain a more holistic view of inclusive practices in gifted education. Longitudinal research tracking the academic and social outcomes of socially vulnerable students over time would provide critical evidence on the long-term impact of inclusion.

Another potential direction is to explore how leadership development programs can be designed to equip principals with the skills and mindset needed for leading inclusive reform in high-performing academic environments.

6.6 Conclusion of the Study

This study explored how principals in gifted schools in the Pavlodar region of Kazakhstan perceive and implement the 2022 inclusive education policy. The findings show that while many principals are committed to the ideals of inclusion, they operate within a system that offers limited support for achieving these goals. Implementation is shaped by each principal's beliefs, leadership style, and the resources available to them.

The study emphasizes the need for a more strategic and inclusive approach to policy development—one that sees principals not just as implementers but as active partners in shaping educational reform. Inclusive education in gifted schools is both a challenge and an opportunity. If supported by strong leadership, adequate training, and systemic alignment, it can transform gifted education into a more equitable and socially responsive domain. The findings from this research contribute to the ongoing dialogue about how Kazakhstan can build a more inclusive, fair, and high-quality education system for all learners.

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Appendices

Appendix A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Name of Interviewee:

Date of Interview:

Time:

Place:

Type of interview: face-to-face/online

[Introduce yourself, the purpose of the study, and confidentiality] [Get the permission for recording audio] [Signing the consent form]

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview, which is conducted as part of my master's thesis research. The purpose of this interview is to explore school principals' perspectives and experiences regarding the implementation of the 2022 inclusive education policy that mandates the allocation of 15% of placements in gifted schools to children from socially vulnerable backgrounds. Your participation is voluntary, and the interview is expected to last approximately 45–60 minutes. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to ensure accurate transcription. A copy of the interview transcript will be sent to you within one week after the interview for your review and clarification, in order to ensure that your views are represented accurately and to avoid any misunderstandings. During the interview, additional follow-up questions may be asked to better understand your responses. You have the right to skip any question or to withdraw from the interview at any point without any negative consequences. The confidentiality and anonymity of your responses will be strictly maintained, and no personal data or identifiable information will appear in the final thesis or any related publications. All data collected will be securely stored and accessible only to the researcher. By continuing with the interview, you acknowledge that you have been informed about the purpose, procedures, and your rights as a participant, and you consent to participate under the described conditions.

Interview questions:

1. How do you define inclusive education in the context of your school?
2. How do you understand the new policy that reserves 15% of places for socially vulnerable children in specialized schools?
3. In your opinion, what are the key goals of this policy in promoting inclusivity in gifted education?
4. What steps has your school taken to implement this policy of inclusion for socially vulnerable students?

5. How do you ensure that students from socially vulnerable backgrounds have access to the same opportunities as others in your school?
6. What resources or support have you received from the government or other institutions to implement this policy?
7. What challenges have you encountered in integrating students from socially vulnerable backgrounds into your school?
8. How do you address potential inequalities that arise between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds?
9. In your experience, what are the biggest barriers to achieving full inclusivity in gifted education?
10. What strategies have you employed to create an inclusive and supportive environment for all students, especially those from socially vulnerable backgrounds?
11. How do you foster a sense of belonging among students from different backgrounds in your school?
12. How do teachers and staff in your school contribute to the integration and support of socially vulnerable students?
13. How do you assess the effectiveness of the inclusive practices in your school?
14. Have you received any feedback from students or parents regarding the inclusivity of your school? If so, what have been the key points?
15. What measures do you think could further improve the inclusion of socially vulnerable students in specialized schools?
16. In your view, what are the long-term benefits of this policy for both socially vulnerable students and the broader school community?
17. How do you envision the future of inclusive education in specialized schools like yours?
18. What recommendations would you make to policymakers to enhance the effectiveness of inclusive education policies in gifted schools?

[Express gratitude to the participant for their time and valuable insights shared during the interview. Reassure them once again that all information provided would remain strictly confidential and would be used solely for academic purposes]

СҰХБАТ ХАТТАМАСЫ

Сұхбат алушының аты-жөні:

Әңгімелесу күні:

Уақыты:

Орны:

Әңгімелесу түрі: бетпе-бет/онлайн

[Өзіңізді таныстыру, зерттеу мақсаты және құпиялылық] [Дыбыс жазуға рұқсат алу] [Келісім формасына қол қою]

Құрметті Қатысушы,

Магистрлік диссертациямды зерттеудің бір бөлігі ретінде өткізілетін осы сұхбатқа қатысуға уақыт бөлгеніңіз үшін рахмет. Бұл сұхбаттың мақсаты – дарынды мектептерге орналастырудың 15%-ын әлеуметтік осал топтардан шыққан балаларға бөлуді міндеттейтін 2022 жылға дейін инклюзивті білім беру саясатын іске асыруға қатысты мектеп директорларының көзқарастары мен тәжірибесін зерттеу. Сіздің қатысуыңыз ерікті және сұхбат шамамен 45-60 минутқа созылады деп күтілуде. Сіздің рұқсатыңызбен сұхбат дәл транскрипцияны қамтамасыз ету үшін аудиожазбаға алынады. Әңгімелесуден кейін бір апта ішінде сіздің көзқарастарыңыздың дұрыс берілуін қамтамасыз ету және кез келген түсініспеушіліктерді болдырмау үшін әңгімелесу транскриптінің көшірмесі сізге шолу және түсіндіру үшін жіберіледі. Сұхбат барысында сіздің жауаптарыңызды жақсырақ түсіну үшін қосымша сұрақтар қойылуы мүмкін. Кез келген сұрақты өткізіп жіберуге немесе кез келген уақытта кез келген жағымсыз салдарсыз сұхбаттан бас тартуға құқығыңыз бар. Жауаптарыңыздың құпиялылығы мен анонимділігі қатаң сақталады және қорытынды диссертацияда немесе кез келген байланысты жарияланымдарда жеке деректер немесе сәйкестендірілетін ақпарат көрсетілмейді. Барлық жиналған деректер қауіпсіз сақталады және тек зерттеушіге қолжетімді болады. Сұхбатты жалғастыра отырып, сіз мақсат, процедуралар және қатысушы ретінде құқықтарыңыз туралы хабардар етілгеніңізді және сипатталған шарттар бойынша қатысуға келісесіз.

Сұхбат сұрақтары:

1. Сіздің мектебіңіздің контекстінде инклюзивті білім беруді қалай түсінесіз?
2. Мамандандырылған мектептердегі әлеуметтік осал балаларға арналған орындардың 15% бөлетін жаңа саясатты қалай түсінесіз?
3. Сіздің ойыңызша, дарынды білім берудегі инклюзивтілікті ілгерілетудегі осы саясаттың негізгі мақсаттары қандай?
4. Сіздің мектебіңіз әлеуметтік осал оқушыларды қамту саясатын жүзеге асыру үшін қандай қадамдар жасады?

5. Әлеуметтік осал топтардан шыққан оқушылардың мектебіңіздегі басқалармен бірдей мүмкіндіктерге қол жеткізуін қалай қамтамасыз етесіз?
6. Осы саясатты жүзеге асыру үшін үкіметтен немесе басқа институттардан қандай ресурстар немесе қолдау алдыңыз?
7. Әлеуметтік осал топтардан шыққан оқушыларды мектебіңізге біріктіруде қандай қиындықтарға тап болдыңыз?
8. Өртүрлі әлеуметтік-экономикалық ортадағы студенттер арасында туындайтын ықтимал теңсіздіктерді қалай шешесіз?
9. Сіздің тәжірибеңізде дарынды білім беруде толық инклюзивтілікке қол жеткізудегі ең үлкен кедергілер қандай?
10. Барлық студенттер, әсіресе әлеуметтік осал топтардан шыққан студенттер үшін инклюзивті және қолдаушы орта құру үшін қандай стратегияларды қолдандыңыз?
11. Мектебіңізде әр түрлі ортадан шыққан студенттердің қатысымдық сезімін қалай қалыптастырасыз?
12. Сіздің мектебіңіздегі мұғалімдер мен қызметкерлер әлеуметтік осал оқушыларды біріктіруге және қолдауға қалай үлес қосады?
13. Мектебіңіздегі инклюзивті тәжірибенің тиімділігін қалай бағалайсыз?
14. Мектебіңіздің инклюзивтілігіне қатысты оқушылардан немесе ата-аналардан кері байланыс алдыңыз ба? Олай болса, негізгі ойлар қандай болды?
15. Әлеуметтік осал оқушыларды мамандандырылған мектептерге қосуды қандай шаралар одан әрі жақсартуға болады деп ойлайсыз?
16. Сіздің ойыңызша, бұл саясаттың әлеуметтік осал оқушылар үшін де, жалпы мектеп қауымдастығы үшін де ұзақ мерзімді артықшылықтары қандай?
17. Сіз сияқты мамандандырылған мектептердегі инклюзивті білім берудің болашағын қалай елестетесіз?
18. Дарынды мектептердегі инклюзивті білім беру саясатының тиімділігін арттыру үшін саясаткерлерге қандай ұсыныстар айтар едіңіз?

[Қатысушыға уақыт бөлгені және сұхбат барысында бөліскен құнды пікірлері үшін алғыс білдіріңіз. Барлық берілген ақпарат қатаң құпия болып қалатынына және тек академиялық мақсаттар үшін пайдаланылатынына тағы бір рет сендіріңіз]

Appendix B: Consent form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Implementation of Policy for Socially Vulnerable Children in Gifted Schools: Perspectives from Principals in the Pavlodar Region

DESCRIPTION: You are invited to participate in a research study aimed at exploring the perspectives and experiences of school principals in the Pavlodar region regarding the implementation of policies for socially vulnerable children in specialized schools for gifted students. This research seeks to understand how principals conceptualize these policies, the challenges they face in integrating students from underprivileged backgrounds, and the strategies they employ to ensure inclusivity within their schools.

Your participation will involve a face-to-face interview where you will have the opportunity to share your insights and experiences related to the policy's implementation, the obstacles encountered, and your approaches to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for socially vulnerable students. The interview will be conducted in your preferred language to ensure that you can comfortably express your thoughts. Your candid responses are highly valued and will contribute significantly to the research findings.

Confidentiality and anonymity will be strictly maintained by assigning coded names to participants, and any identifiable information will be removed prior to analysis and presentation in the Master's thesis. With your consent, the interview will be audio recorded to facilitate accurate transcription. All recorded materials and data will be securely stored on a password-protected device and will be retained for one year following the thesis submission, after which they will be permanently deleted.

Your participation is crucial in shaping an understanding of how educational inclusivity is being achieved in specialized schools and in identifying areas for future improvements in policy and practice.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your participation is anticipated to take about 45 to 60 minutes.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: Participating in this study involves minimal risks. If any topics discussed during the interview cause discomfort, you are free to skip specific questions or withdraw from the study at any time without any repercussions. The researcher will prioritize your well-being throughout the interview and address any concerns you may have. If you decide to withdraw from the study after the interview, all data related to you will be immediately deleted.

While there are no direct benefits to you from participating, your involvement in this research has the potential for significant societal impact. By sharing your experiences, you can help enhance the understanding of the challenges and strengths involved in creating an inclusive educational environment that supports socially vulnerable students. This, in turn,

can contribute to improving overall student well-being and academic success. Additionally, your participation can help raise awareness about the importance of inclusivity, ultimately assisting educators, policymakers, and society in promoting healthy educational and developmental practices for all children.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY: Your involvement in this study is completely voluntary. You can choose to withdraw from the study or skip certain questions without any consequences.

CONTACT INFORMATION: If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about this research study, including its procedures, risks, or benefits, please don't hesitate to reach out to the Master's Thesis Supervisor, Sourav Mukhopadhyay, at sourav.mukhopadhyay@nu.edu.kz.

For independent questions or concerns regarding the research process or your rights as a participant, you can reach out to the NUGSE Research Committee at

gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT: I have carefully reviewed and understood the information provided above. I willingly consent to participate in this study and permit the use of my data for research purposes.

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's 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).

ЗЕРТТЕУ ЖҰМЫСЫ КЕЛІСІМІНІҢ АҚПАРАТТЫҚ ФОРМАСЫ

Дарынды мектептердегі әлеуметтік осал топ балаларына арналған заңды жүзеге асыру: Павлодар облысындағы директорлардың перспективалары

СИПАТТАМА: Сіздерді дарынды оқушыларға арналған мамандандырылған мектептердегі әлеуметтік осал балаларға арналған заңды іске асыруға қатысты Павлодар облысындағы мектеп директорларының перспективалары мен тәжірибесін зерттеуге бағытталған зерттеуге қатысуға шақырамыз. Бұл зерттеу директорлардың осы саясаттарды қалай тұжырымдайтынын, аз қамтылған топтардан шыққан студенттерді біріктіруде кездесетін қиындықтарды және олардың мектептерінде инклюзивтілікті қамтамасыз ету үшін қолданатын стратегияларын түсінуге тырысады.

Сіздің қатысуыңыз бетпе-бет сұхбатты қамтиды, онда сіз саясатты жүзеге асыруға, кездесетін кедергілерге және әлеуметтік осал студенттерге қолдау көрсететін және инклюзивті ортаны қалыптастыруға қатысты көзқарастарыңызбен және тәжірибеңізбен бөлісу мүмкіндігіне ие боласыз. Сұхбат сіздің ойларыңызды ыңғайлы жеткізе алуыңыз үшін өзіңіз қалаған тілде жүргізіледі. Сіздің ашық жауаптарыңыз жоғары бағаланады және зерттеу нәтижелеріне айтарлықтай үлес қосады.

Қатысушыларға кодталған есімдер беру арқылы құпиялылық пен анонимділік қатаң сақталады және кез келген сәйкестендіретін ақпарат магистрлік диссертацияда талдау мен ұсынылу алдында жойылады. Сіздің келісіміңізбен сұхбат дәл транскрипцияны жеңілдету үшін аудио жазылады. Барлық жазылған материалдар мен деректер құпия сөзбен қорғалған құрылғыда қауіпсіз сақталады және диссертация тапсырылғаннан кейін бір жыл бойы сақталады, содан кейін олар біржола жойылады.

Сіздің қатысуыңыз мамандандырылған мектептерде білім берудің инклюзивтілігіне қалай қол жеткізілетінін түсінуді қалыптастыруда және саясат пен тәжірибеде болашақта жетілдіру бағыттарын анықтауда өте маңызды.

ӨТКІЗІЛЕТІН УАҚЫТЫ: Сіздің қатысуыңыз шамамен 45-60 минутты алады деп күтілуде.

ТӘУЕКЕЛДЕР МЕН АРТЫҚШЫЛЫҚТАР: Бұл зерттеуге қатысу ең аз тәуекелдерді қамтиды. Өңгімелесу кезінде талқыланған тақырыптар ыңғайсыздық тудырса, кез келген уақытта ешқандай салдарсыз нақты сұрақтарды өткізіп жіберуге немесе зерттеуден бас тартуға болады. Зерттеуші сұхбат барысында сіздің әлауқатыңызды бірінші орынға қояды және сізді алаңдататын кез келген мәселені шешеді. Өңгімелесуден кейін зерттеуден бас тартуды шешсеңіз, сізге қатысты барлық деректер дереу жойылады.

Қатысудың сізге тікелей пайдасы болмаса да, сіздің осы зерттеуге қатысуыңыз маңызды қоғамға әсер ету мүмкіндігіне ие. Тәжірибеңізбен бөлісу арқылы сіз әлеуметтік осал студенттерге қолдау көрсететін инклюзивті білім беру ортасын құруға қатысты қиындықтар мен күшті жақтарды түсінуді жақсартуға көмектесе аласыз. Бұл, өз кезегінде, студенттердің жалпы әл-ауқатын жақсартуға және оқудағы жетістіктерге ықпал етуі мүмкін. Бұған қоса, сіздің қатысуыңыз инклюзивтіліктің маңыздылығы туралы хабардарлықты арттыруға, сайып келгенде, барлық балалар үшін салауатты білім беру және дамыту тәжірибесін ілгерілетуде педагогтарға, саясаткерлерге және қоғамға көмектесе алады.

ҚАТЫСУШЫ ҚҰҚЫҚТАРЫ: Сіздің бұл зерттеуге қатысуыңыз толығымен ерікті. Ешбір салдарсыз зерттеуден бас тартуға немесе белгілі бір сұрақтарды өткізіп жіберуге болады.

БАЙЛАНЫС АҚПАРАТЫ: Егер сізде осы зерттеуге қатысты сұрақтар, алаңдаушылықтар немесе шағымдар болса, соның ішінде оның процедуралары, тәуекелдері немесе пайдасы болса, магистрлік диссертация жетекшісі Соурав Мухопадхьяға sourav.mukhopadhyay@nu.edu.kz поштасы арқылы хабарласудан тартынбаңыз.

Зерттеу процесіне немесе қатысушы ретіндегі құқықтарыңызға қатысты тәуелсіз сұрақтар немесе алаңдаушылықтар үшін NUGSE зерттеу комитетіне мына мекенжай бойынша хабарласуға болады: gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz.

КЕЛІСІМ ТУРАЛЫ МӘЛІМДЕМЕ: Мен жоғарыда келтірілген ақпаратты мұқият қарап шықтым және түсіндім. Мен осы зерттеуге қатысуға және өз деректерімді зерттеу мақсатында пайдалануға рұқсат беруге дайынмын.

Қатысушының аты-жөні: _____

Қатысушының қолы: _____ Күні: _____

ФОРМА ИНФОРМАЦИОННОГО СОГЛАСИЯ

Реализация политики в отношении социально уязвимых детей в одаренных школах:
взгляд директоров Павлодарской области

ОПИСАНИЕ: Вас приглашают принять участие в исследовании, направленном на изучение точек зрения и опыта директоров школ Павлодарской области в отношении реализации политики в отношении социально уязвимых детей в специализированных школах для одаренных учеников. Это исследование направлено на то, чтобы понять, как директора концептуализируют эту политику, с какими проблемами они сталкиваются при интеграции учащихся из неблагополучных семей и какие стратегии они используют для обеспечения инклюзивности в своих школах.

Ваше участие будет включать личное интервью, в ходе которого у вас будет возможность поделиться своими идеями и опытом, связанными с реализацией политики, возникшими препятствиями и вашими подходами к созданию поддерживающей и инклюзивной среды для социально уязвимых учеников. Интервью будет проводиться на предпочитаемом вами языке, чтобы вы могли комфортно выражать свои мысли. Ваши откровенные ответы высоко ценятся и внесут значительный вклад в результаты исследования.

Конфиденциальность и анонимность будут строго соблюдаться путем присвоения участникам кодированных имен, и любая идентифицируемая информация будет удалена до анализа и представления в магистерской диссертации. С вашего согласия интервью будет записано на аудио для облегчения точной расшифровки. Все записанные материалы и данные будут надежно храниться на защищенном паролем устройстве и будут храниться в течение одного года после подачи диссертации, после чего будут окончательно удалены.

Ваше участие имеет решающее значение для формирования понимания того, как достигается инклюзивность образования в специализированных школах, и для определения областей для будущих улучшений в политике и практике.

ВРЕМЯ УЧАСТИЯ: Ожидается, что ваше участие займет около 45–60 минут.

РИСКИ И ПРЕИМУЩЕСТВА: Участие в этом исследовании сопряжено с минимальными рисками. Если какие-либо темы, обсуждаемые во время интервью, вызывают дискомфорт, вы можете пропустить определенные вопросы или отказаться от исследования в любое время без каких-либо последствий. Исследователь будет уделять первостепенное внимание вашему благополучию на протяжении всего интервью и решать любые ваши проблемы. Если вы решите отказаться от исследования после интервью, все данные, связанные с вами, будут немедленно удалены.

Хотя для вас нет прямых выгод от участия, ваше участие в этом исследовании может оказать значительное общественное влияние. Делясь своим опытом, вы можете помочь улучшить понимание проблем и сильных сторон, связанных с созданием инклюзивной образовательной среды, которая поддерживает социально уязвимых учащихся. Это, в свою очередь, может способствовать улучшению общего благополучия учащихся и их успеваемости. Кроме того, ваше участие может помочь повысить осведомленность о важности инклюзивности, в конечном итоге помогая педагогам, политикам и обществу в продвижении здоровых образовательных и развивающих практик для всех детей.

ПРАВА УЧАСТНИКОВ: Ваше участие в этом исследовании полностью добровольное. Вы можете отказаться от участия в исследовании или пропустить некоторые вопросы без каких-либо последствий.

КОНТАКТНАЯ ИНФОРМАЦИЯ: Если у вас возникли вопросы, опасения или жалобы по поводу данного исследования, включая его процедуры, риски или преимущества, не стесняйтесь обращаться к руководителю магистерской диссертации Соураву Мукхопадхьяю по адресу sourav.mukhopadhyay@nu.edu.kz.

Если у вас есть независимые вопросы или опасения относительно процесса исследования или ваших прав как участника, вы можете обратиться в Исследовательский комитет NUGSE по адресу gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz.

ЗАЯВЛЕНИЕ О СОГЛАСИИ:

Я внимательно изучил и понял информацию, предоставленную выше. Я добровольно соглашаюсь участвовать в этом исследовании и разрешаю использовать мои данные в исследовательских целях.

Имя участника: _____

Подпись участника: _____ Дата: _____