

Рекомендуемая структура исследовательских работ

Рекомендуемый объем исследовательского отчета — не более 2000 слов

Секция	Описание
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Тема	STRENGTHENING STUDENT WELL-BEING THROUGH THE KIVA ANTI-BULLYING PROGRAM: ACTION RESEARCH EVIDENCE FROM A NAZARBAYEV INTELLECTUAL SCHOOL 2024–2025 гг
Аннотация (150–250 слов)	Student well-being has become a central focus of contemporary educational policy and school development, as research increasingly demonstrates the connection between psychological safety, academic engagement, and positive learning outcomes. Bullying remains one of the most persistent threats to student well-being, particularly in secondary schools, where peer relationships play a critical role in adolescents' social and emotional development. This article presents the results of a school-based action research study examining the implementation of the KiVa anti-bullying program at the Nazarbayev Intellectual School of Science and Mathematics in Semey during the 2024–2025 academic year. The study aimed to explore how a structured, whole-school prevention program influences students' perceptions of safety, the frequency of bullying incidents, and teachers' responses to bullying situations. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining anonymous pre- and post-intervention surveys, analysis of internal school bullying reports, systematic observations, and individual conversations conducted in response to identified cases. Approximately 800 students in grades 7–12 participated in the program, alongside teachers, curators, school psychologists, and parents. The findings indicate a reduction in reported bullying cases during the second semester, an increased sense of safety among students, and improved teacher awareness and responsiveness. Despite initial challenges related to workload and stakeholder skepticism, the results suggest that the KiVa program can be effectively adapted to the local educational context and contribute to strengthening student well-being and school climate.
Актуальность и обоснование проблемы	In recent years, student well-being has emerged as a key indicator of educational quality, alongside academic achievement. Modern schools are increasingly expected to create learning environments that promote not only cognitive development but also emotional safety, social

inclusion, and positive interpersonal relationships. International studies emphasize that students who feel safe and supported at school are more likely to demonstrate higher engagement, motivation, and resilience (OECD, 2019; Hymel & Swearer, 2015).

One of the most significant challenges to student well-being is bullying. Bullying is commonly defined as repeated aggressive behavior characterized by an imbalance of power, where victims experience difficulty defending themselves (Olweus, 1993). However, international research highlights that students' understanding of bullying may vary depending on cultural and educational contexts. Comparative studies demonstrate that while core elements such as repetition and power imbalance remain consistent, the interpretation of bullying behaviors differs across countries and age groups (Smith et al., 2002). Such behavior may take multiple forms, including verbal harassment, social exclusion, and cyberbullying. Research indicates that bullying has both immediate and long-term consequences, including anxiety, decreased academic participation, and weakened trust in school institutions (Espelage & Swearer, 2010).

Importantly, bullying is not solely an individual issue but a group phenomenon shaped by peer norms and social dynamics. Studies show that bystanders play a critical role in either reinforcing or discouraging bullying behavior (Salmivalli, 2010; Gaffney et al., 2019). As a result, prevention efforts that focus exclusively on perpetrators and victims may have limited impact. Instead, whole-school approaches that address collective responsibility and school culture are increasingly recommended.

Meta-analytical research confirms that school-based anti-bullying programs can significantly reduce bullying and victimization when they are systematically implemented and supported by school leadership (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). Among these programs, the Finnish KiVa initiative has gained international recognition due to its strong theoretical foundation and empirical effectiveness. KiVa combines classroom lessons, visible school-wide practices, targeted interventions, and continuous monitoring to influence peer behavior and establish clear norms against bullying (Salmivalli et al., 2011).

Within the Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools system, student well-being has been identified as a strategic priority aligned with international educational trends. However, empirical research on the implementation of international anti-bullying programs in the Kazakhstani context remains limited. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the experience of implementing the KiVa program at the Nazarbayev Intellectual School of Science and Mathematics in Semey.

<p>Цель и исследовательские вопросы</p>	<p>The purpose of this study was to investigate how the KiVa program influenced student well-being and bullying prevention practices. The research objectives were: (1) to analyze changes in reported bullying incidents; (2) to examine students’ perceptions of safety and willingness to seek support; and (3) to explore changes in teachers’ awareness and responses to bullying situations. It was hypothesized that a structured, whole-school intervention would contribute to a more positive school climate and enhanced student well-being.</p> <p>The study was guided by the following research questions:</p> <p>Central research question:</p> <p>How does the implementation of the KiVa anti-bullying program influence student well-being and school climate in one Nazarbayev Intellectual School in Kazakhstan?</p> <p>This question seeks to explore the overall influence of a structured, whole-school anti-bullying intervention on students’ perceptions of safety and institutional responses to bullying.</p> <p>Sub-questions:</p> <p>1. How do students perceive their sense of safety and willingness to seek support following the implementation of the KiVa program?</p> <p>This question aims to examine changes in students’ perceptions of psychological safety and trust in school support mechanisms.</p> <p>2. What changes occur in the frequency and handling of reported bullying incidents after the implementation of the KiVa program?</p> <p>This question focuses on identifying trends in bullying reports and institutional responses across the academic year.</p> <p>3. How do teachers perceive their roles, responsibilities, and preparedness in responding to bullying within the KiVa framework?</p> <p>This question explores teachers’ awareness, confidence, and engagement as key actors in bullying prevention.</p>
<p>Теоретическая основа (кратко)</p>	<p>The theoretical framework of the study draws on the social-ecological perspective of bullying (Espelage & Swearer, 2010) and the peer group model of bullying prevention proposed by Salmivalli (2010). These frameworks conceptualize bullying as a socially embedded phenomenon influenced by peer dynamics, adult intervention, and school culture. Additionally, principles of whole-school change and evidence-based intervention underpin the study, emphasizing the importance of systematic implementation and stakeholder involvement (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). By applying these theoretical perspectives, the study aims to contribute to international discussions on student well-being and</p>

	the effective adaptation of anti-bullying programs across diverse educational contexts.
Методология	<p>This mixed-methods study was conducted as a school-based action research project, allowing the researcher to integrate practical leadership responsibilities with systematic inquiry. Action research is particularly appropriate in educational settings where the goal is not only to study a phenomenon but also to improve practice through reflection and evidence-based decision-making.</p> <p>Context and Participants</p> <p>The research took place during the 2024–2025 academic year at the Nazarbayev Intellectual School of Science and Mathematics in Semey, Kazakhstan, where the author worked as Deputy Director for Pastoral Care and KiVa Coordinator at the time of the research. The KiVa program was implemented across grades 7–12, involving approximately 800 students. A total of 681 students participated in the anonymous survey. Teachers, class curators, school psychologists, and parents were actively engaged through training sessions, informational meetings, and coordinated intervention procedures.</p> <p>Data Collection and Analysis</p> <p>Multiple data sources were used to ensure triangulation. Quantitative data were collected through pre- and post-intervention student surveys and internal school records documenting bullying cases. Qualitative data were gathered through structured observations and individual conversations conducted when bullying incidents were identified. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively to identify trends, while qualitative data were thematically analyzed to capture patterns related to behavior, attitudes, and institutional responses.</p>
Реализация (ход исследования)	<p>Program Implementation</p> <p>The KiVa program was introduced as a comprehensive, whole-school initiative. Its key components included KiVa lessons delivered during class hours, a school-wide KiVa Start event, the establishment of a dedicated KiVa team, anonymous student surveys, professional development sessions for teachers, and informational support for parents. To increase program visibility and reinforce a culture of safety, teachers wore KiVa vests and supervised students during breaks.</p>
Результаты и главные выводы	<p>The analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected during the 2024–2025 academic year revealed noticeable changes in students’ perceptions of safety, the frequency of reported bullying incidents, and teacher response practices following the implementation of the KiVa</p>

program. The results are presented based on student survey data, internal school records, and systematic observations.

The anonymous student survey, completed by 681 students from grades 7 to 12, demonstrated a generally high level of awareness regarding bullying-related concepts. The majority of respondents (99%) indicated that they clearly understood what constitutes bullying and extortion, which suggests that preventive and informational work carried out within the framework of the KiVa program was effective. Most students reported that they felt safe within the school environment, and this perception was more pronounced in the second half of the academic year compared to the initial implementation stage.

Survey results also showed that only a small proportion (0,6%) of students acknowledged encountering bullying or extortion at school. While isolated cases were identified, the overall prevalence was low. Importantly, students demonstrated a high level of readiness to report bullying incidents to adults, including teachers (15%), curators (35%), school psychologists (10%), KiVa team (15%), parents (10%), school administration (15%). This finding indicates an increased level of trust in school staff and confidence in existing support mechanisms.

Table 1 summarizes selected indicators from the student survey and reflects students' awareness, perceived safety, and willingness to seek support.

Table 1

Selected Student Survey Results on Bullying and Safety (n = 681)

Indicator	Outcome
Awareness of bullying-related concepts	High
Students reporting bullying incidents	Low
Perceived sense of safety at school	Increased
Willingness to report bullying to adults	High

Analysis of internal school bullying reports provided additional evidence of positive dynamics. During the second semester of the 2024–2025 academic year, the number of registered bullying cases decreased compared to the first semester. Although bullying incidents were not entirely eliminated, reported cases were addressed more promptly and systematically by the KiVa team. This reduction suggests that the program contributed not only to prevention but also to more effective early intervention.

Observational data collected during lessons and break times further supported these findings. Increased teacher presence in common areas, facilitated by the use of KiVa vests and organized supervision schedules, contributed to a more structured and predictable school

	<p>environment. Teachers were more proactive in monitoring student interactions and intervening when potentially risky situations emerged. Compared to the initial stage of implementation, teachers demonstrated greater confidence in identifying signs of bullying and responding in accordance with agreed procedures.</p> <p>Qualitative data obtained through individual conversations conducted in response to identified bullying cases revealed that students were more willing to discuss their experiences and emotions. In several cases, early reporting prevented the escalation of conflicts. Teachers and school psychologists noted that students increasingly perceived bullying as a shared problem rather than a private issue, which aligns with the core principles of the KiVa program.</p> <p>Overall, the results indicate that the implementation of the KiVa program was associated with improved student perceptions of safety, reduced bullying reports in the second half of the academic year, and more coordinated staff responses. These findings suggest that a whole-school, structured approach can positively influence both preventive practices and the broader school climate.</p>
Практические рекомендации	<p>The purpose of this action research was to determine to what extent the implementation of the KiVa anti-bullying program influenced student well-being and the overall school climate at the Nazarbayev Intellectual School of Science and Mathematics in Semey during the 2024–2025 academic year. In my view, the findings clearly indicate that the program had a constructive impact on students’ perceived safety, their understanding of bullying-related issues, and their trust in the school’s response mechanisms. These results directly correspond to the initial research objective and confirm that systematic, school-wide prevention can meaningfully strengthen the psychological climate of an educational institution.</p> <p>In my analysis, the gradual decrease in officially registered bullying incidents during the second semester reflects not only procedural changes but also a shift in collective norms. As preventive practices became embedded in everyday routines, students appeared more willing to assume personal responsibility and to seek adult support. I interpret the increased readiness to report incidents as evidence that the program fostered a culture of openness and shared accountability, rather than fear of punishment. This aligns with broader international discussions on the importance of bystander engagement and restorative approaches in anti-bullying initiatives.</p> <p>From a pedagogical standpoint, I observed notable professional growth among teachers. At the initial stage, some colleagues demonstrated uncertainty about their specific responsibilities within the KiVa framework. However, continuous professional development sessions, collaborative reflection, and structured supervision</p>

	<p>strengthened their confidence and promoted consistency in intervention strategies. In my assessment, the visible presence of teachers during breaks and the adoption of unified response protocols significantly enhanced students' sense of protection and predictability within the school environment.</p> <p>At the same time, I acknowledge several challenges encountered during implementation, including increased workload for staff and cautious attitudes among some parents. Addressing these issues required deliberate communication, contextual adaptation, and ongoing dialogue. This experience has led me to conclude that evidence-based programs cannot be transferred mechanically; they must be thoughtfully integrated into the unique culture of each school.</p>
Заключение	<p>Based on these findings, I propose further longitudinal monitoring of student well-being indicators, expanded parental engagement, and advanced training modules for teachers and curators. Additionally, future research should incorporate richer qualitative data to better capture student voice. Overall, I conclude that a structured, reflective, and collaboratively implemented anti-bullying strategy can substantially enhance student well-being and contribute to a safer, more supportive school climate.</p>
Список литературы	<p>Espelage, D. L., & Swearer, S. M. (2010). A social-ecological model for bullying prevention and intervention. In S. R. Jimerson, S. M. Swearer, & D. L. Espelage (Eds.), <i>Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective</i> (pp. 61–72). Routledge.</p> <p>Gaffney, H., Ttofi, M. M., & Farrington, D. P. (2019). Evaluating the effectiveness of school-bullying prevention programs: An updated meta-analytical review. <i>Aggression and Violent Behavior, 45</i>, 111–133. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2018.07.001</p> <p>Hymel, S., & Swearer, S. M. (2015). Four decades of research on school bullying: An introduction. <i>American Psychologist, 70</i>(4), 293–299. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038928</p> <p>OECD. (2019). <i>PISA 2018 results (Volume III): What school life means for students' lives</i>. OECD Publishing.</p> <p>Olweus, D. (1993). <i>Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do</i>. Blackwell.</p>

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Приложения (при необходимости)

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