

2 CLINICAL AND SPECIAL PSYCHOLOGY КЛИНИКАЛЫҚ ЖӘНЕ АРНАЙЫ ПСИХОЛОГИЯ КЛИНИЧЕСКАЯ И СПЕЦИАЛЬНАЯ ПСИХОЛОГИЯ

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THE PSYCHOLOGICAL READINESS OF THE EDUCATORS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AT UNIVERSITIES OF KAZAKHSTAN

Abstract

Inclusive education is a fundamental right that aims to provide equal opportunities and access to quality education for students with diverse backgrounds, abilities, and special educational needs. In recent years, our country has made significant progress in embracing inclusive education at the university level. By fostering an inclusive learning environment, Kazakhstan is not only empowering every learner but also paving the way for a more inclusive society. This article explores the importance of inclusive education for university students in Kazakhstan and the initiatives taken to ensure its implementation. Moreover, the psychological determinants of the readiness of educators for inclusive teaching of university students with disabilities have been studied. The analysis of scientific sources has shown that a positive attitude and appropriate training of teachers are decisive in this problem. The findings from the conducted survey for diagnosing the level of inclusive readiness of university teachers show that the experience of instructing students with SEN has a big impact on the educators' attitude towards practicing inclusive education, as well as their level of confidence in own capabilities and competencies. Further expansion and continuous evaluation of inclusive education programs will ensure sustainable progress towards a more inclusive society.

Key words: inclusive education, educators, university students, the psychological readiness, inclusive teaching practices, special educational needs (SEN).

Introduction

Relevance of the study. Currently, the number of young people with disabilities and SEN around the Globe is increasing. In these terms, inclusive education is seen as an optimal kind of learning that facilitates the process of socialization and adaptation to the adult life of a personality with disabilities. The problem of inclusive education in Kazakhstan has been addressed primarily in schools and kindergartens, and less in higher education institutions. Nevertheless, inclusive education in our country at the university level is gaining momentum, aiming to address barriers that hinder students' access and create a nurturing environment that encourages success.

Inclusive education acknowledges the importance of catering to the diverse learning needs and abilities of all students. The modern education system seeks effective ways of providing inclusive education and strives to improve the quality of teaching for all participants. Thanks to inclusion, students with special educational needs can be actively engaged in the learning process and group activities, encouraged to communicate with peers and exchange their viewpoints, enhancing interaction skills in a natural environment. On the other hand, the students without health limitations learn to treat students with SEN with respect and understanding.

Main provisions

This article demonstrates the significance of inclusive education in promoting equal opportunities and positive outcomes among university students, as well as the necessity to analyze the structure of inclusive readiness, considering the role of educators' personality in successful implementation of inclusive practices. With the regard of less attention paid to the practical realisation of inclusive education at university level as well as to the instructors' degree of readiness for working with students with SEN, it is expedient to investigate the psychological readiness of the teachers of universities to provide this kind of education.

The object of the study is the system of inclusive education in higher educational institutions.

The subject of the study is the degree of psychological readiness of university teachers for inclusive education.

The aim of the research is to analyse the benefits of inclusive practices in universities, as well as to evaluate the instructors' average level of psychological readiness for teaching university students with SEN.

The tasks of the study are the following:

- 1) to break down the profits of integrating inclusive education in universities;
- 2) to review the issue of the development of inclusive education in current conditions;
- 3) to diagnose the level of psychological readiness of university teachers for inclusive education;
- 4) to analyse and evaluate the received data on the inclusive readiness of university teachers.

Literature review

Among foreign authors, the studies of the structure and diagnostics of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education by K.C. Stoiber [1], E. Avramidis [2], J. Campbell [3], should be noted. The results obtained within the framework of their methodology "My Thinking about Inclusion" reveal that the appropriate training of educators plays a crucial role in the formation of progressive attitudes towards inclusion [1].

Such scholars as Black [4], Gelbar [5], and Morina [6] in their works reported insufficient training in the types of disability and SEN, as well as a lack of awareness of regulatory documents, inclusive practices and methodologies among tutors.

The fact that a young person belongs to a linguo-cultural minority, or the fact that he has a certain psychological-physical deviation from the norm requires recognition of the need to create such a student an inclusive educational environment. University teachers ought to identify the features of the organisation of the comprehensive learning process within the framework of vocational training.

From the point of view of E.V. Kilimnik, the Professor of General Psychology and Humanities, university teachers should be guided by such beliefs and principles as:

- ♦ all students are able to study and attend classes at university corresponding to their psychophysiological status;
- ♦ everyone receives suitable educational programs and a curriculum tailored to their needs;
- ♦ all learners are engaged in joint and extracurricular activities;
- ♦ every person benefits from cooperation at the university [7].

In these terms, inclusive education agrees with the humanistic approach to teaching, acknowledging the rights of the students as independent personalities, regardless of their health issues and backgrounds.

The pedagogical process with an inclusive approach facilitates the acquisition of the necessary competencies by students, according to the State Educational Standard. S.N. Sorokoumova points out peculiar conditions for people with SEN to be taken into account:

- 1) compliance with the rights of students to full-fledged education;
- 2) ergonomic environment (ramps, elevators, medical office, specially equipped toilets and gym, etc.);
- 3) organizational and methodological support of the educational process (individual training programs, innovative ICT in the auditoriums, regular control of students' knowledge);
- 4) monitoring of inclusive education (tracking learning achievements of individual students) [8].

According to psychologists C.V. Alyokhina, E.L. Agafonova and M.A. Alekseeva, the main psychological barriers are the following:

- 1) "fear of harm of inclusion" for other participants of the educational process;
- 2) negative attitude and prejudices of the tutor;
- 3) lack of the professional competence of the teacher;
- 4) unwillingness to change and adapt to inclusive education;
- 5) psychological unpreparedness to work with "special" students.

The readiness of a teacher to work in the frame of inclusive education is deemed by the researchers as a set of two key parameters: professional readiness and psychological readiness [9].

Among Kazakhstani scientists, Zhangazina M.K. differentiates between objective and subjective milestones of the development of inclusive education. Subjective ones include:

- ♦ insufficient development of standard inclusive procedures;
- ♦ a lack of indicators for monitoring the process and outcomes of learning of students with disabilities;
- ♦ a limited number of teaching aids in the Kazakh language;
- ♦ lack of special knowledge of educators for the organization of the inclusive pedagogical process;
- ♦ a little amount of regular consultations on the part of specialists;
- ♦ unique circumstances of students with disabilities.

The researcher highlights a considerable problem of the deficit of teachers-defectologists, typhlopedagogues and sign language therapists for special institutions with Kazakh language education [10].

In the context of our study, it is essential to recognize the structure of psychological readiness. It consists of such characteristics as emotional acceptance of personalities with various types of disorders; willingness to include students with disabilities in activities in the auditorium; satisfaction with one's own teaching practice, etc.

Materials and methods

In order to achieve the aim of the study, the following methods were applied:

- 1) the method of survey (by means of Google Forms);
- 2) the factor analysis of reliability (α -Kronbach) of the survey questions;
- 3) the graphical method of data analysis (for visualization of data).

Within the research, 42 educators of Abai and Narxoz University were asked to express their opinions and the degree of agreement with the given statements.

The responses were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale, which allowed us to reveal seven factors of the ranking of readiness for inclusive education:

- 1) rejection and avoiding inclusive teaching;
- 2) uncertainty and incompetence;
- 3) scepticism and indifference;
- 4) psychological barriers;
- 5) realising the need for inclusion and open-mindedness;
- 6) awareness of inclusive teaching procedure (methodology);
- 7) having experience of working with students with SEN.

The survey “The Diagnostic of Psychological Readiness of University Teachers for Inclusive Education” in Kazakh and Russian languages includes 30 statements regarding the problem of inclusion.

Results and discussion

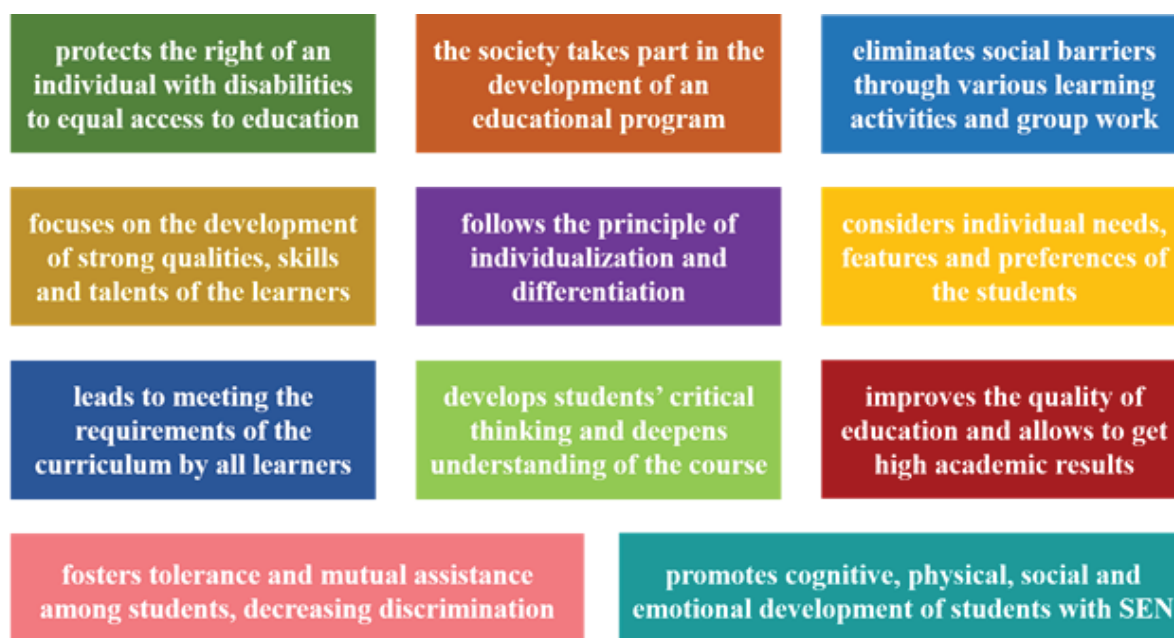
Theoretical study. So, what benefits does inclusive education give to society and persons with SEN? First of all, inclusive teaching and learning recognizes the right of every student without discrimination to receive a meaningful learning experience in diverse forms and through various activities which allow better perception and consolidation of information. Besides, it ensures the participation of all the stakeholders in the development of the educational program.

Thirdly, inclusive education eliminates communication and interaction barriers, creating a favourable atmosphere for the collaboration of students with and without disabilities. And certainly, it takes into account the individual needs and preferences of the students. The implementation of inclusive methods of teaching, learning and assessment gives all students an opportunity to meet the requirements of the curriculum and fully realize their intellectual potential.

Furthermore, a wide range of learning activities and valuable experiences in pair and group work contribute to developing critical thinking and a deeper understanding of the discipline. The inclusive curriculum developed by the university can help the instructors to ensure that all students, regardless of their physiological capabilities, have equal access to the learning material and are able to fully participate in the educational process, getting considerable academic results.

Corresponding to a new paradigm of education – lifelong learning, and the main aim of pedagogy – versatile harmonious development of personality, inclusive education meets the realia of modern society, enhancing the universal development of students with disabilities and special educational needs. Moreover, inclusive education occurs in the context of the formation of human values and tolerance among the young generation.

On the basis of analysis of literature on the issue of psychological readiness for inclusive pedagogical activity, the advantages of inclusive education were identified. They are illustrated in the picture 1.



Picture 1 – The benefits of inclusive education for students and society

Note: Compiled by the authors.

Considering the question of preparation of special personnel, one should speak about the problem of psychological readiness of the teachers for inclusive education. The attitude and the degree of inclusive competence of the educators will certainly affect the pedagogical process and learning achievements of the students with disabilities. To note, the term “inclusive readiness” may be a more suitable analogue of the extensive concept of the “psychological readiness of educators.”

What is understood by the term “inclusive readiness” or “inclusive attitude”? It refers to a complex integral quality of personality, meaningfully reflected in a set of competencies that determines the possibility of effective professional and pedagogical activity in the given conditions. The composite parts of inclusive readiness are cognitive, emotional, motivational, reflexive and communicative components that are viewed through the prism of two facets: psychological and pedagogical [11].

The obtained data was subjected to exploratory factor analysis, as a result of which 7 factors were identified: rejection and avoiding; uncertainty and incompetence; scepticism and circumspection; psychological barriers; realising the significance of inclusion and open-mindedness; awareness of inclusive teaching procedure; having positive or negative experience of teaching students with SEN.

The a-Kronbach reliability coefficients calculated for each of the listed factors show good internal consistency of the questionnaire, ranging between 0.77 and 0.8. The interpretation of the obtained scales together with the reliability and the number of tasks is given in Table 1.

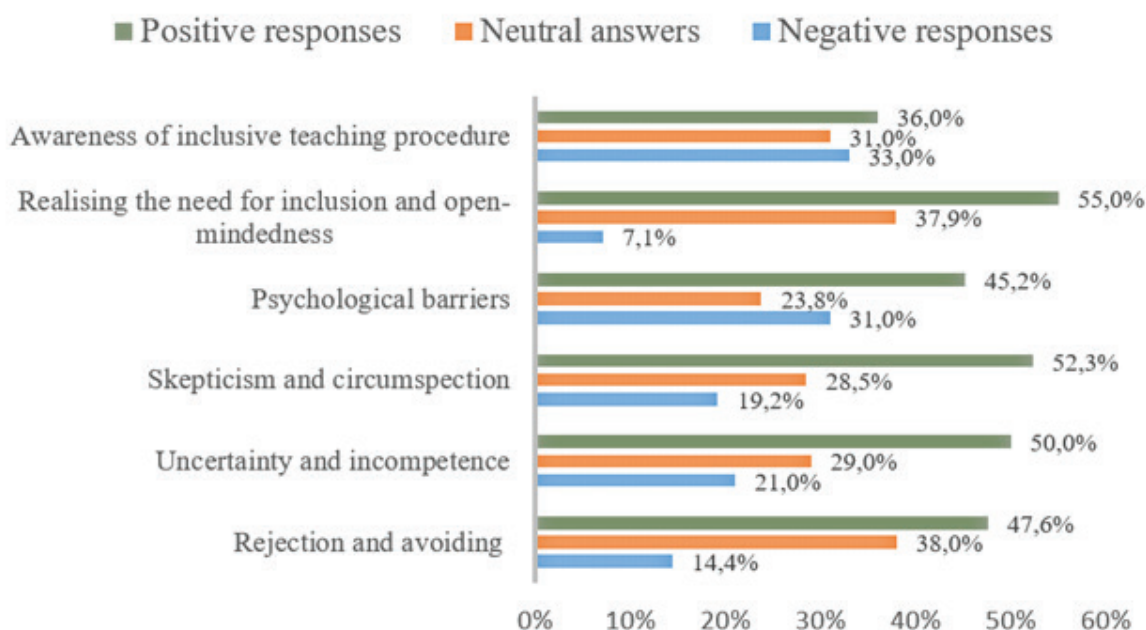
Table 1 – Characteristics of the parameters of the questionnaire of readiness for inclusive activity based on the factor analysis

The parameter and its interpretation	Number of 5 scale questions	Reliability (α -Kronbach)
Rejection and avoiding inclusive teaching	4	0.8
Uncertainty and incompetence	4	0.79
Scepticism and circumspection	4	0.77
Psychological barriers	4	0.78
Realising the need for inclusion and open-mindedness	5	0.78
Awareness of inclusive teaching procedure	5	0.79
Evaluating experience of teaching students with SEN	3	0.78
Note: Compiled by the authors.		

The obtained data from the survey in percentage are demonstrated in Table 2 and Picture 2 (p. 26) below.

Table 2 – Results of the survey “The Diagnostic of Psychological Readiness of University Teachers for Inclusive Education” in relation to the factors of inclusive readiness

The Factor	Negative responses	Neutral answers	Positive responses
Rejection and avoiding	14,4%	38,0%	47,6%
Uncertainty and incompetence	21,0%	29,0%	50,0%
Skepticism and circumspection	19,2%	28,5%	52,3%
Psychological barriers	31,0%	23,8%	45,2%
Realising the need for inclusion and open-mindedness	7,1%	37,9%	55,0%
Awareness of inclusive teaching procedure	33,0%	31,0%	36,0%
Note: Compiled by the authors.			



Picture 2 – Visualisation of the survey results corresponding to the factors of inclusive readiness

Note: Compiled by the authors.

The results of the data analysis show that the experience of working with young people with disabilities significantly affects the scores on the scale “rejection and avoiding” along with the factor “uncertainty and incompetence.” Subjects who have no experience working with students with SEN are more likely to display a negative attitude towards inclusive education and try to avoid it, whereas subjects with such experience consider themselves more competent and willing to teach non-standard personalities.

To be more precise, 47.6% of the surveyed instructors would like to avoid dealing with special students and not take such responsibility. Still, 38% of the participants are neutral to teaching learners with disabilities and more liberal towards inclusive education. The rest of the university teachers don’t exhibit signs of rejection of inclusive teaching.

Analysing the responses on the scale “uncertainty and incompetence”, we discovered that a considerable number of teachers felt insecure about their competence. 50% of respondents (21 teachers) are not ready to work with students with SEN, whereas 21% of the survey participants are fully ready to work with such people, being confident in their knowledge and skills. 80.9% of the surveyed people note that they need to pass special trainings and programs on teaching “special” students, emphasizing the necessity to increase methodological competence regarding inclusive education.

The results on the third factor – scepticism and circumspection – show that some teachers are cautious about inclusive education since it is a new phenomenon. Therefore, 52.3% of respondents admit the difficulty of comprehending and correctly realising it. The majority of the tutors consider working with persons with disabilities far harder and more responsible because it requires a lot of effort and attention. Some teachers are sceptical about the use of their participation in the process of inclusive education.

Comparing the results of the fourth parameter – psychological barriers – we may conclude that there are barriers that impede the acceptance of a person with disabilities by teachers. Some educators (12%) are worried about the possibility of isolation of the individual with handicaps by his or her groupmates. 16% of the teachers expressed concern that they would not be productive enough to teach everyone properly if there was at least one young person with disabilities. Approximately 14% of the participants would not teach boys and girls with disabilities if it were not for the requirement of the administration.

Considering the fifth factor – open-mindedness towards inclusive teaching – More than half of respondents consider it difficult but noble to teach individuals with disabilities and disorders. As for the statement “In modern society, all young people, irrespective of their psycho-physical peculiarities and backgrounds, should have a chance to study at a university”, nearly 69% of the respondents expressed full agreement and 4.8% of them disagreed. 19 teachers feel inspired to work with learners with SEN witnessing their success and high academic results.

A comparative analysis of answers on realising the need for inclusion shows that 55% of the survey participants consider it necessary to implement inclusive education in higher education institutions, while only 3 individuals disagree with this. Some inexperienced teachers and all survey participants who have experience teaching special students acknowledge the significance of inclusive training. More than half of the respondents believe that inclusive education is useful not only for people with disabilities but also for ordinary children, as it fosters tolerance. On the other hand, 2 persons suppose that such youth should study only in special institutions.

Evaluating the awareness of inclusive teaching procedures, we may conclude that 36% of the respondents know how to work with several categories of students with disabilities. Among them, 7 individuals (16.6%) are well-versed in the psychological characteristics of people with diverse types of disabilities. A third of the tutors report a lack of knowledge about inclusive teaching methods and techniques for learners with disabilities. The rest of the study participants relate their knowledge of inclusive methodology to an average level.

In general, 22 respondents have not worked with persons with disabilities, gifted individuals and other categories of inclusive students. Among people who have instructed learners with SEN, 12 persons are content with their experience. However, some tutors are not satisfied with their inclusive teaching practices. 4 individuals selected the average level of evaluation of inclusive teaching. Most university teachers encounter foreign students rather than persons with disabilities.

Conclusion

The findings from the empirical study conducted in Abai and Narxoz universities demonstrate the transformative potential of inclusive education for university students. By promoting equal access, fostering positive learning outcomes, and nurturing an inclusive environment, inclusive education initiatives are creating a conducive atmosphere for students to thrive academically, emotionally, and socially.

Inclusive education aims to provide equal opportunities, access, and support for students of diverse backgrounds and abilities, fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment. Understanding the significance and need of inclusive education by university teachers in Kazakhstan, their psychological and pedagogical training, participation in methodological developments for working with students with disabilities, is crucial for enabling effective and qualitative education for all learners.

By organising and implementing inclusive practices, Kazakhstan is taking significant steps toward building a more inclusive society. The collaborative efforts of universities, faculty members, and students are key to creating an inclusive learning environment where diversity is embraced, knowledge is shared, and all students can reach their full potential.

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ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКАЯ ГОТОВНОСТЬ ПЕДАГОГОВ К ИНКЛЮЗИВНОМУ ОБРАЗОВАНИЮ В УНИВЕРСИТЕТАХ КАЗАХСТАНА

Аннотация

Инклюзивное образование – это фундаментальное право, обеспечивающее равные возможности и доступ к качественному образованию учащимся с различным происхождением, способностями и особыми образовательными потребностями. За последние годы наша страна добилась значительного прогресса во внедрении инклюзивного образования на уровне вузов. Создавая инклюзивную среду обучения, Казахстан не только расширяет возможности каждого учащегося, но и прокладывает путь к более инклюзивному обществу. В этой статье исследуется важность инклюзивного образования для студентов университетов в Казахстане и инициативы, предпринятые для обеспечения его реализации. Кроме того, были изучены психологические детерминанты готовности педагогов к инклюзивному обучению студентов вузов с ограниченными возможностями здоровья. Анализ научных источников показал, что позитивный настрой и соответствующая подготовка учителей являются ключевыми в решении этой проблемы. Результаты проведенного опроса для диагностики уровня инклюзивной готовности преподавателей вузов показывают, что опыт обучения студентов с ОВЗ оказывает большое влияние на отношение преподавателей к практике инклюзивного образования, а также на уровень их уверенности в собственных возможностях и компетенциях.

Ключевые слова: инклюзивное образование, педагоги, студенты вузов, психологическая готовность, инклюзивные педагогические практики, особые образовательные потребности (ООП).

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ПЕДАГОГТЕРДІҢ ҚАЗАҚСТАН УНИВЕРСИТЕТТЕРІНДЕ ИНКЛЮЗИВТІ БІЛІМ БЕРУГЕ ПСИХОЛОГИЯЛЫҚ ДАЙЫНДЫҒЫ

Аңдатпа

Инклюзивті білім беру-шығу тегі, қабілеті және ерекше білім беру қажеттіліктері бар оқушылар үшін сапалы білім берудің тең мүмкіндіктері мен қолжетімділігін қамтамасыз етуге бағытталған іргелі құқық. Соңғы жылдары біздің еліміз университет деңгейінде инклюзивті білім беруді енгізуде айтарлықтай прогреске қол жеткізді. Инклюзивті оқу ортасын құра отырып, Қазақстан әрбір оқушының мүмкіндіктерін кеңейтіп қана қоймай, неғұрлым инклюзивті қоғамға жол ашады. Бұл мақалада Қазақстандағы университет студенттері үшін инклюзивті білім берудің маңыздылығы және оны іске асыруды қамтамасыз ету үшін қабылданған бастамалар зерттеледі. Сонымен қатар, мүмкіндігі шектеулі жоғары оқу орындарының студенттерін инклюзивті оқытуға педагогтердің дайындығының психологиялық детерминанттары зерттелді. Ғылыми дереккөздерді талдау мұғалімдердің оң көзқарасы мен тиісті дайындығы бұл мәселені шешуде маңызды екенін көрсетті. ЖОО оқытушыларының инклюзивті дайындық деңгейін диагностикалау үшін жүргізілген сауалнаманың нәтижелері мүмкіндігі шектеулі студенттерді оқыту тәжірибесі оқытушылардың инклюзивті білім беру практикасына деген көзқарасына, сондай-ақ олардың өз мүмкіндіктері мен құзыреттеріне деген сенімділік деңгейіне үлкен әсер ететіндігін көрсетеді.

Тірек сөздер: инклюзивті білім беру, педагогтар, ЖОО студенттері, психологиялық дайындық, инклюзивті педагогикалық практика, ерекше білім беру қажеттіліктері.