

Running head: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS, ATTITUDES AND CONCERNS ABOUT
THE IB PROGRAM IN ONE IB SCHOOL IN ASTANA

**Teachers' perceptions, attitudes and concerns about the implementation of the
International Baccalaureate program in one IB school in Astana**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

in

Educational Leadership

Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education

June, 2017

Word Count: 17723

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NUGSE RESEARCH APPROVAL DECISION LETTER

The NUGSE Research Committee reviewed the project entitled "Teachers' perceptions, attitudes and concerns about the implementation of the International Baccalaureate program in one IB school in Astana" and decided:

To grant approval for this study

Approval: This approval is effective for the life of the study. However, any time you change any aspect of your project (e.g., recruitment process, administering materials, collecting data, gaining consent, and changing participants) you will need to submit a request for modification to the NUGSE Research Committee. Make sure to address all of the information requested on the request for modification form(s). Please be advised that in some circumstances, changes to the protocol may disqualify the project from approval.

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Acknowledgment

I would like to express my deep gratitude towards my supervisor – Dr. Amanda Ajodhia-Andrews for her valuable guidance, endless support and motivation to proceed at every stage. The amount of knowledge and patience that professor Amanda has shown me has been truly inspiring and valuable. I am thankful to all the NUGSE community who were always willing to help and support me in my research path. In particular, I would like to thank professors Deborah and Alfred for their effort and time sacrificed for improving my language competency and making my thesis academically beautiful.

I also appreciate NISA community and my participants for their willingness to contribute to my study and share valuable information. I would like to thank NISA principal who allowed me to conduct my study at this school.

I cannot express my gratitude more deeply to my dearest parents Sayat and Gulnara and to my siblings Aziza, Kamaltin, Nurzat, and Margarita who have shown endless support and patience. Their belief in me has motivated me to continue to push forward and to work hard.

I am so grateful to my dearest friends Assima, Asema, Indira, Magripa, Dinara, and Shepard who were always with me and supported me a lot. I have done this big work thanks to these guys. You are incredible! Many thanks to everybody.

I would like to express my special thanks of gratitude to my friend Yerlan K. for giving me golden support and big motivation to work hard and to go forward towards my goals. I love you so much!

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**“Teachers’ perceptions, attitudes and concerns about the implementation of the
International Baccalaureate program in one IB school in Astana”**

Abstract

The International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum is the program that “offers a design for curriculum and instruction that is more challenging than traditional models, but which can produce deeper intellectual and emotional engagement in learning” (Erickson, 2012, p. 3). One component of the IB curriculum includes the “Learner Profile,” which provides clear and definite explanation of outcomes which is expected from students in terms of learning and is considered to be a core of the IB program and it encourages the development of higher order thinking skills among students. However, there are issues of implementing and assessing the IB program, particularly Learner Profile in the classroom by Kazakhstani IB teachers.

The purpose of this study is to explore Kazakhstani teachers` understanding, attitudes and beliefs regarding the new IB program, and in particular the Learner Profile in order to better understand their concerns and challenges.

The research question guiding this study is: What are Kazakhstani IB teachers’ understandings of the IB program and Learner Attributes?

The researcher employed qualitative case study design in order to address the research question. One-on-one semi-structured interview, classroom observation, and document analysis were used for data collection. All the responses and filed notes were interpreted and written in the findings and discussion chapters.

Key words: International Baccalaureate, Learner Profile, curriculum, Kazakhstani teachers

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“Астана қаласындағы ХБ мектептерінің бірінде Халықаралық

**Бакалавриат бағдарламасын іске асыруға қатысты мұғалімдердің түсініктері,
сенімі және қаупі”**

Аңдатпа

Халықаралық бакалавриат бағдарламасы (ХБ) оқу процесіне оқушы ойымен де, сезімімен де қатынасқа түсе алатын, дәстүрлі оқу түрлерінен терең әрі қиындығымен ерекшеленетін оқу бағдарламасы болып табылады (Erickson, 2012, p. 3). Осы бағдарламаның өзекті бөліктерінің бірі – ХБ оқушысының үлгісі. Ол оқушыдан оқу бағдарламасының соңында қол жеткізуі керек жетістіктерді анықтайды және ХБ бағдарламасындағы жоғарғы ойлау әрекеттерін орындауға итермелейді. Алайда, Халықаралық бакалавриат бағдарламасын Қазақстан мектептерінде жүзеге асыру барысында оқушы үлгісін жүзеге асыру ұстаздардың аса өзекті мәселесі болып табылады.

Берілген зерттеу жұмысының басты мақсаты Қазақстан мұғалімдерінің ХБ оқушы үлгісін қалай түсінетінін, оған деген қарым-қатынасын және ХБ бағдарламасына деген, соның ішінде оқушы үлгісіне деген сенімдерін зерттеу арқылы олардың қиыншылықтарын түсіну болып табылады.

Зерттеу сұрағы: «Қазақстан ұстаздарының Халықаралық Бакалавриат бағдарламасы мен ХБ оқушы үлгісінің түсіністігі қандай?»

Зерттеуші жұмыс кезінде сапалық зерттеу әдіс-тәсілін қолданды. Ақпарат жинау мақсатында бетпе-бет интервью, мұғалім сабағын бақылау және құжаттар анализін жүргізуді қолданды. Барлық жиналған жауаптар жаңа табылған ақпараттар мен талқылау тарауларында көрсетілді.

Кілт сөздер: Халықаралық Бакалавриат, оқушы профайлы, оқу бағдарламасы, Қазақстандық мұғалімдер

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“Понимание, убеждения и опасения учителей касательно реализации программы Международного Бакалавриата в одной из школ МБ города Астаны”

Абстракт

Учебная программа Международный Бакалавриат (МБ) - это программа, которая «предлагает дизайн учебных программ и инструкций, которые являются более сложными, чем традиционные модели образования. Более того, данная программа способствует более глубокому интеллектуальному и эмоциональному взаимодействию в обучении» (Erickson, 2012, стр. 3). Одним из компонентов учебной программы МБ является «Профиль ученика», в котором дается четкое объяснение конечных результатов, ожидаемых от учащихся с точки зрения обучения. Профиль ученика МБ считается ядром программы МБ, который направлен на развитие высших мыслительных навыков учащихся.

Целью данного исследования является изучение понимания, взглядов и убеждений казахстанских учителей школ МБ о преподавании новой международной программы, в частности компонента программы «Профиль ученика», чтобы лучше понять трудности и проблемы, возникающие в ходе реализации и внедрения данной учебной программы.

Исследовательский вопрос, определяющий данное исследование: каково понимание казахстанских учителей школ МБ о программе МБ и его атрибутах ученика?

Качественное исследование было использовано для того, чтобы ответить на поставленный исследовательский вопрос. Для сбора информации и данных использовалось индивидуальное полуструктурированное интервью, наблюдение в

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классе и анализ документов. Все ответы и примечания были интерпретированы и
изложены в следующих главах: выводы и обсуждение.

Ключевые слова: Международный Бакалавриат, профиль учащегося, учебная
программа, Казахстанские учителя

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Chapter I. Introduction/Background of study

Introduction

Recent studies have described the Western context of acknowledging the value of the value of developing students' higher order thinking (Collins, 2014; Madhuri, Kantamreddi & Goteti, 2012; Van den Berg, 2004). Higher order thinking skills is a term that consists of a variety of thinking processes which can be useful in various situations (King, Goodson & Rohani, 1998). There is growing recognition of the importance of developing students' higher order thinking skills, such as critical thinking, creative thinking, self-regulation, and inquiry and research skills, in order to prepare them to be successful in an ever changing and evolving world (Fisher, 2006; Jones, 2008; Lizarraga, Baquedano, & Oliver 2010). For instance, Fisher (2006) pointed out that the world has changed, and traditional rote learning is no longer relevant to prepare students for adulthood. According to him rapid change within society makes it difficult to predict what factual knowledge will be needed in the future. Therefore, Fisher (2006) suggested that effective teaching of higher order thinking skills would help students be successful in today's unpredictable world. According to Lizarraga et al. (2010) students who obtain problem-solving and critical thinking skills are capable of addressing real life problems more competently than others. Also, students who possess these skills can capably apply them to their own personal lives and experiences. Additionally, a number of researchers highlighted the role of teachers in developing students' higher order thinking skills (Barak & Shakhman, 2008; Fisher, 2006; Hopson, Simms, & Knezek, 2001). For example, there is a paper where the role of teachers who actively use information and communication technology (ICT) in developing students' higher order thinking skills is emphasized (Hopson et al., 2001). Similarly, Polly and Ausband (2009) revealed the importance of technology in the classroom, particularly in developing higher order thinking skills in

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students. According to Jones (2008) well-trained teachers who can use information and communication technology are more likely to produce capable students by organizing proper lessons aimed at developing necessary skills.

Despite the fact that the literature described above only discussed the Western context, there are researchers who studied the development of students' higher order thinking skills in the Asian context. Richmond (2007) revealed most Asian countries are experiencing dramatic changes in all sectors of government including education. He also highlighted the vitality of developing students' critical thinking skills as well as creative thinking in order to successfully meet the demands of a rapidly changing world. Further, Alnabhan, Alhamdan, and Darwish, (2014) pointed out the necessity for developing students' higher order thinking skills in Bahrain, as it is crucial for addressing the needs of modern society.

As for the Kazakhstani context, there are few research studies and adopted policies emphasizing the importance of developing students' ability to think critically, creatively, and conceptually. Since Kazakhstan intends to be among the top 30 most developed countries in the world, highly-qualified, intellectually developed specialists and educators are crucial for the enhancement of all spheres of the country. Therefore, supporting students' higher order thinking skills, such as critical thinking, creative thinking skills, self-regulation, inquiry and research skills is a high priority for the government of Kazakhstan (Burkhalter & Shegebayev, 2012; Ministry of Education and Science, 2012). According to the Ministry of Education and Science (2012) there are 20 intellectual schools or gifted children across Kazakhstan, which the government created to adopt the most effective practices of Western education. The intellectual school for gifted children in Astana, however, is the only school among the 20 intellectual schools which adheres to and implements the International Baccalaureate program.

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There is often debate about which academic studies are beneficial in supporting and preparing students for academic achievement and strengthening their ability to interact on a global scale. For instance, Lizarraga et al. (2010) revealed that high quality classroom instruction, clear outcomes, and student-centered teaching and learning greatly contribute to the effective development of students' higher order thinking skills. The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) acknowledges the importance of academically rigorous curricula and learning outcomes based on certain values and skills also known as the Learner Profile. These curricula and the Learner Profile are important in developing successful students who will be able to take in the demands of a changing world (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2010). The IB Learner Profile is considered to be a core aspect of the IB program which describes a wide sphere of human capacities and duties which go beyond academic success. The IB LP represents 10 attributes which are thinker, knowledgeable, inquirer, researcher, reflective, caring, principled, risk-taker, well-balanced and communicator (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2016). They are designed to develop students' inborn traits in order to successfully address demands of living and working in a global society (International Baccalaureate, 2010; Walker, 2010). However, it is important to note that most of these studies stressed the importance of teachers' role in enhancing teaching of the IB program to build the necessary skills of their students.

One of the main features of the IB program is that successful implementation may foster the development of students' disposition for higher order thinking skills through the Learner Profile component of the curriculum, which is considered a crucial element of the whole program, particularly in strengthening students' understanding of globalization (Walker, 2010). Moreover, to successfully imbue these attributes, teachers need to understand the nature of each of the profile's attributes and effectively integrate them into

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the process of learning (Bullock, 2011). Additionally, as IB program was initially founded in the West, there is a clash of ideas that the current program is mostly Western-oriented. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate non-Western, particularly Kazakhstani IB teachers` perceptions, understanding and beliefs about IB program in order to successfully establish the program in non-Western contexts.

Personal experiences/ journey

I started my career path in one school in Astana which is an International Baccalaureate school. Working in this school provides many opportunities to travel on different business trips abroad to be “up-to-date” with the currency of my understandings and skills with the most effective principles and practices of “Western colleagues,” and to adopt these practices in my school. I have been working in this school for about 3 years and during this period I had different professional development opportunities such as visiting the International Baccalaureate schools in England, Switzerland, Russia, and Slovenia.

If to consider my case, this school is my first job place and I did not have teaching experience before, the IB program was new for me to implement and teach. I think that IB curriculum oriented to suite needs of Kazakhstani students, as most of components are found in a conceptual level and they are flexible for adaptation in various contexts. However, it is worth to note that I am a new teacher with no teaching experience before and I have nothing to compare with IB program. Thus, I might conclude that it was not challenging for me to implement this program and deal with it.

Despite the successful implementation of the International Baccalaureate programs in the schools I visited, there were still some challenges they faced in teaching this program. For example, there were often issues in the implementation of attributes of IB Learner Profile in their classroom practices. Most of the IB teachers with whom I discussed when I

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was observing in their school, pointed out that generally attributes of LP are found at the very abstract level which makes them confused and lost while implementing in their schools.

Although there is the expectation that teachers will successfully infuse the IB LP attributes in their lessons, there are teachers and schools who neglect it in their practices. For instance, during a discussion with the school staff I visited, some teachers admitted that their school administration ignore the implementation of the Learner Profile attributes in classroom, because there are many other elements of the program (e.g., theory of knowledge, extended essay, personal project, community project, service, etc...). Implementing all of the elements of the IB program can be very time-consuming and increases teachers' workload significantly. Therefore, during the discussion with the school staff I identified that some school administration and teachers arrived at a decision not to focus on the Learner Profile.

Our school also faced some challenges when implementing the IB program. During the informal discussion, teachers reported that teachers` attitude towards the implementation of a new program and teaching new curriculum was negative. It was difficult for them to eliminate the traditional "Post-Soviet" style of teaching and move toward a new teaching methodology borrowed from "Western colleagues". However, only a few teachers reported on these issues whereas the remaining teachers who are young and with no teaching experience worked hard on the implementation process. Therefore, I could assume that teachers with "rich teaching experience" struggled more when establishing the new program and its components.

Problem Statement

With adoption of the State Programme for the Development of Education in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011-2020, some schools gradually started implementing a

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new curriculum program. This new curriculum aims to transfer Western educational ideals and practices across the 20 public schools for gifted children in Kazakhstan (Ministry of Education and Science, 2012). This is particularly the case with the one IB school, which in 2011 was established as a school of Chemistry and Biology. In 2013, the school received approval from the International Baccalaureate organization and became an “international” school (Nazarbayev Intellectual School of Astana, 2017).

Considering personal experience, it is important to acknowledge that professional development sessions aimed at providing more in-depth information on how to successfully implement particular elements were not facilitated due to the costs of these sessions in the present IB school in Astana. Similarly, World Bank (2016) reported that the Kazakhstani government allocated only 3.2 % of the GDP toward the development of the education sector in 2009, while government of USA allocated more than 12,91% of its GDP. Further, Kazakhstan had the GDP (per capita) of about 7165 U.S. dollars in 2009, while USA had the GDP (per capita) of about 47000 U.S. dollars. Considering this GDP data we can conclude that Kazakhstani educational sector had a less than viable investment which resulted in insufficient teachers professional development courses. Similarly, Takala and Piattoeva (2012) claim “By 2000, for example, the percentage of GDP spent on education had fallen by approximately one-third in Uzbekistan and by one-half in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan” (p. 4).

Particularly in the present case, considering personal experience, not all IB teachers were able to attend such courses which resulted in a poor understating of the nature of this program among teaching staff and school administration. Although the IB program and our school administration strive to educate their teachers by organizing different workshops and courses, there is a concern about teachers` understandings of particular attributes of this program, and their beliefs regarding the IB program. These understandings and beliefs

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influence the implementation of the program, and may negatively impact students' learning and higher order thinking skills. Kazakhstani IB teachers have a significant responsibility to effectively implement the IB program and the Learner Profile attributes in the classroom practices.

The Learner Profile provides a clear and definite explanation of outcomes which are expected from students in terms of learning and is considered to be a core of the IB program (Walker, 2010). Currently, there is a lack of sufficient in-depth studies about the Learner Profile, its importance and benefits for students, and teacher implementation in schools. According to Walker (2010) the Learner Profile, including the entire IB program, is too Western-oriented and cannot be applied in Eastern contexts. However scholars such as, Bullock (2011) and Rizvi, Acquaro, Quay, Sallis, Savage, and Sobhani (2014) claimed the Learner Profile is defined at a conceptual level that can be applied and implemented in various country contexts. Therefore, to effectively teach the LP attributes in the classroom, teachers must understand, adapt, and integrate them into classroom activities and teaching content to suit their students. Van Oord (2013) claims the 10 attributes of the Learner Profile are the IB mission statement transferred into outcomes for 21st century learning whereas all IB students regardless of their ages and national background are expected to achieve these outcomes. Moreover, Van Oord (2007) states despite the fact that the IB programme is increasingly spreading across the world this program, particularly Diploma Programme is considered to be western –oriented which can be taught for international-minded non – Western students.

Considering that the IB program initially was founded in the West, there are many contradictions between scholars' perspectives on the implementation of the IB program in the Eastern context. As for Kazakhstan, the IB school in Astana was one of the first IB schools in the state where local teachers worked on implementation process of the current

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program by adapting particular components into the local context. As the effective development of students` higher-order thinking skills depends on successful execution of the IB program and its components, implementation of IB program in one of IB school in Astana has remained a significant issue to be controlled and monitored. Clashes of ideas about the establishment of the IB program not only highlight issues of interpretation of components of the program in different context but also questions how well monitoring by the IB headquarters of program implementation of the program in different context is occurring (Rizvi et al., 2014).

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions:

The purpose of this study is to explore Kazakhstani IB teachers` perception, attitudes and beliefs regarding the new IB program. In particular, this study will focus on the Learner Profile component of the IB program in order to better understand Kazakhstani teachers` concerns and challenges.

The research question guiding this study is: What are Kazakhstani IB teachers` understandings of the IB program and Learner Attributes?

To address the over-arching question, the researcher will answer the following three sub-questions: 1) What are Kazakhstani IB teachers' understanding of the IB learner profile? 2) How do Kazakhstani IB teachers implement the IB program into their daily practice to develop student`s higher order thinking skills? 3) What are Kazakhstani IB teachers` concerns and challenges regarding the implementation of the IB program?

Definition. Attitudes: the study focuses on a feeling or emotion of Kazakhstani IB teachers toward the implementation of the IB program in Kazakhstani context (Merriam-Webster, 2017).

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Perception: the study focuses on teachers` awareness of the components of the IB program through teaching and implementing in daily classroom practices (Merriam-Webster, 2017).

Significance of the Study

Due to a lack of studies on the implementation of the IB program in a Kazakhstani context, particularly the IB Learner Profile, the current study, first, will greatly contribute to the research/knowledge gap in this field. Second, educational stakeholders may use the findings and recommendations of this paper for further development of quality education in Kazakhstan. The research paper will also be beneficial for the government, teachers, and students. Considering that the Kazakhstani government plays a vital role in sustainable development of the country, the government is deeply concerned with the quality of education, and developing well educated citizens who may contribute to the development of the state. That is why they might use the finding of this study and consequently contribute to establishing the quality education by making some adjustments into curriculum program and adapting the Westernized curriculum to suit Kazakhstani society.

The next group of people who benefit from this research is students. Successful implementation of the IB program will result in developing students` higher order thinking skills. Higher order thinking skills includes variety thinking process such as critical, creative, and conceptual thinking which can be applied in different situations.

As teachers are considered to be pivotal in a proper implementation of the IB program and developing students` higher order thinking skills, the findings from this study will support their pedagogical practices. They will have an opportunity to share their important perspectives and have their voice heard; therefore, this will be empowering for teachers. However, I cannot guarantee that participants will receive any particular benefits from participating in this project.

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Chapter 2. Literature Review

The aim of the present chapter is to demonstrate a critical analysis of key ideas, concepts, and theories related to Kazakhstani IB teachers in teaching the Learner Profile in their classroom. This investigation will address the experiences and understandings of Kazakhstani teachers in implementing a relatively new curriculum (i.e., IB) and more specifically the IB Learner Profile.

The literature review chapter consists of three sections. The first section intends to provide background information on the context of international education – The IB program and its use in a Kazakhstani educational context and to clarify the nature and values of the IB LP. The second section aims to give comprehensive information on educational change and reforms in Kazakhstan. The third section will acknowledge the theoretical background of this study.

Implementation of the IB's Middle Year Program

International Baccalaureate is a non-profit organization that provides international academically rigorous curriculum and standards aimed at developing student knowledge, as well as instilling necessary skills and values to be successful in a global scale (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2010). This programme formally emerged in 1990 and it offers academically rigorous curriculum aimed to develop students' disposition for higher order thinking skills (i.e. ability to think critically, conceptually, and creatively). As illustrated in Figure 1, the Middle Year Program is based on eight subject groups, which are language acquisition, language and literature, individuals and societies, sciences, mathematics, arts, physical and health education, and design. These subject groups consist of four areas of interaction (i.e. core elements of the program which do not relate to any of the eight subject groups but where all students are involved in order to develop their knowledge and skills through the service). These four areas of interaction are service,

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service project, community project, and personal project (International Baccalaureate

Organization, 2014a). At the heart of MYP is the Learner Profile and it is considered to be a crucial component of the programme. In general, all of these components and 8 subject groups and areas of interaction help to develop students' particular skills and dispositions for higher order thinking skills as well as moral education (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014a).

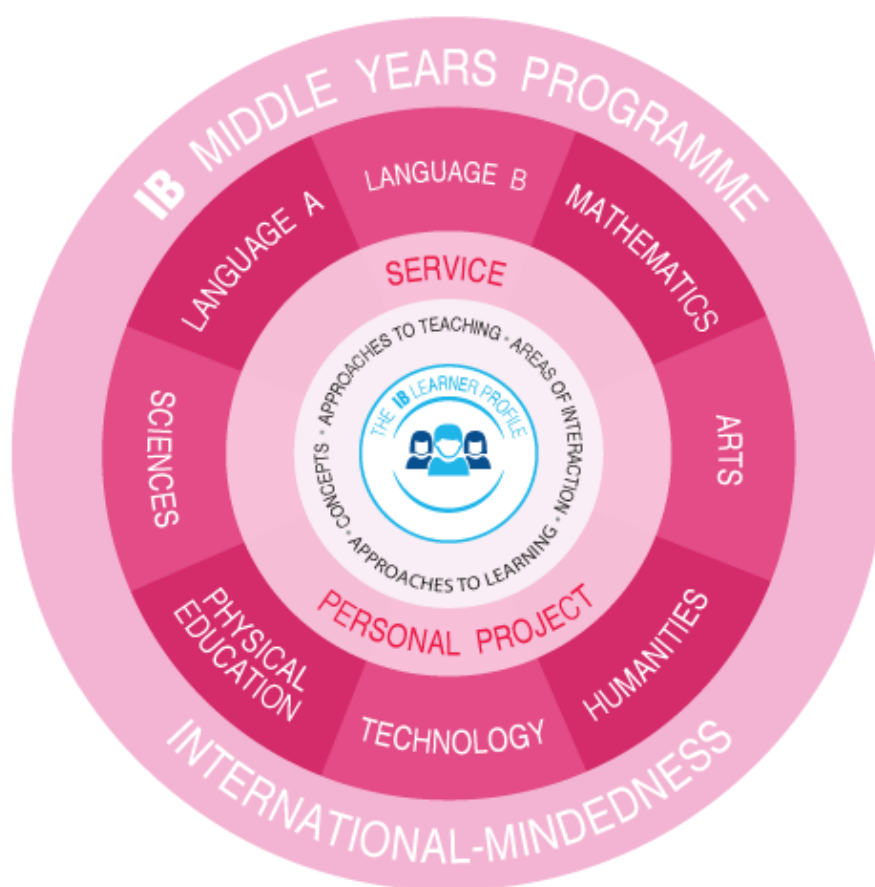


Figure 1. Middle Year Programme curriculum (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014a)

Starting from the year 2000 the IB has expanded from 926 programs to 3326 across the world (Starr, 2009). According to Starr (2009) presently, about 324 schools are practicing this program within Asia. Since the MYP IB was initially practiced in Western countries there is a debate whether it is applicable for Eastern contexts. Many educational

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stakeholders argue that the IB program values do not correspond to the values of students from non-Western background. For instance, Walker (2010) mentioned that many researchers and educational stakeholders critiqued the IB curriculum as it was mostly designed for Western nations. Contrary to this, however, the IB curriculum stated that its current program can be applied in schools of different geographical and educational contexts (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014a). Bunnell (as cited in Calvert & Tan, n.d.) also reported that the aim of the IB mission is to create a rigorous curriculum in facilitating the development of international awareness of students; these authors thus suggested the programme is applicable in different contexts. Lee, Hallinger, and Walker (2012) revealed the IB program received its recognition in Asian Pacific regions because of its popularity in Europe and North America, which consequently influenced the stakeholders` decision to accept the program as a credible, internationally authorized alternative to a national educational system. Another reason for spreading of IB program in Asian- Pacific countries is parents` attempts to prepare their children for university entrance in foreign countries (Lee, Hallinger, & Walker, 2012). Additionally, scholars reported that international programme such as IB gives opportunity to Asian private schools to provide quality education which is internationally recognized and valued.

Examining Kazakhstani case, Silova (2008) acknowledged the role of transferring a Western approach to the state where the government is pivotal in adapting and adopting of reforms. Kuzhabekova, Mukhametzhanova, Almukhambetova, and Soltanbekova (2015) also support the idea of transferring Western practices in order to develop education in Kazakhstan whereas educational authorities and actual practitioners are responsible for implementation and other details. Scholars reported the little role of the government in the educational reforms in the very beginning of Kazakhstani independence. According to the scholars, the government of a newly independent Kazakhstan passively adopted Western

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ideas in order to keep funding from external donors (Kuzhabekova et al., 2015). However, the situation with interventions from the government side has changed in 1999, when Kazakhstan government turned to funding from internal sources (Kalikova & Silova, 2008). This is important to note that Silova (2009) reported about interventions from the governmental side that made the process of implementing of Western practices more challenging in post-Soviet countries. Thus, most of the new educational reforms and changes were resisted by educational stakeholders and these changes simply got lost when implementing (Silova, 2009). Additionally, Kuzhabekova et. al (2015) pointed out that since most of the flagships were created recently, it is difficult to gauge its effectiveness.

International Baccalaureate Learner Profile. As was mentioned above the 10 attributes of the Learner Profile are the IB mission statement transferred into outcomes which students are keen to achieve by the end of the program. Since the LP reflects the idea of the IB mission in its attributes that students, teachers and administration should obtain, it is considered to be a pivotal part of the IB program (Lai, Shum, & Zhang, 2014).

Stevenson, Thomson, and Fox (2014) claimed that the Learner Profile is the IB's mission statement in action. The IB mission statement encourages communication, holistic learning, and intercultural understanding as the basic principles for the successful learning and which describes the nature of the IB programmes (IBO, 2014b). The Learner Profile is composed of 10 attributes: inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, risk-taker, balanced and reflective (IBO, 2014b). There is no hierarchy in the attributes, as all of them are equally significant. Some of the most published IB practitioners and theorists claim that the LP attributes are characteristics of an individual's personality, which is greatly valued by IB and promoted as the ethos of the IB community (Rizvi et.al, 2014; Starr, 2009; Stevenson, Thomson, & Fox, 2014; van Oord, 2013). Additionally, they proposed that these attributes be seen as "virtues," as the attributes

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express positive traits and characteristics of one's personality. Rizvi et.al. (2014) reported effective acquiring of these attributes by students will help them to be successful in this rapidly globalizing world.

To gain insight into the nature of the LP it is necessary to examine the classification proposed by Bullock in her study (2011). She identified 4 categories of the LP, which are: cognitive, affective, conative, and cultural (see Table 1):

Table 1

Learner profile constructs grouped by four theoretical dimensions

№	Categories	The LP attributes
1	Cognitive or intellectual:	knowledgeable, thinkers, reflective;
2	Affective or emotional:	caring, balanced; risk-taker;
3	Conative or personal:	inquiry, principled;
4	Cultural or social:	communicators, open-minded;

The researcher maintains the idea that 10 attributes of the LP have been classified into 4 interrelated themes that call attention to the IB emphasis on the intellectual, personal, emotional and social development of a student through fulfilling all the components of the present program (Bullock, 2011).

Implementation of the Learner Profile. According to the IBO, the Learner Profile is the main tool for achieving the mission of the program the successful implementation of which positively influences the teaching and learning process (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014b). It is important to note that there a lot of factors that influence implementation of the Learner Profile and it depends not only on students` understanding but also on the understanding of teachers, parents and all stakeholders in the IB community (International Baccalaureate, 2014b). Therefore, the IB highly encourages all stakeholders to take active participation in the life of this community. Additionally, van Oord (2004)

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highlighted the role of IB teacher in the effective implementation of the Learner Profile.

Even though IB highly encourages schools to effectively implement the LP by organizing special environment for students, in the reality not all IB schools provide such opportunities for it (Starr, 2009). The main reason of neglecting the implementation of the LP is that teachers are overloaded and they have no time to do this (Apple as cited in Starr, 2009).

Considering that the attributes of the LP are found at a conceptual level (Rizvi et al., 2014), teachers of different contexts can interpret it and translate the meanings of the LP differently, which in turn will influence an outcome. Thus, LP could be adapted and implemented in various contexts considering local peculiarities. However, the other side of the coin is that wrong translations and interpretation of the attributes might influence results and outcomes. Moreover, it might cause some issues in a local implementation of the IB LP (van Oord, 2007).

In summary, review of the relevant literature demonstrates the growing worldwide demand for IB programs. It also suggests a number of issues related to implementation of IB program in different contexts which should be taken into consideration, particularly the issue of understanding of the core of IB program – the Learner Profile, it's appropriate interpretation and practicing in various contexts. This consideration has shaped the nature of the study and research questions which are going to be addressed in the following chapters.

Educational Change/Reforms

Teachers as change agents. Since Kazakhstan gained its independence in 1991, it has accepted large loans for restructuring the educational sector, like many other Post-Soviet countries, and subsequently it has become a centre for the research by external non-governmental organizations (Silova & Steiner-Khamsi, 2008; Takala & Piattoeva, 2012).

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Main external “donors” were Asian Development Bank and Soros Foundation who

invested a lot to the development of the education of post-Soviet countries, including Kazakhstan (Takala & Piattoeva, 2012). Therefore, a lot of attention was paid to teacher training, as they were considered pivotal for the successful implementation of the new educational reforms and programs. According to Fullan (2002) “Effective school leaders are key to large-scale, sustainable education reform” (p. 16). Additionally, he emphasized the role of professional development of teachers as well as school development in reshaping the professional culture of teaching (Fullan, 1996). Moreover, Fullan (1996) recognized two main issues that constraints changes in education, they are overload and fragmentation which are interrelated with each other.

Taking into account Kazakhstani case, most of Kazakhstani teachers were taught in Soviet time and the basis for their education was Soviet totalitarian ideology, it was difficult for them to adapt to the new program with basis on Western ideology (Burkhalter & Shegebayev, 2012). The reason is that Soviet teaching methods were designed in order to meet requirements of collectivisation and industrialization which are no longer effective in the current changing world (Webber as cited in Burkhalter & Shegebayev, 2012). Moreover, if in Soviet time students practice rote-learning where focus was on independent learning, presently Western curriculum enhances case-study where students are encouraged to work collaboratively.

The integration of international practices and reforms undertaken in the education system of Kazakhstan over the past decade have put much tension on Kazakhstani teachers, as the amount of duties teachers are to perform have increased to a great extent, fostering teacher overload and burn out (Chapman, Weidman, Cohen, & Mercer, 2005). Another reason for intensification of teachers work is intervention from the government side. For instance, Day (2002) claimed “Teachers in most countries across the world are

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experiencing similar government interventions in the form of national curricula, national tests, criteria for measuring the quality of schools and the publication of these on the internet in order to raise standards and promote more parental choice” (p. 678).

Having experienced many reforms that failed when implementing, teachers started sceptical perceiving the new attempts of the government to adopt new reforms. Massyrova, Zhimagulova, Ospanova, Khaidarova, and Issayeva (2015) revealed that “The education system in Kazakhstan had difficulties, compounded by disease processes, for decades, experienced by the community” (p. 486). One of the reasons that caused this issue is the corruption in Kazakhstani education. According to Heyneman (2004) “... the definition of education corruption includes the abuse of authority for personal as well as material gain” (p. 637). It might result in undermining of incentives and declining of young specialists` motivation to work hard and (Rumyantseva, 2005). As for Kazakhstani case, this is considered to be one of the main issues which have negative influence on the development of all the sectors of the government. For instance, Satpayev (2014) claims “The non-competitive nature of the political system is slowing down the economic development of the country because modernisation is hindered by corruption, which has already become one of the important mechanism for the redistribution of existing resources among the elite in Kazakhstan” (p. 1).

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. The IB program is considered to be mostly a Western –oriented program which can be taught to culturally diverse non-Western students who are flexible for new things and who are able to consider one issue from various perspectives. However, it is important to note that in order for students to succeed in their learning, the learning process should address students` needs, skills and areas to improve upon, as well as to consider the peculiarities of a particular culture. According to Irvine (2010) “Culturally relevant pedagogy is a term that describes effective teaching in

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culturally diverse classrooms" (2010, p. 57). Similarly, Durden, Escalante, and Blicht, (2015) claim that culturally relevant pedagogy is about fostering students' intellectual, social, emotional and political senses through teaching knowledge, skills and values with consideration of cultural features. According to Ladson-Billings (1995) culturally relevant pedagogy is based on three criteria: 1. Students are to be academically successful; 2. Students must develop cultural expertise; 3. Students must develop higher order thinking skills in order to address current world "requirements" (p. 160).

Many researchers claim that Kazakh culture is similar to Eastern culture. The reason is that cultural legacy of Kazakhstan includes a long line of nomadic traditions. Cultures of steppe nomads have always been flexible and adaptive to changes as Russia, China, Persia and Islamic cultures were the neighbors of steppe nomads. They established the basis for the formation of modern Kazakh culture (The Astana Times, 2014). "Many Central Asian leaders have stressed that the Central Asian states have more in common with their Asian neighbors than with their European neighbors, pointing in particular to example of Singapore" (Perlman & Gleason, 2007, p.1332). Moreover, scholars claimed that "Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, like all the other Central Asian republics, were united by significant common cultural attributes, features, and traditions" (Perlman & Gleason, 2007, p.1333). Considering that Kazakh culture is similar to Eastern, it is important to note that teaching a Western-oriented program might interfere with Kazakhstani IB students' values. Nussbaum (1997) mentioned differences between Eastern and Western values. According to her, Eastern culture values order, whereas the Western values freedom and the Eastern culture values community, while the Western values personal. Similarly Starr (2009) highlighted the idea "... the use of the IB Learner Profile is both complex and deep, and places students at the center of the conflict between their own cultural references and traditions and those of the Euro- American education they seek" (p. 120).

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To sum up, as IB intends to improve its quality of education, IB organization conducts various researches and uses results to make adjustments into the curriculum. Some of the researchers claim the idea that IB is changing over time and this is the ongoing process. However, it is important to note that the Learner Profile was not changed (International Baccalaureate, 2014b). This is also important to note there is the difference in values teaching in IB program and Kazakhstani students. Therefore, in order for students to succeed in education, it is important for educational stakeholders to examine and adapt the present program for the Kazakhstani students.

Theoretical background of the study

The theoretical framework for the present study is illustrated by a social constructivist paradigm of research. The constructivism paradigm claims "...reality is socially, culturally and historically constructed" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 8). Since the researcher intends to understand multiple views on challenges and concerns that Kazakhstani IB teachers might have when implementing the IB program, particularly the LP, the present study is grounded in the assumption that reality is socially constructed in different context (Silverman, 2013; Bloomberg, & Volpe, 2008). A social constructivist approach also suggests that participants are to be actively engaged in the research and they can contribute to the research by sharing their own experiences and lives. They create meanings of their own worlds and realities and have their own understandings of these. Thus, the research intends to encourage Kazakhstani IB teachers to take active participation in the present research in order to gain in-depth understandings of their beliefs and concerns on the implementation of the IB program.

Creswell (2013a) maintains the idea is that knowledge is constructed through an alternative process and set of assumptions. Moreover, he claims that "Social constructivism is such a perspective" (p. 8). Vygotsky also discussed that social

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constructivism is built on the idea people construct their knowledge through interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1978). Social constructivist theory posits the significance of participation in social activities as well as interaction with other people in developing knowledge (Kim, 2001). According to Shunk (as cited in Kim, 2001) "Social constructivist approaches can include reciprocal teaching, peer collaboration, cognitive apprenticeships, problem-based instruction, web-quests, anchored instruction and other methods that involve learning with others" (p. 5). As for IB programme, the present program encourages students to develop from multiple perspectives by acquiring theoretical knowledge, by developing higher order thinking skills, and by instilling a number of values such as international – awareness in order for them to meet the requirements of the modern world (Martin, Tanyu, Perry, 2016). Considering that IB program fosters students-centered learning, the researcher thinks that the current framework will suit the nature of the research.

Since modern education has shifted from rote-learning to inquiry-based and problem-solving a lot of responsibility is laid on students (Lombardi, 2007). Therefore, the role of modern teachers is to guide and facilitate learning through inquiry, problem solving, dialogue, etc. (Brooks & Brooks, 1999). It is important to note that the IB programme encourages student –centered learning as the effective tool for developing the attributes of the Learner Profile. In addition the constructivist approach allows students to develop various skills such as critical thinking skills, social, self-regulation, communication and affective skills (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014a).

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Chapter III. Methodology

Introduction

This chapter presents the selected methodology for the present study. First, there is a description of the research design employed for the study. Then, the researcher explains sampling of participants, research procedures, and suitable data collection methods and analysis. The researcher then discusses ethical considerations and possible limitation of the study.

As the researcher intends to gain an in-depth understanding about Kazakhstani IB teachers` perception, beliefs, and concerns of the international program this study considers qualitative case study research method as the most appropriate approach. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research explores a problem and develops in-depth understanding of a phenomenon which is IB program and the Learner Profile. As “Qualitative research properly seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings” (Berg, 2001, p.21), the researcher thinks that employing of the current approach will give opportunity to thoroughly investigate and understand Kazakhstani IB teachers` perceptions, beliefs and concerns about the implementation of the international program. In particular, this study will examine teachers` perspectives, knowledge, and experiences about the IB Learner Profile. This qualitative study will identify the ways in which Kazakhstani IB teachers implement the Learner Profile in the classroom, from their own experiences and seek to better understand the challenges these teachers in the classroom.

Research Design

Case study. Within qualitative approach a case study design is adopted for this study. According to Punch (as cited in Silverman, 2013) a case study is an empirical research which allows to obtain deep understanding of one case or a small number of cases.

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Similarly, Yin (2011) reveals the aim of the case study is "... to produce an invaluable and deep understanding – that is, an insightful appreciation of the "case(s)" – hopefully resulting in new learning about real-world behavior and its meaning" (p. 4). According to a case study design, the following methods will be used (1) semi-structured open-ended interviews (2) observations, (3) and document analysis (Please see attached protocols).

The researcher employed instrumental case study which is described in Creswell (2013b) as the study where "... the researcher focuses on an issue or concern, and then selects one bounded case to illustrate this issue" (p. 99). Firstly, the researcher identified the issue and after the issue was identified, the researcher selected the research case (IB school) to shed the light to the issue. By conducting the instrumental case study the researcher will try to gain insight into the Kazakhstani IB teachers` perceptions, beliefs, and concerns about the international program, particularly attributes of the Learner Profile in order for them to successfully implement the present program in their classes through well-supported descriptions and explanations.

Since case study does not have a clear framework and pattern, it is poorly understood by researchers (Yin, 2011). However, despite that the present approach did not get recognition as the research method of choice among researchers; it is still widely used when conducting research in various spheres (Yin, 2011). Similarly, Yin claims that many researchers consider case study as the exploratory phase for using with other research designs (2011). Berg (2001) also maintains the idea that case study is sometimes criticized, as it is considered to be "less rigorous" and "less systematic" than other research designs (p. 317). According to Merriam, by employing case study the researcher could focus upon one phenomenon and research the current phenomenon in depth (Merriam, 2002).

Moreover, she pointed out that "since case study is the unit of the analysis that determines

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whether a study is a case study, this type of the qualitative research stands apart from other types defined here” (Merriam, 2002, p.8)

Sampling. Purposeful sampling is adopted to select the participants. In purposeful sampling, the researcher intentionally chooses the participants and bound to gain an understanding of the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). Glesne (2015) also supports the idea that interpretivist researchers or case study researchers purposefully choose their participants, as it allows gaining more information about researching cases. The benefit of purposeful sampling is that intentionally selected informants are “information rich” (Creswell, 2014), i.e. it will allow the researcher to consider the issue profoundly. Within purposeful sampling, the researcher chose maximal variation sampling, as it allows displaying various perspectives of the issue (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan & Hoagwood, 2015). For example, IB teachers of different subject groups were selected to interview in order to understand how the components of the IB program are understood and implemented in different subjects from different teachers` perceptions. Additionally, other inclusion criteria for showing different views on implementation of IB program and the Learner Profile included: (1) must be a Kazakhstani resident, (2) age range, (3) gender, (4) range of teaching experience (number of years), (5) all the participants should be able to speak in English, as this language utilized in IB, (6) range of geographical location within Kazakhstan.

According to Creswell (2014) “Maximal variation is a purposeful sampling strategy in which the researcher samples cases or individuals that differ on some characteristic or trait (e.g. different age groups)” (p.230). Convenience sampling is also employed to select participants, as the researcher is going to conduct the study in the school in which she is currently working. It will be convenient for her to stay in touch with all the participants during the whole study. According to Glesne (2015, p. 45) “Convenience sampling selects

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cases on the basis of convenience”. Moreover, Glesne (2015) states that this sampling is low credibility and suitable only for practice and cannot be used in other studies.

Research site. The researcher used a purposeful convenience sampling for selecting the research site. The one IB school in Astana was selected as the site for the research. Witnessing the problem of implementing the Learner Profile attributes in some IB schools across the world, the researcher decided to conduct the study in one IB school due to its uniqueness. There are only few IB schools in Kazakhstan, particularly in Astana, and most of them are private schools, with expat teachers and foreign students. However, the present IB school which is chosen for this study is the only school in Astana among public schools for gifted children that implements International Baccalaureate program to teach, and where only residents of Kazakhstan are allowed to study. Additionally, in this school local teachers make up 90% of the teaching staff, whereas only 10% are expat teachers. Considering that the purpose of the study is to identify Kazakhstani IB teachers` attitudes, values and concerns regarding the implementation of IB program in their classroom, this site fits with the criteria of the research. The researcher chooses this site for the study because she is currently working in there. Moreover, this is vital to note that her role in the school is the Social Studies teacher and she is not the member of the school administration which means she is at the same level as the participant teachers

Participants. Teachers of one IB school were selected for this study. The total number of participants was six. The age range of the participants was around 27-33 years. In general, there were four males and two females who participated in the current study. All participants range between two-four years of teaching experience. Participants were from different academic subjects such as humanities, mathematics, science, language, design and arts subject groups to have a variety of teachers from different subject groups will provide diverse and multiple perspectives regarding the implementation of IB

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curriculum and the Learner Profile. All the participants are Kazakh teachers. However, they are from different regions across Kazakhstan which provided variety of perspectives and attitudes about IB program and the Learner Profile (i.e. two from West, one from South, one from East, one from North, and one from Central Kazakhstan).

Data Collection

As the researcher decided to have semi-structured, one-on-one interviews interview protocol was used as the instrument for collecting data. Additionally, observation protocol was used for classroom non-participant observation. The researcher used iPhone for recording data. Additionally, the researcher took field notes in order to obtain full in-depth data about teachers' experiences, techniques, body languages they use during the lesson. All the recorded data and notes are kept in a USB key and are put in a locked safe in order to avoid the case of information leak.

Procedures. Firstly, the researcher contacted the gate keeper of the research site – the principal of the one IB school in Astana. The researcher has sent the gate keeper a consent form via email describing the purpose of the study, the role of participants, the rights of participants, confidentiality and possible risks of the study and other information will be explained in a clear and logical manner and then, the researcher visited the gate keeper in person to discuss the study further. Then, after receiving permission from the gate keeper, the researcher has sent her/him the recruitment email so that she/he can send to teachers via email. After that the researcher has contacted by participants and she will prepare the list of participants. The next step is allocation of time and place for meeting with participants for our interview. During the first meeting together, the researcher presented the consent form and explained all the ethical aspects and will ask to sign the form.

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Participants were informed in about their rights to reject or stop the interview at any time if they feel pressure from the researcher side or uncomfortable with interview or its questions. In addition to this, participants have received clear information about the purpose of the study and their role in the research process. Consent forms were signed during the face-to-face meeting. In the consent form they found information about the purpose of the study and the confidentiality of their responses and participants themselves. Additionally, they were informed that their responses will not influence their relationship with their school and Nazarbayev University. The participants had an opportunity to take a copy of this form. This is important to know that participation is voluntary and participants have the right to discontinue the study at any time without penalty or loss to benefits to which you may be entitled.

Additionally, participants were informed about confidentiality of information. Names of all the participants were anonymized by giving pseudonyms (e.g. all the participants` names will be coded as Deborah, Superman and so on). The researcher disclosed that the findings will be read by the supervisor and presented in the final thesis paper and in conferences or publications potentially. After transcribing, the researcher will keep all the audio-recording and transcripts in a safe and secure place for two years and will not share their responses with others. Moreover, to keep confidentiality of the interviewee, the researcher will keep the raw data separate from the consent forms. And for the site, the researcher will not disclose any information that may identify the participant or the site.

In general, the researcher had 10 open-ended questions and 30 minutes for the interview. The researcher conducted the interview in a school room. When interviewing the participants, the researcher used iPhone to audio record participants` responses, and took field notes. The questions inquired with participants about their teaching experience,

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professional development session they had, the role of administration in assisting with a new curriculum and other. After transcribing and interpreting the interview, the researcher has sent results to the participants, individually and one-by-one so participants can revise, edit, and remove any areas they wish and to make sure that the researcher represents the idea of participants as they wish (please see interview protocol). The researcher believes that member checking allowed her to avoid bias and misinterpretation of data obtained by interview.

After the researcher finished with interview, she negotiated with teachers a particular time and lesson for observation. The researcher met with participants individually and negotiate particular day and time to come and observe their lesson. In total, the researcher had six observations, as there are six teachers of different academic subject groups. The researcher had non-participant classroom observations where she observed different aspects of the classroom such as teaching strategies, assessment strategies, teacher's confidence, and others (please see attached observation protocol). Observations were conducted for each participant for approximately one hour. The researcher has taken observational field notes.

Interview. The researcher sought to obtain relevant data and address the research questions using semi-structured, one-on-one interviews. By conducting interview, the researcher aimed to explore each teacher's perception and experience in implementing the IB program. Creswell (2014) claims that "one-on-one interviews are useful for asking sensitive questions and enabling interviewers to ask questions or provide comments that go beyond the initial questions" (p. 410). Meanwhile, semi-structured interviews were chosen because they "allow informants the freedom to express their views in their own terms" (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006, p 1). Overall, interviews were employed as the main tool to gather relevant data.

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In general, the researcher had 10 questions and 30 minutes for the interview asking questions about their experience on implementing the IB program in their lessons. The researcher has conducted the interview in one of school room. When interviewing the participants, the researcher used an iPhone in order to record participants` responses. After transcribing and interpreting the interview, the researcher has sent results to the participants, individually and one-by-one to make sure that the researcher represented the idea of participants as they wish. No one has changed their interviews except the cases when participants supplemented their responses.

Observation. Another tool which is crucial in conducting the case study is observation. Glesne defines multiple recognition of the observation process such as it “is whole process of doing fieldwork” another is “research method” (p. 64). Thus, the researcher observed daily work of the participants in order “...to develop trust, learn the culture, and to check haunches” (Glesne, 2015, p. 49). As for Merriam “observational data represent a firsthand encounter with the phenomenon of interest rather than a secondhand account obtained in an interview” (Merriam, 2002, p. 13). As the researcher intended to connect participants` responses with their practice she conducted non-participatory observation with each participant. In general, the researcher observed six lessons of teachers from different subject groups. Observation lasted for about one hour. All the information was written in the observational protocol where the researcher put her reflection upon the observed lessons. Observation reflections were put in the Finding chapter in order to underpin participants` responses by the practical evidence and to avoid cases of bias and giving insufficient information.

Document analysis. To see the holistic picture of how Kazakhstani IB teachers understand and perceive international program, it was decided to use document analysis as the tool for collecting data in addition to interviews and observation. Document analysis

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involves various procedures which assume analyzing and interpreting data from different documents, records, media scripts, school reports and other sources relevant to a particular study (Schwandt, 2007,). Document analysis will greatly contribute to data collection part and will help to deepen received information as well as avoid bias when interpreting.

Merriam (2002) claims that document analysis is vital, as documents are data sources that are already existed and they cannot be altered or interpreted by the researcher which means document analysis helps to avoid bias. The researcher used Atlas Rubicon platform where teachers of the current IB school create and upload lesson/unit plans. The researcher investigated the way teachers designed their lesson, in particular the research considered how teachers implement attributes of the IB program in their lesson and only then, she started observing lessons.

Data Analysis

This is important to note that data analysis in qualitative approach is simultaneous with data collection (Merriam, 2002). Once the researcher started interviewing, observing, collecting documents, s/he could start to analyze at the same time. In the current research, analysis of qualitative data is done in six steps. First step, the researcher transcribed and read the transcripts from the interview. After completion of reading and transcribing, the researcher ensured that all the information is present. Then, information was coded, after which the ideas and opinions were categorized. Firstly, the researcher defined initial codes from the participants` responses. Secondly, the researcher organized focused codes from the initial codes. Then, focused codes were categorized into major themes. Finally, based on these steps, the researcher interpreted it and presented findings in a writing form (Creswell, 2014). The researcher identified 3 major themes through the process of focus coding, they are: 1) teachers` prior experience and learning about IB, 2) change agents, 3) Implementation of international program and its components. The category “*teachers`*

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prior experience and learning about IB reflects participants` experience and its influence of the implementation process. Another category “*teachers as change agents*” demonstrates the shift in education sphere and willingness of teachers to participate in decision-making process. Last but not least category “*Implementation of international program and its components*” shows how the implementation process went in the researched IB school. In addition, it represents positive and negative sides of the implementation process. In order to interpret and present findings the researcher selected Merriam perspective on case study.

Ethical Consideration

There may be minor psychological risks. Since all the participants are currently working in an IB school, there is risk of information leak and to be identified. This may result in criticism, penalty, and psychological pressure from the administration and even in dismissal. In addition to these, the risk of information leak and to be identified may result in teachers` fear, or embarrassment, negative thoughts when thinking of certain memories or experiences and they may be uncomfortable sharing personal information and worry about confidentiality. In order to avoid such risks participants were informed in about their rights to reject or stop the interview at any time if they feel pressure from the researcher side or uncomfortable with interview or its questions. In addition to this, participants have received clear information about the purpose of the study and their role in the research process. Additionally, they were informed that the researcher is there to know about their teaching experiences but to not evaluate/ judge their programs or work, or their students.

Consent forms were signed during the face-to-face meeting. In the consent form they could find information about the purpose of the study and the confidentiality of their responses and participants themselves. Additionally, they were informed that their responses will not influence their relationship with their school and Nazarbayev

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University. The participants had an opportunity to take a copy of this form. This is important to know that participation was voluntary and participants had the right to discontinue the study at any time without penalty or loss to benefits to which you may be entitled. Additionally, participants were informed about confidentiality of information. Names of all the participants were anonymized by giving pseudonyms (e.g. all the participants' names will be coded as Deborah, Superman and so on). The researcher disclosed that the findings will be read by the supervisor and presented in the final thesis paper and in conferences or publications potentially. After transcribing, the researcher will keep all the audio-recording and transcripts on her password protected laptop for two years and will not share the raw data with anyone but herself and her advisor. The researcher will download all the data, interview, and other material to a personal password protected computer. Moreover, to keep confidentiality of the interviewee, the researcher will keep the raw data separate from the consent forms and all the field notes will be kept in a locked desk in a private office.

As the purpose of the study is to research only Middle Year Program (Grades 7-10), the researcher has had six observations of different classes from 7-10 grades. However, this is important to note that the research has had non-participant observation and she has observed only teachers but not students. The researcher did not talk to students and students were not engaged in the present research. The researcher was strictly observing the teacher and not the students in the classroom, as the purpose of this study pertains to teachers. Furthermore, the non-participant observation did not alter the students' normal classroom experience. In this case, a parent consent form/student assent form is not required. Additionally, schools encounter numerous "visitors" daily, particularly in classroom settings (e.g., speech therapist working with one child in the classroom) and there is no classroom parent consent required for this.

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Chapter IV. Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents findings to reveal understandings of Kazakhstani IB teachers toward the implementation of the international program in one of the Kazakhstani IB schools. Three significant themes were identified: 1) teachers` prior experience and learning about IB, 2) teachers as change agents, 3) implementation of international program and its components.

Teachers` prior experience and learning about IB

Each participant has reported that he/she had had no teaching experience before coming to NIS system, and IB is the first teaching program with which they had to deal. For example, a History teacher, Alexander described “I have been teaching History for five years. I didn` t have any previous experience before. I` m working at this school since 2012. Since that time I am a History teacher”.

Similarly, Deborah, English teacher acknowledged that the current school is her first job placement:

I` ve been officially teaching for six years now. Almost completing fifth year in the system of Nazarbayev Schools. I` ve started in Nazarbayev Schools, so it hasn` t been different since then. But I took a year, a gap year and went abroad to teach Kazakh.

Additionally, most of the participants highlighted that having no experience in the educational field before was beneficial in dealing with the new international program. They could easily adapt to the NIS system and the authorization process went smoothly. Regarding practice, teachers used various teaching tools and their classroom activities aimed at developing multiple skills which can be used not only in the lesson but also in real life. According to Deborah`s response she was introduced to the NIS system when she was studying at the university and then, she started to learn more and more about it:

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Well, firstly I have to say that I got introduced to the system during my studies at the Nazarbayev University during the PDP program. And then I signed the contract, which said that I then have to transfer to one of the schools. At the time being our current IB schools was only a project, so no one thought that it will open as a fully functioning school and first when I got introduced to it I was working as a translator of mainly for documents and subject guides. And then after that we realized that the program is very big and it worth to open as a big one complete school. So, in 2011 I was enrolled into the team of English B teacher, who were supposed to write the course outline for English B course. And then at that year I went to visit one of the United States world colleges, to saw their CAS program... And I've been working for the CAS authorization for a year. And when I got back from the United States after my Fulbright scholarship is done I officially started working as a CAS coordinator.

Similarly, another participant, Bob, Physics teacher reported that he had had no prior dealings with international educational programs. Thus, he was ready to gain experience in teaching the IB program and he was flexible to learn and adopt a new Western approach to teaching and to adapt it to Kazakhstani context:

I did not have experience in other schools. This IB program was first for me. That is why I was free to have such kind of changes in my way of education. That is why I cannot say that it was difficult or painful for me.

Alexander also highlighted how being an inexperienced teacher helped him to adapt to the new IB program and to implement it gradually in his classroom. Moreover, he pointed out that he would not include his first year of working in the international teaching program as experience as the school was authorized only the year after having received the status of "school candidate":

I have been teaching History for five years. I didn't have any previous experience before. I'm working at this school since 2012. Since that time I am a History teacher... Well, we started in a school, which wasn't authorized in IB system. That's why the first year will not be counted as in IB system. But other four years I consider as working in IB system. So four years.

Despite the fact that all the participants had no previous teaching experience, during the observation the researcher noted that they were confident conducting their classes, carrying out well-planned lessons, using diverse modern approaches in their teaching that

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were effective in providing new theoretical knowledge and also in developing a set of skills in students.

Teachers' attitudes/perception of IB program. Participants with similar prior teaching experience acknowledged the IB program as a rigorous program which aimed at preparing students for their future life by teaching not only theoretical knowledge but also instilling skills that would help them to learn themselves. Deborah, English teacher has stated:

Honestly, I think that IB is very rigorous academic program. And may be having such a rigorous program is helpful in developing some of the profiles as knowledgeable, enquirer, or thinker.

Additionally, in Deborah's lesson, much attention was paid to learning language but also she required her students to fulfill different activities that develop higher order thinking skills. For instance, students were given a text which they had to read and analyze by answering given conceptual questions. Similarly, another participant, Alexander stated:

I think that IB program is one of the most challenging programs for higher school students because it certainly, develops higher order thinking skills of students. For students the benefit of this program is that it is well-known, established system that's why many international universities understand and value these students and they [students] don't have any problems with entering universities. In most of the cases, they do not only enter the university but they also have a lot of knowledge and skills that are relevant to their future studies.

Alan, Math teacher also supported the idea of his colleagues that IB program is academically rigorous which helps students to develop from different perspectives:

IB program gives students opportunity to enter to very good universities and also, students are developed in the all field of knowledge. So, they are harmonically developed in all the fields of the life.

In Alan's case, even though his subject is Math, connections are made with other subjects such as history, biology and physical education. Students were required to not only address some tasks but also to explain them, provide examples from real life

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situations and apply concepts to different situations and subjects. Therefore, it might be concluded that students indeed are holistically developed from different perspective, particularly in Math classes.

Participants also emphasized the role of the Learner Profile as one of the main components of the program. They highlighted that successful implementation of the Learner Profile influences the implementation of the whole program. According to them the current component is pivotal in instilling skills in students and in the holistic development of students. It is important to note that effective implementation of the Learner Profile in the classrooms depends on teachers' experience and their background.

For instance, Leila, Biology teacher has stated:

In my understanding learner profiles can motivate students to self-learning and help them to cope with the difficulties. Also these profiles support student to respect themselves and surrounding. To student with the good motivation and self-regulation it is easy to be honest versatile in the educational process. Learning profiles can give an ideal image of the IB student and which qualities it's necessary to develop in themselves.

Another participant, Alan referred Learner Profile to a set of skills which teachers are to develop in their students. Additionally, he stated that the effectiveness of teaching Learner Profile depends on a teachers' experience: "The learner profile is such of things that...as I said... that we cannot find in any books...just based on our experience". To continue the idea of teaching the Learner Profile, Superman, Design teacher agreed that in order to effectively teach attributes of the Learner Profile, teachers are to follow them and then, develop them in their students: "I am trying to be that teacher who is following these learner profiles and I think that if you follow all of these you will try to develop these skills in our students".

Additionally, some participants reported that teaching is implicit which means teachers do not teach attributes of the Learner Profile specifically. For instance, Alexander,

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History teacher revealed that “Well, learner profile is used in every classroom, in every class in MYP and DP at our school. We do not do this in purpose; they all are in regular activities”. Moreover, Alan, Math teacher acknowledged the role of practical assignments through which students develop skills while doing various assignments and teachers are to create conditions for it:

When students work, for IB students it is huge, so when students cannot do some questions from the homework or they do not have a time, they can ask other students in the common chat, WhatsApp, they can ask for a help to give their solutions to other, to explain something. So, for example, it can be...it can develop caring profile of the students.

All the observed lessons consisted of multiple tasks in which students were actively involved in activities and most of the tasks were effective in developing some attributes of the Learner Profile. Some teachers explicitly acknowledge the attribute of the LP and expectations from students. However, the rest of observed teachers, they taught LP attributes implicitly without acknowledgment. For example, Alan initially planned his lesson and classroom activities that promote developing of skills. However, he did not explain it to students and sometimes students did not even know that they were developing particular skills while fulfilling tasks. Another teacher, Superman, started his lesson with refreshing concepts and context of the unit/lesson, then, he introduced the aim of the lesson where students were expected to work on developing communication skills. At the end of the lesson, students reflected on learnt skills. Bob, Physics teacher started his lesson with introducing the concept and context but he did not mention about LP at all. During the lesson, it was difficult to see how students developed their skills, as the lesson was mostly teacher-centered and most of students were not involved in the discussion. There was no dialogue between the teacher and students. After the lesson, Bob said that he was substituting for another teacher. That is why he could not conduct a discussion with students, as he does not know them well.

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Teachers as change agents

Professional development courses – teacher training. According to participants' responses, it was clear that being inexperienced and having participated in a number of workshops and internships helped them to implement the international program within the local context. All the teachers involved in the current study emphasized the role of administration in providing professional development courses for their staff. Moreover, all the participants pointed out that the IB program demands all teaching staff as well as administrative staff to be up to date with requirements of the program in order to successfully implement the components of the program. It means that school staff should be provided with professional development courses such as workshops, internships and other courses. For instance, Alexander, History teacher said:

I started to learn more about the IB when I entered the school. Gradually, step-by-step I learnt more about the main practices, main principles, about teaching history in IB school and all the other stuff. I also have been provided with lots of workshops, seminars on professional development where I was told how to teach History at IB school and what are basic rules at IB schools.

Similarly, Alan, Math teacher revealed that a series of workshops provided by IB helped him greatly in gaining insight into the nature of the current program. Furthermore, it helped him to successfully implement particular components of the program in his lessons. Moreover, he emphasized the role of data in special platform which is available only for IB schools.

Firstly we did not have a lot of sources of information. Just when we became the candidate school, IB gave us an access to the OCC – Online Curriculum Center. So, main information was taken from this source.

Additionally, the participant highlighted the issue of the high turnover of teachers that also negatively influences the successful implementation of the program, as the administration is not able to provide novice teachers with professional development courses on an ongoing manner:

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The main concern, I think, for me is staff. Because many teachers are inexperienced and they still need a lot of time and efforts to learn more about IB, to learn more about requirements, to develop their skills and knowledge. So for me the main concern is the teachers who need more time for their professional development.

Additionally, Bob, Physics teacher highlighted the role of visiting other IB schools in successfully adopting their experiences in the local context.

I have observed our foreign colleagues. I mean in other countries, how they do teach students. At the beginning of the school year they do not write like in this unit I will implement such kind of skills and so on. They are really experienced and according to the 1-2 lessons they already know what kind of skills students need in their future, I mean in this unit. They deal with such kind of skills but they look at it freely.

According to the participants' responses administration plays a vital role in establishing the culture within the school whereas all teachers are equally treated and have similar opportunities to take part in professional development courses. For example, Alan, Math teacher revealed that in order for the school to successfully implement IB program, the administrative staff should also learn IB with other teachers in order to support and help when it is needed.

The idea is that administration is also to learn the IB program with us. For example, if they see that they do not understand something that means that sometimes the whole school does not understand something of the IB program. So, that is why they are trying to make the courses that are clear to all and that checks understanding of the particular elements...and also, if they ask the departments for the development, we also can suggest some topics that we are not good at which are not so good to take the professional development. And usually, in most of cases they provide us with professional development courses that we need.

Similarly, another participant, Alexander highlighted the pivotal role of administration in providing professional development courses for teachers. Moreover, he pointed out that in the event that administration treats teachers differently, it will result in teacher turnover which in turns negatively influences the effective implementation of IB program.

If school and administration of the school do not motivate and encourage people to work here, they will leave it anyways. And it will result in the low results. Every

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new teacher, especially in Kazakhstan, needs to learn a lot, because we have two completely different systems, the ordinary schools which are state schools and IB school that we have there. That's why I think that the main problem is in staff. If staff and teachers are motivated, they will not have any problems, if they are not motivated; you will have to train more and more teachers every time.

Mentorship. Some participants emphasized the role of mentorship in establishing effective teacher training and support at the school. For instance, Design teacher, Superman highlighted the significance of workshops and emphasized the role of mentorship at the school.

Before I started teaching IB program, some of the Design department teachers, they were my mentors and I was involved in one MYP workshop before I started teaching and after I started teaching I had four workshops, IB official workshops.

Another participant, Biology teacher, Leila acknowledged the pivotal role of administration and experienced colleagues in providing ongoing support for novice teachers in order to eliminate the issue of insufficient teacher training and to successfully implement the program:

Each year we have some new colleagues in our staff, who are not familiar with the IB program and I think that it is necessary to organize PD sessions, which can explain how to use all components of IB, what is IB philosophy. Most of them see ATL as very hard or Global Context is very hard to implement on the lesson. We also have experience with mentoring. And mentors should explain these difficult issues to the mentees.

The role of administration. Another participant, Alexander said that the main issue in the implementation of the IB program is staff. According to him, in order for administration to have effective staff, they have to motivate them.

If one of the IB schools wants to be effective and successful in their IB program they (administration) need to be able to motivate and encourage teachers to work more. If teachers stay at school and do not leave it they will learn more of requirements and rules at IB school. If school and administration of the school do not motivate and encourage people to work here, they will leave it anyways.

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Considering these issues, participants suggested that administration of the school plays a vital role in establishing “school culture” whereas both teachers and students are involved in school life:

Administration of the school should spend some time to establish the entire system: what are the deadlines for the main requirements, who are responsible people, who are responsible teachers, who are the supervisors. All those things should be done during the process and it needs some time. I think that system will improve itself later, but the main thing is to motivate people to stay here.

According to the participants` responses whole staff involvement in the implementation process can bring numerous positive results for administration and teachers. However, establishing of the entire system at the school requires the administration to take equal participation in implementation as teachers which are somehow difficult to fulfill.

Implementation of international program and its components

Culturally relevant pedagogy. Some participants acknowledged that the current program is challenging both for students and teachers, as it considers teaching ethical values where students are responsible for their actions. As mentioned above the IB program was initially founded in the West, and therefore considered a Western-oriented teaching program. In the Kazakhstani context, if teachers want their students to succeed in completion of the program, they need to adapt some components of it to their local context. For example, Deborah has reported challenges ensuring the curriculum are culturally relevant to students` lives. She demonstrated frustration in teaching the program and at the same time a sense of acceptance that she is trying her best to cope with issues:

I strive to be a language teacher when you have to teach the language aspects. But still you have to teach the students about global issues, cultural diversity, taboos, social acceptance, communication media, and sometimes it is hard to stay as a language teacher and not to transfer into social studies teacher... It is very challenging for me and I don` t think that I am coping with the problem good enough right now.

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During the lesson observation, I noticed that Deborah focused not only on teaching grammar and language, but also gave a variety of information about global problems which are the topic of Humanities subject.

As for students, they also are struggling with their studies. For instance, according to Deborah's response IB curriculum is not fully culturally relevant to Kazakhstani students and in order to successfully teach this program, teachers need to adapt it to the local culture: "I think, it is culturally challenging for our students, because they don't really study ethics". From the lesson observation it could be seen that some questions/tasks asked of the students confused them and made them feel lost; as the topic was about global issues, students had to consider the current topic from different perspectives and to bring solutions considering all the ethical values. Similarly, Superman, Design teacher reported that the current program is challenging in terms of cultural peculiarities. Some aspects of the program might be interfering with the local cultural values:

IB wants our students to be risk-taker, not to be afraid of some situation. They want our students to be brave but in Kazakh and other eastern culture it is somehow abnormal thing.

However, Superman, Design teacher stated in order for teachers to avoid imposing international components of the program on local cultural values, they could adapt the attributes of the Learner Profile:

I think that IB learner profile attributes depend on how you will interpret them, it depends on if you have some boundaries. In my opinion, risk-taker means that you learn something new but it does not mean that you have to break some rules. It does not mean that you have to go outside of the box, I mean some ethics boundaries. And of course, our students, they understand it and I think that it really fits in Kazakh culture.

During the lesson observation, I did not notice any aspects that might challenge students. They were confident and actively participated in the discussion. Students were willing to share their points of view with their classmates and the teacher. Generally, the atmosphere in the classroom was friendly and hospitable.

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Moreover, majority of the participants believe that the current international program fits with Kazakh cultural values and it does not interfere with the local values at all. However, Deborah was the only teacher who unintentionally highlighted that IB changes students and sometimes they were forced to do that.

To fully reach all or one of the profiles you need Creativity Action Service (CAS) component. Because it makes you, regardless if you want it or you do not want it you have to work on creativity. You have to be creative. You have to love sports; even if you do not love sports, it will teach you to love sports. And it makes big empathies on surveys. So that is how you reach to be open-minded, because you have to work with so many people. It will make you extravert, even if you an introvert.

In her lesson, I noticed that there were some students who were shy and did not participate in the whole class discussion so much. However, when Deborah organized students into groups and allocated roles to students, all the students had to contribute to the group work equally in order to fulfill the task successfully. These “shy” students had to participate in the group work actively.

The participants highlighted some issues they faced when implementing the IB program in their school. For example, Alan, Math teacher reported that the Diploma Program (higher school) was easy to implement, as the program was structured and there was clear instruction. Teachers were aware of what to do and how to do it. However, implementation of MYP (middle school) was challenging, there was no clear instruction and many aspects were defined at a very conceptual level and teachers had to decide what to do relying on their experience.

We were very well in the implementation of the Diploma Program [the teaching program for 11-12 grade students] but when we started to authorize the Middle Years Program [teaching program for 7-10 grade students], there were a lot of difficulties. Every person understood the guide and the elements of the Middle Years Program differently. So, there are a lot of contradictions that were told us by experts, forums and other resources. So, sometimes we need to find our way of solution. Sometimes our ways did not work, so we needed to change something. So, it was quite hard to find good solution when it was not given clearly by the IB”.

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Biology subject was difficult to observe, as students defended their projects and the whole lesson they were presenting their finding to the class. In general, all the participants said that they did not have any problem in implementing of IB components in their classrooms, as they were provided with various professional development courses and it helped them greatly.

In this chapter I highlighted findings which emerged from the data collection and which were categorized according to the following themes: 1) teachers` prior experience and learning about IB, 2) teachers as change agents, 3) the role of administration, 4) implementation of international program and its components. Participants` responses, ideas, and opinions are carefully interpreted and presented in the discussion chapter. Ideas are written in the same order as in the current chapter.

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Chapter V. Discussion

The present study researched attitudes, beliefs and concerns of Kazakhstani IB teachers toward the implementation of the international program in the Kazakhstani context from the perspectives of Math, Physics, Biology, English language, Design, and History teachers in one IB school of Astana. During the data analysis, three significant themes were identified: 1) teachers' prior experience and learning about IB, 2) teachers as change agents, 3) implementation of international program and its components. In addition, relationships between the factors and their effects on the implementation process were identified.

This chapter presents discussion of the findings in relation to the literature review section and it is organised in the same structure as the previous chapter. After that practical implications will be identified with recommendations for the school and for educational authorities to be applied.

Teachers' prior experience and learning about IB program was found to be the pivotal reason for effective implementation of the IB program in the school because it relates to attitudes and perceptions of IB, which in turn influence practices. Findings reveal that novice teachers with no prior teaching experience are more likely to successfully implement the international program, as they have nothing to compare with and they are open to new aspects. However, empirical studies reveal that experienced teachers tend to resist changes in the educational field for a variety of reasons. For example, Burkhalter and Shegebayev (2012) claimed that experienced teachers are more likely resist teaching new programs which are based on Western ideology. Moreover, the scholars pointed out that if in Soviet time students were taught using the rote-learning approach, presently the learning process mostly focuses on student-centered learning (Burkhalter & Shegebayev, 2012). Additionally, experienced teachers who have worked in the educational field for a long

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time, they have seen many reforms adopted by the government since the state gained its independence. Moreover, most of these educational reforms failed during the implementation period which negatively influences teachers` attitude towards any reforms and changes (Massyrova, Zhimagulova, Ospanova, Khaidarova, & Issayeva, 2015).

All teachers who participated in the current study perceived IB program to an academically challenging program that develops particular skills in a student to inquire, think critically, and consider ethical consequences of their actions. Similarly, Walker (2010) like many other scholars revealed that the present international program gives opportunity not only to develop a student from the academic side. It also fosters behavior and virtues that result in the balanced development of a student who will be able to meet requirements of the global labor market. Van Oord (2013) also supports the idea of the harmonious development of a student. He stated, “The organisation wants to educate students academically, but also wishes to equip them with certain attitudes and patterns of behavior” (p. 208). Furthermore, IBO itself claims that the components of the program that include academic and non-academic activities encourage development skills and dispositions for higher-order thinking skills and moral education (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014). In general, all the participants showed a positive attitude towards teaching the current program. All the teachers acknowledged benefits of the program both for students and the school. Teachers stated that IB certificate is highly welcomed by most of the universities across the world. Moreover, they shared that IB students are more likely to be enrolled in universities compared with other graduates. This finding reflects the idea of IB program, “for students, success in the IB often results in advanced standing, course credit, scholarships, and other admissions related benefits at many universities” (IBO, 2016). For teachers, teaching the current program promotes being up-to-date and it encourages self-development. In addition, teaching the program

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challenges teachers to obtain the same skills as students in order to effectively develop

successful students. Thus, all the IB teachers have very good thinking, communicating and social skills.

The findings indicate the vitality of providing professional development courses for teachers to successfully implement the international program which is considered to be one of the main requirements of IB. All the participants pointed out that IB program demands on all teaching staff as well as administrative staff to be up to date with requirements of the program in order to successfully implement the components of the program. It means that school teaching staff and administration should be provided with professional development courses such as workshops, internships and other courses equally. Furthermore, response to the requirements of IB program influenced their understanding and perceptions of change agents. Teachers become change agents. To underpin the finding derived from the data analysis, the view of Fullan on establishing and adjusting the professional culture where reforms are implemented successfully was considered. He suggested organizing various workshops and courses for teachers which would positively influence school culture and which would help effectively adopt reforms (1996). Additionally, Lukacs and Galluzzo described that “since teachers are closest to the problem of student learning, we believe they should be the agents of change when it comes to renewing their schools to improve student learning” (2014, p. 7).

From participants` accounts, mentorship practiced at the school is also vital for the successful implementation of the program. They acknowledged the role of experienced colleagues as well as administration in providing ongoing support that helped them a lot in understanding the components of the program. Chou (2011) also emphasized the role of mentorship in sustaining the transformation of a novice teacher into an expert teacher. Moreover, the scholar highlighted the role of colleagues, school culture, and history of a

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place in general in the effective “transformation” from the beginner to the expert teacher.

Similarly, Korcheck and Reese (2002) revealed “successful leaders were more likely to demonstrate facilitative behaviors by means of shared decision making, motivating others, and enabling others to perform effectively” (p. 4). Moreover, it is worthy to note that mentorship is a new practice for the present school and we cannot claim that every novice teacher gets equally good opportunities for self-development (Chou, 2011). According to participants` responses the effectiveness of the mentorship varies for multiple reasons where responsibility occupies a crucial place. Some reasons for example that might hinder effective mentorship are teachers` overload, personal issues, and unclear instruction. In addition, participants revealed that practicing mentorship at the school gives reciprocal benefits for both novice and experienced teachers. Similarly, Wadee, Keane, Dietz, and Hay (2010) revealed that mentorship is effective when it is voluntary. The reason for such “interdependent” collaboration is experienced teachers could introduce the nature of the program and acquaint novice teachers with the main requirements in order for them to adjust to a new place whereas novice teachers have a plethora of creative approaches to teaching which will result in differentiation and effective implementation of the program. Similar to O` Hainley`s idea (2014) about establishing mentorship at schools having a long-term effective impact on the sustained development of teaching and where teachers learn how to collaborate to achieve common goals, Fullan (2002) suggested “Effective school leaders are key to large-scale, sustainable education reform” (p. 16).

As mentioned above, all the teachers who participated in the current research emphasised the role of administration in establishing a culture in a school in which the entire school community effectively collaborates with each other. Furthermore, they revealed that in order to establish a hospitable atmosphere at the school, firstly, the administration should treat every single teacher equally. However, teachers are not always

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treated in the same way and have equal opportunity for development by attending various courses and workshops. This issue might result in a high teacher turnover that consequently negatively influences the effectiveness of the implementation process.

Another issue that might hinder the successful implementation of the international program is that teachers experience much tension due to the fulfillment of IB requirements and the national curriculum which result in teachers overload and subsequently in teachers burn-out. The participants shared the same view on overload as Chapman, Weidman, Cohen, and Mercer (2005) who claimed that incorporation of international practices and reforms launched in Kazakhstani educational field over last 20 years put a lot of pressure on teachers who are expected to fulfill various duties effectively and which resulted in teachers overload and burn-out. Similarly, Day (2002) revealed "Teachers in most countries across the world are experiencing similar government interventions in the form of national curricula, national tests, criteria for measuring the quality of schools and the publication of these on the internet in order to raise standards and promote more parental choice" (p. 678). Moreover, since there are many reforms to be adopted, principals having many tasks to fulfill experience work intensification. Subsequently, such intensification could lead to decreasing effectiveness of a job and burnout. For instance, Savoye (2001) highlighted the issue of principal overload "principals are facing longer hours in their day job, plus more nights than ever when they have to return to school for sporting events, theater productions, or community meetings" (p. 16).

According to the findings derived from the data analysis, unequal treatment of teachers by the administration leads to decline in motivation among teachers and ineffective fulfilment of the requirements of the program. Participants suggested a number ways to motivate teaching staff to work effectively. Firstly, they pointed out the significance of establishing a school-wide system with clear instructions and deadlines and

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allocating equal responsibilities across all teaching staff. Teachers believe that by doing this, it would help to create a hospitable climate at the school and it would increase teachers` motivation. Moreover, they think that it would help to prevent the issue of teacher turnover which in turn would positively influence the implementation process. Secondly, they highlighted the incentive of an increased salary in improving the motivation of teachers. According to participants` perspective, the level of productivity in teachers is tightly connected with the amount of money they are paid. Similarly, Muijs et al., 2004 noted that effective implementation of reforms depends on teachers` confidence that their efforts are appreciated and valued by their administration and the school community itself. Moreover, Brown (2015) suggested that “Continuous professional development-linked to school and embedded in the workplace is also essential for success” (para. 24).

Furthermore, participants shared that the current program is somewhat challenging for teachers to understand and to implement. The reason is that IB requires teachers to meet particular expectations such as obtaining necessary skills and understanding of all the components of the program. Bullock (2011) stated a similar idea that in order for teachers to successfully implement the attributes of the Learner Profile, they have to get right inside the nature of each of the attributes and then, skillfully incorporate them into the learning process. In addition, teachers found it difficult to implement the components of the program due to their number and variety. Similarly, IBO states that the MYP program is composed of eight subject groups and four core elements that do not relate to any of subject groups. Nevertheless, they are considered to be the main components of the program successful fulfillment of which result in the development of academic and moral sides of a student (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014a). Despite that most of the teachers found the present program very stressful, some of them reported that they try to cope with this stress to overcome constraints. Teachers also shared that to effectively

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fulfill the requirements of IB they must reflect upon the work done and seek a variety of ways to increase the quality of the program.

Another difficulty that teachers face when teaching and implementing IB program is the holistic approach of it. Participants reported that IB wants its students to learn one issue/topic from various subject perspectives which means teachers are to focus not only on the content of their subject they should also be able to connect and consider from diverse perspectives. This considerably increased responsibility and extra work for teachers, as they have to learn and make connections between different subjects. Thus, some participants reported that they are afraid of not giving sufficient information to students which might hinder their development.

Some participants also mentioned students' attitudes toward the current IB program. Participants said that IB program is challenging for students, as some aspects of the program do not fit with the cultural peculiarities of the students. The current finding contradicts the IB view that the present program can be applied in various schools of different geographical and educational contexts (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2016). Bunnell (as cited in Calvert & Tan, n.d.) also supports the idea of opportunity of IB program application in diverse contexts. However, Walker (2010) claims there are scholars who reveal IB program Western-oriented teaching program, as initially it was founded in the West. Thus, if teachers want their students to succeed in the completion of the program, they need to adapt some components to their local context, as they are defined at the conceptual level and could be interpreted and adapted to various contexts (van Oord, 2013). Thus, implementation of the Learner Profile depends not only on students' understanding but also on the understanding of teachers, parents and all stakeholders in the IB community (International Baccalaureate, 2014a). In order for Kazakhstani IB schools to successfully implement the IB LP, a school community

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including teachers and the school administration are to interpret meanings of the IB LP considering local cultural peculiarities.

Gauging the findings derived from data analysis and literature it is still debatable whether IB program is culturally relevant and could be implemented in a non-Western context. To address the present question it was decided to examine the definition of culturally relevant pedagogy given by Durden, Escalante, and Blich (2015) who stated that culturally relevant pedagogy allows students to develop their intellectual, social, emotional and political senses through obtaining theoretical knowledge, skills and values. Similarly, participants of the study said that IB program encourages students to develop holistically. It fosters not only the academic side but also it develops moral values of students. Furthermore, the present program expects its students to develop various skills which will equip them to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world. Bearing in mind criteria that defines culturally relevant pedagogy: 1. Students should be academically successful; 2. Students must develop cultural competence; 3. Students must develop higher order thinking skills to meet requirement of the contemporary world given by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) and participants' responses, it was concluded that the IB program meets all three criteria. By giving first criterion on students' success, the researcher means that despite the difference in social, cultural backgrounds of a student, s/he must develop academic skills. Second criterion refers to maintaining cultural integrity by students and the role of teachers' in using cultural peculiarities of their students to provide more relevant and quality education. Third criterion is about engaging "the world and others critically" using academic knowledge and obtained skills in the classroom (Gloria Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 162).

For example, most participants reported that the current program is academically rigorous and encourages students to develop higher order thinking skills. Moreover, during

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the observation of the participants' lessons, it was identified that teachers pay much attention to developing international awareness. However, according to the responses of some participants some components such as CAS and Theory of Knowledge push students to go out of their box and think differently. Some requirements of the components influence students to change the way they act and foster ongoing reflection of students upon their actions which is somehow unusual for the local culture. Additionally, participants reported that students, who are mainly introverts, there are struggling with meeting some requirements of the curriculum rather than their counterparts - extraverts.

Considering that many components of the IB program were founded at the abstract level, teachers must interpret them using their own experience which results in multiple perspectives and misunderstandings between teachers when implementing the program, in particular MYP. Teachers also reported that they were stressed-out when they received one instruction on how to incorporate particular components of the program from their mentors and another instruction on the implementation of the same component from expat experts. This misunderstanding led to confusion, overload and extra work for local teachers. However, they highlighted the positive influence of visiting classes of Western colleagues, school-partners abroad who successfully established the current program. Teachers also shared that visiting schools that were already authorized would give them an opportunity to see the process of implementation in the practice and to adopt their best practice by adapting to our local culture/context.

All the participants indicated the importance of the IB program in sustaining development of higher order thinking skills of students. Moreover, teachers highlighted the role of the international program teachers' self-development. In addition, they reported that dealing with the requirements of IB pushed them to become change-agents which in turn can influence the implementation process and change decision-making process in the

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school. However, it was also identified that implementation of IB program has its own unique pitfalls such as interfering with local cultural peculiarities which has a negative influence on students and their academic performance. Nevertheless, according to the responses of participants, such issues could be avoided if teachers were able to deeply understand and interpret the components of the IP program in order to adapt them respectfully and with consideration of the local cultural context.

Recommendations

Considering that successful implementation of IB program leads to the development of students' higher-order thinking skills and to their future success in enrolling at universities, findings of the study might be taken into consideration by policy-makers and stakeholders in order to improve the implementation process. Moreover, findings derived from the data analysis say that there are many interventions from the government side that leads to the decline of teachers' effectiveness, their overload, and eventually teacher burn-out. Therefore, it is suggested to be acquainted with the nature of the IB program and its requirements for the educational authorities and to follow them. Additionally, the current group of people should fund the current project and to organize various professional development courses abroad. Additionally, considering that many schools in various Western and non-Western countries have already implemented the current program, it is suggested to make a declaration for collaboration in order for the local IB schools to adopt and adapt their best practices.

It is apparent in the study that school administration is pivotal in establishing the entire system with clear instructions and realistic deadlines. Moreover, as was derived from the data analysis, the school authority has to learn more about IB program in order to meet requirements of this program. In order for the school administration to be up-to-date with

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the requirements of IB program, they should organize special courses for the administration team and learn the procedures of implementation of the IB components.

It can be seen from the findings that qualified teachers are considered to be pivotal in the successful implementation of IB components. Thus, the administration of the school should continue to practice mentoring by setting up requirements and frames, as it has a positive influence on developing teachers` skills and abilities needed for the implementation of the international program. Secondly, administration should allocate more money for funding professional development courses that will allow teachers to participate in and to obtain necessary knowledge and skills. Furthermore, they have to encourage teachers to be change agents to successfully implement the current program and its components by giving bonuses and other benefits. Additionally, in order to develop a bottom-up decision making process and support the notion of teachers as change agents administration needs to create a climate in which the entire school community participates in the decision making process which in turn will result in successful implementation of the program and will help to avoid misunderstanding and underestimating. Similarly, Fullan (2014) reported “as they develop the skill set – the seven competencies – they are in a better position to challenge the status quo effectively because they create conditions for overall success” (p. 129).

Furthermore, findings reveal that administration needs to motivate their teaching staff by allocating work equally among teachers and increasing teachers` salary. It is worthy to note that Kazakhstani teachers have a low salary which also influences the effectiveness of their work (Maratovna, 2015). Therefore, to eradicate the issue of teachers` low motivation, administration should praise them by giving bonuses and increase amount of their salary which subsequently will attract more specialists and eliminate the issue of teachers` turnover.

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As for teacher training, particularly at the universities, it is suggested to create a memorandum with local universities to prepare students of a particular specialty for future teaching at schools. It will address the issue of insufficient number of qualified specialists and eliminate the issue of teacher turnover.

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Chapter VI. Conclusion

By examining the perspectives of Kazakhstani IB teachers regarding their role in the International Baccalaureate program to develop a successful student who will be able to meet requirements of the modern world, it was identified that the present program is vital in enhancing students' higher-order thinking skills and holistically developing students. Furthermore, the thoroughness and rigor in student development depends on how effectively the program is interpreted and implemented. In addition, the study highlights the role of every single member of the school community in delivering the program which can be used further by educational stakeholders to improve the implementation of international curricula within Kazakhstani context.

Findings indicate benefits of conducting professional development courses in the successful realization of the international program in various non – Western contexts, particularly in Kazakhstani IB schools. Moreover, according to participants' responses practicing distributed leadership and establishing clear expectations also result in effective implementation of the international program. However, some drawbacks of establishing the current program were also identified. They are teacher overload, and a mismatch between the IB values and the local culture and values.

Moreover, the issue of whether the IB program is culturally relevant and could be implemented in a non-Western context is still debatable. To address the issue of cultural intervention, it is important to pay attention to the nature of the program and to properly interpret the idea of the IB program and integrate them in the classroom. Moreover, school authorities are responsible for endorsing effective teaching and learning by establishing a school-wide system. Furthermore, new policies and reforms should be adopted and clear instructions with firm deadlines should be put into practice and followed. In general, it is apparent from findings and literature that successful development of IB components will

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positively influence the implementation of the whole program. It is vital to note that novice teachers who have no prior teaching experience tend to successfully implement the international program over their experienced colleagues.

Limitations and future research

The present study has some limitations which should be taken into account when planning future research. Since the study employed qualitative approach which aimed at highlighting lived experiences of people from their perspectives, the study was mostly based on the subjective perspectives of the participants. However, the researcher tried to eliminate the present limitation by triangulating findings using document analysis and classroom observation.

Sampling. As the nature of the study was to investigate the perceptions of IB program by Kazakhstani IB teachers, the purposeful sampling was employed for the present study. As the present study was conducted in the English language, the researcher used specific criteria to select participants where one of the main criteria was the ability to speak English. Thus, all the participants were young novice teachers with no previous teaching experience and with experience living abroad. It, in turn, influenced the findings and did not give a holistic view on the topic. Furthermore, bearing in mind that English is the third language of communication, not all participants could express their ideas to the fullest extent.

Data collection. The researcher faced challenges when transcribing the audio records. The quality of the interview was somewhat poor because some participants spoke quietly and it was difficult to understand particular words and expressions. Therefore, the researcher had to go for member-checking which was somewhat difficult as at that particular time slot teachers were very busy with their reports.

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Future research. It would be beneficial to conduct mix-method research to get more in-depth picture of how Kazakhstani IB teachers perceive the present program. Moreover, it would be more effective to include all the IB schools of Astana city to see the whole picture of implementing international teaching within Kazakhstani context. To obtain various and rich data, the number of participants should be increased. Furthermore, the interview should be conducted in Russian and Kazakh languages which would result in recruiting not only young teachers but also experienced. In addition, including students in future studies would incorporate feedback from students on the influence of the program and would give a holistic picture on whether IB interferes with their values.

Researcher reflection

As my first experience of a case study, the research brought uncertainties, challenges and delight. In the very beginning of my research path, it was difficult for me to choose a topic and research question for the investigation. I realized that the creation of research questions has its own pitfalls and my research findings are tightly connected with the quality of the designed research question. Therefore, I was somewhat stressed out and felt uncertainty when writing the introduction and literature review parts. However, my supervisor could provide strong support that helped me greatly in “putting basis for the future research”. Another thing that made me stressed out is that I had very tough deadlines. Moreover, I needed to fulfill all the requirements of my supervisor and at the same time to fulfill my duties at work.

September and October were the most challenging months for me and I even started thinking that I might drop-out from the program because of such load. Surprisingly, I have survived that “harsh” period and could continue working on my thesis because I understood that many people believed in me and it was my choice to try myself as a

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researcher. Moreover, it was my initiative to apply for the Master Program and that is why I changed my mind to a positive side and stopped complaining about overload.

The most interesting part of my thesis writing was data collection, as I was working with participants and could gather information which would address my questions. While I was writing findings and discussion chapters I felt confident because I had obtained rich data from participants. It was a delight for me to work with the responses of my participants, to analyze and interpret them.

Overall, I enjoyed the current process of writing the thesis. During this period I always felt support from my supervisor and it made my work easier.

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Appendix A

TEACHER INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title: “Teachers’ perceptions, attitudes and concerns about the implementation of the International Baccalaureate program in one IB school in Astana.”

Dear Participant,

DESCRIPTION: You are invited to participate in a **research study** on the purpose to explore Kazakhstani teachers` understanding, attitudes and beliefs regarding the new IB program. Particularly, the Learner Profile in order to deeply understand their concerns and challenges. This is important to note that the researcher is not going to evaluate programs or teachers practice, the only aim of the researcher is to know more about teachers` experiences.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: You will be asked a series of questions about your perceptions and any experiences of teaching international curriculum. Additionally, you will be asked to spend some time for follow-up interview questions in order to avoid bias and misinterpretation from the researcher sider. Your participation will take approximately 45 minutes. We will allocate one classroom, so it will be convenient to take interview and avoid cases of being interrupted by other people.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: There may be minor psychological risks. Since you are currently working in an IB school, there is risk of information leak and to be identified. In order to avoid such risks you have the rights to reject or stop the interview at any time if they feel pressure from the researcher side or uncomfortable with interview or its questions. Please, be informed that the researcher is there to know about your teaching experiences only but to not evaluate/ judge their programs or work. Your responses will not influence the relationship with your school and Nazarbayev University. You will have an opportunity to take a copy of this form.

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Your names will be anonymized by giving pseudonyms (e.g. your names will be coded as teacher 1, teacher 2 and so on). The researcher will disclose that the findings will be read by the supervisor and presented in the final thesis paper and in conferences or publications potentially. After transcribing, the researcher will keep all the audio-recording and transcripts in a safe and secure place for 2 years and will not share their responses with others. Moreover, to keep confidentiality of the interviewee, the researcher will keep the raw data separate from the consent forms. And for the site, the researcher will not disclose any information that may identify the participant or the site. The collected information will be used only for the purpose mentioned above and will not be used in any other purposes. Your name and educational institution will not be acknowledged in any data reported.

Due to the lack of studies on the implementation of the IB program in a Kazakhstani context, particularly the IB Learner Profile, the current study, first, will greatly contribute to the research/knowledge gap in this field. Second, educational stakeholders may use the findings and recommendations of this paper for further development of quality education in Kazakhstan. However, the researcher does not guarantee that the participants will benefit from the present research.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS: If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this project, please understand your **participation is voluntary** and you have the **right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty**. Additionally, your responses will not influence the relationship with your colleagues and administration at your current job (school) and Nazarbayev University in the future in case if you decide to apply for Master Degree or PhD. **The alternative is not to participate**. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. The results of this research study may be presented at scientific or professional meetings or published in scientific journals.

TEACHERS` PERCEPTIONS, ATTITUDES AND CONCERNS ABOUT THE IB PROGRAM IN ONE IB SCHOOL IN ASTANA
CONTACT INFORMATION:

Questions: If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research, its procedures, risks and benefits, contact the Master`s Thesis Supervisor for this student work, Dr. Amanda Ajodhia-Andrews [-amanda.ajodhia@nu.edu.kz](mailto:amanda.ajodhia@nu.edu.kz).

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

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

RE: “Teachers’ perceptions, attitudes and concerns about the implementation of the International Baccalaureate program in one IB school in Astana.”

- I have carefully read the information provided;
- I have been given full information regarding the purpose and procedures of the study;
- I am aware that my interview will be recorded;
- I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will be seen only by the researcher and research supervisor 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.

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Researcher`s Signature: _____ Date: _____

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

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Appendix B:

PRINCIPAL INFORMED CONSENT FORM

**Title: “Teachers’ perceptions, attitudes and concerns about the implementation of
the International Baccalaureate program in one IB school in Astana.”**

Dear Principal,

DESCRIPTION: I would like to invite you in assisting me with conducting a research study. Before you decide to assist or not you need to understand what the purpose of the research is and what is expected from you and participants. Please take time to read the information very carefully. If you have questions or concerns, please let me know. Please take time to decide whether or not to facilitate the present research. This is important to note that the researcher is not going to evaluate programs or teachers practice, the only aim of the researcher is to know more about teachers` experiences.

First of all, let me introduce myself. My name is, Nazerke Mukazhanova, and I am studying at Nazarbayev University at Master Degree course on Leadership in Education and currently conducting the research for my master thesis. The purpose of my study is to explore Kazakhstani teachers` understanding, attitudes and beliefs regarding the new IB program and in particular the Learner Profile in order to understand their concerns and challenges.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: For the present research I need to interview 6 IB teachers from different academic subject groups in order to gain in-depth understanding of how IB components, particularly IB Learner Profile is understood and implemented by the teachers. The interview will be conducted in one-on-one form and will last for about 45 minutes. For the interviewing teachers the researcher needs one classroom, so it will be convenient to take interview and avoid cases of being interrupted by other people.

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RISKS AND BENEFITS: There may be minor psychological risks. Since you are currently working in an IB school, there is risk of information leak and to be identified. In order to avoid such risks you have the rights to reject or stop the interview at any time if they feel pressure from the researcher side or uncomfortable with interview or its questions. Please, be informed that the researcher is there to know about your teaching experiences only but to not evaluate/ judge their programs or work. Your responses will not influence the relationship with your school and Nazarbayev University. You will have an opportunity to take a copy of this form.

Your names will be anonymized by giving pseudonyms (e.g. your names will be coded as teacher 1, teacher 2 and so on). The researcher will disclose that the findings will be read by the supervisor and presented in the final thesis paper and in conferences or publications potentially. After transcribing, the researcher will keep all the audio-recording and transcripts in a safe and secure place for 2 years and will not share their responses with others. Moreover, to keep confidentiality of the interviewee, the researcher will keep the raw data separate from the consent forms. And for the site, the researcher will not disclose any information that may identify the participant or the site. The collected information will be used only for the purpose mentioned above and will not be used in any other purposes. Your name and educational institution will not be acknowledged in any data reported.

Due to the lack of studies on the implementation of the IB program in a Kazakhstani context, particularly the IB Learner Profile, the current study, first, will greatly contribute to the research/knowledge gap in this field. Second, educational stakeholders may use the findings and recommendations of this paper for further development of quality education in Kazakhstan. However, the researcher does not guarantee that the participants will benefit from the present research.

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PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS: If you have read this form and have decided to assist in this project, please, understand **participation of teachers is voluntary** and they have the **right to withdraw the consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty**. Additionally, their responses will not influence the relationship with Nazarbayev University in the future in case if they decide to apply for Master Degree or Ph.D. **The alternative is not to participate**. Teachers have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. The results of this research study may be presented at scientific or professional meetings or published in scientific journals.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Questions: If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research, its procedures, risks and benefits, contact the Master's Thesis Supervisor for this student work, Dr. Amanda Ajodhia-Andrews – amanda.ajodhia@nu.edu.kz.

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

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

RE: "Teachers' perceptions, attitudes and concerns about implementation of the International Baccalaureate program in one of school in Astana."

- I have carefully read the information provided;
- I have been given full information regarding the purpose and procedures of the study;
- I am aware that participants' interviews will be recorded;

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- I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will be seen only by the researcher and research supervisor and will not be revealed to anyone else;
- I understand that participants are 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 assist in this study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher`s signature:_____ Date: _____

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

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Appendix C: Interview protocol

Interview Script:

Hello! First of all, let me introduce myself. My name is, Nazerke Mukazhanova, and I am studying at Nazarbayev University at Master Degree course on Leadership in Education and currently conducting the research for my master thesis. I am happy to have you as interviewee and to see your willingness to contribute to the research of implementation of IB program and its main element the Learner Profile in Kazakhstani context. Just to remind the purpose of the study is to explore Kazakhstani teachers` understanding, attitudes and beliefs regarding the new IB program, and in particular the Learner Profile in order to better understand their concerns and challenges. Thank you for sacrificing your time spending with me. Our interview will take about 45 minutes. Please, feel free to share with your experience and opinion, as all of your responses will be kept in a safe and your name will be anonymized. I also ask you to forget that I am working here and think of me as a researcher. If you feel pressure from my side or very sensitive to you questions, do not hesitate to stop at any time. If you have read information and decided to participate in the current research, please sign the consent form. In case if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask me.

1. What is your name?
2. Tell me more about teaching background.
 - a. What subject do you teach?
 - b. What is your previous teaching experience? (all your teaching experience)
3. Tell me more about your experience in working with the IB system.
 - a. How long have you been in the IB system?
 - b. What subject do you teach?
4. Please tell how did you learn about the IB program?

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- 4.1 Were you provided with professional development courses to get insight of the nature of the IB program?
5. Please share with your point of view on the role of IB program in developing students` higher order thinking skills.
- 5.1 How do you think the IB program is working to develop students` higher order thinking skills?
6. Please explain what the Learner Profile means to you? How do you implement this profile in your classrooms? Please share some examples
7. Please share your opinion about any aspects of the IB program which are unclear/ challenging to understand and implement.
- a. What aspects/components are the most challenging for you to understand?
- b. What was the most challenging component of IB program for you to implement?
8. What about benefits?
9. Tell me, please, about the role of administration in assisting you with the IB program elements.
- a. What kinds of supports administration has to assist you with the IB program elements?
- b. What concerns do you still have regarding implementation of the program?
10. Please share with your ideas and suggestions for the further improvement of the implementation process.
- a. The role of colleagues
- b. The role of administration
- c. Personal professional development courses

Interview Script:

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“Thank you again for spending these 45 minutes with me. Your contribution will be highly appreciated. Please, be informed that I will send you my transcript with your responses where you may do any changes in case if you feel that I have interpreted your words wrong.”

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Appendix D: Observational protocol

Date: _____

Location: _____

Subject: _____

Time: _____

Topic(s): _____

Outcomes: _____

Areas to Observe: Teaching strategy (how does the teacher incorporate the IB elements in the classroom?), teaching aids/materials used in the classroom, assessment strategies used to evaluate students, confidence level, body language, students` engagement, students` confidence, students` feedback.

Observations Notes	Researcher Reflections

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Appendix E: Recruitment Email

Dear teachers,

I hope my email finds you all doing well. I am writing to you to inform that I am currently conducting the research for my master thesis. The purpose of my study is to explore how Kazakhstani IB teachers understand the IB program and implement it, particularly the Learner Profile in their classroom. I am very interested in learning about your personal experiences with the IB program and learner profile component. I will be happy to have you contributed to the present research by participating in the interview. Any subject teacher who has willingness to contribute to the present study can participate in interview which will last for about 45 minutes. The only thing which is needed from the participant is to be honest and be not afraid to share with their valuable experience on implementing the IB program in their classroom, as it will be hugely contribute to the present study and might influence the improvement of the quality education.

* This is important to know that your participation is voluntary and you have the right to participate or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss to benefits to which you may be entitled.

* You will not be identified, as I am going to anonymize your names and your school's name by giving pseudonyms (e.g., teacher 1, teacher 2, and school 1).

* Additionally, your responses will not influence your relationship with your current school and Nazarbayev University.

* You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions or stop the study at any time.

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If you are willing to be a part of the present research, please let me know by responding to this email or by personal visit. My email is n.mukazhanova@nu.edu.kz, my contact number is +77026155311

Many thanks.