

**Examining University Stakeholders' Perceptions and Experiences with Inclusive
Education Courses in Pedagogical programs**

Berik Suleimen

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

in

Educational Leadership

Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education

April, 2025

Word count: 24166

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

Dear: **Berik Suleimen**

This letter now confirms that your research project titled:
Examining University Stakeholders' Perceptions and Experiences with Inclusive Education Courses in Pedagogical programs

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,

Oliver Mutanga (PhD)

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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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Dr. Oliver Mutanga, for his invaluable advice, constant support, and inspiration throughout the entire research process. His professional expertise, attentiveness, and insightful feedback were crucial at every stage of my work.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the faculty members and administrative staff who participated in the study. Their willingness to share their time, experiences, and sincere reflections made the realization of this research possible and significantly enriched its outcomes. Special thanks are due to all the participants of the study for their openness, trust, and readiness to share their perspectives and experiences. Their valuable stories and reflections formed the foundation for understanding the issues of inclusive education and made an invaluable contribution to the development of this work.

I am deeply grateful to my family for their unconditional love, moral support, and faith in me. Their encouragement has been my main pillar during the most challenging moments. Without them, I would not be where I am today.

I would also like to address special words of gratitude to my girlfriend for her patience, care, and belief in me. Her support and warmth helped me maintain strength and focus even during the most difficult periods of my work.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends and colleagues who stood by me, inspired me, and helped me overcome difficulties. Their presence made this journey brighter and easier.

To all who contributed to the realization of this work, I express my sincere gratitude.

ABSTRACT

Examining University Stakeholders' Perceptions and Experiences with Inclusive Education Courses in Pedagogical programs

This qualitative study aims to investigate the views and experiences of the university's stakeholders - specifically faculty members and administrative personnel - regarding the preparation and execution of inclusive education courses within pedagogical programs in Kazakhstan. Despite the increasing global emphasis on inclusive education as a means to advance equality in education, comprehension remains limited in the post-Soviet context concerning the design, teaching, and perception of such courses in higher education institutions, especially in teacher training programs.

The research utilizes a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of those directly engaged in developing and implementing inclusive education courses. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with faculty teachers and administrative staff from three public universities that provide teacher training programs. Thematic analysis was employed to uncover key patterns and meanings in the participants' narratives.

The findings reveal that the inclusive education course is regarded as a significant and ethically important part of the undergraduate teacher training program's curriculum. However, its execution is seen as fragmented and lacking adequate support. Participants noted multiple challenges, including insufficient institutional backing, limited professional development opportunities, poor assimilation into curricula, and inadequate inter-faculty collaboration. Nonetheless, some positive aspects were acknowledged, such as faculty dedication, collaborations with NGOs, and practice-oriented teaching approaches.

This study fills a gap in the empirical literature on inclusive education within Central Asian higher education institutions and offers a contextualized perspective on the current practices for implementing these courses. The experiences shared by educators and administrators provide valuable insights anticipated to aid professionals involved in developing and implementing inclusive education courses, ultimately helping to improve their effectiveness and relevance in training future teachers for success in an inclusive educational setting.

Keywords: Inclusive education, pedagogical programs, higher education, faculty perceptions, implementation, phenomenological research, Kazakhstan, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory.

Аңдатпа

Мұғалімдерді даярлау жүйесінде инклюзивті білім беру курстарын іске асыруға қатысушылардың көз қарастары мен тәжірибесін зерделеу

Бұл сапалы зерттеу Қазақстандағы педагогикалық бағдарламалар аясында инклюзивті білім беру курстарын іске асыруға қатысатын университет оқытушылары мен әкімшілік қызметкерлерінің тәжірибесі мен қабылдауын зерттеуге бағытталған. Соңғы жылдары инклюзивті білім беру білім беру теңдігін қамтамасыз етудің маңызды құралы ретінде жаһандық деңгейде назар аударып келе жатқанына қарамастан, мұндай курстардың жоғары білім беру жүйесінде, әсіресе мұғалімдерді даярлау бағдарламаларында қалай енгізіліп, тәжірибеде іске асырылып жатқанын түсіну жеткіліксіз.

Зерттеу феноменологиялық әдіснамаға сүйеніп, инклюзивті білім беру курстарын әзірлеу мен оқыту үдерісіне тікелей қатысушы мамандардың өмірлік тәжірибесін талдауға негізделген. Деректер Қазақстандағы үш мемлекеттік педагогикалық ЖОО-да жұмыс істейтін оқытушылар мен әкімшілік қызметкерлермен жүргізілген жартылай құрылымдалған сұхбаттар арқылы жиналды. Мәліметтерге тақырыптық талдау әдісі қолданылды.

Нәтижелер көрсеткендей, инклюзивті білім беру мұғалімдерді даярлау бағдарламасының маңызды және этикалық тұрғыда қажетті бөлігі ретінде қабылданғанымен, оны іске асыру барысында бірқатар қиындықтар кездеседі. Қатысушылар институционалдық қолдаудың жеткіліксіздігі, кәсіби дамудың шектеулі мүмкіндіктері, оқу бағдарламасының үйлесімсіздігі мен бөлімдер арасындағы координацияның әлсіздігі сияқты кедергілерді атап өтті. Сонымен қатар,

факультет мүшелерінің жеке бастамасы, ҮЕҰ серіктестігі және тәжірибеге бағытталған оқыту тәсілдері сияқты оң факторлар да байқалды.

Бұл зерттеу Орталық Азиядағы жоғары білім беру жүйесіндегі инклюзивті білім беру бойынша эмпирикалық әдебиеттегі кемшілікті толтырады және мұндай курстардың қазіргі жағдайын тереңірек түсінуге мүмкіндік береді. Жоғары оқу орындарында инклюзивті білім беру курстарын әзірлеу мен жүргізуге жауапты мамандар үшін бұл нәтижелер рефлексия жасауға және болашақ мұғалімдерді инклюзивті ортада тиімді жұмыс істеуге дайындау мақсатында курстарды жетілдіруге ықпал етеді деп күтіледі.

Түйінді сөздер: Инклюзивті білім беру, педагогикалық бағдарламалар, жоғары білім, факультеттің қабылдауы, жүзеге асырылуы, феноменологиялық зерттеулер, Қазақстан, Бронфенбреннердің Экологиялық Жүйелер Теориясы.

Аннотация

Изучение восприятия и опыта участников реализации курсов инклюзивного образования в системе подготовки педагогов

Это качественное исследование направлено на изучение восприятия и опыта заинтересованных сторон университета, а именно преподавателей и административного персонала, относительно внедрения и подготовки курсов инклюзивного образования в рамках педагогических программ в Казахстане. Несмотря на растущее международное внимание к инклюзивному образованию как средству содействия равенству в образовании, в постсоветском контексте по-прежнему отсутствует понимание того, как такие курсы разрабатываются, преподаются и воспринимаются в высших учебных заведениях, особенно в рамках программ подготовки учителей.

Исследование основано на феноменологическом подходе и направлено на изучение жизненного опыта тех, кто непосредственно участвует в разработке и внедрении курсов инклюзивного образования. Данные были собраны с помощью полуструктурированных интервью с преподавателями и административным персоналом трех государственных университетов, предлагающих педагогическую подготовку. Тематический анализ был использован для выявления ключевых закономерностей и смыслов в рассказах участников.

Результаты показали, что курс инклюзивного образования воспринимается как ценный и этически необходимый компонент программы подготовки учителей для бакалавриата, но его реализация остается фрагментарной и недостаточно поддерживаемой. Участники отметили ряд проблем, включая отсутствие институциональной поддержки, ограниченные возможности для профессионального развития, слабую интеграцию в учебные планы и недостаточное сотрудничество

между факультетами. Тем не менее, были выявлены благоприятные факторы, такие как приверженность учителей, партнерские отношения с НПО и практико-ориентированные методы обучения.

Это исследование заполняет пробел в эмпирической литературе по инклюзивному образованию в высших учебных заведениях Центральной Азии и предлагает контекстуализированное понимание текущей практики внедрения этих курсов. Описанный опыт преподавателей и администраторов содержит ценные наблюдения, которые, как ожидается, будут способствовать размышлениям профессионалов, участвующих в разработке и внедрении курсов инклюзивного образования, и поддержат усилия по повышению их эффективности и значимости в подготовке будущих учителей к работе в инклюзивной образовательной среде.

Ключевые слова: инклюзивное образование, педагогические программы, высшее образование, восприятие преподавателями, реализация, феноменологические исследования, Казахстан, теория экологических систем Бронфенбреннера.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction and Background of the Study

This chapter offers the foundational context for the thesis proposal, introducing the topic and emphasizing its importance. It identifies the gaps in the current body of knowledge that this study aims to address. Additionally, the chapter presents the problem statement and outlines the purpose of the research. It specifies the research questions and discusses the significance and potential impact of the study. Finally, the chapter provides an overview of the subsequent sections of the thesis.

Every student possesses the right to join all educational activities without exclusion according to inclusive education principles (Kefallinou et al., 2020). The educational approach supports placing students with special educational needs in regular classrooms to achieve complete participation and learning opportunities for all children (Hoque & Nasrin, 2023). The educational role in achieving social justice and equity remains an ongoing topic of discussion. Education will achieve its goals more effectively when operating within a national system that establishes genuine inclusivity in schools. Schools that embrace diversity should deliver quality education to all students while targeting both students who lack school attendance and those who receive insufficient education (Shaeffer, 2019).

The worldwide adoption of inclusive education has increased substantially since the 1980s because of international agreements including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) launched in 2016 build upon previous worldwide initiatives to support inclusive and equitable quality education for all

students. The Salamanca Statement together with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) have since 1994 promoted inclusive education principles which the SDGs strengthen through their commitment to supporting diverse learners. These frameworks support inclusive education which requires mainstream classrooms to welcome students with different needs (Rieser, 2012). Many countries have transformed their educational policies and practices through the adoption of inclusive education (Shulha, 2021).

However, the worldwide push toward inclusive education has not led to a sufficient understanding of practical implementation barriers and achievements in higher education inclusive education courses. The research on inclusive education has expanded but theoretical frameworks and policy development receive more attention than the direct experiences of faculty and administrative staff who deliver these courses. Haug (2016) indicates that numerous nations have passed inclusive education policies yet the real-world implementation experiences especially within higher education institutions need additional research. Most research focuses on legislative and structural aspects according to Javier (2023) while the practical learning environment challenges that students and educators encounter receive insufficient examination. The research by Ioannidi & Malafantis (2022) reveals that inclusive education inclusion in teacher training lacks sufficient empirical evidence about its effectiveness in preparing educators to address diverse student needs. The insufficient examination of practical implementation challenges indicates the requirement for additional research into inclusive education's operational aspects. The integration of inclusive education into teacher training within pedagogical programs stands as a critical factor because it determines how well future educators will meet learner diversity needs. Current research demonstrates inclusive education's role in promoting classroom equity and diversity yet there is insufficient comprehensive analysis of practical

factors that affect course success or failure (Ioannidi & Malafantis, 2022; Ryndak et al., 2023). Knowledge of these practical experiences will help enhance teacher training programs' inclusivity and effectiveness by providing adequate preparation for educators to establish inclusive learning spaces.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The worldwide shift toward inclusive education has become evident. Higher education institutions which run pedagogical programs must take the lead in teaching future teachers how to implement inclusive education practices effectively. The practical implementation of inclusive education courses stands as a fundamental component of teacher preparation specifically for undergraduate students in pedagogical specialties. The integration of «Inclusive Education» courses into bachelor's programs for pedagogical specialties serves as an essential approach to develop pre-service teachers who can establish and direct inclusive learning spaces (Ioannidi & Malafantis, 2022). These courses develop future teachers by teaching them essential practical competencies together with theoretical knowledge which enables them to meet the diverse educational requirements of students while guaranteeing every learner receives quality inclusive education (Ryndak et al., 2023). The courses explore multiple elements of inclusive education through teaching students about different learning requirements and developing inclusive lesson planning and student accommodation methods (Khasanah, 2018).

The essential nature of these courses becomes apparent but higher education institutions face significant obstacles when implementing inclusive education within pedagogical programs. The implementation of inclusive education faces multiple obstacles such as insufficient instructor training and limited resources and student and faculty members' resistance to change and varying levels of acceptance (Sowiyah & Perdana, 2022). The perceptions and experiences of teachers and administrative staff who directly

participate in these courses need to be understood because this information will reveal obstacles and successful implementation methods for the course. The analysis of these perceptions and experiences helps identify potential barriers while improving the implementation of inclusive education courses (Veradegita et al., 2021). The identification of these challenges is essential to guarantee that future educators receive proper training to establish and sustain inclusive educational environments.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This research aims to investigate how directly involved personnel including faculty teachers and administrative staff perceive and experience inclusive education courses. The research identifies both obstacles and opportunities and successful strategies that occur during this implementation process. The study aims to provide policymakers and educational designers with essential information to develop more effective and genuinely inclusive educational curricula.

1.4 Research Questions

To explore the perceptions and experiences of those directly involved in the implementation of inclusive education courses, this study addresses the following research questions:

- 1) What are the perceptions and experiences of faculty teachers, and administrative staff in pedagogical specialties regarding the implementation of inclusive education courses?
- 2) What successes and challenges do faculty members encounter in implementing inclusive education courses, and how do they utilize these benefits to enhance the effectiveness of the courses?

- 3) What are the policy, practice and research implications of the participants' insights for enhancing the inclusivity and effectiveness of inclusive education courses in pedagogical programs?

1.5 Significance and Contribution of the Study

This study is significant as it addresses a critical gap in the current understanding of the practical implementation of inclusive education courses in higher education, particularly within pedagogical programs. By examining the perspectives of faculty teachers, and administrative staff, the study provides a comprehensive view of the factors that influence the success or failure of these courses. These insights are not only important for addressing immediate barriers but also for fostering long-term improvements in how inclusive education is approached and delivered in higher education institutions. The findings of this study will have broader implications for both policy and practice, ensuring that the courses better meet the needs of all students and support faculty in their teaching roles.

One of the key contributions of this research is that it identifies essential barriers which institutions encounter while establishing inclusive education courses as one of its main findings. The identification of these challenges remains essential because it enables higher education institutions to detect and resolve obstacles which prevent inclusive education practices from succeeding. The gathered information serves as a foundation for creating specific interventions to remove obstacles which will boost course effectiveness.

The study makes another essential contribution through its identification of best practices in inclusive education. The research examines effective approaches in inclusive education courses which provide institutions with valuable information to replicate or modify these strategies. The identification of best practices enables educators and

administrators to study successful approaches which they can implement to enhance program inclusivity.

Additionally, the research findings will serve as evidence to develop educational policies and curricula. The research results will present evidence-based recommendations which policymakers and curriculum developers can use to create better inclusive education courses for Kazakhstani students. The recommendations will prepare future educators to build and sustain inclusive learning spaces which will result in better educational equality for all students.

Finally, this research will contribute to the academic literature on inclusive education. By providing new insights into the implementation process of inclusive education courses within the context of higher education in Kazakhstan, the study will fill a gap in the existing research. This contribution is significant because it expands the body of knowledge on inclusive education and provides a foundation for future research and practice.

1.6 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is structured into six comprehensive chapters, each addressing different aspects of the study on the implementation of inclusive education courses in higher education, particularly for bachelor's students in pedagogical specialties. Chapter 1, the Introduction, sets the stage by providing the background of the study, stating the problem, outlining the purpose, research questions, significance, and defining key terms. It concludes with an overview of the thesis organization. Chapter 2, Literature Review, explores the concept of inclusive education, global perspectives, and specific implementation challenges of inclusive education. This chapter also explores theoretical framework and existing research on perceptions and experiences related to inclusive education. The third chapter details the research design, population and sample, data

collection methods, data analysis techniques, ethical considerations, and study limitations, providing a roadmap for how the research was conducted. The fourth chapter presents the collected data and analyzes the perceptions of faculty teachers, and administrative staff, identifying barriers and effective strategies for implementing “Inclusive Education” courses in higher education. The following chapter presents discussions and interprets the findings, compares them with existing literature, and discusses implications for policy and practice, offering recommendations for enhancing inclusive education courses and suggesting avenues for further research. The final chapter of the study presents the conclusion which summarizes the research while presenting main results and field contributions and final thoughts. The thesis includes a complete reference list and appendices which contain consent forms. The organized structure provides a complete and logical presentation of research data and results.

1.7 Summary

The introductory chapter establishes the fundamental importance of inclusive education for higher education especially within pedagogical programs. The text first explained what inclusive education means while explaining its importance for creating equitable educational environments and social justice. The discussion highlighted the worldwide movement toward inclusive education which stems from international agreements including CRPD and SDGs and the Salamanca Statement while showing how different nations have incorporated these principles into their educational policies.

The chapter reveals that despite worldwide progress in inclusive education there remains a significant research gap regarding how higher education institutions implement inclusive education courses in practice. The research gap demonstrates the need to study how faculty teachers and administrative staff experience inclusive education within

pedagogical programs. The statement of the problem described the obstacles which prevent higher education from adopting inclusive education through its curricula because of inadequate training and scarce resources and opposition to educational changes.

The research aims to examine these perceptions and experiences because it wants to discover the barriers and opportunities which emerge during the implementation process. The research questions were created to lead this study toward understanding the elements that determine the outcome of inclusive education courses. The research demonstrated its importance through its ability to shape educational policies while improving curriculum development and enriching academic discussions about inclusive education.

The thesis outline concluded the chapter by showing the research direction for the following chapters which will analyze the literature review and research methodology and data analysis and findings interpretation.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature review chapter presents a thorough evaluation of academic research and theoretical foundations which support the study. The research examines essential concepts and obstacles and recent developments in inclusive education through a worldwide lens with particular emphasis on Kazakhstan. The principle of inclusive education works to deliver equal high-quality education to all students regardless of their backgrounds or abilities and has emerged as a primary focus in worldwide educational reform efforts. This chapter investigates the historical development of this concept together with its implementation difficulties and its effects on educational policy and practice.

2.2 Concept of Inclusive Education

The basic principle of modern education discourse promotes inclusive learning because it creates equal opportunities for high-quality education among all students who come from different backgrounds and have different abilities. The foundation of inclusive education rests on democratic values along with principles of justice and diversity which work to remove educational exclusion and discrimination according to Jiangye and Lijuan (2010). This approach includes more than integrating students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms since it requires a complete educational strategy that meets all student needs according to Mitchell (2015).

Local educational institutions should provide education to all children and young people who have social, emotional, cultural, intellectual or linguistic differences or disabilities according to the principle of inclusive education as defined by Florian et al. (2010). This educational method allows children to engage fully in school activities while

celebrating the value of diverse student populations. Reindal (2016) states that inclusion needs to be seen both as a physical and social system and as an ethical requirement for educational equity and social justice.

Despite its widespread endorsement, the practice of implementing inclusive education faces numerous obstacles despite general support for its principles. According to Haug (2017) many countries have established inclusive education policies but their practical implementation differs widely because of ongoing debates about how to define and measure inclusion. The dominant focus on achieving inclusion has a potential drawback according to Hegarty (2001) because it might divert attention from essential educational goals such as deep learning critical thinking and student development. When inclusion efforts focus primarily on structural or administrative goals like physical integration of students into mainstream settings they risk neglecting the genuine educational growth of all students. The integration of inclusive practices requires a balanced approach to maintain high educational standards and deliver effective learning outcomes for all students.

Kazakhstan has introduced progressive inclusive education policies which demonstrate its dedication to achieving educational fairness together with children's disability rights. Through the Ministry of Education and Science Kazakhstan declared its plan to establish an inclusive education system by 2020 which would integrate inclusive practices across all educational levels (Rollan & Somerton, 2019). The support of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) helped revise policies while implementing them which led to cultural transformation and school inclusivity enhancement.

Furthermore, the State Program for the Development of Education and Science (2016–2019) established a target to achieve 70% mainstream school inclusion throughout

Kazakhstan before 2018 according to Helmer et al. (2020). The establishment of school-based resource centers in Nur-Sultan cities has supported inclusive education development which helps achieve this objective according to Helmer et al. (2020).

However, the implementation of inclusive education faces ongoing obstacles which include the requirement of teacher training and changes in teacher perceptions regarding students with disabilities (Agavelyan et al., 2020). Despite the ongoing challenges Kazakhstan's inclusive education policies demonstrate major achievements in integrating disabled students into general education programs.

Makoelle (2020) states that the country is working to transform education at every level through equity and inclusion principles yet faces various obstacles during this transition. The main obstacle to implementing inclusive education stems from insufficient preparation and professional development for teachers. Teachers express their lack of preparedness and support for working with students who have different learning requirements which negatively affects inclusive educational practices (Agavelyan et al., 2020). Society holds negative views toward disabilities which creates a significant obstacle for complete classroom integration of students with special needs (Rollan & Somerton, 2019).

The Kazakhstani government places education for children with disabilities at the forefront of national priorities while inclusive or integrated education functions as a fundamental approach to deliver high-quality education and essential development support to all children (Zholtayeva et al., 2013). Kazakhstan has introduced various measures to solve these problems in practice. The government launched resource centers inside schools to help implement inclusive education programs. The centers offer training sessions as well as materials and additional personnel who support the development of inclusive teaching

environments (Helmer et al., 2020). The initiatives show promise yet the practical application of policies continues to fall short especially in rural areas which experience limited access to resources and trained personnel (Zholtayeva et al., 2013).

Administrative promotion of inclusion encounters contradictions because essential structural elements are absent. Schools need to follow inclusive practices but many educational institutions maintain insufficient physical spaces and trained staff to support students with special needs properly (Makoelle, 2020).

Agavelyan et al. (2020) discovered that teachers generally hold neutral views about inclusion but many educators do not have the training or confidence needed to deliver inclusive practices. These challenges emphasize the requirement for sustained investment in teacher training and community awareness and infrastructure development to achieve the full vision of inclusive education in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan tackles its inclusive education challenges by actively engaging civil society organizations and NGOs in its implementation. These organizations have been instrumental in revising policies and offering essential methodological support to schools. The authors Rollan and Somerton (2019) explain how NGOs act as connectors between policy and practice to turn theoretical inclusive education reforms into practical school-level actions. The active involvement of NGOs becomes essential for overcoming teacher training deficits and societal resistance to inclusion because these organizations deliver necessary resources and expertise to help schools implement new inclusive models. The local initiatives described by Kauffman and Popova (2013) in Petropavlovsk demonstrate how grassroots efforts can successfully implement inclusive practices. Civil society uses these practical examples to demonstrate its ability to create substantial progress in inclusive education challenges across Kazakhstan.

The rationale for inclusive education is further strengthened by its potential to foster social cohesion and eliminate educational disparities. Inclusive education aims to develop the full potential of every individual, particularly those vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion (Saharan & Sethi, 2009). This approach aligns with the broader goal of creating an inclusive society where differences are respected and celebrated. However, as Nunan, George, and McCausland (2000) argue, achieving inclusivity in higher education requires addressing market-oriented educational environments that may be hostile to inclusive practices, thus necessitating a critical and socially reconstructive approach to education. The market-driven environments have competition and efficiency as their core elements and focus on individual student performance and institutional success rather than student needs from underprivileged backgrounds. Educational institutions tend to distribute resources toward students who excel academically and students from well-off families at the expense of students with disabilities and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The conflict between market-oriented objectives and inclusive education demonstrates the necessity for an analytical education framework that defends equal educational opportunities for every student instead of focusing on students who benefit institutions through their academic achievements or financial contributions (Ball, 2003; Marginson, 2016).

In summary, the concept of inclusive education exists in multiple dimensions because it seeks both universal high-quality education and social justice together with educational unity. The research literature demonstrates that educational and ethical requirements both require inclusive strategies for meeting student diversity needs. The foundation provides the necessary support for investigating the implementation of inclusive education courses to discover both successful strategies and educational obstacles. All people regardless of their abilities and backgrounds should have access to

high-quality education according to the fundamental principle of inclusive education. The educational system's ethical requirement to include all learners stems from a moral obligation to others which existed before the establishment of formal regulations and policies according to Veck (2014). According to Kumar (2018) inclusive education requires ethical principles to manage both student groups properly while building a fair learning space. Tirri and Laine (2017) together with Tirri and Laine (2017) discuss the ethical difficulties of inclusive education through the lens of balancing gifted students' needs with students who need additional support. The studies demonstrate that inclusion requires more than policy implementation because it represents an ethical duty to ensure equal opportunities and justice in learning environments for everyone.

2.3 Global Perspective on Inclusive Education

The worldwide initiative of inclusive education delivers equal educational possibilities through mainstream programs to all students including those with disabilities. The worldwide initiative follows social justice principles which support fair educational opportunity distribution and cultural diversity and political education decision-making participation (Mena & Waitoller, 2022). The United Nations supports inclusive education through two important frameworks including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Education for All initiative which guarantee discrimination-free education access for all children (Sharma, 2015). These frameworks demand that children with disabilities should attend regular educational settings so national policies must change alongside educational structures to deliver equal access with required support services (Nock, 2011; Sharma, 2015). The Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities launched by the United Nations helps stakeholders work together to establish better inclusive educational systems (Sharma, 2015).

All countries which sign the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities must redesign their education system to support students with disabilities. Educational transformations require general education systems to deliver reasonable accommodations alongside curriculum restructuring and inclusive teaching practices and accessible physical facilities for supporting diverse learner needs (Byrne, 2019). The level of change along with its effectiveness shows extreme variations throughout different educational contexts. Sharma et al. (2008) discovered that inclusive education policies exist extensively yet schools face obstacles from unprepared teachers and insufficient facilities and restricted funding. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) state that inclusive policies do not lead to effective practice without professional development, consistent funding and institutional commitment. The global standards established by the CRPD serve as a benchmark yet countries face difficulties in achieving these standards because they need strong institutional support systems and ongoing evaluations of inclusive practices at both national and organizational levels.

Different national educational systems execute inclusive education policies according to their unique blend of cultural values alongside their economic standing and political framework. The educational system of developed economies integrates disabled students into typical classrooms through provision of necessary support services. In many economically developed countries, inclusive education policies emphasize the integration of students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms to receive the necessary accommodations and support services that enable academic success. Inclusive education within the United States exists under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) which requires specialized services with individualized education plans and reasonable accommodations for academic and social achievements in mainstream environments (McLeskey & Waldron, 2011). The United Kingdom supports inclusive

education practices through the Equality Act (2010) which requires schools to provide active educational accommodations for students with disabilities (Hodkinson, 2016). The educational infrastructure together with teaching resources and programs for disability support in regular schools remains strong in these nations (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2018). Economically developed countries maintain complete legislative backing for inclusive education yet they experience continuing practical issues stemming from inconsistent school-level execution and teacher preparation variability and enduring disability-related attitudes (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). The successful implementation of inclusive education needs more than policy creation since professional development together with institutional and societal commitment and resource allocation remain essential (Sharma, Forlin, & Loreman, 2008). In contrast, in emerging economies, the focus may be on increasing access to education for all children, especially those in marginalized communities who have historically been excluded from the formal education system (Dyson, 2004). The current difference between the two regions demonstrates the necessity to develop particular approaches that focus on resolving particular difficulties of various countries.

The international community considers inclusive education to be both an educational transformation and an instrument to fulfill social justice objectives. Social justice in education means distributing opportunities and resources to provide fair treatment and results for marginalized and underrepresented groups. The social justice framework presented by Fraser (2008) consists of three main dimensions which include redistribution together with recognition and representation. Educational resources should be distributed equally to all students particularly those who have traditionally been denied access. The educational system must accept and honor all cultural expressions and linguistic backgrounds along with individual differences that students bring to class.

Educational decision-making processes should include marginalized groups through representative participation.

The implementation of inclusive education helps create harmonious and democratic communities by teaching students to value diversity while developing empathy and teamwork and respect for others. The core objective of its mission includes removing educational inequalities through learning opportunities that reach all students regardless of their physical or social or economic status (UNESCO, 2020). Through inclusive education practices students learn to view diversity as an advantage instead of an obstacle while developing environments that provide benefits to every student (Ainscow, 2020).

These educational goals match exactly with the social justice objectives of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) which targets inclusive quality education for all by 2030 (United Nations, 2015). Education's social justice approach requires equal distribution of educational resources alongside acknowledgment of different cultural backgrounds and meaningful representation of underrepresented populations in educational decision-making processes (Fraser, 2008).

Empirical studies demonstrate the effectiveness of inclusive education approaches which integrate diverse learning needs into mainstream classrooms while supporting a society that values diversity (Landorf & Nevin, 2007). According to Kurth et al. (2018) these inclusive objectives require multiple successful elements for their realization including appropriate policy frameworks and extensive teacher training and sufficient resource allocation. The implementation of inclusive education proves challenging because different countries face unique conditions when trying to establish successful programs worldwide.

In conclusion, the global movement of inclusive education serves as a multifaceted approach which establishes social justice principles to deliver equal educational chances to every student. Different national contexts experience distinct challenges and achievements when implementing inclusive education because of their unique socio-cultural and economic conditions. Kazakhstan has achieved notable progress in inclusive education but ongoing teacher training programs and resource allocation and societal attitude changes remain essential. The worldwide perspective on inclusive education shows that achieving fully inclusive educational systems demands collaborative work with context-sensitive approaches.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The study uses Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) as its theoretical framework to examine the various influences on inclusive education course implementation in pedagogical programs. The theory explains how human development happens through dynamic environmental systems which shape the experiences and perceptions of people in these systems.

The fundamental component of Bronfenbrenner's theory consists of the microsystem which represents the direct contact environment that includes schools and universities. The research focuses on classrooms and institutional practices in higher education to show how direct faculty-student-administrative staff interactions influence both inclusive education course implementation and effectiveness (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

Next layer, the mesosystem examines the connections between various microsystems which include the relationships between faculty members and administrative staff and departmental collaborations and support service coordination in higher education

institutions. According to literature, effective mesosystemic connections are critical for the successful integration and sustainability of inclusive education programs, emphasizing communication and cohesive efforts across institutional sectors (Chiner & Cardona, 2013; Sharma et al., 2008).

Further out, the exosystem encompasses settings that indirectly affect the participants but where individuals do not actively engage. Policies, educational regulations, and institutional management decisions constitute the exosystem, influencing faculty and administrative roles and resources allocated to inclusive education initiatives (Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). An understanding of the exosystem aids in recognizing the administrative, regulatory, and policy-related barriers or facilitators encountered in inclusive education practice.

At the broadest level, the macrosystem reflects the overarching cultural attitudes, societal norms, and policy frameworks that shape educational practices and expectations around inclusion. Within Kazakhstan, macro-level influences include cultural beliefs about disability and diversity, national education strategies, and international educational frameworks and standards (Loreman et al., 2013). These broader societal and cultural contexts significantly inform and constrain how inclusive education is conceptualized and operationalized within higher education settings.

Bronfenbrenner's model also emphasizes the importance of the chronosystem, highlighting the temporal dimension that accounts for changes and continuity over time. Given the evolving educational landscape and policy shifts in Kazakhstan, this dimension is critical for understanding how perceptions, implementations, and experiences of inclusive education courses adapt and transform over time (Slee, 2011).

Applying this ecological framework enables a thorough investigation into the complex interactions among multiple levels of influence that shape the experiences of faculty, administrative staff, and pedagogical students. By recognizing these layered contexts, the study provides a nuanced analysis of how inclusive education practices are implemented and perceived, ultimately offering insights for enhancing educational practices and policies at both institutional and national levels.

2.5 Implementation of Inclusive Education Courses

The development of inclusive education courses in pre-service teacher education programs presents multiple complex decisions about the organizational framework and the materials to include together with educational methods. The main task for teacher educators becomes deciding whether to integrate inclusive education into the entire curriculum or to teach it through separate stand-alone courses. The infusion method which Loreman (2010) supports according to Walton and Rusznyak (2017) ensures inclusivity becomes essential to teaching practices so it remains central rather than marginal. Daily pedagogical discussions and routines benefit from this method because it normalizes inclusive practices. Systematic and explicit development of critical analytical frameworks that help teachers challenge inclusive and exclusionary practices remains missing from an infused approach. The practical implementation of inclusive education faces substantial barriers due to monitoring requirements and faculty expertise inequalities as well as scheduling difficulties (Walton & Rusznyak, 2017).

Standalone courses establish inclusive education as a distinct professional subject area through which pre-service teachers gain extensive knowledge about core concepts including inclusion and exclusion and marginalization (Florian & Camedda, 2020). Through this method students can dedicate their full attention to examining relevant

literature and theoretical foundations. The main limitation of isolated courses is that pre-service teachers tend to treat inclusive education as an additional requirement instead of an essential part of their fundamental teaching duties. Stand-alone courses presented as electives tend to create a perception that inclusive education applies only to certain teachers or teaching contexts (Walton & Rusznyak, 2017).

The selection of proper knowledge content represents a crucial factor beyond course structure selection. The process of developing inclusive education courses requires teacher educators to balance practical teaching needs with policy requirements alongside academic field standards. According to Slee (2010) in Florian and Camedda (2020) inclusive education courses must analyze how power systems and institutional barriers cause marginalization while teaching pre-service teachers to identify and break down educational barriers. A different method to understand diversity focuses on teaching students about individual student variations while studying different types of disabilities. The emphasis on teacher competence typically includes three main elements: practical instructional strategies, curriculum differentiation, and specialized assessment techniques. However, pre-service teachers need to recognize that these teaching methods do not automatically lead to inclusive practices unless they analyze the systemic inequalities that exist (Walton & Rusznyak, 2017).

The combination of infusion and stand-alone strategies has become widely accepted as an effective approach. The South African university implemented a dual approach which started with implicit inclusion of concepts throughout the curriculum before adding a specific course that focused on diversity and inclusive pedagogy and critical theory (Walton & Rusznyak, 2017). The method seems beneficial because it

enables pre-service teachers to build essential inclusive mindsets through gradual development which gets reinforced by subsequent direct conceptual instruction.

The South African educational environment faces unique implementation challenges for inclusive education courses because of apartheid history and modern policies that work to remove learning obstacles. The White Paper Six from the Department of Education (DoE) (2001) as cited by Walton & Rusznyak (2017) establishes teachers as key implementers of inclusive education. The national policy documents contain significant contradictions which stem from the conflict between individual deficit models and broader social paradigms (Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Pather, 2011, as cited in Walton & Rusznyak, 2017). The different viewpoints create challenges for course development while generating doubts about optimal educational practices among educators. Pre-service teachers in South Africa must acquire competencies for recognizing diversity and working together to solve educational and social challenges according to policy mandates (Walton & Rusznyak, 2017). The South African university case study demonstrates how course design should integrate scholarly authority with inclusive pedagogy and critical reflexivity while respecting local systemic limitations and constraints (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2010, as cited in Walton & Rusznyak, 2017).

The successful delivery of inclusive education courses in pre-service teacher education requires thorough planning of course structure and content selection along with awareness of specific contextual factors. Effective programs combine direct theoretical instruction with practical learning while confronting structural obstacles and showing awareness of educational settings and historical backgrounds.

2.6 Challenges and Successes in Implementing Inclusive Education Courses

The process of implementing inclusive education courses in university pre-service teacher education programs includes multiple obstacles and prospects. Several obstacles including institutional and societal obstacles along with practical issues affect the effectiveness and sustainability of inclusive practices.

The main institutional barriers to progress stem from curriculum limitations and organizational choices. Teacher education programs face an overcrowded curriculum which forces educators to choose between essential courses and inclusive education content thus creating resistance toward changes (Lancaster & Bain, 2007). Educational institutions must decide between spreading inclusive education principles across multiple courses or creating separate classes dedicated to this topic. The infusion method which seeks to integrate inclusive practices into standard teaching philosophy encounters three major implementation challenges: monitoring difficulties and inconsistent faculty expertise and practical scheduling problems (Florian & Linklater, 2010). Pre-service teachers view standalone courses about inclusion concepts as nonessential to their professional duties even though these courses deliver thorough instruction about exclusion and marginalization (Lancaster & Bain, 2007; Florian & Linklater, 2010). National frameworks for inclusive education contain policy contradictions which generate institutional ambiguity that makes curriculum development and accreditation processes more complicated (Ahsan, Sharma, & Deppeler, 2012).

The implementation of inclusive education becomes more complicated because of societal barriers which exist alongside other challenges. Mainstream classrooms have become more diverse with students of various backgrounds which makes it essential for teachers to handle multiple learning differences despite this being a fundamental aspect of inclusive education (Florian & Linklater, 2010). Educators often hold unfavorable opinions

about their capability to handle inclusion because such beliefs reflect the societal prejudices and negative stereotypes about disability and diversity. The lack of proper knowledge and training generates major psychological and professional obstacles that affect individuals according to Ahsan et al. (2012). The fundamental societal beliefs about unchangeable abilities directly oppose inclusive education principles which focus on the ability and flexibility of every student (Florian & Linklater, 2010). The historical legacies of exclusion together with socio-economic inequalities and under-resourced schools in specific contexts such as South Africa and Bangladesh create major obstacles which pre-service teacher programs need to address directly according to Lancaster and Bain (2007) and Ahsan et al. (2012).

The application of inclusive education faces three main practical obstacles which stem from the selection of knowledge content and the determination of instructional priorities and teaching strategies. Teacher educators must determine which needs between policy requirements and academic research and teacher requirements should receive priority when developing inclusive education programs (Lancaster & Bain, 2007). Educators face a decision point that determines whether they will base inclusive education on student diversity or teacher competence or systemic and societal elements. The exclusive attention to student differences might produce deficit-focused outcomes whereas teacher competence-focused approaches might overlook systemic causes of exclusion (Florian & Linklater, 2010). The implementation of inclusive education concepts proves challenging for virtual and online learning platforms because they struggle to create authentic student collaboration and empathy (Lancaster & Bain, 2007). The theoretical knowledge that pre-service teachers gain at university does not match the inclusive practices they experience during practicum placements which results in their feeling unprepared for actual classroom requirements (Lancaster & Bain, 2007).

The implementation of inclusive education courses faces numerous obstacles yet has produced significant achievements together with recognized opportunities. The infusion method has the potential to establish inclusive practices as basic professional requirements for all educators according to Florian and Linklater (2010). The stand-alone courses provide educators with both focused instruction about inclusive concepts and training to develop specialized knowledge (Lancaster & Bain, 2007). Teacher training programs receive vital structural support and essential policy frameworks even when these frameworks present contradictory elements (Ahsan et al., 2012). The combination of infusion and stand-alone elements in hybrid approaches creates a balanced strategy which uses the best aspects of each method to improve program effectiveness (Lancaster & Bain, 2007).

Additionally, teacher training programs can benefit from using established research and theoretical frameworks such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL) together with interactive simulations to deliver practical innovative teaching methods. The methods connect academic knowledge to real-world practice which enables pre-service teachers to develop empathy and achieve deeper understanding (Florian & Linklater, 2010). The transition of pre-service teachers into inclusive teaching roles receives additional support through university-school collaborations which combine professional development with coordinated efforts (Ahsan et al., 2012).

In summary, the implementation of inclusive education courses faces multiple barriers but strategic use of opportunities and research-based teaching methods leads to improved teacher readiness. Teacher education programs need continuous critical evaluation which draws from educator and institutional leader experiences to improve their inclusive education practices.

2.7 Perceptions and Experiences in Implementation of Inclusive Education

The understanding of how people perceive and experience inclusive education implementation remains crucial because these aspects directly affect both results and long-term sustainability. The research indicates that teachers' beliefs together with their attitudes and experiences strongly determine how effective inclusive practices will be and how well they will work (Florian & Linklater, 2010; Lancaster & Bain, 2007).

Pre-service teachers begin their training by assuming classrooms consist of similar students while underestimating the multiple learning needs they will encounter during their practice (Florian & Linklater, 2010). The majority of pre-service teachers maintain favorable beliefs about inclusive classrooms yet demonstrate insufficient preparation for teaching diverse student groups by expressing concerns about workload expansion and knowledge gaps alongside difficulties in providing suitable attention to all students (Lancaster & Bain, 2007). The lack of resources along with insufficient staff support makes teachers' training experience more stressful because they face increased challenges (Ahsan, Sharma, & Deppeler, 2012). Knowledge growth about inclusion sometimes generates more awareness about the real-world obstacles of inclusion which produces a paradox that leads to intensified teacher apprehension (Lancaster & Bain, 2007).

The attitudes of pre-service teachers depend on student support requirements because they tend to favor inclusion of students who need minimal assistance yet remain hesitant about teaching students who require extensive support or exhibit violent behavior (Lancaster & Bain, 2007). The attitudes of trainees evolve differently when they encounter students with disabilities directly through practical training activities. Research shows that inclusion efforts produce positive results in some cases yet yield minimal or negative results in other cases because societal norms promote isolated educational environments (Florian & Linklater, 2010).

Teachers who are already working in schools face similar obstacles in inclusive education by stating they need more training to provide suitable support for their diverse students. Many experienced educators demonstrate insufficient preparation to support students with intellectual disabilities in inclusive settings which indicates problems within the broader system of professional development and teacher support (Ahsan et al., 2012). The strong educational beliefs that determine student learning methods create major barriers to inclusive educational practices among certain teaching professionals. The implementation of successful inclusive practices needs complete support which includes knowledge acquisition alongside practical strategies and belief system transformation to modify teacher identities and educational methods (Florian & Linklater, 2010).

Teachers' experiences with inclusive education implementation depend on multiple essential elements. The way teacher education courses are structured and designed determines how well teachers understand and apply their knowledge. The approach of integrating inclusive education throughout the curriculum or through separate units determines how future teachers understand their inclusive teaching responsibilities and competencies (Lancaster & Bain, 2007). National policy frameworks containing built-in contradictions or tensions create institutional and educator uncertainties which typically transform inclusion into policy compliance instead of an educational philosophy and genuine practice (Ahsan et al., 2012).

The societal perception of ability as an unchangeable trait creates extra obstacles which teacher education programs need to address directly. The development of inclusive pedagogical practices depends on addressing fundamental societal beliefs that exist within education systems (Florian & Linklater, 2010). The implementation of inclusive education faces major obstacles because of practical barriers which include large class sizes and

under-resourced schools thus requiring systemic reform in addition to teacher training (Ahsan et al., 2012).

Overall, the worldwide philosophical backing for inclusive education exists but multiple obstacles exist during its actual implementation. The main obstacles to effective teaching stem from teacher readiness and the absence of adequate system-wide support according to Lancaster and Bain (2007). International education trends now demonstrate a transformation in inclusion concepts which now encompasses diversity and social justice principles beyond disability-focused approaches. The transformation requires educators to develop their role as inclusive agents who promote competencies which move past classroom methods to include teamwork and reflective practice and organizational understanding (Florian & Linklater, 2010). The implementation of critical evaluation of fundamental principles and continuous partnership between educational institutions and educational systems serves as vital strategies to enhance teacher education and maintain sustainable inclusive educational practices (Ahsan et al., 2012; Lancaster & Bain, 2007).

2.8 Summary

The Literature Review conducted an extensive evaluation of inclusive education which analyzed basic concepts alongside worldwide viewpoints and both obstacles and achievements of implementation practice. Inclusive education exists as a dedication to providing equitable high-quality learning opportunities for all students within democratic frameworks of justice and diversity. The study stressed the ethical need for inclusive education while continuing discussions about its precise definitions and practical implementation.

The analysis demonstrated worldwide education approaches for inclusivity produce different results which depend on cultural social economic and political environments.

Emerging economies experienced significant practical obstacles because they lacked resources and insufficiently trained educators while countries with strong infrastructure and supportive policy frameworks showed better results. Kazakhstan functioned as a vital analysis example because it dedicated substantial policy support to inclusive education while facing enduring obstacles related to teacher education deficiencies and social opposition and unpredictable funding distribution primarily in rural settings.

Pre-service and in-service teachers' perceptions along with their experiences function as essential determinants that affect the execution of inclusive education practices. Educators maintained favorable attitudes toward inclusive education yet they expressed multiple concerns about their inadequate training and workloads and resource availability and their ability to manage students with intensive needs. Systemic elements including teacher education curriculum structure alongside policy conflicts and cultural views about fixed intelligence and practical obstacles from big class sizes proved to be important factors influencing educator perspectives.

Notably, the review demonstrated a major transformation in inclusive education approaches from special needs disability focus to an expanded framework that includes diversity and social justice and equity principles. Educators need development to become active inclusive practitioners who possess skills in cooperative practice and reflective thinking and systems understanding. The current study benefits from this Literature Review which establishes essential groundwork by explaining complex implementation determinants for inclusive education while pointing out vital research directions focused on Kazakhstani settings.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The chapter explains the research methodology used in this study by describing the research design and research site selection and participant recruitment methods and data collection and analysis procedures. The chapter starts by explaining the research design selection process while providing details about the study location. The research explains the participant recruitment process in detail while focusing on the purposive sampling approach that targeted participants with suitable backgrounds. The chapter presents the research data collection approaches before explaining the analysis procedures. The chapter discusses ethical aspects by showing methods to protect participant confidentiality and obtain informed consent and safeguard their rights. The chapter provides reasons for each methodological decision to show their connection to the research objectives. The research components work together to establish a unified framework for studying faculty members' perceptions about inclusive education courses in higher education institutions.

3.2 Research Design

The research aimed to investigate the experiences and perceptions of faculty teachers and administrative staff who directly contribute to the implementation of inclusive education courses at Kazakhstani higher educational institutions. The research followed a qualitative design because the study aimed to explore human experiences and the meanings participants attach to them. The research questions concentrate on understanding barriers and opportunities alongside effective strategies through the perspectives of faculty teachers and administrative staff. The research questions investigate how and why different variables affect inclusive education course implementation. Interviews serve as qualitative

research tools because they generate detailed answers that reveal insights which cannot be obtained through quantitative approaches (Cleland, 2017).

Qualitative research becomes the best option when researchers want to study a problem and understand its comprehensive nature according to Creswell and Poth (2018). The research method enables investigators to observe how participants construct their realities and understand their interpretations of personal experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A qualitative research design represents the best selection because it addresses both inclusive education course implementation and multiple stakeholder viewpoints.

The research employed phenomenological methodology to identify core experiences participants had with inclusive education courses. The qualitative research tradition of phenomenology targets the identification of common meanings which several people experience in their lived experiences of concepts or phenomena (Johnson & Christensen, 2007). The method proved optimal for studying faculty teachers' and administrative staff's inclusive education experiences because it explores their personal interpretations of these experiences.

The research data collection method used semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews enable researchers to conduct deep investigations of participants' thoughts and feelings which generate detailed and rich data (Brantlinger et al., 2005).

The research used inductive and thematic content analysis to analyze the collected data. Through this method researchers can discover patterns and themes in their data to gain a complete understanding of participant experiences and viewpoints (Cleland, 2017). The thematic analysis method serves qualitative research well because it enables detailed organization and description of data sets (Hanson, Balmer, & Giardino, 2011).

3.3 Research Site

The research took place at two public universities in Kazakhstan which serve as leading institutions for pedagogical education. The chosen institutions are located in major cities and are known for their dedication to implementing inclusive education courses in their bachelor's degree programs. The universities include:

- 1) University A (Almaty): A renowned institution with a strong focus on educational and humanities programs.
- 2) University B (Almaty): This university also has a robust faculty of education and humanities.

The institutions were selected because they are among the leading educational institutions in Kazakhstan and have been actively introducing inclusive education courses into their curricula. This selection provides a representative understanding of how inclusive education courses are being implemented in key educational settings across the country.

3.4 Sampling Approach

The research sample consists of educational staff who teach inclusive education courses together with administrative personnel who lead the development and execution of these courses. The research used purposive sampling to choose participants who actively participate in inclusive education course implementation. The research method was suitable because it enables researchers to choose participants who possess valuable information about the research questions (Bryman, 2012).

The research participants received email invitations through their institutional email addresses for recruitment. The participants provided both informed consent and written authorization. The inclusion criteria for participants are:

- Teachers: 4 faculty members actively teaching inclusive education courses.

- Administrative Staff: 1 administrative staff member involved in the development and implementation of inclusive education courses.

The purposive sampling approach allows the study to concentrate on participants who possess the most relevant experience and knowledge thus providing a thorough understanding of the challenges and successes in implementing inclusive education courses. The research design of purposive sampling matches the study's objective to investigate in-depth perceptions and experiences about inclusive education courses. The study targets participants who actively work with these courses to obtain detailed information which accurately represents the implementation of inclusive education within higher education institutions. The research approach aligns with Braun and Clarke (2013) because it relies on practical experience to understand specific challenges and strategies from those who work directly with the courses.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

The interview times were arranged to accommodate participants in a way that made them feel at ease and receptive to open dialogue. The researchers conducted video conferencing interviews with participants who gave their consent to recording because this method protected their data from accidental loss while ensuring accurate transcription. The research data collection included performing semi-structured interviews with five participants who included four instructors of inclusive education courses and one administrative staff member involved in course development and implementation. Peters and Halcomb (2015) recommend semi-structured interviews because they excel at revealing complex experiences so this research on inclusive education benefits from this approach. The researchers conducted interviews in Kazakh, Russian and English to let participants share their thoughts in their native language which resulted in extensive data collection.

3.5.1 Data Collection Tool

The semi-structured interview used open-ended questions which provided guidance for the discussion but allowed participants to explore topics in greater detail. The instrument serves to gather extensive information about faculty members who develop and teach inclusive education courses through their detailed experiences and perceptions and insights. The semi-structured interview format described by Kallio et al. (2016) enables researchers to explore all necessary topics while allowing participants to introduce new themes that emerge during the conversation. Semi-structured interviews excel at collecting detailed human experiences while producing abundant detailed information (Kallio et al., 2016).

3.5.2 Procedures

The recruitment process used email invitations which were distributed to participants through their institutional email accounts. The study invitations contained complete details about research objectives together with participant responsibilities and measures for maintaining confidentiality. The research started after participants provided their consent to participate in the study. The consent form required participants to sign before beginning the study to understand their rights and the voluntary nature of participation and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

The data collection process allowed participants to choose interview times based on their personal schedules. Participants received monetary compensation after finishing the interviews as a gesture to show appreciation for their time and effort. The researchers wanted to demonstrate their gratitude toward participants for their essential contributions to the study.

The researchers used online recording of semi-structured interviews to achieve precise data collection. The researchers created transcripts from recorded interviews and verified their accuracy by matching them against the original audio files. The collected data received anonymity treatment to safeguard participant identities and the data storage system maintained high security standards for confidentiality purposes.

The research used semi-structured interviews to obtain extensive detailed information which would deliver a complete understanding of implementation experiences and perceptions among course participants.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedure

The researchers applied thematic analysis to examine qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis serves as a common qualitative research technique for detecting patterns (themes) in data while analyzing and reporting them. The research method fit this study because it offers a versatile yet structured process for complex data analysis which reveals detailed participant experiences about inclusive education course implementation.

Thematic analysis proved specifically fitting for this research because of its following advantages. The method remains free from theoretical constraints which allows researchers to use it for various research questions and data types (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The research needed this adaptability to examine the varied experiences of faculty members who teach inclusive education courses. The analysis method enables researchers to deeply study qualitative data while identifying both hidden and visible concepts present in the information. The thorough examination required for understanding inclusive education implementation depends on identifying both small details and multiple viewpoints (Nowell et al., 2017). The thematic analysis method enables researchers to

conduct a structured data analysis process that allows for both complete data evaluation and continuous theme development (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

The research analysis used the six-phase thematic analysis process which Braun and Clarke (2006) described. The first step of data analysis required researchers to become familiar with the information through transcription and multiple readings of the data while recording their initial thoughts and observations. The interview data required transcription followed by English translation to achieve consistent analysis results. The researchers recorded both spoken words and nonverbal communication elements including pauses and tonal variations because these elements help achieve complete data understanding (Bailey, 2008).

The following step required the creation of initial codes which identified interesting data features throughout the entire dataset. The process of coding requires researchers to select specific data segments which answer research questions before assigning corresponding labels to these segments. The initial coding process serves as a fundamental step to organize data before moving forward with detailed analysis according to Saldaña (2021). After data coding the researchers combined the codes to identify essential themes that reflected key findings related to the research questions. The themes underwent additional evaluation to guarantee their proper alignment with both the coded extracts and the complete dataset which resulted in a thematic analysis map (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

The defining and naming themes phase required researchers to thoroughly examine refined themes for their specific boundaries and main areas of focus which resulted in distinct theme definitions and names. The analysis requires themes to be precise and consistent while accurately reflecting the data to maintain research rigor according to Nowell et al. (2017). The last stage required me to present the research findings through an

organized and convincing account that linked the themes to supporting data extracts while connecting them to the research questions and literature.

The systematic approach combined with trustworthiness strategies enabled thematic analysis to create a strong framework for analyzing qualitative data obtained in this research study. Through this method I obtained abundant detailed information which allowed me to deliver a complete understanding of the views and experiences from inclusive education course implementers.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The study implemented rigid ethical protocols to safeguard every participant's rights alongside their dignity and privacy. The NUGSE Research Committee provided ethical approval before the start of data collection. All participants chose to participate voluntarily after receiving complete information about the study. Every participant received a document which explained both the study's objectives and methods alongside its advantages and hazards and their freedom to drop out at any time without facing any negative effects.

The participants were asked to sign consent forms demonstrating their comprehension of the research while granting permission for audio recordings. The researchers obtained consent forms before conducting interviews and kept them in secure storage.

The research maintained confidentiality and anonymity as fundamental ethical components during its design. All identifying information in transcripts underwent removal and participants received new names through pseudonymation. The researcher maintained exclusive access to encrypted data files which were stored on a password-protected USB drive. Any printed materials were stored in a locked cabinet. The research results will not expose any participant identities in any form of publication or research dissemination. The

institution maintains data storage for five years before conducting permanent deletion according to their policy.

The research acknowledges that qualitative interviews engage participants both emotionally and interpersonally. Interviews constitute ethical interactions which demand both empathy and respect according to Cohen et al. (2007) when researchers study professional experiences and perceptions of participants. The participants could select their interview language from Kazakh, Russian or English and choose their most convenient time for the session. The research team provided participants with small rewards to show appreciation for their time and input.

Finally, participants received information about contacting the researcher or supervisor or members of the NUGSE Research Committee to express any concerns or complaints regarding the study in order to maintain transparency and accountability throughout the research process.

3.9 Summary

The current chapter provided a detailed explanation of research methodologies used in this study together with the rationale for choosing the research design. The chapter also presented data collection tools and data analysis methods. The discussion included thorough explanations of ethical aspects which covered anonymity and confidentiality measures and research risks and benefits. The upcoming chapter will present the research findings.

Chapter 4. Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter employs the research methodology and design outlined in the previous chapter to set out results regarding the experiences of the faculty staff teaching inclusive education courses in Kazakhstan. It aims to offer a comprehensive insight into the real-life experiences of the participants, outlining the challenges and successes, as well as determining opportunities within inclusive education courses. Findings from the research outlined within the chapter are derived from semi-structured in depth interviews with the main stakeholders who plan and implement inclusive education courses.

Answers to research questions achieved by collating data into particular themes that were derived from the interview. Themes are significant aspects of the participants' experiences as they shed light on inclusive education practice within Kazakhstani higher education.

The following themes are explored in detail:

1. Faculty Preparedness and Professional Development – Evaluating the readiness of faculty members to instruct inclusive education and the necessity for ongoing professional development.
2. Autonomy and Flexibility in Course Development – Investigating the degree of independence faculty members possess in creating their courses and the obstacles they face in adhering to institutional guidelines.
3. Institutional Support and Collaboration Challenges – Analyzing the deficiencies in institutional support and the difficulties in partnering with colleagues and external experts to enrich course content.

4. Practical Implementation and Student Engagement – Scrutinizing the disconnect between theoretical knowledge and practical application, alongside the expectations of students enrolled in inclusive education courses.
5. Resource Accessibility and Language Barriers – Examining the issues surrounding the availability of local resources and the language difficulties encountered in teaching inclusive education.
6. Institutional Will and Policy Implementation – Assessing how institutional policies either facilitate or obstruct the practical application of inclusive education in courses.
7. Evaluation and Continuous Improvement – Investigating the evaluation processes established for the courses and the requirement for ongoing feedback to enhance teaching and course content.

The themes represent essential elements of participant experiences and perceptions together with their challenges when developing and teaching inclusive education courses. The first six themes emerged directly from participant experiences to show how autonomy and institutional support and preparedness and practical application and resource access and policy enactment appeared throughout their personal and professional stories. Theme 7 emerged from participant reflections to show how evaluation processes within institutions create systemic problems. The participants' perception of insufficient structured feedback and continuous improvement mechanisms revealed an institutional gap that threatens the sustainability of inclusive education courses. The themes emerged from the interview data analysis which revealed patterns of participant experiences and their challenges and successes.

The first of these research questions, that of perceptions of and experiences of course teachers and administrators, is answered through themes of course design autonomy

and flexibility, institutional support, as well as collaboration. These themes describe how participants conceptualize their activity of creating and teaching inclusive education courses, including their conceptions of autonomy, what they see as the role of the institution, as well as the significance of inclusive education. They have experiences of working independently at the course level of development as well as working with restricted collaborative frameworks.

The second question of research, regarding teachers' challenges and successes while offering inclusive education courses, is answered within themes of teacher preparation and professional development, practical application, and student participation. Examples of these themes reveal both the challenges teachers have had while trying to fulfill the requirements of inclusive education, as well as the benefits or successes they have had, including enhanced student participation and individual professional development.

The third research question explores the political, practical, and research results of the participants. This is evident through issues such as institutional will, policy execution, assessment, as well as improvement. These themes capture the institutional-level barriers and opportunities for enhancing the inclusivity and effectiveness of the courses, as well as the importance of feedback and evaluation to continually improve the delivery of inclusive education.

These themes together provide a complete understanding of the factors which affect the implementation and success of inclusive education courses and answer the three research questions and provide practical advice for improving inclusive education in Kazakhstan's pedagogical programs.

These themes deliver a comprehensive understanding of the elements that influence the implementation of inclusive education courses in Kazakhstan's higher education system. The findings in this chapter are presented thematically to prioritize the participants' voices and experiences, although Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory informed the overall design and understanding of the study. The Discussion chapter further explores the connections to the theoretical framework.

4.1.1 Background Information about Participants

The research included five participants who were public higher education institution members in Kazakhstan. The research included four teaching faculty members who delivered inclusive education courses and one administrative staff member who managed inclusive education implementation and taught inclusive education courses.

The participants included lecturers at different stages of their careers and with varying amounts of professional experience from new faculty members to senior instructors. The diverse viewpoints of participants who taught and managed programs created an extensive understanding of inclusive education development and support in public universities.

4.2 Faculty Preparedness and Professional Development

The participants expressed two main concerns about their readiness to teach inclusive education courses and the insufficient professional development resources available to them. The faculty members demonstrated their understanding of the importance of these courses yet expressed doubts about their capability to provide specialized instruction. The interview participants revealed their dependence on independent learning combined with peer assistance because they felt their faculty training

lacked sufficient depth. Participant D, for instance, openly acknowledged her struggle with confidence in teaching a subject that she herself feels is not fully mastered, saying, *“I have an educational background, I have an inclusive education course, but still I wouldn't say I know this subject well enough. It's like I'm learning alongside my students.”* The university's stated commitment to inclusive education does not match the practical skill set it provides to faculty members. This situation forces faculty members such as Participant D to take personal initiative instead of following well-structured institutional programs.

Equally telling was Participant A's reflection on the breadth of inclusive education knowledge required to address diverse student needs, noting that *“Even those of us who took some workshops on inclusion still feel unprepared, especially when students start asking more advanced questions. We realize how shallow our own training has been.”* She explains that sporadic or introductory workshops provide potential benefits yet fail to deeply engage faculty members in teaching methods. The experiences typically fail to connect with actual teaching realities which makes educators doubt their ability to implement inclusive methodologies in real classroom settings. The feeling of superficial training demonstrates that well-meaning professional development initiatives fail to become functional pedagogical tools which represents a significant shortcoming that mirrors the wider policy-practice gap in inclusive education.

Another perspective was offered by Participant C, who lamented the repetitive nature of available training sessions, stated, *“We keep hearing the same basic definitions of inclusion... I'm waiting for something more practice-oriented, but it's not offered at all.”* The quote highlights the superficial nature of current institutional workshops which provide conceptual definitions but lack concrete advanced strategies. The disappointment of faculty members who seek specialized instruction to handle complex classroom situations becomes evident.

4.3 Autonomy and Flexibility in Course Development

The findings indicated that independence and flexibility of course development was a key area of concern, which reflected how teachers managed course development and adjustment of inclusive education courses. Participants were able to tailor their curricula to the context of inclusive education within their locality through the freedom, often modifying content and methodology to suit the students' needs. This freedom was, however, linked with challenges, where participants were left to work on their courses independently, with inadequate support from the institutions.

4.3.1 Autonomy in Course Creation: Empowerment and Isolation

All five participants shared the same experience of gaining empowerment through autonomous course development. For example, Participant C emphasized the need to create a syllabus which better matched the local needs of inclusive education in Kazakhstan. She stated, *“I developed my own syllabus and refused to change it to fit the standard syllabus format based on the university provided template because I believed the standard syllabus was not detailed enough. I needed to make it more specific to the local context.”* The statement demonstrates both the autonomy faculty members have to determine course content and the requirement to modify their teaching materials for students with different educational needs in Kazakhstan. Participant B and Participant D shared similar experiences because the university gave them freedom but the absence of a defined inclusive education curriculum created major obstacles. Participant B remarked, *“I developed the syllabus largely on my own, but I also tried to adapt some content from other courses and online resources.”* The adaptation required teachers to integrate content from general teacher education courses and online resources which were not specifically designed for inclusive education. Participant B added, *“The university gave me the freedom*

to adjust, but sometimes it was hard because there's no set curriculum for inclusive education."

The two participants faced challenges in their work because their institutions granted them independence yet they lacked defined structures for their tasks. The freedom to work independently sometimes results in professional isolation during course development. Participant A described his early career experience by explaining that he needed to learn independently while developing his own educational materials. He explained, *"When I started after graduation, I had to read everything myself. My peers didn't understand the concept, but now we have the course at university. It felt like I was creating something from scratch."* The self-sufficiency demonstrated by faculty members reflects their resilience and initiative yet reveals the absence of institutional structures that could help them create effective inclusive education courses.

4.3.2 Challenges of Flexibility: Lack of Institutional Support

The ability to customize courses through autonomy remains beneficial for faculty members but the absence of institutional backing creates a major problem. Participant E shared the challenge of working largely alone, stating, *"It was quite challenging because honestly, I'm still young. And when trying to develop the syllabus, I mean, you can consult with people, but you are mostly alone in this process. You end up just reading a lot and gathering everything you can find."* His statement shows how course development creates isolation for faculty members who need to depend on outside resources and their personal expertise because they lack formal guidance.

Participant B observed that her syllabus became better each year through her own learning and new insights which she incorporated into her syllabus. She remarked, *"The syllabus I created wasn't perfect, but I tried to at least include the fundamental*

components of inclusive education. I always try to improve it each year by adding new insights or resources I come across.” The flexibility in course development is evident as faculty members continually revise their content to enhance its effectiveness and relevance. However, it also shows that the process of improving the course is largely self-directed, with little institutional guidance or standardization.

4.3.3 Institutional Freedom vs. Standardization

The participants C and B concurred that freedom to construct courses is productive. Both of the participants were of the same view that freedom to design courses must be balanced with institutional support mechanisms. Participant B clarified that even if she was free to design her course, the fact that there is no set curriculum rendered the work more challenging. The Kazakh inclusive education context presents a typical dilemma, which is that instructors have to produce their content without there being institutional consistency or collective assistance.

The standard framework must guarantee program consistency but must provide for adjusting content according to local needs. Participant C underlined that the program must be adjusted to actual conditions of inclusive education in Kazakhstan. She said, *“I needed to make it more specific to the local context of inclusive education in Kazakhstan.”* The interview data shows that Participant C created most of her syllabus by herself. The interview did not clarify if she used existing syllabi or models for her adaptation. The results indicate that standardization helps achieve course consistency yet institutions need flexibility to modify the curriculum according to regional educational requirements.

4.4 Institutional Support and Collaboration Challenges

The interviews reveal institutional support and collaboration as a core thematic concern, demonstrating how universities create formal frameworks, resources, and

collaborative mechanisms for inclusive course development and instruction. Experience from most of the faculty teachers reflects how institutional discourse of inclusive learning has not been translated into actionable practice within support frameworks for teachers.

4.4.1 A Disconnect Between Policy and Practice

All participants noted a consistent gap between the stated commitment to inclusion and the actual institutional frameworks that might enable such practices. Participant A, for instance, expressed frustration at having no formal guidance or oversight when creating her course materials, saying, *“No supervision or oversight was provided for my syllabus. I was essentially left to work on it alone without any quality control. It felt very isolating and challenging.”*

4.4.2 The Need for Collaboration and Communication

The theme of institutional support demonstrated the overall feeling of working independently but this section concentrated on the lack of organized collaboration between faculty members to support inclusive education initiatives. Participant E highlighted the problem of isolation by describing both insufficient monitoring and the complete lack of meaningful faculty collaboration. The university promoted inclusive education through public statements yet she remained uncertain about her colleagues' activities and their potential challenges. She noted, *“The university says inclusion is important, but in practice, there’s almost no structured collaboration among faculty. We don’t really know what others are doing. There’s no shared space or regular meetings focused specifically on inclusive education.”* Her observations show that even when there is a nominally supportive stance on inclusion, it can feel hollow if there are no institutional structures such as regularly scheduled meetings, dedicated committees or collaborative platforms that

foster idea sharing and collective problem solving. Without these, faculty often remain in silos, left to rely on personal initiative rather than cohesive institutional planning.

4.4.3 Inconsistent External Initiatives

In addition, the participants also discussed external initiatives aimed at supporting inclusive education in addition to challenges related to internal collaboration among faculty. However, as the following theme illustrates, such initiatives were often inconsistent and lacked sustainable impact. Participant C provided a detailed view of external support efforts when she explained that sporadic initiatives provided partial relief but were neither systematic nor sustained. She remembered previously benefiting from seminars organized by a local expert, *“We used to have Ms. S., who conducted some seminars about inclusion. Honestly, that was helpful, but it wasn’t structured support. Once these seminars stopped, we had nowhere to turn to for regular collaboration or advice.”* The experience of Participant C demonstrates how non-institutionalized practices sometimes prove helpful but remain intermittent. The absence of sustained institutional backing and follow-up systems forces faculty members to work independently after short-term seminars or workshops conclude. The intermittent nature of these activities demonstrates an exosystem deficiency which shows how university-wide procedures either enable or limit the work of individual educators.

4.5 Practical Implementation and Student Engagement

The faculty members observed that students experience a significant gap between the theoretical principles taught in inclusive education courses and the practical learning experiences they want to receive. The course content provides essential theoretical knowledge but students often demand more practical learning opportunities that connect theory to real-world practice. As one faculty member, Participant A, noted, *“They always*

say like we need more practice. I understand what they mean: they want to visit special schools or inclusive schools, but it's quite not possible because we have more than 150 students." This statement reflects the dual difficulty of managing enthusiastic students while dealing with operational constraints because the numerous students limit the number of field visits which hinders the hands-on learning that students strongly desire.

Participant B emphasized that there is often a misalignment between student expectations and the actual scope of the courses. She explained, "*They think this course will teach them how to handle every condition, such as visual impairment, autism and everything else. But I explain it's mostly an introduction, not a detailed manual. They're disappointed there isn't more real practice.*" This sentiment not only points to the overgeneralization of course objectives by students but also underscores how courses, in their current form, predominantly emphasize definitions and policies rather than practical strategies. Participant B further observed that even modest, practice-oriented exercises, such as small group presentations or peer-teaching segments, have a positive impact: "*Even creating small group presentations or short peer-teaching segments gave them a taste of applying concepts. They loved it, and some said it finally made the theories click.*" Her experience illustrates that while large-scale practical experiences might be challenging to arrange, even limited exposure to applied tasks can significantly enhance student engagement.

Participant D introduced another essential aspect by highlighting the institutional barriers which prevent practical implementation. She remarked, "*We focus on the 'what is inclusion' part, but not enough on 'how do we really do it?' It's a consistent complaint. Students want us to bring them to real inclusive environments, but we lack formal collaboration with schools.*" Her words show that despite a strong theoretical commitment to inclusion, the absence of structured partnerships with local schools leaves a void in

practical learning opportunities. In line with this view, Participant A also highlighted the ethical and logistical difficulties, noting, *“We can’t randomly send 50 or 100 students to a special school that has maybe one or two inclusive classrooms. It’s overwhelming and ethically tricky.”* The additional information supports the idea that institutional and logistical constraints create major barriers to authentic practice-based learning.

4.6 Resource Accessibility and Language Barriers

The main obstacle to implementing inclusive education according to faculty members is the scarcity of suitable resources which are easily accessible in the local area. The participants observed that numerous evidence-based materials in English exist but there is a notable lack of high-quality materials that are relevant to the Kazakh or Russian context. For instance, one participant observed, *“There is limited access to inclusive education materials in Kazakh or Russian, which creates barriers for students learning in these languages.”* The comment reveals a persistent issue that both educators and learners face because of resource limitations which prevent proper curriculum delivery.

Participant C offered a detailed perspective on the issue, explaining, *“I developed my own syllabus because the standard one did not provide the depth we need. If we had a more standardized curriculum, we could ensure that everyone has access to the same resources; instead, we are just trying to make do with what we have.”* The participant's statement demonstrates both admiration for the freedom to customize and sadness about the insufficient number of accessible materials that properly support inclusive education instruction. Participant C emphasized that using international resources mainly in English fails to meet the needs of the local educational and cultural context, noting, *“Most of the cutting-edge research is out there in English, and while some materials are translated, the translations are rarely updated or capture the nuances needed for our context.”* The

observation shows an essential deficiency in resource availability because students learning in national languages do not have access to the latest and most applicable inclusive education practices.

Moreover, the discussion showed that the lack of materials relevant to the local context creates real challenges for both instructors and students. The absence of materials in Kazakh and Russian requires faculty members to spend additional time on adapting or translating foreign sources which results in time-consuming work and potential inconsistencies in content quality and relevance. As Participant C noted, *“We’re forced to improvise with what we have, which means that while we value the flexibility to tailor our courses, the lack of reliable, localized resources undermines our ability to ensure uniformity and depth in our curricula.”* Her account reveals an institutional problem with resource distribution because the absence of organized support systems negatively affects both course development quality and student participation. The absence of dependable and location-specific materials creates major challenges for faculty members who want to deliver inclusive education effectively.

4.7 Institutional Will and Policy Implementation

Faculty representatives acknowledged that inclusive education has become more prominent in university-level discussions, which are reflected in strategic plans, mission statements, and national education policy. However, all groups noted a mismatch between institutional ambitions and day-to-day application. Participants described inclusivity as a strategic priority "on paper," but which often lacked an organizational structure, ongoing support, or visible results in their day-to-day audiences.

This tension between policy and practice was a recurring thread throughout the interviews. Participant E reflected on the visible rise of inclusive discourse in official

documents, stating, “*Nowadays, inclusion is everywhere. It's in policy texts, university values, course descriptions. But the fact that it's present in writing doesn't mean it's supported with real actions.*” Her words point to a broader institutional pattern in which inclusive education is promoted as a guiding principle but not sufficiently backed by action plans or monitored through systems of accountability. According to her, the proliferation of inclusive language often does not correspond to increased investments in support systems, professional development, or collaborative mechanisms.

Several participants highlighted that, although institutional policies reference inclusive education, these references rarely extend beyond surface-level commitments. Participant D commented, “*We see inclusive education mentioned in the curriculum documents and even discussed at faculty meetings. But then we go back to our departments and find there's no plan, no additional resources, and no one checking how it's actually being implemented.*” This perspective shows that policy-level advocacy for inclusion creates awareness but fails to influence actual teaching conditions so faculty members must independently interpret and apply inclusive principles.

The sense of policy as symbolic rather than structural was also evident in Participant B's account. She observed, “*It feels like inclusive education is something we're expected to support because it's written into the university's mission. But the implementation is left to individuals, we're not trained, we're not monitored, and no one asks how it's going.*” Her experience shows how institutions clearly state their intentions but leave faculty members to implement inclusive practices without any coordinated institutional support or guidance. The approach to inclusion as personal responsibility instead of institutional priority leads to inconsistent implementation and produces uneven course quality and student experiences.

Participant C elaborated on this issue by explaining the effects of the policy-practice gap in course development. She recalled, “*When I was developing the syllabus, I was told to align it with the university’s vision for inclusive education. But there were no real guidelines, no support system. I had to rely on my own research and experience to interpret what that vision meant in practice.*” Her experience demonstrates a common pattern across the interviews that faculty members are expected to align with institutional goals without being provided with the necessary infrastructure or collaborative frameworks to do so effectively.

In several cases, the absence of structured monitoring and evaluation was also highlighted. Participant B noted, “*There’s no formal feedback on how the course supports inclusive education. Once it’s created and uploaded, no one checks whether it meets the goals or how it could be improved.*” The absence of institutional feedback mechanisms indicates that policies remain disconnected from teaching practices while preventing ongoing reflection and improvement. The absence of a formal review process to check for inclusive practice implementation in course delivery makes inclusion risk becoming an empty rhetorical term instead of an active principle.

Taken together, these perspectives reveal a layered picture of institutional will, one that is present rhetorically but inconsistently enacted. Faculty members described a shared experience of navigating inclusive education within a framework of vague expectations, limited support, and decentralized accountability. They see the value in the institutional commitment to inclusive education, yet feel that the burden of implementation falls disproportionately on individual faculty, often without adequate training, resources, or structured collaboration.

4.8 Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

The final theme that emerged from the data relates to how inclusive education courses are evaluated and whether there are systems in place for ongoing improvement. While previous sections discussed the broader challenges of institutional support and collaboration, this section focuses specifically on the lack of structured mechanisms to assess course quality, gather feedback, or revise course content based on student needs and evolving inclusive education practices. Instead, evaluation processes were often limited to general end-of-course surveys, with little follow-up or targeted review related specifically to the implementation of inclusion-focused pedagogy.

Faculty members explained that while universities require student feedback at the conclusion of each course, the information collected rarely leads to substantive changes. Participant A shared, *“We have an online survey by students. In the end, they evaluate the teacher and the class, but it’s very general. It’s not focused on how well we taught inclusion or whether students feel prepared for real inclusive classrooms.”* Her account reflects a common issue: the evaluation tools used are not aligned with the specific aims of inclusive education, and thus offer limited insight into how the course contributes to students’ readiness for inclusive teaching.

This misalignment between feedback mechanisms and course goals contributes to a cycle in which inclusive education courses remain largely static. Participant C commented, *“I try to improve the course every year, based on what students say, but it’s mostly my own judgment. There’s no structured review or meeting to discuss how we’re doing with inclusion.”* Her experience highlights the individualized nature of course revision, where responsibility for assessing and enhancing course quality falls entirely on the faculty member. Without institutional frameworks to guide or support reflective teaching

practices, course development depends more on personal initiative than collaborative improvement.

For Participant E, the absence of a coordinated system for continuous curriculum review and course improvement was particularly concerning given the dynamic nature of inclusive education. She explained, “*Inclusive education is evolving, but our courses don’t really change unless we make them change. We don’t have internal evaluations focused on inclusion. No peer review, no external check.*” The lack of formal oversight and collaborative course development structures means that even as new research and policies emerge, course content may lag.

Participants also noted that students themselves often express interest in contributing ideas for course improvement, but have no formal channels to do so. Participant B shared, “*Students are willing to give ideas, but they don’t know where or how. After the survey, that’s it. There’s no feedback loop.*” This absence of follow-up opportunities means that valuable student perspectives are not systematically captured, discussed, or acted upon. Feedback becomes a one-way process, collected but not analyzed collectively or used to drive institutional learning.

While most faculty participants expressed a desire to improve their courses over time, they often felt they were doing so in isolation. Without support for data-informed revisions or opportunities to reflect collectively with colleagues, the capacity for deep and sustained course enhancement remains limited. The ongoing development of inclusive education faces challenges because there are no established systems for ongoing evaluation and professional communication which prevents the field from adapting to new requirements regarding student readiness and international standards.

4.9 Summary

The chapter presents extensive insights about university faculty members who teach inclusive education courses in pedagogical programs. Analysis of rich firsthand accounts demonstrated that inclusive education delivery methods exist at multiple levels in Kazakh higher education institutions yet receive insufficient institutional support. The research data produced seven major themes that revealed both personal teacher realities and institutional conditions.

University instructors reported extensive freedom to create their own curricula which they frequently developed from scratch while modifying content to suit local requirements. The freedom to create curriculum independently allowed faculty to maintain contextual relevance yet showed that institutions lacked standardized programs and peer support systems for curriculum development. Faculty members experienced the same conflicting situation between the need for institutional backing and their individual freedom to operate which emerged in the second theme.

The data showed that inclusive education remains a priority for curricula but many teaching staff lack proper training to deliver it effectively. The participants mentioned that professional learning opportunities were scarce and introduced basic material without sufficient advanced teaching strategies. The growing student enthusiasm for inclusive education was viewed positively but faculty members continued to face hurdles in delivering practical learning experiences because of classroom size constraints and insufficient partnerships between inclusive and special education settings.

Resource accessibility and policy implementation themes reinforced the systemic nature of the difficulties faculty members face. The scarcity of quality content specifically designed for Kazakh and Russian audiences led participants to note that individual

instructors must take responsibility for resource discovery and modification. The discourse about inclusion in institutions became more prominent yet many participants described it as shallow. Staff members acknowledged inclusive values in official documents but doubted whether these values received enough financial backing for their implementation and planning support.

The last theme focused on evaluation methods for course quality assessment and improvement highlighted the nonexistence of formal evaluation mechanisms. The end-of-course surveys became the main evaluation tool for faculty members who experienced limited depth and specificity in student feedback while facing minimal opportunities for peer review and collaborative reflection and formal feedback. The lack of institutionalized assessment mechanisms made it difficult for inclusive education courses to experience systematic improvement because individual faculty members needed to take responsibility for enhancements.

The study's research questions receive a complete response through these collected findings. The implementation of inclusive education courses results from multiple factors between personal dedication and institutional focus and system-wide limitations. Faculty members demonstrate strong dedication to inclusive education yet their initiatives frequently encounter broken support systems alongside limited resources and gaps between policy and practice. The study reveals inclusive education as an idea that appears frequently in discussions yet exists only partially in actual implementation.

The repeated patterns indicate fundamental problems within the educational system that affect faculty members' capability to provide high-quality inclusive education. The research indicates that course success depends on both instructional content and institutional support mechanisms for teaching and evaluation.

As this chapter concludes, the findings collectively suggest that while important strides have been made toward the inclusion agenda in higher education, significant work remains to translate policy into practice, vision into infrastructure, and commitment into sustainable action. The next chapter will examine these findings in light of existing literature and theoretical frameworks, offering a deeper analysis of their implications for research, policy, and practice in inclusive teacher education.

Chapter 5. Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter critically discusses the key findings from the thematic analysis presented in the previous chapter, connecting them explicitly to the research questions and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which forms the theoretical framework of this study. Ecological Systems Theory provided a valuable lens through which to interpret the findings of this study. By examining how individual faculty members interact with broader institutional structures and policies, the study captured the multi-layered influences affecting course development and implementation. The microsystem level (classroom practices and immediate support structures) and the exosystem level (institutional policies and administrative frameworks) were particularly relevant in highlighting both opportunities and barriers to the effective delivery of inclusive education courses. The primary aim of this study was to explore faculty members' perceptions and experiences regarding the implementation of inclusive education courses in pedagogical programs, identifying both the enabling factors and challenges encountered in the process.

The discussion begins by revisiting the research questions posed at the outset of this investigation: (1) How do faculty members perceive and experience the implementation of inclusive education courses in higher education institutions? (2) What successes and challenges do faculty members encounter, and how are these experiences leveraged to enhance course effectiveness? (3) What implications do these insights carry for policy, practice, and further research to foster inclusivity in pedagogical education?

This section analyzes the findings through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, highlighting how faculty experiences align with the various interacting

layers of influence - from individual capacities and institutional policies to broader societal and cultural contexts. In addition, key insights from existing literature, as explored in Chapter 2, will be revisited to demonstrate how the current findings either reinforce, extend, or diverge from established scholarship.

The discussion will unfold systematically, addressing each of the emergent themes outlined in the Findings chapter, including autonomy and flexibility in course development, institutional support and collaboration, faculty preparedness and professional development, and practical implementation and student engagement. By exploring these themes in depth, the chapter will elucidate how different ecological systems influence the enactment of inclusive education practices within pedagogical programs.

Finally, the chapter will highlight the broader implications of these findings, emphasizing actionable recommendations for policymakers, institutional leaders, and educators. This critical examination aims not only to deepen understanding of inclusive education within the Kazakhstani higher education context but also to suggest concrete pathways for enhancing educational inclusivity and effectiveness.

5.2 Faculty Preparedness and Professional Development

Interviews indicated that teacher preparation and professional development have emerged as a salient topic, with participants registering concern regarding inadequate preparation through training and knowledge sufficient to conduct inclusive education courses with confidence. Both personal and professional commitment towards inclusion was expressed by the participants, but they obtained knowledge regarding inclusive pedagogy through self-study as well as stand-alone seminars instead of comprehensive training courses in institutions. The subject provides knowledge regarding the constraints

to educational potential for teachers, which directly addresses the second research question as well as helps to foster development of a discussion regarding teacher education courses and its implications for inclusive education.

Most of the teachers indicated that they did not feel prepared to instruct the inclusive education content, as apart from theoretical knowledge, practical classroom approaches were needed from students. Participants reported that university papers had no formal preparation regarding inclusive learning approaches. Insufficiency of educators' training within inclusive education corresponds with international research that registered such educational void for decades. Authors Forlin (2010) and Florian and Rouse (2009) illustrate that Scottish teachers do not have knowledge of inclusive education systems, which makes them work under general pedagogical practice instead of specialist knowledge. Participants of the research had analogous results with other research, which confirms that participants' knowledge base regarding inclusive education is applicable for introductory discussions, but inadequate for deep teaching or comprehensive questioning of students regarding learning with special needs. Identified by Walton and Rushniak (2016) problem occurs within higher education frameworks, as inclusive education policy is still not underpinned by educators' training frameworks. The consequence is an uneven teaching experience in which course quality may depend more on the prior exposure, self-initiative, or disciplinary background of individual instructors than on any standardized institutional provision.

While some participants had engaged in short-term seminars or general pedagogical workshops, these were widely regarded as introductory, repetitive, and lacking practical relevance. This aligns with findings from Srivastava et al. (2013), who noted that professional development in inclusive education is often delivered in a “one-size-fits-all” format that fails to accommodate the varied needs of higher education faculty. This study

contributes to the existing conversation by providing evidence that faculty are not only aware of these limitations but are also actively seeking more relevant, applied, and advanced forms of professional learning. The gap identified is therefore not only structural but also motivational, as faculty members are willing but unable to access the type of training that would enhance their instructional confidence and effectiveness.

The individualization of professional development emerged as a key concern. Faculty were often left to navigate inclusive education concepts alone, relying on peer support where available or on international sources primarily in English that were not always directly applicable to the local context. The reliance on informal strategies in the absence of coordinated, institutional learning pathways suggests that the exosystem is underperforming in its role of supporting educators' growth. Professional learning, which is an exosystemic process by nature, is not occurring in a systematic or accessible way. As a result, the microsystem, where teaching and learning takes place, is shaped by uneven knowledge and inconsistent pedagogy.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that inclusive education as a discipline continues to be treated as peripheral within faculty development agendas. This reflects what Florian and Camedda (2019) identify as the marginalization of inclusion-related training in broader professional development programming, where inclusive education is frequently seen as an "add-on" rather than an integrated component of pedagogical excellence. The absence of inclusive education from long-term faculty development strategies risks reinforcing the perception that it is a specialized topic rather than a foundational framework for teaching all learners.

The insights regarding the marginalization of inclusive education within faculty development agendas also raise questions about institutional expectations versus

institutional support. While inclusive education is often promoted in policy and curriculum guidelines, there is a lack of institutional recognition that teaching this subject effectively requires specialized, ongoing development. Similarly, Ainscow and Sandill (2010) emphasize that sustainable inclusive practices can only flourish when institutions actively invest in the professional learning of their educators, recognizing it as a continuous and context-sensitive process.

Within the framework of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, these dynamics of misalignment between institutional expectations and actual support structures can be understood as a breakdown in the alignment between system levels. The macrosystem which includes national education reforms and global movements toward inclusive schooling sets expectations for inclusive competence. However, the exosystem, comprised of university policies, training programs, and administrative priorities, fails to provide the necessary infrastructure to meet those expectations. Consequently, educators within the microsystem must attempt to implement inclusive teaching without adequate preparation, a misalignment that compromises both course quality and faculty well-being.

The theme reveals a demand to establish inclusive education as a specific professional knowledge domain which needs institutional funding beyond current faculty development practices. The commitment of faculty members to inclusive practices exists but they need appropriate tools and training and organizational structures to deliver inclusive education effectively. The acknowledgment of this reality is essential to transform inclusive education from theoretical policy into actual classroom practice.

5.3 Autonomy and Flexibility in Course Development

The research findings about faculty autonomy and flexibility when developing inclusive education courses help answer the first and second research questions which

examine faculty members' perceptions of inclusive education implementation and their experiences with this process and its main achievements and obstacles. The autonomy granted to faculty members received positive reception because it enabled them to respond to educational requirements of their context and maintain their personal teaching approaches. The freedom to make decisions led to feelings of isolation among faculty members because they received minimal supervision from their peers and university administrators.

Ecological Systems Theory helps explain these findings more deeply. The microsystem represents the main domain where faculty members exercise their autonomy because they make decisions about course planning and delivery. The freedom to make decisions matches the principles of learner-centered pedagogy because it enables teachers to create innovative learning environments in their classrooms. The absence of established guidance and systematic feedback and collaborative frameworks in the university administrative structures and departmental policies weakens the advantages that this autonomy could provide. According to Bronfenbrenner's theory optimal classroom teaching requires sufficient support from surrounding systems including well-developed exosystem-level policies and practices. The insufficient development of support mechanisms in the exosystem leads to individual faculty members experiencing isolation which diminishes the overall sustainability and coherence of inclusive education initiatives.

Comparing these findings to existing literature reveals notable consistencies and divergences. Previous research emphasizes the positive aspects of autonomy, highlighting how teacher agency enhances responsiveness to student diversity and encourages innovation in inclusive education (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Slee, 2011). Indeed, this aligns with participants' experiences of being able to tailor their courses to specific

local contexts. However, unlike the predominantly optimistic portrayal of autonomy found in some earlier studies, participants in this study highlighted significant downsides, particularly related to the absence of structured support and collaboration. This finding provides a more nuanced understanding than commonly seen in the literature, underscoring that autonomy without corresponding systemic support can lead to fragmentation and feelings of professional isolation.

The issue of isolation due to autonomy has been touched upon in prior studies focusing on professional learning communities and collaborative networks (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). The findings of this research expand on these studies by clearly illustrating that when institutional structures lack explicit mechanisms for fostering collaboration, autonomy ceases to be purely advantageous and can, in fact, impede effective course development and sustainability. The research results about faculty autonomy and flexibility in creating inclusive education courses help answer the first and second research questions which investigate faculty perceptions of inclusive education implementation and the main achievements and obstacles during this process. Faculty members valued their autonomy because it enabled them to adapt their teaching to specific educational requirements and personal teaching beliefs. The autonomy experienced by faculty members simultaneously led to feelings of isolation because they received minimal supervision from their institution and lacked peer support.

The research extends current literature by showing how individual autonomy needs collective support to achieve its full potential. The findings present essential implications for institutional policy development and leadership practices in practical settings. The successful implementation of inclusive education courses by universities depends on creating structured frameworks that support faculty autonomy through targeted training and clear guidelines and systematic feedback opportunities. The absence of proper

institutional support makes autonomy potentially work against effective inclusive practice instead of supporting it. The complete realization of teacher autonomy depends on proper attention to exosystem-level conditions.

The findings show that a supportive institutional framework remains essential for successful inclusive educational principle implementation. Autonomy holds value but needs to exist within frameworks that combine collaborative networks with administrative systems which promote professional development and course effectiveness. Long-term success in inclusive educational practices depends on implementing a balanced system of autonomy and support.

5.4 Institutional Support and Collaboration Challenges

Inclusive education within higher education institutions requires more than policy statements because successful implementation depends on institutional frameworks alongside support systems and faculty collaboration mechanisms. The research data demonstrates that higher education institutions remain fragmented in their implementation of inclusive education because the proclaimed institutional values about inclusivity do not translate into concrete support for their practical execution. The theme directly helps understand how institutional context affects faculty delivery of inclusive education and answers essential questions from the first and second research questions of the study.

These research findings demonstrate that institutions lack defined guidelines for creating inclusive education courses. Syllabi creation by faculty members occurred independently from structured frameworks and without peer consultation or feedback processes. This deficiency in support mechanisms agrees with previous studies which demonstrated that inclusive policy statements often fail to connect with actual teaching environments of educator training programs. Walton and Rusznyak (2016) point out that

institutional policies fail to check whether faculty members possess the necessary capabilities for inclusive course development despite their expectations. The study conducted by Naidoo (2019) shows that institutional expectations for inclusive education without proper pedagogical support and resource allocation lead to inconsistent implementation which depends heavily on individual instructor motivation.

The barriers to collaboration among faculty members also emerge from these challenges. Participants who shared the same institutional goal of promoting inclusion worked independently because they lacked formal communication and knowledge exchange between departments. The observations by Forlin and Chambers (2011) demonstrate that inclusive values need collaborative professional cultures to become embedded in teacher education programs. Inclusive education remains fragmented and lacks coherence across the curriculum because there are no established spaces for dialogue and co-design or interdisciplinary learning. The research of Florian and Spratt (2013) supports these findings by demonstrating that organizational culture transformation for inclusion requires both curriculum changes and new structures which promote collaborative professional work.

The study's evidence confirms what research shows about institutional symbolic compliance regarding inclusion. According to Rouse (2008) and Pantić and Florian (2015) higher education institutions implement inclusive language in their strategic documents yet fail to create necessary support mechanisms for its complete implementation. The faculty members in this study supported this evaluation by stating that institutional policies presented inspirational visions but lacked specific implementation plans and monitoring systems and support programs. This research supports the conclusion that inclusive education exists as a rhetorical commitment instead of a sustained practice because

institutions fail to provide sufficient systemic support for educators who bear implementation responsibilities.

The study demonstrates this gap through the absence of established evaluation systems and quality assurance mechanisms. Faculty members reported that inclusive education courses do not receive evaluation processes which check their alignment to institutional targets or their success in educating future teachers. The absence of institutional monitoring and evaluation procedures to improve inclusive practices matches the observations in Srivastava et al. (2013) regarding the importance of evaluation systems for maintaining effective inclusive practices after their initial implementation.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory provides theoretical support for understanding these research findings. The exosystem which consists of institutional structures and leadership decisions and professional development provisions strongly influences how faculty members experience their work. The system fails to develop properly because it lacks collaborative forums and insufficient oversight and minimal support for course design which forces faculty to depend solely on their individual resources and networks for growth and innovation. The relationships between institutional actors and departments form a fragmented mesosystem because cross-faculty collaboration and shared development opportunities remain scarce. Systemic weaknesses at higher organizational levels impact the microsystem where teaching and learning happen thus restricting inclusive education delivery effectiveness and consistency.

The research demonstrates that policy frameworks by themselves cannot achieve inclusive education. Although UNESCO (2009) supports inclusive education rights for all learners, the implementation of policies remains inadequate without practical execution methods. Sharma et al. (2011) point out that inclusive education reform needs formal

policy agreements together with continuous teacher development and institutional teamwork and professional development. This study builds upon existing evidence by showing how weak institutional backing and insufficient infrastructure block the execution of policy goals in real-world settings.

In summary, the theme of institutional support and collaboration challenges highlights a critical gap in the current landscape of inclusive education within higher education in Kazakhstan. These institutional support and collaboration challenges are directly tied to policy inadequacy, as policies advocating for inclusion often lack corresponding implementation frameworks at the university level. Without clear mandates, accountability structures, or resource allocation mechanisms embedded within institutional policies, faculty are left without the coordinated support needed to realize inclusive education in practice. The findings confirm the broader scholarly consensus that institutional will must be supported by coordinated systems of action, including clear guidance, collaborative infrastructure, and evaluative practices. At the same time, this study extends the literature by showing how these challenges are experienced in a post-Soviet, under-researched context, adding a valuable dimension to global conversations on inclusive education. For inclusive education to become a lived, institutionalized practice rather than an aspirational discourse, higher education institutions must strengthen the exosystem conditions that support faculty collaboration, coherence, and professional agency.

5.5 Practical Implementation and Student Engagement

The participants in this study demonstrated both a deep commitment to inclusive education and an understanding of its value for teacher preparation yet their reflections showed that there was a persistent gap between the theoretical instruction in inclusive

education courses and the practical experiences that students needed to fully engage with and apply inclusive principles. The challenges associated with this theory–practice divide speak not only to logistical constraints but also to systemic limitations that influence how and whether inclusive pedagogies are meaningfully enacted in teacher preparation programs.

One of the most prominent concerns emerging from the findings is the inability to offer students sufficient opportunities for hands-on experience. Based on the data gathered from participants, the barriers to providing hands-on student experience stemmed primarily from institutional and structural limitations, such as a lack of formalized school partnerships and insufficient coordination between educational settings rather than from faculty unwillingness or lack of initiative. These findings reflect systemic challenges within the mesosystem level, as conceptualized by Bronfenbrenner’s theory. Participants described students’ frequent requests for more practical engagement, such as visiting inclusive or special schools, observing diverse learners, or working directly with children with disabilities. These desires, while strongly aligned with the pedagogical goals of inclusive education, often went unmet due to institutional constraints, such as large student cohorts, lack of formalized school partnerships, and limited coordination between universities and local educational settings. These barriers reflect what Bronfenbrenner describes as disruptions within the mesosystem the interrelations between settings that individuals actively participate in, such as between the university (where learning occurs) and schools (where practice should be applied). When such connections are underdeveloped, the transfer of learning from one environment to another is weakened.

This barrier, specifically the lack of structured and practice-based opportunities for students caused by institutional and systemic limitations, is echoed in the literature. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) argue that inclusive education cannot be effectively taught

through theoretical instruction alone; it requires experiential learning that allows pre-service teachers to observe, participate in, and reflect on inclusive practices in real settings. Similarly, Sharma et al. (2008) emphasize that attitudes and skills necessary for inclusive practice are shaped significantly by exposure to authentic classroom contexts. The findings of the current study reinforce these arguments by showing that the lack of structured, practice-oriented experiences leads to student dissatisfaction and limits the development of their applied competencies.

In many cases, faculty attempted to address this gap by incorporating simulated or small-scale activities into their courses such as peer-teaching exercises, group presentations, or reflective assignments. While these efforts provided some opportunity for students to engage with inclusive concepts in applied ways, they are widely acknowledged by participants as insufficient. The research of Loreman et al. (2010) supports the idea that university-based learning tasks create foundations yet meaningful professional development in inclusive education requires context-rich school-based experiences. The research expands this argument by showing that dedicated instructors face limitations in their ability to advance learning without institutional backing for practicum experiences.

The research findings show that student expectations about course content did not match the actual course structure. The faculty members explained that students who enrolled in inclusive education courses expected to receive specific detailed strategies for supporting students with disabilities as if they would receive a practical guidebook. The courses primarily focused on introducing theoretical concepts about inclusion together with policy evolution and educational teaching methods. The mismatch between student expectations and course structure resulted in student disappointment and required faculty members to repeatedly clarify the boundaries of course content. Similar tensions have been noted in international studies, such as those by O'Toole and Burke (2013), who found that

pre-service teachers often expect immediate, concrete answers to complex educational challenges, while inclusive pedagogy often requires more nuanced, reflective practice over time.

The current study adds to the conversation on the mismatch between students' expectations for practical learning experiences in inclusive education and the predominantly theoretical nature of course design. It suggests that student engagement is not hindered by a lack of interest in inclusion. On the contrary, students appear highly motivated to learn about inclusive practices. However, when institutional structures do not support practical engagement, students' enthusiasm may be underutilized or even diminished. The findings suggest that fostering engagement in inclusive education requires not only relevant course content but also alignment across system levels between what is taught, how it is taught, and how it can be experienced in practice. Bronfenbrenner's theory helps illustrate how the breakdown in linkages between the microsystem (classroom instruction) and the exosystem (institutional partnerships and logistical planning) inhibits students' ability to fully internalize and apply inclusive principles.

Another layer to the theme relates to how these limitations impact faculty agency. Several participants expressed a desire to offer more field-based components but felt constrained by institutional capacity and lack of coordination with local schools. Their accounts reflect structural issues similar to those identified in previous research from contexts with underdeveloped education systems. Mukhopadhyay et al. (2012) conducted a study in Botswana which demonstrated that inclusive education courses fail to reach their full potential because there is no established system for practical learning. The identified barriers in this study appear as part of larger structural patterns which other low- and middle-income countries experience during their inclusive education reform process.

The results of these findings hold important implications. The development of inclusive practice competence among students requires systematic practical exposure integration into course structures and institutional partnerships. The absence of practical training makes inclusive education conceptually strong but operationally weak which results in future teachers being unprepared to support diverse learners. The identified concerns demonstrate the need to redesign inclusive education structures through content development and institutional planning and resource allocation and inter-organizational collaboration.

The theme of practical implementation and student engagement highlights a persistent gap in the current delivery of inclusive education courses: the lack of meaningful, experience-based learning opportunities. Although faculty members are aware of this limitation and attempt to compensate through creative coursework, the absence of supportive structures at the exosystem and mesosystem levels continues to limit the effectiveness of these efforts. The findings support existing literature that calls for deeper integration of practice into inclusive education and extend the conversation by emphasizing the role of institutional ecosystems in either enabling or constraining that integration. Addressing this gap requires deliberate, system-wide planning to ensure that inclusive education becomes not just an idea communicated in lectures, but a practice embedded in the professional identities of future teachers.

5.6 Resource Accessibility and Language Barriers

One of the recurring challenges expressed by participants was the limited availability of high-quality, contextually relevant resources to support the delivery of inclusive education courses, particularly resources in Kazakh and Russian. While inclusive education is increasingly emphasized in higher education curricula, the ability to

implement it effectively depends not only on institutional policies or faculty preparedness, but also on access to pedagogically appropriate and linguistically accessible materials. This theme reflects a systemic issue that intersects with both structural limitations in the higher education landscape and the linguistic realities of a multilingual national context.

The faculty members mentioned that even though there is a growing amount of research and teaching materials from all over the world on inclusive education, most of these resources are available only in English. That is, to the people who work there in Kazakh or Russian, it becomes a significant disadvantage for teaching and learning. This research finding aligns with the conclusion of Engelbrecht et al. (2006), who noted that inclusive education will be ineffective if the international framework is applied as is to fit local contexts. It is the same situation with Kazakhstan, where staff have to translate or paraphrase foreign materials without conducting research using official translations or equivalents.

The shortage of resources of language results from a number of consequences. First, it imposes a significant burden on faculty members who have to spend extra time and effort to find, translate, or adapt materials in order to use them in the classroom. Third, it means that students are treated unfairly because those who are more proficient in English are in a better position to access relevant readings and engage in the wider academic discourse while the others are confined to old and sometimes inaccurate translations. This inequality also impacts students' ability to participate in academic activities, their understanding of the topics, and their involvement in discussions about inclusive practices.

From the perspective of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, the problem identified is related to the exosystem which includes institutional and national structures that determine the curriculum development, translation and academic databases funding. If

the universities and ministries do not offer linguistically diverse resources, then the microsystem which includes the faculty and the students is limited. Moreover, the findings revealed that there is no investment at the macrosystem level which includes the development of inclusive education policies that are not well connected to language and resource management. In a multilingual country like Kazakhstan, policy implementation should be able to take into account the linguistic diversity of the academic community.

This finding is supported by other studies in multilingual and post-soviet countries. For instance, Štrajn (2013) studied teacher education in Central and Eastern Europe and found similar problems with language availability and the dominance of international literature that is not translated. Lack of systematic localization means that instructors are forced to create their own resources which leads to a lack of coherence and diversity of the content. This study adds to the previous findings by showing that these inconsistencies also affect teachers' confidence, students' engagement, and the ability to continue developing the course over time.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that the lack of standardized, accessible materials hampers the efforts to achieve uniformity across programs. Faculty members had to “get by” or “make do” with what they had, and as a result different instructors would teach different content depending on their availability of resources or language abilities. This inconsistency poses problems for curriculum coherence and it may be questioned to what extent the future teachers are prepared in various institutions. Pantić and Florian (2015) have pointed out that the sustainability and coherence of inclusive education can be ensured only when there are standardized materials for teacher preparation which are based on common pedagogical principles, but tailored to the local context. This lack of coherence in the current situation worsens the theory-practice gap which was previously identified.

What is interesting is that the problem is not the lack of resources, but the lack of mechanisms for their collection, translation, and distribution. The faculty members did not require that all materials should be originally produced in Kazakh or Russian; rather, they emphasized the importance of institutional support for the ongoing translation and contextualization of evidence-based materials. In this respect, the findings offer a promising direction for action: enhancing the accessibility and relevance of inclusive education resources does not mean creating everything from the ground up, but rather investing in systems that can make good knowledge accessible across languages.

The named issues show how nations with new inclusive education frameworks are confronted with such shared issues. Sharma et al. (2008) recognize the availability of appropriate learning resources as the most significant yet under-researched factor of success in inclusive education. This view is substantiated by the research as it is evident from it that a shortage of available resources hinders learning quality and thoroughness despite the motivation of faculty and a framework of policy.

The theme of resource accessibility together with language difficulties discloses a significant but often unappreciated determinant of the introduction of inclusive education. It is apparent from the study that restricted access to learning resources for a second language makes teachers less willing to acquire a foreign language, diminishes their confidence, and simultaneously inhibits student equality of opportunity and student participation. Such barriers identify a disconnect between national policy goals and the physical realities of the resources needed to reach these goals. Maintaining full-fledged inclusive education for diverse linguistic contexts necessitates systemic changes within multiple levels of the ecological model through investment covering the areas of translation, the development of resources, and equitable provision. This research continues

a global research project, which proves that access to languages is a pivotal factor in creating inclusive teaching education globally.

5.7 Institutional Will and Policy Implementation

The first observation of the growth of inclusive education within the higher education institution policy documents reflects substantial progress. Universities involved in the present study incorporate inclusivity as a main principle within their mission statements, strategic plans, and curricula. It is evident from the research that teachers are confronted with more complex realities than institutional promises. Several participants have expressed a considerable discrepancy between institutional promises and the realities of operations, which they referred to as symbolic commitment without structure.

The divergence appeared through participants' descriptions of their working conditions which included insufficient detailed guidelines and insufficient administrative support and unclear expectations about teaching inclusion. The educational experiences described by participants match Pantić and Florian's (2015) definition of surface-level engagement because inclusive values appear in discussions yet lack concrete implementation frameworks. The institutional will transforms into an inspirational concept instead of a specific set of directions.

Interestingly, several participants recalled being encouraged to align their syllabi with inclusive principles but receiving no substantive support in doing so. While this may reflect an assumption that educators already possess the tools to interpret and enact such principles, it also raises questions about institutional readiness to lead systemic change. This disconnect is not unique to the Kazakhstani context; research across diverse education systems has shown that policy rhetoric often outpaces the capacity for implementation (Florian & Spratt, 2013; Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). Yet in settings where inclusive

education is still emerging, as in Kazakhstan, the consequences of this disconnect are amplified: without infrastructure to bridge intention and action, even motivated faculty face institutional inertia.

Rather than functioning as a coordinated system, inclusion within these institutions appears to rely heavily on individual interpretation and initiative. This is problematic not only because it leads to uneven implementation, but also because it risks exhausting the very educators institutions depend on to carry forward inclusive values. The literature warns of this pattern: according to Walton and Ruzsnyak (2016), when faculty are expected to internalize and apply policy goals without institutional alignment, implementation becomes fragmented and unsustainable. Participant narratives illustrated how institutional fragmentation manifests practically, aligning with prior concerns about uncertainty, isolation, and inconsistency in inclusive education environments.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory adds a useful explanatory layer to these dynamics. The macrosystem policy declarations which stem from international frameworks and national education reforms demand inclusive practice but these expectations frequently fail to get properly implemented at the exosystem level which contains institutional procedures and leadership practices and resource allocations. The study participants demonstrated this misalignment through various examples which included institutional policy inclusion of diverse language but no established course review processes and no monitoring systems to check inclusion implementation and no organized spaces for faculty collaboration. The teaching and learning environment at the microsystem level received inadequate support because inclusion principles were not consistently applied throughout this level.

Moreover, several participants observed that their institution treated inclusive education as a moral concept instead of an educational necessity. When inclusion receives this treatment it becomes an abstract value which people endorse but fail to question or implement in their academic work. Rouse (2008) identifies “mission statement inclusion” as a critical issue because it allows institutions to appear committed through words while failing to establish necessary systems for actual change. The research indicates that institutional will requires transformation beyond vision statements into operational capabilities.

There were also moments in the data that hinted at potential examples of short-lived seminars, informal encouragement, and loosely framed directives that, if nurtured, could evolve into more concrete support systems. However, without a clear architecture of accountability, such efforts often remained ephemeral. The absence of structured coordination or formalized feedback loops points to a system still in transition, trying to reconcile national policy goals with internal capacity. As the literature suggests (Ainscow et al., 2006; Loreman, 2017), successful implementation of inclusive education requires coherence across all levels of the educational system, not just policy development, but also faculty development, curriculum alignment, and institutional leadership.

Importantly, the findings do not suggest a lack of belief in inclusion; rather, they point to a disconnect between intention and enactment, a disconnect that leaves faculty members in a precarious position. They are asked to embody institutional values without sufficient tools, guidance, or collaboration. The result is a system where inclusive education exists more in principle than in practice.

In this respect, the study contributes to broader scholarly conversations by illustrating how institutional will, when not supported by operational frameworks, can

become a form of passive resistance to change. Faculty narratives in this study demonstrate that institutional change must be both cultural and structural. The presence of inclusive language in policy is a promising start, but without alignment across systems and sustained investment in support mechanisms, the potential of inclusive education will remain unrealized in many classrooms.

5.8 Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Inclusive education, by its very nature, demands responsiveness. As student needs evolve, as societal understandings of inclusion deepen, and as educational contexts shift, inclusive teacher education programs must also adapt. Yet the findings from this study suggest that such adaptation is not occurring systematically within the institutional environments examined. While faculty members expressed an awareness of the importance of evaluating and refining their courses, their experiences point to a broader absence of structured mechanisms for continuous review, feedback, and improvement. What emerged is a portrait of inclusive education courses that are static in structure, personalized in revision, and unsupported in development.

Students use end-of-course surveys as their main feedback tool yet these surveys receive criticism for being generic and insufficiently tailored to the specific content or goals of inclusive education. Course evaluations in higher education primarily measure student satisfaction instead of pedagogical effectiveness or conceptual development (Bovill et al., 2020). The lack of specific evaluation tools forced instructors to interpret unconnected and insufficient survey comments as they made individual choices about implementing changes to their courses. The individualized nature of this model prevents both shared learning experiences and institutional performance monitoring.

The insufficient formal evaluation system presented a major concern because faculty members maintained their interest but the institution lacked necessary infrastructure. Faculty members were expected to monitor and revise their courses autonomously while lacking peer review and institutional feedback as well as specific criteria to define inclusive education excellence. The research aligns with scholarly literature that demonstrates inclusive teacher education requires better evaluation systems while also depending heavily on personal initiative (Forlin, 2010; Srivastava et al., 2013). Florian (2012) emphasizes that sustainable inclusion needs a continuous framework rather than being treated as a definitive objective so institutions should implement structured feedback and reflection cycles with adaptation processes.

The results show that a lack of evaluative frameworks will create barriers to improve both educational course quality and instructor development. The absence of periodic assessment methods for inclusive education courses prevents educators from benefiting from essential opportunities for professional dialogue and cross-departmental feedback and collective growth. This improvement method operates independently from the inclusive environment that should be fostered through collaborative practices. According to Bronfenbrenner's model the exosystem responsible for organizational routines including evaluation and feedback and policy enforcement does not provide sufficient support to the microsystem which includes teaching and learning activities.

Inclusive education faces additional challenges because it continues to develop as an academic field. According to Walton and Ruznyak (2016) inclusive pedagogy exists as an ongoing reflective process rather than a set of established knowledge. The absence of scheduled evaluation causes both curriculum development to become static while also risking course content becoming obsolete relative to new inclusive methods and policies and worldwide discussions.

This theme confirms international concerns regarding the absence of quality assurance standards in inclusive teacher education. Naidoo (2019) shows that institutions implement inclusive education courses to meet national or international policy requirements but they fail to develop robust evaluation methods. The authors Pantić and Florian (2015) state that proper assessment methods involving student and faculty participation are necessary to verify teacher preparation for diverse student needs. The research confirms previous statements through real-world academic observations which show that courses are created then completed without thorough systematic review processes involving faculty members.

The research contains minimal positive indicators. Many participants confirmed their practice of making spontaneous changes to their courses through reading updates and topic adjustments and assignment modifications. The isolated efforts are commendable but lack institutional recognition and fail to integrate into academic development frameworks. The practice of relying on individual initiative to maintain inclusive education reveals an opposing trend because this approach goes against the fundamental principle of equity and shared responsibility that inclusive education represents.

The study reveals an urgent requirement to establish evaluation as a core component of inclusive education instead of treating it as an optional administrative task. Just as inclusion requires ongoing and responsive approaches the systems which deliver it must also operate in this way. Evaluation practices should combine past assessment with future-oriented activities that promote educational growth alongside curriculum development. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) argue that inclusion operates as an educational inquiry method which allows educators to develop through collaborative dialogue and joint reflection. Institutions need to create conditions which allow inquiry to flourish through structural support instead of leaving its development to chance.

The theme of evaluation and continuous improvement demonstrates a major institutional infrastructure deficit in inclusive education. The faculty shows clear dedication to growth and responsiveness yet the lack of systemized evaluation practices restricts potential development for both individuals and the curriculum. The findings reinforce the need for higher education institutions to embed reflective, formative, and collaborative evaluation into their inclusive education practices. Only through such systems can inclusive education courses remain dynamic, effective, and aligned with the evolving needs of both teachers and learners.

5.9 Summary

This chapter has critically examined the findings of the study in light of the research questions, the theoretical framework, and relevant literature on inclusive education in higher education contexts. Drawing on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, the discussion has demonstrated that while institutional policy and faculty intention align rhetorically with inclusive values, the actual implementation of inclusive education courses remains constrained by a complex interplay of systemic, structural, and contextual factors.

The study's findings have addressed the research questions by revealing how faculty members perceive and experience the implementation of inclusive education courses within teacher preparation programs. First, the data show that while faculty value inclusive education and are committed to its principles, they often work without clear guidance, institutional coordination, or adequate professional development highlighting a disjuncture between policy-level expectations and classroom-level realities. Second, the challenges identified ranging from resource scarcity and limited collaboration to underdeveloped evaluation systems, demonstrate that faculty are operating in institutional

environments that are not yet fully prepared to support inclusive education as a sustained and embedded practice.

A central contribution of this study lies in its detailed illumination of how systemic gaps, particularly at the exosystem and mesosystem levels, affect inclusive education delivery in a non-Western, post-Soviet higher education context. While much of the existing literature on inclusive teacher education has focused on policy frameworks or student teacher outcomes, this study contributes a faculty-centered perspective, showing how instructors navigate ambiguity, isolation, and under-resourcing while trying to uphold inclusive values. In doing so, the study both supports and extends existing literature, confirming previously noted challenges (e.g., Sharma et al., 2008; Florian & Spratt, 2013) while also highlighting context-specific nuances in the Kazakhstani higher education system.

Among the more unexpected findings was the degree to which inclusive education was sustained through faculty initiative in the absence of systemic support. While prior literature has acknowledged the role of individual agency, this study revealed a particularly strong reliance on self-motivated practices, self-curated resources, and informal peer collaboration. Such practices, while admirable, underscore the fragility of inclusive education when it is not embedded in robust institutional structures.

Drawing these insights together, it can be concluded that in order for inclusive education to move from rhetoric to reality, it must be accompanied by reliable mechanisms within educational institutions: sufficient training, systematic policy implementation, availability of resources, organized cooperation, and mechanisms for continuous monitoring and evaluation. These findings form the basis of the final chapter, which will summarize the final results of the study, analyze its implications for practice and policy,

and provide recommendations for strengthening inclusive education in the context of higher education.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

The study focused on how faculty members conceptualize and put into practice inclusive education within teacher education programs in Kazakhstan, with a particular focus on the experiences, difficulties, and institutional conditions that influence the delivery of inclusive education courses. Its purpose was to shed light on how these courses were prepared and conducted, how teachers move from policy to practice, and what institutional conditions facilitate or hinder their comprehensive application. Meanwhile, the aim of the study was to highlight the broader implications of these experiences for improving the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of inclusive teacher training.

Using Bronfenbrenner's theory of ecological systems as the basis for the analysis, the research examined the multilevel effect of inclusive education in higher education institutions, from individual-level interactions and learning practices to institutional support systems, as well as at broader policy and country levels. The study paid special attention to the conditions under which inclusive education courses are organized and conducted, the nature of the support and cooperation provided to teachers, as well as the level of application of institutional policies in practice.

The presented findings provide a comprehensive description of the professional reality for teachers responsible for ensuring inclusivity in their classrooms, illustrating both the successes they have achieved and the systemic challenges they face. Finally, the main conclusions are outlined, the contribution of the research to theory and practice is discussed, and the implications for the development of future inclusive education policy and research are described in detail.

6.1 Summary of Key Findings

The outcome of the research indicated the multifaceted and multilevel complexity of the introduction of inclusive education courses within Kazakhstan's pedagogical curricula. While there was a high level of personal commitment of the faculty teachers to inclusive values, their capacity to apply these values was determined and constrained by a range of institutional, structural, and environmental issues.

One of the findings was the level of teachers' independence and flexibility to design inclusive education courses. This freedom provided the instructors with the ability to customize the materials to fit the local situation and norms. This freedom, though, had its downsides. There were inconsistencies in course structure and quality, as teachers were left without coordinated instruction, assistance, or framework for teamwork.

The second significant finding was regarding the restricted institutional support as well as collaboration possibilities for the teaching staff. Even though inclusive education had been evident within political agendas as well as university mission statements, there was a disconnect found within the institutions' intentions and the current implementation support mechanisms. Teachers tended to describe solitary working environments with little interagency relations as well as common planning frameworks.

It was equally evident from the research that a majority of teachers felt inadequately qualified to instruct inclusive education at a level that was compatible with students' expectations. While they had basic pedagogical knowledge, very few of them had undergone special preparation for inclusive methods, and professional development courses were viewed as exceptional, introductory, and not practice-based.

Another significant subject was the disparity between practice and theory. The teachers highlighted the students wanting to have real practical experiences within a

diverse setting, but said that the size of the class, the constraints of logistics, and the fact that there are no established partnerships with schools mean that it is hard to offer genuine practical experiences.

The research also indicated significant concerns regarding availability of resources as well as issues of linguistic barriers. Non-English-speaking students, as well as their teachers, had a problem accessing contemporary as well as pertinent materials for inclusive learning, as most of the resources were not provided in Kazakh or Russian. This restricted the intensity as well as consistency of course materials in various institutions.

While there is increased institutional commitment to inclusive education, respondents indicated that political commitments are given little backing by practical actions. Institution-wide support for inclusivity was widespread as it was expressed in documents, with none of these documents having the monitoring framework, financial structure, or accountability mechanisms to guarantee its meaningfulness and effectiveness.

Lastly, the research indicated that there was a dearth of systematic course evaluation and feedback mechanisms for generating continuous improvement. Course redesigning and revising was largely driven by individual initiatives instead of institutional studies, without providing the instructors with the means or mechanisms for assessing course performance or adjusting to shifting pedagogical standards.

Combined, these findings present a portrait of inclusive education as a nascent but unevenly established practice within Kazakhstani higher education institutions. Faculty are motivated and skilled, but are constrained by structural barriers that constrain the reach as well as effectiveness of their work. It will take concerted institutional efforts with consideration of the perspectives of the faculty, as well as a basis in the precepts of sustainable development of the entire system.

6.2 Theoretical and Practical Contributions

This study contributes to the growing body of scholarship on inclusive education in higher education by providing an in-depth, context-specific examination of how inclusive education courses are interpreted and implemented by faculty in Kazakhstan's pedagogical programs. While inclusive education has been widely studied at the level of school practice or policy development, significantly less attention has been paid to how inclusive education is introduced within teacher education itself where future inclusive practice begins. This gap is particularly notable in post-Soviet contexts, where inclusive education is still in the early stages of institutionalization. By focusing on how inclusive education courses are designed, delivered, and experienced in higher education, this research offers an important empirical contribution to a relatively underexplored field.

From a theoretical perspective, the study demonstrates the relevance of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory as a framework for analyzing inclusive teacher education. By conceptualizing faculty experiences across interconnected levels ranging from classroom dynamics (microsystem) to institutional policies and structures (exosystem) and national policy environments (macrosystem) the research reveals how inclusive education is shaped not by isolated factors, but by multi-layered and interdependent systems. This systemic approach enabled a nuanced understanding of the barriers and enablers faculty face and offers a replicable framework for future research in similar contexts.

Moreover, the study extends the application of ecological theory beyond its conventional use in early childhood and developmental psychology by showing how it can illuminate institutional processes and adult professional learning. In doing so, the research offers theoretical insight into how systemic misalignments between inclusive ideals and institutional capacities can undermine the enactment of inclusive values in teacher

education. Practically, the study holds significant implications for institutional leaders, policymakers, and teacher educators. It brings attention to the realities faced by faculty members who are tasked with implementing inclusion, often with limited resources, guidance, or collaboration. These insights underscore the importance of developing structured professional development pathways, investing in the production and translation of inclusive education materials, and creating institutional mechanisms for feedback, peer exchange, and curriculum alignment.

The research also highlights the need to bridge the gap between policy-level commitments to inclusion and the operational structures required to support them. While inclusive values are widely endorsed in institutional and national discourses, their translation into teaching practice remains uneven. The study shows that faculty possess the motivation and foundational understanding to implement inclusive pedagogy, but they require clearer frameworks, support systems, and institutional coordination to do so effectively and sustainably. Importantly, this research responds to a broader gap in the literature: there is a lack of detailed, context-specific studies that describe what is actually happening inside teacher education programs with regard to the implementation of inclusive education courses. By documenting the current state of inclusive education course development in Kazakhstan, this study provides a grounded and descriptive account that can serve as a baseline for future inquiry. It offers a snapshot of how inclusive education is taking shape in real institutional contexts, and invites further research into how courses evolve, how faculty are supported, and how future teachers are prepared for inclusive classrooms.

In this way, the study makes both a descriptive and forward-looking contribution. It captures what is currently happening in the Kazakhstani context while also identifying critical areas for development and reflection. It is hoped that this work not only informs

institutional improvement but also encourages more focused and sustained research into the design and delivery of inclusive education in teacher preparation both in Kazakhstan and in other under-researched educational systems.

6.3 Implications for Policy, Practice, and Future Research

The findings of this study carry several important implications that can inform not only institutional decision-making but also broader educational policy and research agendas. As inclusive education continues to take shape in Kazakhstan and other transitioning systems, targeted interventions across multiple levels will be critical to transforming inclusive principles from aspirational ideals into embedded, sustainable practice.

At the policy level, the study underscores the importance of moving beyond general commitments to inclusive education and toward more operationalized, measurable strategies for implementation. National policies and institutional frameworks that promote inclusion must be supported by concrete plans for faculty development, curriculum alignment, and resource allocation. Teacher accreditation institutions and ministries of education might have a key role to play in establishing explicit standards for what inclusive education must encompass within teacher training, for example, teacher and learner competencies, quality assurance mechanisms, and making inclusive education content a part of all relevant subject matter. Policy consideration in a multilingual country like Kazakhstan must equally address the linguistic dimension of access, with inclusive education and training materials being offered in Kazakh as well as Russian, rather than merely in English.

At the university level, universities ought to view inclusive education as a systemic collaborative effort, as well as a curriculum requirement. This involves the establishment

of systematic teacher development programs beyond a single seminar, with instead continuous differentiated learning specific to the multifaceted requirements of inclusive pedagogy. Educational institutions need to set up collaboration mechanisms amongst peers, for example, communities of practice or interagency working teams dedicated to inclusive learning.

Another significant outcome is the necessity to establish formal collaboration with inclusive schools as well as other educational organizations. This will integrate practical activities, field visits, and practical exercises that will enable students to fully immerse themselves within an inclusive setting. Such practical options are essential to overcome the gap that often results from theory as compared to practice, as specifically observed from the obtained results.

Additionally, institutions of learning need to invest in continuous assessment and development of inclusive education courses. This means establishing a review mechanism that incorporates both students and teachers, peer review of course content, and incorporating inclusive indicator-based measures into the quality of teaching. Without these types of assessment frameworks, inclusive education may stay stagnant or be left relying on the proactive levels of a particular teacher.

Lastly, the research identifies some areas for research in the future. Firstly, there is a need to carry out more research on students' perceptions of inclusive education courses, such as how they view the course content, what learning methods they find effective, and how the courses mold their attitudes towards inclusive education. Future studies could also examine how administrative leaders interpret and operationalize inclusive policies, offering a fuller ecological perspective on institutional implementation. Given the relative scarcity of localized research in this area, future work could also focus on comparative studies

across institutions in Kazakhstan or similar educational contexts. Such studies could help identify patterns, innovations, and structural differences that influence the quality and consistency of inclusive education delivery. Additionally, longitudinal research tracking how inclusive education courses evolve over time and how faculty perceptions shift as institutional support structures improve would provide valuable insights into what sustainable progress looks like in this field.

Lastly, there is scope for deeper theoretical work that adapts and expands existing frameworks, such as Bronfenbrenner's model, to better capture the unique features of inclusion in post-Soviet or multilingual educational systems. This could enrich the conceptual tools available for researchers and contribute to more context-sensitive models of inclusive education reform.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

As with all research, this study has certain limitations that should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings. The study focused solely on the perspectives of teaching staff. Therefore, the experiences of students, administrative leaders, and policy implementers were not included. Incorporating these voices would have offered a more holistic view of how inclusive education is understood and enacted across different institutional roles. The most immediate limitation concerns the sample size, which consisted of five participants. While this number may appear limited from a quantitative perspective, it is consistent with the aims and design of a qualitative, phenomenological study. The focus of this research was not on generalization, but on gaining deep, context-rich insights into participants' lived experiences of implementing inclusive education in university settings.

Each participant brought a distinct professional background and perspective, reflecting variation in disciplinary focus, years of experience, institutional affiliation, and approaches to teaching inclusive education. The diversity of interviews offered a rich data, enabling us to see nuances as well as complex issues. Additionally, inclusive education teachers at the university level are a specialist and relatively recent professional community in Kazakhstan. This makes their positions directly connected to the new education reform project of the country, so the statements are of utmost significance when it comes to learning about how inclusive education is constructed within higher education institutions.

Prioritization of depth over breadth aligns with accepted qualitative research norms, particularly within the context of phenomenological research, where attention to the intricacies of rich experiences is placed over ascertaining trends within populations. Analysis of the data progressed to a point of thematic saturation, where recurring patterns and salient themes were noted within the interview, offering a strong foundation for interpretation as well as theoretical discourse. In addition to the sample size, other limitations must also be acknowledged. The study focused solely on the perspectives of teaching staff and did not include students, administrators, or policymakers. Including these groups in future research would offer a more holistic understanding of how inclusive education is perceived and enacted at different institutional levels. Furthermore, the study presents a snapshot in time and does not capture how faculty experiences may evolve in response to changing policies, curricula, or institutional priorities.

Finally, while the literature reviewed helped frame the analysis, much of it originated from Western or Anglophone contexts, due to limited availability of research on inclusive teacher education in Central Asia. This may limit the direct applicability of some

frameworks, although the analysis sought to remain grounded in the specificities of the Kazakhstani educational landscape.

Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable insights into a rarely studied aspect of educational reform in Kazakhstan and contributes to a better understanding of the conditions under which inclusive education is currently being implemented in teacher preparation programs.

6.5 Final Reflections

This study has explored how inclusive education courses are implemented, supported, and experienced by faculty members in pedagogical programs across Kazakhstan. It has documented the tensions between policy and practice, autonomy and isolation, commitment and constraint. While the data reveal many challenges such as limited institutional support, underdeveloped professional development systems, and insufficient access to localized resources they also highlight the resolve and adaptability of faculty members working within these conditions.

Inclusive education, as both a value and a practice, continues to evolve within the higher education landscape of Kazakhstan. This research captures a moment in that evolution: a phase in which inclusion is recognized as a priority, but not yet fully embedded in institutional systems and teaching cultures. The participants' accounts show that real change is possible but it requires alignment across policy, institutional practice, and professional support. By giving voice to faculty experiences and documenting the current realities of inclusive education course development, this thesis contributes to a growing awareness of what inclusion means in practice and what is needed to support it. It is hoped that this work will not only inform improvements within individual institutions,

but also stimulate further research, dialogue, and innovation in the field of inclusive teacher education both within Kazakhstan and beyond.

As inclusive education continues to gain prominence globally, the question is no longer whether inclusion should be pursued, but how it can be enacted effectively in specific local contexts. This study offers part of that answer. It underscores the importance of building inclusive systems that are not only well-intentioned, but also well-supported, contextually grounded, and driven by the collective effort of all who shape the future of education.

6.6 Personal Reflection

Working on my dissertation was one of my most challenging and rewarding experiences as a student. This endeavor challenged me to delve deep into a matter about which I am passionate, and to understand the intricacies of independent research. I am proud of my commitment and perseverance throughout, particularly whenever the work was tough or ambiguous to me. I am glad to see the final framework take shape, and I can see that my research is helping to fuel the development of inclusive education discussions.

Additionally, reflecting on it later, I can see that I might have handled some of it differently. If I had a bigger block of time, I could have examined even wider contexts and polished some parts more intensely. Finding a balance between analysis and presentation was a method I learned while doing it, and I understand that improvement always comes with flaws.

More generally, I depart from this process with a clearer sense of purpose, enhanced research abilities, and profound satisfaction with the learning process itself. This

dissertation was a scholarly assignment, but equally a means of personal as well as professional growth, and I am glad to apply what I have learned in my subsequent work.

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Appendices

Appendix A: AI Declaration Form



Examining University Stakeholders' Perceptions and Experiences with Inclusive Education

Courses in Pedagogical programs

Declaration of the Use of Generative AI

I hereby declare that I have read and understood NUGSE's policy concerning appropriate use of AI and composed this work independently (please check one):

with the use of artificial intelligence tools, or

without the use of artificial intelligence tools.

During the preparation of this thesis/examination, I used the GPT-4o and GrammarlyAI to check grammar, paraphrase my text, find other similar synonyms, and get an explanation, as well as to search for the necessary literature and generate citations and references.

I also declare that I

am aware of the capabilities and limitations of AI tool(s),

have verified that the content generated by AI systems and adopted by me is factually correct,

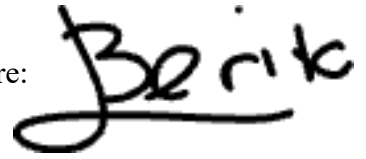
am aware that as the author of this thesis I bear full responsibility for the statements and assertions made in it,

have submitted complete and accurate information about my use of AI tools in this work, and

acknowledge that there may be disciplinary consequences if I have not followed NUGSE's guidelines regarding appropriate AI use.

Name: Berik Suleimen

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Berik". The letters are stylized and connected, with a prominent loop under the 'i'.

Date: September 7, 2024

Appendix B: Consent Letters

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Examining University Stakeholders' Perceptions and Experiences with Inclusive Education Courses in Pedagogical Programs

DESCRIPTION: You are invited to participate in a **research study** that explores the experiences and perceptions of faculty members and administrative staff involved in implementing inclusive education courses in Kazakhstan's higher education institutions. The study aims to identify challenges, opportunities, and effective strategies within this implementation process. Your participation will involve one semi-structured interview, which will be digitally recorded with your consent to facilitate data collection and analysis.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your participation in this study will take approximately **40 to 60 minutes**. The interview will be scheduled at a time and location convenient for you, ensuring your comfort throughout the process.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: There are no known significant risks associated with this study. However, there is a slight possibility that discussing certain challenges related to inclusive education could lead to some emotional discomfort or reflection on difficult experiences. Should this occur, you are free to stop the interview or withdraw your participation at any point without penalty.

The potential benefits for you as a participant include the opportunity to reflect on and assess your experiences with implementing inclusive education, which could offer personal and professional insights. Additionally, your input will contribute to a greater understanding of the effectiveness and challenges of inclusive education in Kazakhstan, potentially influencing future educational practices and policies.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS: Your participation in this study is entirely **voluntary**. You have the **right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You are also free to refuse to answer any particular questions without consequence.** The results of this research study may be presented at scientific or professional meetings or published in scientific journals, but your identity and any identifiable information will remain confidential.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Questions: If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about this research or its procedures, please contact:

Thesis Supervisor:

Dr. Oliver Mutanga

Email: oliver.mutanga@nu.edu.kz

Researcher:

Berik Suleimen

Email: berik.suleimen@nu.edu.kz

Phone: 8 (775) 460 5800

Independent Contact: If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights

as a participant, please contact the NUGSE Research Committee by writing to gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz.

CONSENT

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

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

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Examining University Stakeholders' Perceptions and Experiences with Inclusive Education Courses in Pedagogical Programs

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Date of the interview: _____

Start time of the interview: _____

End time of the interview: _____

Place of the interview: _____

Participant Number #: _____

Interviewer: _____

Introduction to Participant

Good [morning/afternoon]. Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. I am conducting research on the perceptions and experiences of university stakeholders regarding the implementation of inclusive education courses in pedagogical programs. This interview is aimed at understanding the challenges and successes you've encountered in this process, as well as gathering insights into how these courses can be enhanced.

Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the interview at any time without any consequences. If you agree, we will begin with the consent form, and I would like to ask for your permission to record this interview to ensure I capture the discussion accurately. Your identity will remain confidential, and all data will be anonymized.

Consent

- Do you agree to have the interview digitally recorded?
 - [If yes, turn on the recording device. If no, proceed with note-taking.]

Part 1: Background Information

1. Can you briefly introduce yourself and describe your role at this institution?
 - [Follow-up: How long have you been involved with the pedagogical programs here?]
2. What has been your experience with the inclusion of students with special educational needs in your courses or within the institution?

Part 2: Perceptions of Inclusive Education (Research Question 1)

3. How would you describe your perception of the implementation of inclusive education courses at this institution?
 - [Follow-up: How have these courses been received by students and faculty?]
4. What are the key factors that influence the success of inclusive education in pedagogical programs here?
 - [Follow-up: Are there any barriers or challenges you've noticed?]
5. In your experience, how prepared are faculty and students to engage with inclusive education practices?
 - [Follow-up: What could be done to improve preparedness?]

Part 3: Successes and Challenges (Research Question 2)

6. What successes have you experienced or observed in the implementation of inclusive education courses?
 - o [Follow-up: Can you give specific examples of strategies or practices that worked well?]
7. What challenges or disadvantages have you encountered when implementing inclusive education courses?
 - o [Follow-up: How do you manage or overcome these challenges?]
8. In what ways have the successes you mentioned contributed to enhancing the effectiveness of the courses?
 - o [Follow-up: How have faculty and students benefited from these successful strategies?]

Part 4: Implications for Policy, Practice, and Research (Research Question 3 and 4)

9. Based on your experience, what policy changes or institutional practices do you think would enhance the effectiveness of inclusive education courses?
 - o [Follow-up: How can the institution support faculty and students better in this regard?]
10. What research areas related to inclusive education do you think should be further explored?
 - o [Follow-up: How would this research help in improving inclusive education practices?]
11. What changes do you think could be implemented to make the pedagogical programs more inclusive overall?

Part 5: Concluding Questions

12. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experiences or views on inclusive education?
 - o [Follow-up: Are there any areas I haven't covered that you think are important?]
13. Do you have any questions for me about the study or the process?

End of Interview

Thank you for your time and insights. Your participation is invaluable to this research, and it will contribute to a deeper understanding of how inclusive education can be improved in pedagogical programs in Kazakhstan.