The Use of Project-Based Learning to Develop Self-Discipline in Primary School Settings

Saya Turybekova

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Thesis Advisor:

PhD, SDU Associate Professor, Saule Tulepova

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SDU University

School of Education and Humanities
Department of Language Education

This is to certify that the Master's Thesis of

Saya Turybekova

has met the thesis requirements of
SDU University

Kaskelen, 2026

Approved by:

PhD, SDU Associate Professor
Saule TULEPOVA,
Thesis supervisor

Doctor of Ped.Sc. Gulnara
KASSYMOVA
Committee Chair

MA., Senior Lecturer Ainur
ALIYEVA
MA program coordinator

PhD., SDU Associate professor
Akmarzhan NOGAIBAYEVA
Department Chair

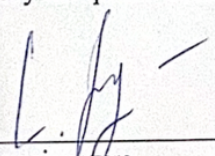
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Dean, School of Education and Humanities

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Saya Turybekova

Name

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The Use of Project-Based Learning to Develop Self-Discipline in Primary School Settings

Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in developing self-discipline among primary school students in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Self-discipline implies learners' ability to control their actions and behavior, perform assigned tasks conscientiously and take an active part in the learning processes. Even though the popularity of PBL continues growing in modern education and more researchers discuss the benefits of this teaching strategy, few studies investigate the impact of PBL on learners' behavior, especially among younger students enrolled in EFL programs in Central Asia. A quasi- experiment was conducted with 18 participants aged between 9-10 years old. A mixed-method concurrent methodology was chosen because it allowed to collect quantitative data through pre- and post-test questionnaires composed of 10 items evaluating self-discipline, responsibility and engagement of students in speaking and collaborative activities (on the 5-point Likert scale) and qualitative data via classroom observations carried out by six teachers for four weeks. According to the questionnaire results, considerable positive changes have been noted in terms of responsibility for teamwork (from 3.22 to 4.0), task organization (from 3.0 to 4.11) and completing homework (from 3.22 to 4.0); the average self-discipline score increased from 3.0 to 3.7. Furthermore, observation reports revealed higher levels of students' independence, collaboration skills and tendency to use English in group discussions. Youngsters showed greater independence in the process of learning and less reliance on teachers.Based on the obtained results, PBL can be regarded as an efficient teaching strategy which facilitates language learning and promotes behavioral outcomes, including self-discipline. This paper is aimed at enriching the literature review concerning the use of PBL at Kazakhstani schools. Further research should explore the long-term impact of PBL on students' self-discipline.

Keywords: Project-Based Learning, self-discipline, primary education, EFL classroom, self-regulated learning, young learners, Kazakhstan, mixed methods, responsibility, student engagement

Аңдатпа

Бұл зерттеу Қазақстандағы шет тілі ретінде ағылшын тілі ШТА сабағында бастауыш мектеп оқушыларының өзін өзі тәртіпке шақыру қабілетін дамытуда жобалық оқытудың ЖО тиімділігін зерттейді. Өзін өзі тәртіпке шақыру дегеніміз оқушылардың өз мінез құлқын реттеу, тапсырмаларды жауапкершілікпен орындау және оқу іс әрекеттеріне белсенді қатысу қабілеті. Жобалық оқытуға оқушы орталық тәсіл ретінде қызығушылық арттырыпкеле жатқанына қарамастан, оның өзін өзі тәртіпке шақыру сияқты мінез құлықтық нәтижелерге әсері, әсіресе Орталық Азия ШТА контекстіндегі жас оқушылар арасында аз зерттелген.Зерттеу Қазақстандағы бастауыш мектептің тоғыз он жастағы он сегіз үшінші сынып оқушысымен жүргізілді. Төрт апталық араласу кезіндегі квазиэксперименттік қатар аралас әдістер дизайны қолданылды. Сандық деректер оқушылардың өзін өзі тәртіпке шақыруын, жауапкершілігін және ағылшын тілінде сөйлеу іс әрекеттеріне қатысуын бағалайтын бес балдық Ликерт шкаласындағы он тармақтан тұратын тест алды, және тесттен кейінгі сауалнамалар арқылы жиналды. Сапалық деректер алты мұғалім жұршізген құрылымдық сынып бақылаулары арқылы жиналды. Сандық нәтижелер өзін өзі тәртіпке шақырудың барлық көрсеткіштері бойынша орташа жақсарулар анықталды. Ең айқын деген өзгерістер топтық жұмыстағы жауапкершілікте (алдын ала тест орташасы: 3,22; кейінгі тест орташасы 4,0),тапсырмалар кезіндегі ұйымдастырушылықта (3,0-ден 4,11-ге) және үй тапсырмасын орындауда (2,83-тен 3,89-ға) байқалды.Жалпы өзін өзі тәртіпке шақыру көрсеткіші 3,0-ден 3,7-ге дейін жақсарды. Сапалық бақылаулар бұл нәтижелерді растады: оқушылардың тәуелсіздігі артып, ынтымақтастық дағдылары жақсарып, топтық іс әрекеттер мен талқылаулар кезінде ағылшын тілін қолдануға деген ынтасы күшейе түсті. Зерттеу нәтижелері жобалық оқытудың бастауыш ШТА сыныптарында өзін өзі тәртіпке шақыруды және тілді дамытуды бір мезгілде қалыптастырудың тиімді оқыту тәсілі екнін айқын көрсетеді. Бұл зерттеу Қазақстандағы білім беру жлбалық оқытуға қатысты өсіп келе жатқан зерттеулер қорына үлес қосады және бастауыш ШТА сыныптарында оқушы орталық тәсілдерді енгізуге ұмтылатын мұғалімдер үшін практикалық ұсыныстар ұсынады.

Түйін сөздер: жобалық оқыту, өзін-өзі тәртіпке шақыру, бастауыш білім, шет тілі ретінде ағылшын тілі сыныбы, өзін-өзі реттеп оқу, жас оқушылар, Қазақстан, аралас әдістер, жауапкершілік, оқушылардың белсенділігі.

Аннотация

Данное исследование изучает эффективность проектного обучения (ПО) в развитии самодисциплины у учащихся начальной школы на уроках английского языка как иностранного (АЯИ) в Казахстане. Самодисциплина понимается как способность учащихся регулировать своё поведение , ответственно выполнять задания и активно участвовать в учебной деятельности. Несмотря на растущий интерес к проектному обучению как к студентоцентрированному подходу, его влияние на поведенческие результаты, такие как самодисциплина, особенно среди младших школьников в контексте АЯИ в Центральной Азии, остается малоизученным. Исследование проводилось с 18 учащимися 3-го класса в возрасте 9-10 лет в начальной школе в Казахстане. В ходе четырехнедельного вмешательства применялся квазиэкспериментальный параллельный смешанный метод исследования. Количественные данные собирались с помощью анкет предварительного и итогового тестирования, состоящих из 10 пунктов по 5-балльной шкале Лайкерта, оценивающих самодисциплину, ответственность и участие учащихся в речевой деятельности на английском языке. Качественные данные были получены в ходе структурированных наблюдений в классе, проводимых 6 учителями на протяжении всего периода вмешательства.Количественные результаты выявили умеренные улучшения по всем показателям самодисциплины. Наиболее заметные изменения наблюдались в ответствености при групповой работе (среднее значение предтеста: 3,22; посттеста: 4,0), организованности при выполнении заданий (с 3,0 до 4,11) и выполнении домашних заданий (с 2,83 до 3,89). Общий показатель самодисциплины улучшился с 3,0 до 3,7. Результаты исследования свидетельствуют о том, что проектное обучение является эффективным подходом для одновременного развития самодисциплины и языковых навыков в начальных классах АЯИ. Данное исследование вносит вклад в растущий массив исследований по проектному обучению в казахстанском образовательном контексте и предлагает практические рекомендации для учителей

Ключевые слова: проектное обучение, самодисциплина, начальное образование, класс английского языка как иностранного, саморегулируемое обучение, младшие школьники, Казахстан, смешанные методы, ответственность, вовлеченность учащихся.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Nowadays in education there is an increasing emphasis on developing not only students' academic knowledge but also essential skills for life such as responsibility, self-discipline and independence. These skills are particularly important in primary school, where students begin to form their learning habits that influence their future academic success (Zimmerman, 2002).

Self-discipline refers to the ability of learners to regulate their behavior, stay focused, complete tasks and take initiative and responsibility for their own learning (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005). In English as a Foreign Language classrooms, self-discipline has a crucial role, as students are required to actively communicate, participate and practice language skills consistently (Brown, 2007).

Traditional teacher-centered approaches that are usually applied in classrooms often limit students' opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning (Freire, 1970). In contrast, Project-Based Learning (PBL) offers a student-centered approach that encourages collaboration, problem solving and active participation (Bell, 2010).

Through project work, students engage in meaningful tasks that require them to plan, cooperate with their teams and complete assignments over time as the project is planned step by step (Bell, 2010). Without completing the task as a team, students are not allowed to move forward or they would have difficulties during the next steps.

In primary EFL classrooms, PBL provides opportunities for students to use English in real-life contexts while simultaneously developing important skills related to behavior such as

independence and responsibility (Nunan, 2004). However, there is limited research focusing specifically on how PBL influences self-discipline among young learners

1.2 Problem Statement

Many primary school students struggle with maintaining focus, completing assignments and tasks independently and taking responsibility for their own learning. It happens not only in EFL classrooms, but during the other lessons as well.

In EFL classrooms these challenges are often more evident due to language barriers and low confidence in speaking, where students struggle to speak and share their ideas independently and freely. Traditional teaching methods may not provide sufficient opportunities for students to develop self-discipline. As a result, there is a need for instructional approaches that promote both academic and behavioral development.

Project-Based Learning has the potential to address these challenges by engaging students in meaningful and collaborative tasks related to the project. However, its impact on self-discipline in primary school settings remains unexplored.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of Project-Based learning in developing self-discipline among primary school students in an EFL Classroom. This study also aims to examine how PBL influences students' responsibility for completing tasks and their participation in speaking English.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the impact of Project-Based Learning on the development of self-discipline among primary school students?
2. In what ways does Project-Based Learning influence students' responsibility for completing homework and classroom tasks?

3. What changes occur in students' participation in speaking English during classroom activities as a result of Project-Based Learning?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for the following reasons:

At first, it contributes to understanding how Project-Based Learning can support students in the development of self-discipline in young learners. Secondly, it provides practical insights for teachers on how to implement PBL in primary EFL classrooms. Finally, the study contributes to educational research by combining language learning with behavioral development.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

Firstly, the current research is based on the concept of self-regulated learning (SRL) proposed by Zimmerman (2002), which forms the theoretical foundation of this study. In particular, Zimmerman states that self-regulated learners engage themselves in the process of learning in terms of goal setting, self-monitoring and self-reflection. These three stages have a direct correlation with the behavioral effects identified within the scope of this research - responsibility, task performance and active engagement.The reason for choosing this particular theoretical framework stems from the fact that it clearly outlines the theoretical background behind the effects produced by PBL on children's self-control in an academic context.

1.7 Structure of the Thesis

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study. Chapter 2 relevant literature. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology. Chapter 4 presents the findings. Chapter 5 discusses the results and provides conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the theoretical and empirical literature related to Project-Based Learning (PBL) and self-discipline in primary education, with a particular focus on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. It explores key concepts, relevant theories and previous studies that inform the current research. The chapter concludes by identifying gaps in the literature that justify the need for this study.

2.2 Concept of Project-Based Learning

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a student-centered pedagogical approach in which learners acquire knowledge and skills through active engagement in meaningful and authentic tasks (Thomas, 2000). Unlike traditional teacher-centered instruction, PBL encourages inquiry, collaboration and the application of knowledge in real-world contexts.

According to Blumenfeld et al. (1991), PBL involves complex task based on challenging questions or problems that require students to design, problem-solve, make decisions and investigate. Similarly, Bell (2010) argues that PBL promotes deeper learning by emphasizing students to take ownership of their learning process.

In language education, PBL has been widely recognized as an effective method for enhancing communicative competence. It provides learners with opportunities to use the target language in authentic real-life situations, thereby increasing motivation and engagement (Stoller, 2006).

In EFL classrooms, where exposure to the target language is often limited, PBL creates meaningful contexts for language use.

Krajcik and Shin (2014) recognized six essential features of Project-Based Learning:

- Driving question
- Clear learning goals
- Active participation
- Collaboration

- Scaffolding tools
- The production of tangible artifacts

This study integrated most of these features. To begin with, the project was guided by driving question related to a science topic, which gave students a clear purpose for their work. Second, the learning goals were focused on both language development and behavioral outcomes such as responsibility and task completion. Collaboration was fostered through small groups of three to four students, where each team member held a specific role, encouraging shared accountability and responsibility for outcomes throughout the four-week intervention. The team of teachers adapted the materials for students to make sure that the given information guided them to have a deeper understanding about the problem. Furthermore, videos and texts were developed for the Jigsaw part of the project which connects with the feature of scaffolding materials. Moreover, students developed a tangible artifact in the form of a final group presentation delivered to the audience of community partners and parents. These features ensured that the intervention aligned with established PBL principles.

2.3 Theoretical Foundations of PBL

Project-Based Learning has reported a range of educational theories that explain how students learn through reflection, active engagement and collaboration. The present study is based on self-regulated learning theory, constructivism and experiential learning as its core theoretical foundations.

2.3.1 Constructivism

Constructivist theory, which was associated with Piaget (1970) at first, indicates that learners actively build understanding through direct interaction with their environment rather than passive learning. According to this theory, learning is the process where students actively construct knowledge by connecting their new knowledge and experiences to the existing knowledge structures. In the PBL perspective,students mostly engage in hands-on activities,

collaborative problem solving and inquiry-based learning. All of these tasks foster active knowledge construction. Overall, students in PBL are encouraged to question and discover, explore, which correlates directly with Piaget's constructivist principles, rather than relying on teacher-directed instruction. Throughout this study, Grade 3 students were given opportunities to explore a science-based problem independently on their own, construct the understanding through team-work and arrive at conclusions through direct observation and experience.

2.3.2 Self-Regulated Learning

The present study's central theoretical framework is Zimmerman's (2002) model of self-regulated learning (SRL). According to Zimmerman, self-regulated learners are those who actively participate in their own learning process through self-monitoring, self-evaluation and goal setting. Self-regulated learning involves three cyclical phases: the forethought phase, where learners set goals and plan their approach. Next is the performance phase, in which learners monitor their progress and apply the strategies. THe last is the self-reflection phase, in which learners evaluate their outcomes and adjust the behavior accordingly.

This framework is particularly relevant to the present study because PBL naturally requires students to engage in all mentioned three phases. Throughout the project, students were encouraged to plan their tasks, take initiative and responsibility for completing the assigned roles, monitor their team's progress and reflect on their performance during the final presentation. In addition, Zimmerman (2002) argues that self-discipline is an essential element of self-regulated learning as it enables learners to persist in tasks, take ownership of their learning and manage distractions. This connection between SRL and self-discipline forms the theoretical foundation of the present study.

2.3.3 Experiential Learning

Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory provides a further theoretical basis for understanding how PBL promotes academic and behavioral development. Kolb suggested a four-stage learning cycle which includes reflective observation, concrete experience, active experimentation and abstract conceptualization. From the perspective of this model, meaningful learning occurs through active engagement with experience followed by reflection and application, not through passive instruction.

PBL aligns closely with Kolb's cycle by providing students with hands-on experiences which are authentic that encourage them to reflect on their work, develop conceptual understanding and apply new knowledge in follow-up tasks In this study students moved through Kolb's cycle by observing their own progress, participating in the project, discussing the outcomes with peers and applying learned lessons to improve their own performance. In this case students learned to take greater responsibility for their learning and especially to each stage of their learning process, which was supported by cyclical engagement with experience that contributed to the development of self-discipline.

2.4 Self-Discipline in Primary Education

Self-discipline is known as an essential element of successful learning and personal development. At its core, self-discipline is a critical component of self-regulated learning and refers to an individual's ability to control their own behavior, manage their time and persist in completing tasks (Zimmerman, 2002).

According to Duckworth and Seligman (2005), self-discipline is the ability to delay gratification and regulate one's actions in pursuit of long-term goals. Their influential study showed that self-discipline is actually a stronger predictor of academic achievement than intelligence, mentioning the critical importance in educational settings. This finding is especially essential for primary education, where the students are at an early stage of

developing their learning habits and behavioral patterns.

According to Baumeister and Tierney (2011) self-discipline is a form of mental strength that allows individuals to regulate and manage impulsive responses, resist temptations and stay focused on the given task. They debate that self-discipline functions like a muscle - it can be improved through consistent practice and gradually becomes more automatic over time. This point of view is relevant to this study, as the four week PBL intervention provided students with several opportunities to develop self-disciplined behaviors such as task completion, responsibility and task completion.

In primary education, self-discipline manifests in behaviors such as:

-completing assignments on time

-maintaining focus during lessons

-following instructions

-participating actively in classroom activities (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005).

Developing these skills at an early age is fundamental for learners, as research regularly demonstrates that those who show strong self-discipline in primary school are more likely to achieve academic success in later years. Pintrich (2002) connects self-discipline with motivational processes, arguing that students

who have inner motivation are more likely to regulate their behavior and persist in challenging tasks.

In EFL classrooms, where learners may face additional challenges that are connected to language barriers and low confidence, developing self-discipline is important. Students who are able to regulate their behavior and remain despite the difficulties are better equipped to actively engage in language learning activities and make a great enormous progress.

2.5 Self-Discipline and Self-Regulated Learning

Self-discipline is closely related to self-regulated learning (SRL), which involves planning,

monitoring and evaluating one's learning processes (Zimmerman, 2002).

According to Zimmerman, self-regulated learning consists of three cyclical phases: forethought, self-reflection and performance. Learners set goals and plan their approach to task in the forethought phase. Throughout the performance phase, learners monitor the progress and apply the strategies to stay on the track. Finally, in the self-reflection phase, students evaluate their outcomes and adjust their behavior for future tasks.

Students who demonstrate strong self-regulation are more likely to:

-set goals

-manage time effectively

-monitor their own learning and progress

-reflect on their performance

In primary classrooms, fostering these skills is crucial for promoting independent learning and long-term academic achievement.

Pintrich (2000) highlights that self-regulated learning is guided by goal orientation and motivation. Students who are intrinsically motivated are more likely to engage in self-regulated behaviors and show greater self-discipline in completing tasks. This is specifically appropriate in EFL classrooms, where students may face challenges related to low confidence and language barriers.

In primary classrooms, encouraging students' self-regulation skills is important for promoting independent learning and long-term academic achievement. Research consistently demonstrates that students

2.6 Golden Rules of PBL

Despite the different forms of PBL found in educational contexts, scholars have determined a set of key characteristics of PBL that can make the process of learning effective. According to Thomas (2000), there are five criteria for authentic PBL. First, PBL needs to be

incorporated into the curriculum as a crucial component instead of the marginal one. Students should be able to learn important content and skills through projects.

Secondly, the projects should be based on some questions and problems that are relevant for students which give them the opportunity to gain a clear understanding of the purpose and direction of their work. Thirdly, students are supposed to engage in constructive inquiry when working on projects and look for the solutions rather than follow certain steps suggested by instructors. Next, the participation of students in the learning process should include a significant element of independence and voice; therefore they are expected to make important decisions regarding their work and presentations. Self-discipline is an inseparable part of student autonomy. Furthermore, PBL must be authentic and grounded in reality.

According to Boss & Lamer (2018) the presentation of results for a community partner or parents will increase motivation and accountability among students.

All the principles were applied to develop and implement a science-based PBL project. This project became the core component of the regular curriculum, was grounded in some driving questions, required students to participate in inquiry work, offered defined roles to students and included presentation in front of community partners and parents.

2.7 Peculiarities of Teaching EFL to Young Learners

The process of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to young learners differs from the same process carried out in respect of adult learners in a number of ways. Usually young learners are defined as children aged between five and twelve, who possess a range of unique traits and characteristics that have a significant impact on their foreign language acquisition (Cameron, 2001).

According to the results of research conducted on the process of learning a second language at a relatively young age, learners improve much better when engaged in practical activities rather than theoretical instruction. The positive reactions elicited by games, songs, stories and

other collaborative activities show that young learners learn language best when it becomes part of their daily communication process rather than just a tool for solving grammatical errors (Cameron, 2001).

Harmer (2007) highlighted that the challenges related to young learners' ability to focus on abstract concepts, the process of EFL learning involves a number of peculiar features associated with learners' lack of practice of using language out of the classroom, fear to make mistakes while speaking and low self-confidence.

Learners' ability to control their own actions is especially crucial in the process of teaching English as a Foreign Language to young learners. Self-disciplined and persistent learners find it easier to to engage in active communication with the teacher as well as complete all the assignments. According to Duckworth & Seligman (2005) students' ability to self-regulate their actions positively affects their engagement and performance.

The project-Based approach is considered as an effective way to overcome the difficulties inherent to EFL classes for young learners. Project work enables teachers to provide students with meaningful contexts that encourage active communication in English and decrease students' anxiety thus boosting their self-confidence (Stoller, 2006).

2.8 Teachers' Role in Promoting Self-Discipline through PBL

At first, the teacher's role in PBL contrasts sharply with the role of the teacher in conventional classrooms. Instead of being the main source of information, the PBL teacher acts as the coach, facilitator and guide who helps the learners to become the owners of their educational process (Thomas, 2000). It is important to mention that this new role is particularly relevant when it comes to teaching children at a younger age and helping them improve self-discipline and self-regulation skills.

Secondly, the teacher creates a structured learning environment where the students know what they have to do, what role they have and what routine actions are to be performed on a

regular basis. According to Krajcik and Shin (2014), scaffolding is a crucial element in PBL, especially when it concerns young students who find it difficult to manage long tasks autonomously. Thus, reducing support little by little while noticing increasing capability makes it possible to develop self-discipline in students.

Furthermore, observing children's behavior throughout the project-based learning process is one of the major responsibilities of the PBL teacher. Systematic assessment helps the teacher to notice those learners who face difficulties related to self-discipline and provide support. In the present research, the project observation checklists were used to track how students managed to behave during the four weeks intervention.

Thirdly, the teacher promotes self-discipline in PBL by fostering accountability to peers for completing tasks in groups and participating in collaborative work. Students' awareness of the dependence of other team members on their performance motivates them to work more responsibly and consistently. According to Boss and Larmer (2018), establishing an accountable atmosphere in class is one of the best ways to promote self-discipline through PBL.

Finally, in the context of EFL classes, teachers are to overcome students' language anxiety and increase their motivation. Fostering an open atmosphere, encouraging children and celebrating any success achieved by them will help young EFL learners build their confidence and become motivated enough to participate actively in the learning process.

2.9 The Relationship Between PBL and Self-Discipline

Project-Based Learning creates an environment that naturally promotes self-discipline. Through project work students are encouraged and required to:

-plan their tasks

-collaborate with peers

-manage time

-take responsibility for outcomes

Bell (2010) mentioned that PBL encourages students to become active participants in their learning, which fosters autonomy and responsibility. Likewise, Thomas (2000) emphasizes that sustained engagement in projects requires students to develop persistence and self-management Skills. These skills are central components of self-discipline as demonstrated by Duckworth and Seligman (2005). Who describe self-discipline as the ability to regulate and manage one's actions in pursuit of long-term goals.

In EFL contexts, PBL also supports language development by encouraging students to use English for communication during collaborative tasks. This increased participation may contribute to greater confidence and responsibility in language use.

The collaborative nature of Project-Based Learning has an enormous impact in promoting self-discipline. At the time when students work in groups, they develop a sense of responsibility not only for themselves or teachers but also for their peers. This social responsibility requires students to complete the assigned tasks consistently, regularly and on time. Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism supports this idea, mentioning that peer collaboration and social interaction give the opportunity to promote higher levels of learning and behavioral regulation.

Moreover, the nature of project work, especially the structure - defined roles for each team member, clear deadlines and expected outcomes (final result) - supports students with an external framework that gradually becomes integrated as self-discipline. Zimmerman (2002) maintains that self-regulated learners develop discipline through systematic and repeated cycles of goal-setting, tracking and reflection. All the mentioned aspects are naturally embedded in the Project-Based Learning process.

In EFL contexts, the relationship between self-discipline and PBL takes on an additional aspect.Students are encouraged to use English for real-life communication during the tasks.

Collaborative and peer tasks, which demand not only linguistic effort, but includes behavioral persistence and confidence. Stoller (2006) mentions that PBL gives great opportunity for meaningful contexts for language use, which helps to increase motivation and engagement. The increased engagement fosters a positive atmosphere in the classroom and also contributes to the greater self-discipline and responsibility in language learning.

Especially in primary school settings, the development of self-discipline through Project-Based Learning is specifically important. This is the step where young learners are at a critical stage of forming their learning habits and behavioral patterns. Research shows that developing self-discipline at an early age has long-term positive effects on academic achievement and personal development (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005). PBL provides ideal conditions for students to nurture their foundational skills such as to plan, collaborate and take responsibility.

2.10 Empirical Studies on PBL in Primary Education

Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of PBL in improving both academic and behaviour outcomes. For example, a study by Holm (2011) found that PBL enhances student engagement and motivation in primary school classrooms. Students who are participating in project-based activities showed higher levels of responsibility and active participation compared with those who had traditional settings.

Similarly, Krajcik and Blumenfeld (2006) stated that PBL supports the development of critical thinking and collaboration. Furthermore, it helps students to improve their self-regulation skills.

In the context of language learning, Stoller (2006) mentioned that PBL promotes meaningful language use and improves learners' communicative competence. However, most studies focus on language outcomes rather than behavioral aspects such as self-discipline.

Grant (2011) investigated the effects of PBL on student motivation and engagement in

elementary school settings. The findings demonstrated that students who participated in PBL showed higher levels of intrinsic motivation and increased willingness to complete tasks independently compared to those who had traditional instruction. The results suggest that PBL creates opportunities that students are naturally encouraged to be self-directed among young learners.

Tamim and Grant (2013) conducted a study examining teachers' and students' perceptions of PBL in K-12 settings. The study identified that students reported heightened sense of responsibility and ownership when engaging in project work. Moreover, teachers found improvements in students' capability to regulate and manage their time and complete the tasks without constant reminders, which means behavioral qualities closely related to self-discipline.

According to Krajcik and Shin (2014) the effective PBL is characterized by maintained inquiry, creation of tangible artifacts and collaboration. The review of Project-Based Learning research clearly demonstrated that students who are interested in and engage in well-structured project work develop stronger self-management skills over time. This is certainly relevant in primary/elementary school settings where foundational behavioral habits are still in the process of forming.

Kokotsaki et al. (2016) conducted a comprehensive review of Project-Based Learning literature and identified the strong evidence that PBL improves student motivation, engagement and responsibility across different ages and educational levels. Furthermore, the study mentioned that PBL is the most effective when students are given clear instructions, structure and support, especially in primary school settings where learners are still working on their self-regulation skills.

Capraro et al. (2013) investigated the effectiveness of STEM-based PBL in primary and

secondary school settings. Their findings revealed that students who took part in project-based STEM activities demonstrated enormous improvements in collaborative skills, independent problem-solving - all of which are key markers of self-discipline. These results are specifically relevant to the present study, which also employed a science-based project conducted in English.

2.10.1 PBL in the Kazakhstani Educational Context

In the Kazakhstani context, Intykbekov (2017) conducted a qualitative case-study exploring secondary school teachers' perceptions of Project-Based Learning in a Kazakh-Turkish Lyceum in Kazakhstan. The findings demonstrated that teachers acknowledged PBL as a student-centered approach that supports increasing motivation and preparing the students for real-world challenges. However, the study also identified challenges in implementing PBL, including difficulties in assessment and time constraints. This study is significant as it demonstrates one of the few investigations of PBL within the Kazakhstani educational context.

In recent years, Sengirbekova et al. (2024) investigated the effects of Project-Based Learning on English Language development in CLIL classrooms across three schools in Kazakhstan. The study found that PBL significantly improved the classroom atmosphere and both teachers and students have positive attitudes to the approach. These findings highlight the potential of PBL to enhance language learning in Kazakhstani school settings, which is directly relevant to the present study.

Alimanova et al. (2025) explored the effectiveness of PBL in fostering creativity among Kazakhstani Grade 3 students using a quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test design with 35 participants, which is the most relevant to the present study. The post-test results indicated a statistically significant improvement in the experimental group compared to the control group.

The findings demonstrate the great influence of PBL and support the use of PBL in primary school settings in Kazakhstan and provide a foundation for future research and present study, which extends this line of inquiry by focusing on self-discipline rather than creativity.

2.11 Research Gap

Although existing literature highlights the benefits of Project-Based Learning, there is limited research specifically examining its impact on self-discipline among primary school students particularly in EFL classrooms.

Most studies focus on academic achievement or language proficiency, while behavioral outcomes such as responsibility, task completion and self-regulation remain underexplored. Therefore the study aims to address this gap by investigating how PBL influences self-discipline and related behaviors in a primary EFL classroom setting.

While the researches reviewed above show the increasing interest in PBL within Kazakhstani schools, the existing literature remains limited in several important areas. Most of the Kazakhstani studies focus on secondary or higher education settings, language outcomes or teachers' perceptions rather than behavioral outcomes such as self-discipline in primary school settings. Moreover, no study has specifically examined the relationship between Project-Based Learning and self-discipline development in primary EFL classrooms in Kazakhstan.

This study aims to address this gap by examining how PBL influences self-discipline, participation and responsibility among Grade 3 students in a Kazakhstani EFL context.

2.12 Challenges of Implementing PBL

Despite multiple benefits related to Project-Based Learning (PBL), the process of implementing it into a primary school setting involves some important challenges that have to be considered by the teachers. Getting acquainted with these challenges is important for

ensuring successful implementation and reaping all possible benefits from using PBL in education.

Firstly, time management can pose a considerable problem for implementing PBL into a curriculum. Since the process of carrying out projects in PBL implies that learners need a lot of time for investigations and collaborations, finding enough time for implementing it at the stage of primary education can be especially difficult for teachers. According to Kokotsaki et al. (2016), lack of time was recognized by numerous researchers as one of the most common barriers to implementing PBL successfully. Another aspect of PBL which poses some difficulties for teachers is assessment. Contrary to the assessment strategies used in the process of traditional teaching where performance is assessed with the help of standardized tests, PBL requires evaluating a range of qualities and skills of the learner including collaboration, responsibility, and self-discipline among others. For developing appropriate methods of such an assessment, a lot of effort should be exerted by the teachers, especially if they have never conducted a PBL lesson before. Sengirbekova et al. (2024) found that Kazakhstani teachers faced the problem of assessing individual contributions within group projects in terms of objective criteria.

In addition, teacher preparation and confidence level play a vital role when it comes to implementing PBL successfully since PBL implies adopting a different role compared to a teacher's role in the process of conventional teaching. As Boss and Larmer (2018) note, to implement PBL successfully, a teacher needs to develop certain skills and dispositions and to change the approach to the learning and teaching process dramatically. However, such skills and dispositions might not have been developed initially by a teacher during his or her preparation.

One more issue to consider regarding implementing PBL into primary education is that PBL requires some self-management abilities from the part of learners, which might be especially

challenging for younger learners. To address this issue, special measures were taken in the current research.

2.13 Summary

The current chapter provides a review of major theoretical and empirical literature on the issues of Project-Based Learning and self-discipline in primary schools teaching EFL. To start with, the notion of PBL is defined relying on its characterization offered by Thomas (2000), Bell (2010), Kokotsaki et al. (2016), and Krajcik and Shin (2014).

Further, a number of important theories related to Project-Based Learning (constructivism - Piaget, 1970; self-regulated learning - Zimmerman, 2002; and experiential learning - Kolb, 1984) are introduced. In combination, these theories help better understand the mechanisms according to which PBL contributes to the academic and behavioral development of students.

Next, self-discipline is considered as an integral characteristic that should be promoted in primary education settings. This notion is considered based on ideas developed by Duckworth & Seligman (2005), Zimmerman (2002), Baumeister & Tierney (2011), and Pintrich (2000).

According to these researchers, self-discipline is seen as a major predictor of academic success in young learners.

This chapter continues with the analysis of the connection between PBL and self-discipline. The review shows that PBL facilitates the development of self-discipline because it requires students to develop plans for activities, collaborate with peers, allocate time appropriately, and control the results of their performance. Further, teachers can help students build self-discipline by providing appropriate scaffolding and conducting regular observations.

Finally, a number of major findings regarding the effectiveness of PBL interventions are summarized, which shows that PBL increases students' engagement and encourages them to take responsibility for their actions. As far as the local context is concerned, a few

Kazakhstani studies (Intykbekov, 2017; Sengirbekova et al., 2024; and Alimanova et al., 2025) are presented to show that PBL can be successfully applied in Kazakhstani schools.One of the gaps in the existing literature is the absence of studies that analyze the connections between Project-Based Learning and self-discipline in EFL primary education context. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the effect of a four-week PBL intervention on self-discipline and responsibility among Grade 3 learners as well as their involvement in Englisp speaking classes.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology: research design, participants, research settings, data collection instruments, procedures and methods of data analysis that were used in this study. The purpose of this research is to identify the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in developing self-discipline among primary school students in an English as a Foreign Language Classroom.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopts a quasi-experimental mixed methods design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. This study applies a concurrent mixed methods design, as described by Creswell and Creswell (2018), in which qualitative and quantitative data were collected simultaneously in a four week period intervention. The quantitative part involves the use of pre- and post-intervention questionnaires to measure changes in students' self-discipline, responsibility and active participation in the classes and especially in English-speaking activities. The qualitative component includes structured classroom observations from 6 teachers who helped in project process to capture behavioral changes during the implementation of Project-Based Learning.

The study was conducted over a period of four-week intervention, which helped to allow sufficient and enough time to observe the changes in students' behavior within a natural classroom setting. This design is appropriate for the study as it enables the researcher to examine real-life situations and educational practices without manipulating variables in an artificial environment.

3.3 Participants

The participants of this study consisted of 18 Grade 3 students, aged between 9 and 10 years old, enrolled in a primary school in Kazakhstan. The participants were selected using a convenience sampling method, as the study was conducted in the researcher's own classroom. This approach allowed the research to take place in an authentic learning environment without disrupting the regular educational process.

Students were divided into five small groups, each consisting of three to four members, to facilitate collaborative project work. Two advisors who are responsible for the class, divided the students into considering their strengths and weaknesses, skills and relationships in order to maximize their individual growth wherever they need to take responsibility or strengthen any other skills which are needed in the project work.

Participation in the study was totally voluntary and informed consent form was obtained from parents or legal guardians prior to data collection. Students whose parents did not provide the consent were excluded from the research data, but still they continued to participate in the project and EFL classroom activities.

Table 3.1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 18 participants, including age, gender, English Proficiency and years of Language study.

Table 3.1

Demographic characteristic of participants

Student Code	Age	Gender	English Proficiency level	Years studying English
S1	9	Male	A1 (Beginner)	2
S2	9	Female	A2 (Elementary)	3

Student Code	Age	Gender	English Proficiency level	Years studying English
S3	10	Male	A2/B1 (Pre-Intermediate)	3
S4	9	Female	A2 (Elementary)	2
S5	10	Male	A2 (Elementary)	3
S6	10	Male	A2 (Elementary)	3
S7	9	Female	A1 (Beginner)	1
S8	9	Female	A2 (Elementary)	2
S9	10	Male	A2 (Elementary)	3
S10	9	Female	A1 (Beginner)	2
S11	9	Male	A1 (Beginner)	1
S12	10	Female	A2 (Elementary)	2
S13	10	Male	A2 (Elementary)	3
S14	9	Female	A2/B1 (Pre-Intermediate)	3
S15	10	Male	A2 (Elementary)	3
S16	9	Male	A1 (Beginner)	2
S17	10	Female	A2 (Elementary)	3
S18	9	Male	A1 (Beginner)	2

Note. Proficiency levels are based on the CEFR framework. All students are enrolled in Grade 3 at Private Primary school in Kazakhstan.

3.4 Research Setting

The study was conducted in a primary school EFL classroom in Kazakhstan, where English is taught as a foreign language. All research activities were integrated into regular English and Project lessons, ensuring that the study did not interfere with the standard curriculum. The Classroom environment provided a natural setting for observing students' behavior, interaction and language use during Project-Based Learning activities.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

Two primary instruments were used to collect data in this study

3.5.1 Student Questionnaire

The student questionnaire was developed by the researcher based on the theoretical framework of self-regulated learning (Zimmerman, 2002) and self-discipline (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005). The questions were designed to reflect the key behavioral characteristics and indicators of self-discipline identified in the literature, including active participation in attention and focus, English-speaking activities, task completion and responsibility. The questionnaire consisted of 10 items measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The Likert scale was selected as it is a widely used and reliable instrument for measuring attitudes and behavioral perceptions in educational research (Cohen et al., 2018). Moreover, this scale is considered as an appropriate tool for use with young learners due to its simplicity and easy comprehension. The questionnaire was introduced in both English and Russian languages to ensure that all participants, regardless of their English proficiency level, could fully understand each item and respond accurately.

As the class has different levels of English and some of the students may be confused if the

questionnaire will be only in English, it was presented in both English and Russian, in order to support students to fully understand each item and ensure that they feel confident filling out the questionnaire.

The questionnaire included statements such as:

-I complete my English homework on time

-I stay focused during English lessons

-I take responsibility for my part of the group project

-I try to speak English when working with my classmates

-I follow instructions when working on group activities

-I participate actively during English lessons

-I try to solve problems independently before asking teacher for help

-I stay organized when working on project tasks

The questionnaire was administered twice:

-Pre-test (before the intervention)

-Post-test (after the four-week intervention)

This allowed for comparison of students' responses and identification of behavioral changes over time. To notice their opinion about themselves at the beginning of the project and in the end, how 4 weeks of active project time can change the students.

3.5.2 Teacher Observation Checklist

A structured observation checklist was used to monitor students' behavior during the classroom activities.

The checklist focused on the following indicators:

-task completion

-attention and focus

-responsibility for homework

-participation in group work

-use of English during activities

Observations were conducted throughout the four-week period and notes were recorded systematically to identify patterns and changes in student behavior.

3.5.3 Observation Protocol

Classroom observations were conducted systematically throughout the 4 week intervention period. The researcher and researcher's co-teacher had observations and post-observation discussions after each English and Project lessons. Moreover, four teachers who were also supporting the class throughout the project, had observations once in a week during 2-period Project lessons of 45-minutes each. This ensured that behavioral changes were observed and monitored consistently throughout the intervention period.

During the observation session, observers filled out a structured observation checklist focusing on five behavioral indicators: participation in group work, use of english during activities, task completion, responsibility for homework and attention and focus. Each indicator was rated on a three-point scale: Low, Medium or High.

The two regular observers (researcher and researcher's co-teacher) discussed their findings and compared the checklists in order to monitor consistency and accuracy of the recorded data following each lesson. This discussion process helped to minimize observer bias and strengthen the reliability of the qualitative data.

3.6 Procedure

The study was conducted over a four-week period during regular English and Project classes.

Step 1: Preparation

Before the study began, informed consent was obtained from parents or legal guardians. Students were informed about the purpose of the study and given clear instructions on how to

complete the questionnaire. Grade 3 teachers planned the project, procedures and steps that would be conducted throughout 4 weeks.

Step 2: Pre-Test

At the beginning of the study, students were asked to complete the pre-test questionnaire, which measured their initial levels of self-discipline, responsibility and participation in English learning.

Step 3: Intervention (Project-Based Learning)

During the four-week period, students participated in Project-Based Learning activities integrated into their English lessons. The project was science-based but conducted in English, requiring students to:

-collaborate in groups

-discuss ideas in English

-complete projects tasks

-present their works

Students worked in teams, which encouraged communication, cooperation and shared responsibility.

Step 4: Observation

Throughout the intervention, the teacher conducted systematic observations using the checklist to monitor students' behavior and engagement.

Step 5: Post-Test

At the end of the four-week period, students conducted final presentations in front of the community partner and the audience. Right after the presentations students had a reflection activity where they reflected on their work. After having the reflection, they completed the post-test questionnaire, allowing the researcher to measure any changes in behavior.

Step 6: Data Comparison

The results of the pre-test and post-test questionnaires were compared to identify improvements in self-discipline, responsibility and participation.

3.7 Data Analysis

Quantitative Data

Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically mean scores.

Pre-test and post-test results were compared to identify changes in:

-self-discipline

-task completion

-responsibility

- participation in English

This strategy facilitated the determination of the extent and direction of change with respect to all variables after the implementation of the four-week PBL intervention program. It was concluded that descriptive statistical analysis is the most appropriate technique given the limited number of subjects (n = 18) and the exploratory nature of the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Qualitative Data

Data collected from classroom observations were subjected to content analysis. The process involved using the predetermined categories from the observation checklist in order for the researcher to be able to see any changes in the patterns of behavior shown by the students during the four weeks (Cohen et al., 2018).

The researcher identified patterns related to:

-student engagement

-independence

-collaboration

-language use

These observations provided deeper insight into how Project-Based Learning influenced on student's behavior. Content analysis was applied as an approach to the analysis of qualitative data gathered through structured observations carried out in class. Specifically, the content analysis framework involved the pre-set categories identified in the observation checklist, such as task completion, attention and focus, homework responsibility, group work participation, and English utilization during activities. This method was chosen because of its ability to offer a systematic analysis of observational data based on certain categories (Cohen et al., 2018).

During the four-week intervention, the researcher and co-researchers recorded the behavior patterns of the individual students using the observation checklist. Having collected all the information, the researcher examined all the completed checklists to determine whether there have been any changes in the behavior of the students over the four weeks. Specifically, attention was drawn to student engagement, independence, collaboration, and language use over time.

Combining the quantitative and qualitative data gathered helped understand the effects of PBL implementation on students' self-discipline.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical research standards. Students' identities were protected through the use of codes (e.g., S1-S18)

Participation was totally voluntary

Parental consent was obtained

Data were stored securely in a researcher's google account

Students could withdraw at any time without penalty

The study involved minimal risk, as all activities were the part of regular classroom instruction and did not affect students' grades or evaluations.

CHAPTER 4

Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study, which aimed to investigate the impact of Project-Based Learning (PBL) on the development of self-discipline among Grade 3 students in an EFL classroom. The results are based on quantitative data collected through pre- and post-test questionnaires, as well as qualitative data obtained from classroom observations.

4.2 Quantitative Results

4.2.1 Overall Changes in Self-Discipline

The comparison of pre-test and post-test results indicates a moderate-improvement in students' self-discipline, responsibility and participation in English Language Learning.

Table 4.1

Mean Scores of Students' Self-Discipline (Pre-Test vs Post-Test)

Indicator	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean
Homework Completion	2.83	3.89
Task completion without reminders	2.89	3.72
Staying focused during lessons	3.0	3.67
Responsibility in group work	3.22	4.0
Speaking English in group activities	2.78	3.5

Active participation in lessons	3.11	3.9
Independent Problem-Solving	2.94	3.64
Organization During Tasks	3.0	4.11
Overall self-discipline	3.0	3.7

4.2.2 Interpretation of Quantitative Results

The data show a consistent increase across all the indicators.

The most noticeable improvements were observed in:

Responsibility in group work

Participation in lessons

Homework Completion

These findings suggest that Project-Based Learning encourages students to take greater responsibility for their learning and participate more actively in classroom activities.

However, improvements in:

Speaking English

Independent problem-solving

Were moderate rather than dramatic, indicating that these skills may require a longer intervention period to develop fully.

4.3 Qualitative Results (Classroom Observations)

Classroom observations provided deeper insight into students' behavioral changes during the four-week intervention.

4.3.1 Increased Responsibility

At the beginning, students were avoiding answering or discussing the questions. However,

during the project each member was given time to share and other teammates were supposed to write the noticings on their science journals. Students demonstrated greater ownership of their learning during project activities. Many students took responsibility for completing their assigned roles within the group. Some students started to demonstrate their leadership skills by dividing the tasks and responsibilities. For example, several students began reminding their peers about tasks and deadlines, which was not observed before the intervention. If some students completed their task first, they were initiating to help their peers by guidance and explanation.

4.3.2 Improved Task Engagement

During the project, students showed increased focus and engagement. Compared to the pre-intervention stage, fewer students required repeated instructions or reminders from the teacher. Students were more willing to stay on task and complete activities within the given time.

4.3.3 Development of Collaboration Skills

At the beginning of the project it was difficult for students to work in the teams, as they wanted to work with their teams. Nevertheless, they were divided according to their skills, strengths and previous performance. Each team was supposed to have the student who is good in: writing, drawing, researching and presenting. In order to improve their collaboration each project and EFL lessons were starting with Team-Building activities, which fostered their team work and positive atmosphere in the group. Therefore, starting the lesson with short, fun and collaborative activities led to the positive outcomes, such as enhanced student engagement, higher motivation level and improved teamwork skills. Group work played a significant role in promoting cooperation, Students actively discussed ideas, shared responsibilities and supported each other during tasks. Active collaboration helped students to discuss the given problem, brainstorm the solution ideas and listen to each other throughout

the whole project period. Moreover, it increased the positive atmosphere overall in the classroom.This collaborative environment contributed to the development of responsibility and accountability.

4.3.4 Increased Use of English

Students demonstrated a gradual increase in the use of English during group work and Presentations. According to the previous observations, students rarely used English during the team and class discussions. During the project each team had 1IPad on the table in order to use a translator if they needed to.

Although some students still relied on their first language, there was a noticeable improvement in:

-willingness to speak

-participation in discussions

4.3.5 Growth in Independence

Over time, students became more independent in completing tasks. They relied less on the teacher and attempted to solve problems on their own before asking for help.

4.4 Summary of Findings

The findings indicate that Project-Based Learning had a positive impact on students' self-discipline and classroom behavior.

Key outcomes include:

-moderate improvement in self-discipline

-increased responsibility and task completion

-improved participation in english-speaking activities

-greater independence and collaboration

While the improvements were not dramatic, they demonstrate that even a short-term PBL intervention can contribute to the development of important behavioral skills in young learners.

An increase in task engagement was observed in particular in the latter parts of the intervention period. During the first week, many students were adjusting to the structure of the project and often asked for guidance from the teacher. However, toward the third and fourth weeks, the students displayed a far better ability to concentrate on tasks without needing constant encouragement and to effectively manage their time.

These results were also supported by the observation checklists, in which most students received Medium to High levels of rating for both their attention and focus in the latter part of the project in comparison with mainly Low and Medium levels before its start. It can be said that through continued participation in well-structured project-based activities, students gradually became more capable of concentrating for an extended period of time.

Furthermore, the science-based content of the project made students engage in the task due to their interest in the subject matter and desire to explore and share their discoveries. The project's authentic nature and purpose served as an internal motivating factor helping students concentrate and commit to completing the project. According to Krajcik & Shin (2014), students engaged in authentic, inquiry-based projects will not require external motivation as their projects give them a genuine reason to continue learning.

The cooperative nature of the project allowed students to establish a shared sense of responsibility that kept them focused. Namely, students understood that they will affect their whole group with any lack of concentration and dedication; therefore, they had a motivation to remain engaged at all times.

Chapter 5

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study in relation to the research questions and existing literature. It also presents the conclusions, implications for teaching practice, limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

5.2.1 Impact of PBL on Self-Discipline

The findings of this study indicate that Project-Based Learning had a positive and moderate impact on the development of self-discipline among primary school students.

Students demonstrated improvements in:

-completing tasks independently

-staying focused during lessons

-taking responsibility for their learning

These results align with the findings of Duckworth and Seligman (2005), who highlight that self-discipline plays an important and crucial role in academic success. The structured nature of project work required students to regulate their behavior and manage their time, which contributed to the development of self-discipline.

Furthermore, the results support the theoretical framework of self-regulated learning (Zimmerman, 2002), as students engaged in planning, monitoring and completing tasks throughout the project.

The changes in self-regulation reported can be attributed to the organized and systematic nature of PBL as an instructional strategy, according to which, students were required to perform certain tasks in each stage of the project, thus creating an obvious basis for self-

regulation. Gradually, as external scaffolding faded away, students started regulating their own behavior by monitoring their own activities and performing certain actions independently of any instructor's instructions.This assumption is supported by Pintrich's (2000) point about how effective self-discipline can be developed through the assignment of meaningful tasks and tracking of personal progress.

Indeed, students in the present study were offered a clear objective and a series of goals, which allowed them to start regulating their behavior and completing their assigned tasks. That being said, one should bear in mind that self-discipline did not change significantly in the course of the experiment. This statement is corroborated by Kokotsaki et al.'s (2016) idea that relatively short-term projects are unlikely to help change learners' behaviors dramatically. Four weeks might be too little for developing self-discipline competences in the targeted sample. Nevertheless, the consistently increasing levels of all aspects of self-discipline are encouraging in this regard, because it means that PBL can play the role of a foundation on which the future development of proper learner behavior can be based. The positive results obtained during the investigation can be considered encouraging, especially against the background of primary EFL education in Kazakhstan.

It appears that incorporating PBL into the process of teaching English may allow young learners to obtain the needed linguistic knowledge as well as acquire necessary behavioral traits, including self-discipline.

5.2.2 Responsibility for Homework and Classroom Tasks

The study found that students notice a noticeable improvement in their responsibility for completing homework and classroom tasks. This can be explained by the collaborative nature of PBL. When students worked in groups, they became accountable not only to the teacher but also to their peers. This social responsibility encouraged them to complete their tasks more efficiently and consistently.

These findings are consistent with Bell (2010), who argues that PBL fosters responsibility and learner autonomy by placing students at the center of the learning process.

Thus, organizing and defining the different roles in the group during the process of implementing the project contributed to enhancing students' sense of responsibility since it was explicitly shown how important were their contributions to achieve positive outcomes for the peers. The understanding of dependence of someone's work on others' stimulated students to work collaboratively and efficiently in terms of completing their task on time and considering all the requirements.

This assumption finds its confirmation in the works by Krajcik and Shin (2014) stating that PBL with allocation roles fosters increased sense of responsibility among students. Moreover, according to Zimmerman (2002), setting the goals and monitoring the progress of one's personal activities allows enhancing students' sense of achievement and responsibility. Qualitative data gathered during four weeks of intervention proves this assumption. As stated by teachers, students that initially were prompted frequently to perform necessary actions started acting independently. In addition, some students were observed reminding their peers about deadlines and assigned tasks, helping them in completing their assignments. Such behavior implies that PBL encourages not only a sense of responsibility, but also creates a sense of collective accountability for all the tasks.

These results have great implications for the primary EFL education in Kazakhstan because conventional teacher-centered methods prevent learners from developing such skills as autonomy and responsibility. Thus, incorporating the PBL approach into English classes might provide children with opportunities to behave responsibly in real conditions.

5.2.3 Participation in Speaking English

The results also indicate an increase in students' participation in speaking English during classroom activities. Although the improvements was moderate, students demonstrated:

-greater willingness to speak

-increased participation in group discussions

-improved confidence in using English

This supports Stoller's (2006) view that PBL creates meaningful contexts for language use, particularly in EFL classrooms where opportunities for communication are often limited. However, the moderate level of improvement suggests that language development requires longer exposure and practice and a four-week intervention may not be sufficient for significant changes. It could be also argued that the gradual increase in the level of English language participation in the present study is due to a number of features inherent to the PBL intervention. First of all, students had to conduct their group discussions, prepare tasks and make presentations in English. These were the situations where it was possible to have real language use which is rarely achieved in traditional teacher-centered classes. In addition, the use of tablets facilitated translation and made students feel less nervous and willing to use English even if they were not confident about their abilities. According to Cameron (2001), young learners can develop their language skills best if they are provided with meaningful opportunities to practice communication skills. This particular situation provided them with just such an opportunity since it was necessary for students to use English to share their findings, make comments and present their projects in front of the community partner, parents and the other audience. This gave students extra motivation to try to speak English more actively than they usually do while completing tasks in conventional classrooms. At the same time, it should be noted that language skills take a long time to develop and require much practice. The fact that there was only a slight increase in the level of participation in speaking indicates that even one month of working in this way might not bring significant changes in language skills. According to Hammer (2007), to develop communication skills, learners need regular practice over a considerable period.

However, despite the slight improvement, it is important that the willingness to speak English was increased in any case. It means that PBL helped to create an atmosphere where students felt confident and were eager to participate in discussions and communication.

5.2.4 Role of Collaboration and Engagement

One of the most significant findings of this study is the role of collaboration in promoting self-discipline. Students became more engaged and motivated when working in teams. The interactive nature of PBL encouraged active participation and reduced passive learning behaviors. For example, according to Vygotsky's theory of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (1978), students are able to reach higher levels of comprehension and productivity if they cooperate with peers who have the ability to provide assistance and help. In the current experiment, this effect was demonstrated when competent students automatically assumed the role of leaders and helped their peers to perform tasks effectively and without any delays.Peer support led to the formation of the positive atmosphere in the classroom, which allowed all participants to become more engaged in the process of completing assignments. Furthermore, the team building exercises used at the beginning of each lesson played an important role in establishing a positive atmosphere and creating conditions for efficient teamwork. According to Boss and Larmer (2018), it is crucial to create a positive environment where students feel comfortable working together since it plays an important role in the effective implementation of PBL.In addition, PBL allowed reducing typical behavior associated with traditional teacher-centered lessons. Passive listening was replaced by discussion of ideas, decision-making processes, and problem-solving activities. All of the mentioned activities required high levels of self-discipline from students, which were reached in the course of cooperative work with other members of a project team.Kokotsaki et al. (2016) confirm the results of the current study by stating that the collaborative character of project work positively influences student engagement. Therefore, it could be stated that the

collaborative aspect of PBL is considered to be one of its strong instruments that allows developing self-discipline among students of primary schools.

5.3 Conclusion

To conclude, the present study investigated the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning in developing self-discipline among Grade 3 students in a primary EFL classroom in Kazakhstan. The findings show that even a short-term four week PBL intervention can produce meaningful improvements in students' self-discipline, task completion, participation in English-speaking activities and responsibility. While the improvements were moderate rather than dramatic, they provide encouraging evidence for the potential of PBL as a student-centered instructional approach in primary school EFL settings. The research contributes to the growing body of research on PBL in Kazakhstan and offers practical insights for teachers seeking to implement student-centered approaches in their classrooms.

This study addressed three research questions. The first question examined the impact of PBL on self-discipline. The findings demonstrated that it has a positive impact on students' self-discipline and classroom atmosphere. Students are more responsible, engaged and motivated during the lessons which are the indicators of self-discipline.

The second research question examined the responsibility for completing tasks. The results indicated that students willed to complete their tasks more than it was before, specifically Science homeworks which were usually about the project. Through regular observations the researcher and colleague identified this pattern.

The third research question explored the participation in speaking English. The study found that students were more motivated to speak and discuss in English. At first, it was challenging, but after time students got used to speaking or using the tools which could support their challenges (using translators on IPads or vocabulary books). According to the

likert scale students have great change, but it is still lower than the other aspects and could be improved more.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

Despite the positive findings, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First of all, the small sample size of 18 students from a single classroom limits and effects on generalizability of the findings. The results cannot be broadly generalized and applied to all primary EFL classrooms in Kazakhstan or other countries and contexts. Future studies with larger and more diverse samples would provide stronger evidence for the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning in developing self-discipline.

Secondly, it is related to the period of conducting the research. The four-week intervention was relatively short. A longer intervention may have produced more significant and lasting behavioral changes while the improvements were observed in self-discipline. According to Kokotsaki et al. (2016), a reasonable link between PBL and positive student outcomes cannot be established with certainty in short term quasi-experimental studies.

Finally, the absence of a control group means that improvements observed in students' self-discipline cannot be attributed exclusively to the PBL intervention. Other factors such as natural developmental changes or the influence of other classroom activities may have contributed to the observed improvements.

5.5 Implications for Teaching Practice

The findings of this study provides several practical implications for EFL teachers working in primary school settings. At first, the results suggest that PBL is an effective approach for developing not only language skills but also behavioral skills such as active participation, responsibility and self-discipline. Teachers who want to foster and develop these qualities in young learners may consider integrating PBL activities into their regular classroom routine.

Second, the study emphasizes the importance of collaboration with a team in promoting

self-discipline. Assigning students to specific roles, which requires duties and makes students foster the responsibility in themselves. It holds them accountable for the contribution , which creates a sense of shared responsibility that encourages disciplined behavior. Teachers are supposed to carefully consider the groupings, ensuring that students with different strengths and abilities are together in order to maximize the individual growth of each student and team.

The next aspect is the use of structured observation checklists together with student questionnaires proved to be an effective combination of tracking behavioral development. Teachers should adopt similar tools to monitor students' progress in self-discipline over time and identify the areas where additional support may be needed.Finally, the study suggests that incorporating regular and consistent team-building activities for students at the beginning of the lessons can significantly improve their team work and positively affect the overall classroom climate, collaboration and motivation - all of which are included into self-discipline.

5.6 Recommendations for the Future Research

According to the findings and limitations of the study, there can be suggested several recommendations for future research. First, future studies should employ larger sample sizes, including control groups to allow for more systematic comparison of the outcomes and stronger causal claims about the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning.

Second, longitudinal studies examining the long-term effects of PBL on self-discipline would provide valuable insights into whether the behavioral improvements observed in short-period interventions are sustained over time. A study planning a full academic year or longer would allow researchers to track the development of self-discipline more effectively.

Third, future study should explore the effectiveness of PBL in developing self-discipline across different age groups, backgrounds and educational levels, contexts in Kazakhstan.

Comparative studies examining PBL in the rural and urban schools, or across different grade levels, would positively contribute to a more detailed understanding of how contextual factors influence outcomes.

Finally, future researchers could also investigate the role of teacher training in the successful implementation of PBL. As the quality of PBL implementation and intervention totally depends on teachers' preparation and understanding, research investigating how professional development sessions and programs can better equip teachers to use PBL more effectively would be particularly valuable.

5.7 Novelty of the Study

The current research is characterized by some unique aspects compared to those studies that have already been conducted in the field of PBL and self-discipline in primary education. In general, many scientific works devoted to PBL were carried out in various settings and focused on different issues associated with the approach in particular. However, the novelty of the current research lies in the uniqueness of its focus, setting, and methodology.

First, the study fills the gap in the existing literature on self-discipline of primary school students. Many scholars have already studied the effect of PBL on the academic achievements, linguistic skills, cognitive development, etc., of primary school students. At the same time, very little attention was paid to behavioral characteristics such as self-discipline, self-responsibility, willingness to complete assignments. Therefore, this research aims at filling the identified knowledge gap and adding new information to the literature.

Second, this research is unique for its geographical context, namely, Kazakhstan. With the increased interest in educational reforms in Kazakhstan, PBL in primary schools still lacks evidence-based research. Thus, the study contributes to filling the knowledge gap concerning the effectiveness of PBL in a specific setting. To put it simply, the current research is one of the first attempts to study PBL in a primary school EFL setting in Kazakhstan.

Third, the current research offers a better understanding of PBL and its effect on self-discipline of children by using a mixed-method design. By applying pre- and post-tests in combination with classroom observations, the study generates a set of valuable insights concerning the process of developing students' self-discipline within the scope of PBL. Finally, the focus of the research on the Grade 3 students aged 9-10 years adds to its uniqueness since the specified age group has received little attention in PBL literature before. At the same time, the importance of focusing on the behavior of children of such age cannot be underestimated because of their developmental needs.

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Appendix A

SDU University Research Ethics Committee

Statement of Informed Consent for Parents/Guardians of Minors

KEY INFORMATION:

Dear parent, guardian,

Your child is being invited to participate in a research study about the use of **Project-Based Learning (PBL) in English language lessons** and how it may help develop students' self-discipline and responsibility in learning.
The purpose of this study is to explore whether project-based learning activities can improve primary school students' self-discipline, responsibility for homework and classroom tasks, and participation in speaking English.
Approximately **18 students** will take part in this study. The results of the research will be used for the researcher's **Master's thesis at SDU University** and may also be used for academic publications.
If you allow your child to participate, they will be involved in the study for **four weeks during regular English lessons**. The research activities will take place during normal class time and will not require any additional sessions outside school hours.
Students will participate in project-based learning activities in small groups during English lessons. They will also complete a short questionnaire about their learning behavior **before and after the project**. The teacher will observe classroom participation and learning behavior during lessons.
We believe this study involves **no more than minimal risk**. The activities are part of normal classroom learning and will not cause physical or psychological harm. The only possible inconvenience may be the time needed to complete the short questionnaire.
Your child may not directly benefit from this research; however, the study may help teachers better understand how project-based learning can support students' responsibility, teamwork, and participation in English learning.

DETAILED STUDY INFORMATION (some information may be repeated from the summary above):

Your child is being asked to participate in a research study about **Project-Based Learning in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lessons**.

This study is being conducted at **a primary school in Kazakhstan during regular English classes**.

The study is conducted by:

Saya Turybekova
Master's student, Program: Two Foreign Languages

Faculty of Education and Humanities
Suleyman Demirel University

Research Advisor:
Saule Tulepova

Your child was selected as a possible participant because they are a student in the researcher's English language class.

Please read this consent form carefully and ask any questions before deciding whether to allow your child to participate.

PROCEDURES:

If you give permission for your child to participate in this study, the following activities will occur:

Week 1

- Students complete a short questionnaire about their learning behavior (approximately 5-10 minutes).

Weeks 1-4

- Students participate in project-based learning activities during regular English lessons.
- Students work in small teams to complete learning tasks and a group project.
- The teacher observes students' participation, responsibility, and task completion during lessons.

Week 4

- Students complete the same questionnaire again to measure possible changes in learning behavior.

All research activities will take place during regular English lessons. Students will not be required to participate in any activities outside normal class time.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

The records of this study will be kept private and your child's confidentiality will be protected.

Students' real names will **not be used in the research data**. Each participant will be assigned a **code number (for example: S1-S18)**.

In any reports or publications resulting from this study, no identifying information about participants will be included.

All research data will be stored in the researcher's **password-protected Google Drive account**. Only the researcher will have access to the data.

All identifiable research records will be deleted **three years after completion of the study**.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY:

Participation in this study is completely voluntary.

Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate will not affect your child's grades, evaluation, or relationship with the teacher or school.

If you decide to allow your child to participate, they may still skip any question they do not want to answer. You may also withdraw your child from the study at any time without penalty.

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS:

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact:

Researcher:
Saya Turybekova
Email: 241302014@sdu.edu.kz
Advisor:
Saule Tulepova
SDU

If you have concerns about the ethical conduct of this study, you may contact the **Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC) of SDU University**

STATEMENT OF CONSENT:
I am 18 years of age or older. I have read and understood the above information. I give consent for my child to participate in the study.

Signature:_____
Date: _____

Signature of Investigator:_____
Date: _____

Signature of Investigator:_____
Date: _____

Appendix B

	1- Strongly Disagree	2- Disagree	3- Neutral	4 - Agree	5 - Strongly Agree
I complete my English homework on time Я делаю домашнее задание по английскому вовремя.					
I try to finish my classroom tasks without being reminded by the teacher Я стараюсь выполнять задания сам, без напоминания учителя.					
I stay focused during English lessons Я внимательно работаю на уроке английского					
I follow instructions when working on group activities Я следую инструкциям при выполнении групповых заданий.					
I take responsibility for my part of the group project Я несу ответственность за свою часть работы в групповом проекте.					
I try to speak English when working with my classmates Я стараюсь говорить на английском языке при работе с					

	1- Strongly Disagree	2- Disagree	3- Neutral	4 - Agree	5 - Strongly Agree
одноклассниками.					
I participate actively during English lessons Я активно участвую в занятиях по английскому языку.					
I try to solve problems independently before asking the teacher for help Я стараюсь решать задачи самостоятельно, прежде чем обращаться за помощью к учителю.					
I stay organized when working on project tasks Я организованно выполняю задания в рамках проекта.					
I feel responsible for completing my learning tasks Я чувствую ответственность за выполнение своих учебных заданий.					

Appendix C

Student Code	Completes tasks independently	Brings homework	Stays focused duringlesson	Participates in group work	Speaks English during activities	Comments
S1	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High					
S2	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High					
S3	☐ Low ☐Medium ☐ High					
S4	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High					
S5	☐ Low ☐Medium ☐ High					
S6	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High					
S7	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High					
S8	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High					

Student Code	Completes tasks independently	Brings homework	Stays focused duringlesson	Participates in group work	Speaks English during activities	Comments
S9	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High					
S10	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High					
S11	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High					
S12	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High					
S13	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High					
S14	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High					
S15	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High					
S16	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High					
S17	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High					
S18	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High					