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A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON AWARENESS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AMONG PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS IN TWO KAZAKHSTANI UNIVERSITIES

Abstract. This study aimed to explore and compare the awareness level of Inclusive education among pre-service EFL teachers at two Kazakhstani universities. University 1 is a private multi-profile university, while University 2 is a state university with a pedagogical profile. A quantitative method was utilised in the current study and an adapted questionnaire was distributed to 80 participants. The results showed that pre-service EFL teachers at both universities had similarly high awareness levels of the concept, aims, and importance of Inclusive education, however both universities had moderate level of awareness regarding educational policies and ongoing projects. Moreover, University 1 demonstrated a higher awareness level than University 2 on teaching methods and issues, visible and invisible disability types, and the role of gifted children in promoting inclusion. The findings of this study can be used to improve teacher training programs on Inclusive education at higher educational institutions of Kazakhstan.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, awareness, English as a Foreign Language, teacher training programs

Introduction

Education has experienced a significant shift towards embracing inclusivity throughout history. In 1989, leading countries made a historic step towards children's rights by accepting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. As was noted in the articles 28 and 29, it is essential to recognize the right of every child to education and ensure that school discipline should be designed to improve students' abilities to develop their fullest potential [1]. Inclusive education has been integrated into the educational system of Kazakhstan not very long ago. In 2007, the definition of inclusive education was established as a process that aims to grant equal access to education for all students taking into consideration their abilities and special educational needs (SEN) in the Law on Education [2]. Moreover, the State Program of Education and Science development for 2020 - 2025 planned to extend the share of educational organisations that created conditions for inclusive education to 100% [3].

It is important to note that successful implementation of Inclusive education depends on many factors, including providing sufficient training for teachers and having a clear concept and definition of inclusive education [4]. According to Amjad et al., (2020), the effectiveness of Inclusive Education (IE) primarily depends on the knowledge and expertise of class instructors, therefore, it is crucial for educators to be aware and have a comprehensive understanding of the rules and principles governing IE [5]. A study of Zagana et al. (2017) indicated a correlation between educators' readiness for inclusive education and whether they have undergone a university course specifically focused on inclusion [6]. As reported by NEPC (2021) in Global Education Monitoring Report of Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, pre-service teachers study the discipline "Inclusive education" which is a mandatory course of 3 ECTS credits for all pedagogical specialties in higher education [7]. Nevertheless, Makoele and Burmistrova (2021) stated that pre-service teachers found the university training insufficient and mainly delivered through logopedics and defectology approaches [8]. The findings of Kazakhstani scholars' studies are consistent with foreign ones. Polat et al. (2023) highlighted that obstacles of putting Inclusive education into effect included the absence

of practical experience in inclusive environments and a shortage of courses addressing inclusive education and curricular content [9]. To improve the teacher training program in Turkey, Gülay and Altun (2023) proposed incorporating hands-on activities and making the inclusive education course mandatory with the extension of course duration [10].

Existing literature supports the idea that implementation of Inclusive education is also related to teachers' attitudes and support. Pre-service English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers in Spain and Portugal believe that having students with special educational needs will increase their workload, however participants from both countries claimed that inclusion benefits all students by promoting socially appropriate behaviour and facilitates a faster academic improvement for students with SEN in regular classrooms [11]. In Australia, attitudes toward inclusion among pre-service primary teachers were generally positive, improving throughout their training years. However, these attitudes differed based on demographic factors, constructs, and specific inclusion areas [12]. Regarding Kazakhstani teachers, Zhalelkhanova's (2019) comparative study revealed that pre-service EFL teachers' views on teaching English language in the inclusive settings are positive by comparison with teachers in Turkey [13]. According to Polat et al. (2023), older and experienced teachers demonstrated more positive attitudes and perspectives to inclusion rather than pre-service teachers [9].

Another cause of weak implementation of inclusive education is insufficient awareness among the population and main stakeholders in education [14]. The awareness of Inclusive education among teachers has been under the scope of several researchers. According to Gülay & Altun (2023), teacher candidates' awareness of Inclusive education is their understanding and knowledge of the concept, that includes recognizing its history, aims, students encompassed and practical implementation [10]. Similarly, another study aimed to identify classroom teachers' awareness of Inclusive education emphasises that awareness encompasses teachers' competencies, knowledge and perception of the concept [15]. Based on aforementioned studies, the awareness of Inclusive education can be defined as conceptual understanding of this term and its aims, recognizing policies, possible barriers and practical implementations.

A study aimed to identify teacher candidates' awareness about Inclusive Education in Turkey found that pre-service teachers' awareness of the concept of Inclusive education, including its legislation and history, was on a moderate level. Furthermore, female participants and participants who received training on Inclusive Education showed higher levels of awareness compared to male participants and those who did not receive any training [10]. Similar study conducted in Punjab, respondents' awareness on the importance of implementing Inclusive Education was on a high level, while the awareness of the national and international projects and policies about Inclusive Education was on a low level [5]. It is important to note that as a result of low level of awareness concerning disability types among teachers, non visible disabilities are often unrecognised since the symptoms are not apparent [16].

In the context of Kazakhstan, a study by Makoelle and Burmistrova (2021) revealed that teacher educators and pre-service teachers' understanding of Inclusive Education in Kazakhstan is when healthy students study with students who have disabilities in one classroom [8]. It was also mentioned in previous studies that teachers are often not certain and lack confidence about how to teach and facilitate learning in inclusive settings [17]. Based on previous studies results, there are still ongoing misunderstandings about Inclusive education among educators and despite extensive research on the topic of Inclusive education, existing studies have not adequately addressed the issue of exploring the level of awareness of pre-service EFL teachers in Kazakhstan. Since teachers are the main stakeholders of the educational process and English is one of the subjects taught in secondary schools, identifying pre-service EFL teachers' awareness of inclusive education at different universities is crucial and would be valuable to improve teacher training programs at Kazakhstani higher institutions.

Methodology

This study aims to explore and compare the awareness of inclusive education among pre-service EFL teachers at two universities in Kazakhstan and seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What level of awareness of Inclusive Education do pre-service EFL teachers at University 1 have?
2. What level of awareness of Inclusive Education do pre-service EFL teachers at University 2 have?
3. Is there any difference between University 1 and University 2 pre-service EFL teachers' awareness of Inclusive education?

There are several factors that influenced the choice of quantitative research design. First of all it provides measurable and statistical information that allows comparison of collected data (Creswell, 1994) [18], as the population of the current study involves 2 groups. Moreover, the results of quantitative studies can be generalised to larger populations (Price & Lovell, 2018) [19] and it aligns with the objectives of the current research.

Sample

The population of the research is 4th year TFL (Two Foreign Languages) students, who are considered as pre-service EFL teachers, at two universities in Almaty, Kazakhstan. University 1 is a private university, meanwhile University 2 is a state university with a pedagogical profile. In overall, 80 participants have taken part in the research, specifically 40 participants from University 1 and 40 participants University 2.

Table 1

Demographic information of the participants under study from University 1 (N=40)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	36	90
	Male	4	10
Age	Under the age of 22	40	100

Table 2

Demographic information of the participants under study from University 2 (N=40)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	37	92.5
	Male	3	7.5
Age	Under the age of 22	38	95
	Over the age of 22	2	5

The medium of instruction in University 1 is English, whereas at University 2 is Kazakh. The total figure of participants of the research accounts for 80. All of the participants have taken the requisite course of "Inclusive Education" as a part of their teacher training program.

Due to time and access-wise limitations, the participants in this study were recruited approaching the non-probability, convenience sampling method. The nature of the study was voluntary. Population was provided with an invitation to participate in the study and an "Informed Consent Form".

Data collection

The questionnaire utilised in this study was developed by Amjad et al., (2020) (Dr. Amjad Islam Amjad, a PhD Scholar, Department of Education, University of Lahore) that was aimed to explore teachers' awareness level about inclusive education in Punjab. Teachers' Awareness about Inclusive Education Scale (TAIES) consists of questions about participants' demographic information and Likert scale statements about:

- 1) Concept of Inclusive Education;
- 2) Importance of implementing Inclusive Education;
- 3) Policies for Inclusive Education;

4) Issues of Inclusive Education

5) Teaching methods in Inclusive education.

The Likert scale statements were divided into 2 sections. Section 1 comprises 5 scale options on the level of agreement (1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree) and Section 2 includes 5 scale options on the extension of awareness (1 = Not at all; 2 = To little extent; 3 = To some extent; 4 = To great extent; 5 = To full extent).

TAIES scale (developed by Amjad et al., (2020)) has undergone some adaptations including rephrasing and adding statements concerning EFL teachers and language classrooms, adjusting statements to the context of Kazakhstan, and removing redundant items. The questionnaire was developed via the survey administration software “Google Forms”. It is important to note that the translated Kazakh version of the questionnaire was distributed to the participants from University 2, who studied the course of Inclusive Education in Kazakh, to minimise language barriers. To assess the validity and reliability of the adapted questionnaires, the pilot study was conducted.

Data analysis

Raw numerical data collected from the questionnaire was analysed through descriptive analyses measuring frequency, percentage, mean, mode, and standard deviation. The analysed data is interpreted according to the criteria for mean and percentage taken from the study conducted by Amjad et al., (2020) using the TAIES scale that was adapted for the current study.

Table 3

Criteria for interpretation of mean and percentage

Criteria for mean		Criteria for Percentage	
Score	Awareness level	Range	Level of majority
1.00-2.49	Lower level	51-60	Majority
2.50-3.49	Moderate level	61-70	Significant majority
3.50 and above	High level	71-80	Dominant majority
		81 and above	Overwhelming majority

Results

University 1

According to the results of the Likert scale’s first section, the majority of pre-service teachers at University 1, in other words 17 respondents (43%) out of 40 agreed and exactly the same number of participants strongly agreed that Inclusive education means integrating students with and without disabilities in mainstream schools. It is apparent from this table that 22 (55%) respondents strongly disagreed and 7 (18%) respondents disagreed on the statement that Inclusive education focuses only on students with disabilities.

Similarly, 17 (43%) and 10 (25%) students at University 1 chose “strongly disagree” and “disagree” for the statement “Inclusive education is primarily aimed at correcting children's impairments”. Moreover, 10 (25%) respondents were uncertain, whereas 10 (25%) agreed and 12 (30%) strongly agreed on the fact that gifted children are the integral part of Inclusive Education. Interestingly, the most frequently chosen option was “strongly agree” in the statements from 6 to 9 about the importance and the role of Inclusive education.

Table 4

Likert scale analysis of the University 1 (Section 1)

№	Items	n	Frequency (Percentage)					M	Mo	SD
			1-SD	2-D	3-UD	4-A	5-SA			

1	IE is combining students with and without disabilities in special schools.	40	13 (33%)	8 (20%)	5 (13%)	8 (20%)	6 (15%)	2,65	1	1,33
2	IE is integrating students with and without disabilities in general schools.	40	1 (3%)	4 (10%)	1 (3%)	17 (43%)	17 (43%)	4,125	4; 5	0,74
3	IE focuses only on supporting students with disabilities.	40	22 (55%)	7 (18%)	5 (13%)	1 (3%)	5 (13%)	2	1	1,1
4	IE is primarily aimed at correcting children's impairments.	40	17 (43%)	10 (25%)	5 (13%)	3 (8%)	5 (13%)	2,225	1	1,15
5	Gifted students are an integral part of IE.	40	2 (5%)	6 (15%)	10 (25%)	10 (25%)	12 (30%)	3,6	5	1,04
6	IE ensures that students with SEN can access education in nearby schools.	40	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	7 (18%)	15 (38%)	16 (40%)	4,1	5	0,72
7	IE will help students with SEN for their better socialization.	40	0 (0%)	3 (8%)	1 (3%)	11 (28%)	25 (63%)	4,45	5	0,68
8	IE will help in developing a tolerant society.	40	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	2 (5%)	7 (18%)	29 (73%)	4,55	5	0,65
9	IE will contribute to fostering a sense of equality and empowerment among students with SEN.	40	1 (3%)	4 (10%)	2 (5%)	10 (25%)	23 (58%)	4,25	5	0,86

SD=Strongly disagree D=Disagree UD=Undecided A=Agree SA=Strongly agree

In terms of the results of Section 2 in the Likert scale at University 1 (Table 5), 19 (48%) respondents and 16 (40%) respondents know the importance of Inclusive education to great and full extent. It is important to highlight that none of the students have chosen “not at all” or “to a little extent”.

The statements 11-14 were about the policies and history of Inclusive education. It is worth noting that there were also differences in the ratios of chosen options. 15 (38%) out of 40 respondents were uncertain concerning their knowledge of UN's policies on Inclusive education. However, 10 (25%) and 11 (28%) of pre-service teachers at University 1 know about the Salamanca statement to some and greater extent. Regarding the awareness of the current projects on Inclusive education in Kazakhstan, 10 (25%) students are uncertain, while 9 (23%) students are aware to little extent and the number of students chose “not at all”. As it is presented in the table, 33% and 30% of students are familiar with the visible and invisible disabilities to great and full extent.

Furthermore, the results of the statements 16-20 regarding issues of Inclusive education and teaching competence, shows that the most frequently chosen option was “to great extent” and the mean score accounts for more than 3,5 in all statements except 20. In statement 20, (“You have enough competence to foster inclusivity in EFL classrooms.”) 40% of respondents chose “to some extent”, whereas 30% “to great extent” and only 10% “to full extent”. Nevertheless, 30% of all respondents at University 1 selected “to little extent” on the statement “You have enough knowledge and training on IE.”.

Table 5*Likert scale analysis of the University I (Section 2)*

№	Items	n	Frequency (Percentage)					M	Mo	SD
			1- NA	2- LE	3- SE	4- GE	5- FE			
10	You know the importance of IE.	40	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (13%)	19 (48%)	16 (40%)	4,275	4	0,58
11	You know about the UN's policies for IE.	40	3 (8%)	9 (23%)	15 (38%)	8 (20%)	5 (13%)	3,075	3	0,85
12	You know about the Salamanca statement 1994.	40	5 (13%)	7 (18%)	7 (18%)	10 (25%)	11 (28%)	3,375	5	1,30
13	You know about the Education For All (EFA) movement.	40	5 (13%)	9 (23%)	8 (20%)	10 (25%)	8 (20%)	3,175	4	1,14
14	You are aware of ongoing projects of IE in Kazakhstan.	40	9 (23%)	9 (23%)	10 (25%)	7 (18%)	5 (13%)	2,75	3	1,12
15	You are familiar with visible and invisible disabilities.	40	0 (0%)	6 (15%)	9 (23%)	13 (33%)	12 (30%)	3,77	4	0,88
16	You know issues of student-teacher interaction in IC.	40	0 (0%)	4 (10%)	12 (30%)	15 (38%)	9 (23%)	3,72	4	0,78
17	You know issues of classroom management in IC.	40	1 (3%)	3 (8%)	9 (23%)	18 (45%)	9 (23%)	3,77	4	0,75
18	You are aware of teaching methods used in IC.	40	0 (0%)	4 (10%)	12 (30%)	18 (45%)	6 (15%)	3,65	4	0,72
19	Being an EFL teacher, you know the different techniques to enhance the learning potential of individuals with SEN.	40	0 (0%)	5 (13%)	12 (30%)	18 (45%)	5 (13%)	3,57	4	0,73
20	You have enough competence to foster inclusivity in EFL classrooms.	40	3 (8%)	5 (13%)	16 (40%)	12 (30%)	4 (10%)	3,22	3	0,82
21	You have enough knowledge and training on IE.	40	3 (8%)	12 (30%)	10 (25%)	11 (28%)	4 (10%)	3,02	2	0,93

NA= Not at all LE= To little extent SE= To some extent GE= to great extent FE= To full extent

University 2

Table 6 displays the synthesised data gathered from pre-service teachers enrolled at University 2 regarding their responses to Section 1 of the translated version of the Likert scale. A significant number of the participants, namely 16 (40%), disagreed that Inclusive Education means combining students with and without disabilities in special schools. Meanwhile, 22 respondents (55%) agreed that Inclusive Education is integrating students with and without disabilities in mainstream schools.

16 (40%) and 18 (45%) respondents chose the option “disagree” for the statements “IE focuses only on supporting students with disabilities” and “IE is primarily aimed at correcting children's impairments” respectively. 14 students (35%) agree that gifted students are an essential part of Inclusive Education. It can be clearly seen that 17 pre-service teachers (43%) agree with the statement “IE ensures that students with SEN can access education in nearby schools”.

The figure of participants, who chose the option “agree” and “strongly agree” for the statement “IE will help students with SEN for their better socialization”, was exactly the same - 15 (38%). More than a half of the respondents, that is to say 21 (53%), strongly agree that Inclusive Education can help to foster the development of a tolerant society.

Similarly, a significant number of students, explicitly 24 (60%), strongly agree with the statement “IE will contribute to fostering a sense of equality and empowerment among students with SEN”. It can be noted that the most frequent answer to the questions about the importance and the role of Inclusive Education in the society numbered 7, 8, and 9 was “strongly agree”.

Table 6

Likert scale analysis of the University 2 (Section 1)

№	Items	n	Frequency (Percentage)					M	Mo	SD
			1-SD	2-D	3-UD	4-A	5-SA			
1	IE is combining students with and without disabilities in special schools.	40	9 (23%)	16 (40%)	9 (23%)	4 (10%)	2 (5%)	2,35	2	0,88
2	IE is integrating students with and without disabilities in general schools.	40	1 (3%)	6 (15%)	4 (10%)	22 (55%)	7 (18%)	3,7	4	0,78
3	IE focuses only on supporting students with disabilities.	40	3 (8%)	16 (40%)	10 (25%)	9 (23%)	2 (5%)	2,77	2	0,88
4	IE is primarily aimed at correcting children's impairments.	40	5 (13%)	18 (45%)	9 (23%)	8 (20%)	0 (0%)	2,5	2	0,82
5	Gifted students are an integral part of IE.	40	4 (10%)	3 (8%)	11 (28%)	14 (35%)	8 (20%)	3,47	4	0,97
6	IE ensures that students with SEN can access education in nearby schools.	40	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	7 (18%)	17 (43%)	12 (30%)	3,87	4	0,78
7	IE will help students with SEN for their better socialization.	40	2 (5%)	3 (8%)	5 (13%)	15 (38%)	15 (38%)	3,95	4;5	0,82
8	IE will help in developing a tolerant society.	40	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	4 (10%)	13 (33%)	21 (53%)	4,3	5	0,73

9	IE will contribute to fostering a sense of equality and empowerment among students with SEN.	40	2 (5%)	4 (10%)	3 (8%)	7 (18%)	24 (60%)	4,175	5	0,99
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SD=Strongly disagree D=Disagree UD=Undecided A=Agree SA=Strongly agree

In terms of the responses of Section 2 in the translated version of the Likert scale at the University 2 (Table 7), the exact figure of the students, namely 14 (35%), expressed that their knowledge about the importance of the Inclusive Education is “to great extent” and “to full extent”. None of the respondents chose the option “not at all”.

Policies of the UN about Inclusive Education were known “to some extent” and “to great extent” to an equal number of pre-service EFL teachers - 12 (30%). 13 (33%) participants knew about the Salamanca statement “to some extent”, nonetheless 6 (15%) students knew nothing at all. Similarly, 8 (20%) students have chosen an option “not at all” for the statement “You know about the Education For All (EFA) movement”. However, 12 (30%) and 10 (25%) participants had knowledge about the Education For All (EFA) movement “to some extent” and “to great extent” respectively. Regarding the ongoing projects of Inclusive Education in Kazakhstan, 14 (35%) of students indicated their awareness “to some extent”.

Furthermore, it was revealed that 15 (38%) participants were familiar with visible and invisible disabilities “to some extent”. It is interesting to note that the option “not at all” was not chosen by anyone. Questions with statements about the issues of Inclusive Education, namely “You know issues of student-teacher interaction in IC” and “You know issues of classroom management in IC” were answered by 17 (43%) and 16 (40%) participants with the option “to great extent” respectively.

A notable number of students, explicitly 19 (48%), were not aware of teaching methods used in Inclusive classrooms as they were aware “to little extent”. The statements about the Inclusive Education in EFL classrooms, such as “Being an EFL teacher, you know the different techniques to enhance the learning potential of individuals with SEN”, “You have enough competence to foster inclusivity in EFL classrooms” show that the most frequently selected option was “to little extent” (17 (43%) and 18 (45%) respectively).

When it comes to the training of the pre-service teachers, 16 (40%) believe that they have enough knowledge and training on Inclusive Education “to little extent”, whereas 12 (30%) express the competence “to great extent”.

Table 7

Likert scale analysis of the University 2 (Section 2)

№	Items	n	Frequency (Percentage)					M	Mo	SD
			1-NA	2-LE	3-SE	4-GE	5-FE			
10	You know the importance of IE.	40	0 (0%)	5 (13%)	7 (18%)	14 (35%)	14 (35%)	3.925	4,5	0.80
11	You know about the UN's policies for IE.	40	5 (13%)	9 (23%)	12 (30%)	12 (30%)	2 (5%)	2.925	3,4	0.89
12	You know about the Salamanca statement 1994.	40	6 (15%)	11 (28%)	13 (33%)	8 (20%)	2 (5%)	2.725	3	0.91
13	You know about the Education For All (EFA) movement.	40	8 (20%)	7 (18%)	12 (30%)	10 (25%)	3 (8%)	2.82	3	1.01
14	You are aware of ongoing projects of IE in Kazakhstan.	40	2 (5%)	11 (28%)	14 (35%)	10 (25%)	3 (8%)	3.02	3	0.78

15	You are familiar with visible and invisible disabilities.	40	0 (0%)	8 (20%)	15 (38%)	12 (30%)	5 (13%)	3.35	3	0.80
16	You know issues of student-teacher interaction in IC.	40	1 (3%)	6 (15%)	12 (30%)	17 (43%)	4 (10%)	3.425	4	0.80
17	You know issues of classroom management in IC.	40	0 (0%)	14 (35%)	6 (15%)	16 (40%)	4 (10%)	3.25	4	0.95
18	You are aware of teaching methods used in IC.	40	2 (5%)	19 (48%)	5 (13%)	10 (25%)	4 (10%)	2.875	2	1.01
19	Being an EFL teacher, you know the different techniques to enhance the learning potential of individuals with SEN.	40	0 (0%)	17 (43%)	7 (18%)	6 (15%)	10 (25%)	3.225	2	1.12
20	You have enough competence to foster inclusivity in EFL classrooms.	40	2 (5%)	18 (45%)	2 (5%)	12 (30%)	6 (15%)	3.05	2	1.15
21	You have enough knowledge and training on IE.	40	1 (3%)	16 (40%)	7 (18%)	12 (30%)	4 (10%)	3.05	2	0.96

NA= Not at all LE= To little extent SE= To some extent GE= to great extent FE= To full extent

Discussion

A comparative analysis of the awareness of Inclusive education between two universities revealed that overall the awareness level of both groups are similar. Notably, both participants from University 1 ($M > 4.1$; $SD > 0.65$) and University 2 ($M > 3.7$; $SD > 0.73$) demonstrated a high level of awareness regarding the concept and aims of Inclusive education. Nevertheless, pre-service teachers at University 2 showed more uncertainty in their chosen options. It is worth mentioning that students at University 1 had a high level of awareness ($M=3.6$, $SD=1.04$) regarding gifted children as a part of Inclusive education, while students at University 2 had a moderate level ($M=3.47$, $SD=0.97$).

In addition, a similar performance can be seen regarding familiarity with the significance of Inclusive education. Participants from both groups had a high level of awareness, however it is worth noting that students at University 1 responded that they know the importance of Inclusive education at least to some extent and more, whereas there were participants who responded “to little extent” from University 2. Both groups demonstrated a moderate level of awareness concerning the history and regulations, such as the UN policies, Salamanca statement, Education for All movement and as well as the ongoing projects on Inclusive education in Kazakhstan (University 1- $M < 3.375$; $SD < 1.30$; University 2- $M < 3.02$; $SD < 1.01$).

In terms of disabilities types, namely visible and invisible disabilities, the awareness level of pre-service teachers at University 1 was high ($M=3.6$, $SD=1.04$), meanwhile pre-service teachers at University 2 had a moderate level ($M=3.35$, $SD=0.80$). Moreover, there is a discrepancy in the awareness level of teaching methods used in inclusive classrooms. Majority of students at University 2 were aware to a little extent, while students at University 1 to a great extent. As for teaching issues in Inclusive education, the level of awareness among two groups are identical. On the subject of sufficient training, knowledge, and competence to embrace inclusivity, both groups evaluated it as a moderate level (University 1- $M < 3.22$; $SD < 0.93$; University 2- $M < 3.05$; $SD < 1.15$).

The findings of this study contradict Amjad et al.'s (2020) study, where teachers' awareness of the concept and aims of Inclusive education was at a moderate level, meanwhile according to current research, pre-service teachers from both universities had a high level of awareness. Amjad et al. (2020) also revealed that teacher candidates' awareness of policies on Inclusive education was at a low level, whereas teachers in the current study had a moderate level. Moreover, results also differ from Zhalelkhanova's (2019) study, who reported that only a minority of pre-service teachers in Kazakhstan had a profound understanding of the concept of IE. Nevertheless, results align with Makoele and Burmistrova (2021), Makoele (2020), who highlighted that pre-service teachers lack practical training on Inclusive education and often feel unsure about their competence in supporting learning in an inclusive classroom.

Conclusion

The aim of the present research was to explore and compare the awareness levels of inclusive education among pre-service EFL teachers at two universities in Kazakhstan. This study has found that generally, teacher candidates at University 1 and University 2 have similar levels of awareness of Inclusive Education. Pre-service teachers' awareness at the two universities were on interchangeable levels, being either moderate or high, in terms of the concepts, aims, policies, issues, and significance of Inclusive Education. Concerning the differences, this study has identified that awareness about the disability types and teaching methods in Inclusive Education of pre-service EFL teachers were discrepant at University 1 and University 2.

While there is a general awareness and fundamental knowledge of Inclusive Education, there is still a need for improvement and development of teacher training education programs to deepen the proficiency, and foster the confidence of teachers in implementing inclusivity in classrooms from a practical point of view. The results of the study can be used for the modifications and adjustments of the Inclusive Education course curriculum offered at Kazakhstani universities. Furthermore, this study contributes to addressing the gap of studies connected to pre-service and in-service EFL teachers' awareness of Inclusive education in the context of Kazakhstan.

Limitations of the study

The distribution of male and female participants might not represent a wider population of pre-service EFL teachers, which is a limitation of the current study. Moreover, the size of the sample, comprising 80 participants, is comparatively small and may restrict the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the non-probability sampling method that was used in this study might impact the external validity of the research, since it can not guarantee that the chosen sample is representative of the whole study population.

Recommendations

Taking into account the mentioned limitations, it is suggested for further similar studies to extend the sample size and use probability sampling methods to enhance the validity and to obtain more reliable data. Since this study solely contained 4th year students, the sample size can be increased by including 3rd year and junior students. Moreover, it may be interesting to analyse the awareness of male and female pre-service teachers separately as the sample of the current study mainly consisted of female students. Concerning pre-service teacher education programs on Inclusive education, it may be beneficial to conduct a qualitative study on exploring pre-service teachers' own preferences and suggestions regarding their training and its improvements.

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ЕКІ ҚАЗАҚСТАНДЫҚ ЖОО-ДА БОЛАШАҚ АҒЫЛШЫН ТІЛІ (EFL/ШЕТ ТІЛІ РЕТІНДЕ) МҰҒАЛІМДЕРІНІҢ ИНКЛЮЗИВТІ БІЛІМ БЕРУ ТУРАЛЫ ХАБАРДАРЛЫҒЫН САЛЫСТЫРМАЛЫ ЗЕРТТЕУ

Аңдатпа. Бұл зерттеу екі Қазақстандық жоғары оқу орындарындағы болашақ EFL оқытушыларының Инклюзивті білім беру туралы хабардарлық деңгейін зерттеуге және салыстыруға бағытталды. Университет 1 - жеке көпсалалы университет, ал Университет 2 - мемлекеттік педагогикалық университет. Ағымдағы зерттеу сандық әдісті қолданды және бейімделген сауалнама 80 қатысушыға таратылды. Нәтижелер екі университетте де EFL оқытушыларының Инклюзивті білім берудің тұжырымдамасы, мақсаттары мен маңыздылығы туралы хабардарлығы бірдей жоғары деңгейде екенін көрсетті, дегенмен екі топ инклюзивті білім беру саясаты және жүзеге асырылып жатқан жобалар туралы туралы хабардарлықтары орташа деңгейде болды. Сонымен қатар, Университет 1 Университет 2-ге қарағанда оқыту әдістері мен мәселелері, мүгедектіктің көрінетін және көрінбейтін түрлері, дарынды балалардың инклюзивтіліктің дамуына ықпал етудегі рөлі туралы хабардарлықтың жоғары деңгейін көрсетті. Осы зерттеудің нәтижелерін Қазақстанның жоғары оқу орындарында Инклюзивті білім беру бойынша мұғалімдерді даярлау бағдарламаларын жетілдіру үшін пайдалануға болады.

Түйінді сөздер: инклюзивті білім беру, хабардарлық, ағылшын тілі шет тілі ретінде, мұғалімдерді даярлау бағдарламасы.

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СРАВНИТЕЛЬНОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ ОСВЕДОМЛЕННОСТИ ИНКЛЮЗИВНОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ СРЕДИ БУДУЩИХ УЧИТЕЛЕЙ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА КАК ИНОСТРАННОГО ЯЗЫКА (EFL) В ДВУХ КАЗАХСТАНСКИХ УНИВЕРСИТЕТАХ

Аннотация. Целью данного исследования было изучение и сравнение уровни осведомленности об инклюзивном образовании будущих преподавателей EFL в двух Казахстанских университетах. Университет 1 является частным многопрофильным университетом, а Университет 2 является государственным педагогическим университетом. В данном исследовании использовался количественный метод, а адаптированный опросник был распространен среди 80 участников. Результаты показали, что преподаватели EFL в обоих университетах имели одинаково высокий уровень осведомленности о концепции, целях и важности инклюзивного образования, однако обе группы имели средний уровень осведомленности о политике инклюзивного образования и текущих проектах. Кроме того, Университет 1 продемонстрировал более высокий уровень осведомленности, чем Университет 2, о методах и проблемах преподавания, видимых и невидимых типах инвалидности, а также роли одаренных детей в продвижении инклюзивности. Результаты данного исследования могут быть использованы для совершенствования программ подготовки учителей инклюзивного образования в высших учебных заведениях Казахстана.

Ключевые слова: инклюзивное образование, осведомленность, английский как иностранный язык, программа подготовки учителей.

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