

## Formation of Inter-Ethnic Solidarity of The Kazakhstani Society Based on The Implementation of The Multiculturalism Concept in The Student Environment

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### **Abstract**

*The article presents the results of a sociological study on the problem of modern inter-ethnic relations among students based on the concept of multiculturalism. The purpose of this study is to identify the attitudes of urban students towards the implementation of the ideology of multiculturalism, and the implementation of interethnic communication; to identify possible strategies for their behavior in a situation of interethnic tension and conflict in the context of the implemented state policy in the field of interethnic relations. The survey showed that Kazakhstani students have a high level of interethnic tolerance and are ready to enter into interethnic relations, which confirms the existence and implementation of the ideas of multiculturalism. The ideas of multiculturalism in the higher education system of Kazakhstan are implemented through various mechanisms that allow for preserving ethnic diversity and strengthening interethnic harmony, which contributes to the formation of interethnic solidarity in society.*

**Keywords:** *Multiculturalism, Solidarity, Youth, Kazakhstan, Interethnic Relation*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Multiculturalism is a theory and social practice that supports the identification, and respect of cultural diversity in society. In recent decades, multiculturalism has become an important aspect of the political and social life of many countries, especially those facing migration and ethnic diversity.

The basic principles of multiculturalism include recognition and respect for cultural diversity, the provision of special rights, and protection for cultural minorities, besides ensuring their participation in political and social life. These ideas are based on the belief that cultural diversity enriches society and contributes to its development. Recognition and respect for cultural diversity are key aspects of multiculturalism. This idea is based on the value and uniqueness of each culture and the need to protect and support it. The provision of special rights for cultural minorities includes the use of their native language, the preservation of traditions and customs, as well as access to education and social support in their native language. Ensuring the equal participation of cultural minorities in political and social life is aimed at creating conditions for the representation of minorities in government and considering their interests and needs in arranging public policy.

Multiculturalism as an ideology has several strengths. First, it promotes social justice by recognizing and respecting cultural diversity. Secondly, multiculturalism can promote peaceful coexistence of different cultural groups and reduce ethnic conflicts. Thirdly, recognition and respect for cultural diversity promote social justice by ensuring equal rights and opportunities for all groups in society. This helps to reduce discrimination and marginalization of cultural minorities. Multiculturalism can also contribute to the peaceful coexistence of different cultural groups. Recognizing and respecting cultural differences helps to reduce tensions and conflicts arising on ethnic grounds.

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At the same time, multiculturalism can lead to fragmentation of society, weakening of national identity, and fragmentation of society (Deryabina, 2011).

The theory of multiculturalism began to take shape in the middle of the 20th century when many countries faced waves of migration and an increase in ethnic diversity. This theory was a reaction to the problems of assimilation and integration, besides the desire to preserve the cultural identity of various groups. Among the main representatives of the theory of multiculturalism, such scientists as Charles Taylor, Will Kymlicka, and Iris Marion Young stand out. These researchers have made significant contributions to the growth of concepts and practices related to multiculturalism. The main idea of Taylor's multiculturalism concept is that respect for cultural traditions is a model for building an inclusive and just society (Taylor, 1994: 25-73).

Kymlicka introduces the concept of "multiculturalism as a legal structure", where cultural diversity should be considered in legal and political systems. This means that public policy should consider the cultural characteristics of different groups when making political decisions (Kymlicka, 1996:131-173; Kymlicka, 2001: 69-82).

Yang's "Politics of Difference" offers ideas for inclusive democracy that consider differences and specific needs of different groups. Yang emphasizes the need for equal participation of all cultural groups in the political life of society. It offers principles of dialogue and interaction for efficient multicultural principles performance. Yang especially emphasizes that multiculturalism provides a space for various forms of self-expression and cultural practices, which enriches society for the most part. These ideas emphasize the importance of a respectful and inclusive approach to cultural differences in building a just and equitable society (Young, 2011: 156).

Representatives of the theory of multiculturalism have different views and approaches in invoking its ideas, but it is fundamentally important to recognize and respect cultural diversity in society. The potential of this theory has not been exhausted, but it must consider historical, cultural, and country-specific features of its performance.

Multiculturalism in Kazakhstan is a multi-layered and complex phenomenon derived from the unique historical and country-cultural context, where various ethnic and cultural groups coexist. In this context, multiculturalism is understood as a way to ensure harmonious interaction and mutual understanding between ethnic, societal, and religious communities.

Kazakhstan's experience shows that multiculturalism is currently one of the promising forms of coexistence of peoples in multiethnic states. Kazakhstan implements a well-thought-out state policy regarding the development of multiculturalism, revealing its new forms and possibilities, developing the culture of each ethnic group and, at the same time, strengthening intercultural communication and integration" (Rees & Williams, 2017).

Kazakhstan, as a multiethnic country, was founded on the principles of cooperation and solidarity between different peoples. According to the 2021 census, more than 130 various ethnic groups live in Kazakhstan, which contributes to the formation of a multicultural environment (The Bureau of National Statistics of Kazakhstan, 2024).

In the international arena, Kazakhstan positions itself as a state that aims to preserve and support interethnic stability and other interethnic relations. The policy of the First President of Kazakhstan, N. Nazarbayev, has always emphasized the importance of interethnic peace in Kazakhstan, including the sphere of state-building, his position on interethnic policy sought to be balanced. Legislation, including the Constitution, was adopted to promote equality between all people, and representatives of different ethnic groups. The Constitution adopted in 1993 stated that the Republic of Kazakhstan is an expression of the "will of the Kazakh people" (Constitution of the republic of Kazakhstan, 1993). Later in 1995, several serious amendments were made to the Constitution: e.g., the phrase "the will of the Kazakh people" was changed to the expression "the will of

the citizens of Kazakhstan" (Constitution of the republic of Kazakhstan, 1995). This slight change indicated that Kazakhstan was now open to all, regardless of ethnicity.

Another example of the advancement of interethnic harmony was the creation in 1995 of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan (APK), an advisory body for the progress and implementation of state national policy. Among the goals of the body was to maintain interethnic and interfaith harmony and stability in society, besides ensuring equal rights and freedoms for all citizens of the country. For almost thirty years, the Assembly has taken the lead in preserving and encouraging civil harmony and positive changes in our civil society (Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, 2024). However, despite all these efforts, there have been several violent ethnic clashes in Kazakhstan since independence. In some cases, the escalation was stopped promptly by the State authorities, which made it possible to avoid violence and immediately establish interethnic peace (Kumar & Baktybayev, 2021).

The Kazakh authorities announced the state policy reform of interethnic relations, and the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan announced the reloading of its activities. For this purpose, the Committee for the Development of Interethnic Relations of the Ministry of Information and Public Development was established in May 2020. The task of this Committee was the performance of state policy in the sphere of interethnic relations, including scientific research and explanatory work with the population (Committee for the Development of Interethnic Relations, 2024).

As an important aspect, it is worth noting the role of media in the performance of a multicultural space. Kazakh media plays a key role in spreading information about the diversity of cultures and peoples, which helps to develop public awareness of the value of multiculturalism.

However, despite the positive trends, there are several challenges in modern Kazakhstan related to problems of interethnic communication, ethnic discrimination, and the potential emergence of interethnic conflicts. At the same time, young people in a situation of potential interethnic tension and conflict are implementing their behavioral strategies, being influenced by many factors, including state policy in interethnic relations. Kazakhstani youth. These challenges require scientific analysis and the development of effective strategies to resolve emerging conflicts and misunderstandings.

One of the most pressing issues is the balance between preserving ethnic identity and integration into a common cultural space. This is confirmed by studies devoted to the problems of duplication of language standards and culture (B-Ikeguchi, 2023; Mišić Ilić, 2004; Ruiz Vieytez, 2016). Research shows that identity issues become especially relevant in conditions of globalization when local cultures are influenced by global processes and trends (Sadykova et al., 2015; Clyne & Jupp, 2011; Vineet, 2012; Triandafyllidou, 2011).

It is noteworthy that in many ways the successful implementation of multiculturalism depends on the political will and support from the state. In Kazakhstan, there are laws aimed at protecting the rights of ethnic minorities, which is an important condition for achieving harmony (Shakirov, 2016).

The Institute of Education plays an important role in the array of interethnic relations since young people in the course of growing up are the most susceptible to destructive influence from radical organizations and individuals. Therefore, the main responsibility for the array of a stable multicultural position among students should be assumed by universities, as large centers of production and transfer of accumulated experience, norms, and values. Higher education should promote tolerance, understanding, and respect for other ethnic groups. Through education, young people have the opportunity to study the history, culture, religion, and language of other ethnic groups, which helps to reduce prejudices and stereotypes (Ameny-Dixon, 2004; Iorio & Silva, 2024), creating conditions for the development of interethnic communication and cooperation. It promotes a conscious approach to diversity, the formation of interethnic cooperation skills, and the ability to resolve conflicts peacefully.

At universities, interethnic communication is formed through many mechanisms and practices:

(i) Universities, especially multinational ones, attract students from various ethnic and cultural groups, which create natural conditions for interethnic communication and interaction (Platt et al., 2020; Alcaraz et al., 2023).

(ii) Universities offer courses and programs to study cultures, languages, history, and religions of various ethnic groups. This helps to increase understanding and tolerance between students of different ethnic backgrounds (Platt et al., 2020; Suhaili et al., 2020);

(iii) Universities often support interethnic activism by creating clubs, associations, and events dedicated to cultural diversity. This forms platforms for interethnic communication and exchange of experience; universities can facilitate students' participation in international exchange and internship programs, where they have the opportunity to interact and study in an interethnic environment (Platt et al., 2020; Babayeju, 2018);

(iv) Universities can provide access to specialized centers and materials dedicated to studying and supporting multilingualism and interethnic communication (T4EU Alliance, 2024; INGENIUM European University, 2024).

Multiculturalism in Kazakhstan is becoming an important tool for social stability and harmony. Amid global challenges and changes, cultural diversity enhances the cultural landscape but fosters civil society development.

Thus, it may be asserted that multiculturalism in modern Kazakhstan is implemented through many institutions and practices aimed at preserving cultural heritage and developing interethnic dialogue, which leads to a harmonious society formation. An important role in promoting the ideas of multiculturalism is played by the Institute of Education, which is aimed at the formation, among other things, of such values and norms as justice, solidarity, democracy, and tolerance.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

In our study, we set the task to identify how the multicultural education of modern Kazakh student youth contributes to the formation of interethnic solidarity in society. In particular, how is the ideology of multiculturalism implemented by such a social group as the Russian student youth: how does it assess state policy in the field of interethnic relations, how interethnic communication among students is carried out, how often do young people face ethnic discrimination and what is the probability, from their point of view, of the emergence of interethnic conflicts, that they understand interethnic conflict and what can lead to its occurrence, what behavioral strategies orient them in a situation of potential interethnic tension and conflict.

We have raised the following research questions:

1. How is interethnic communication carried out among students? How frequently do young individuals encounter ethnic discrimination, and what are the possibilities and reasons for the emergence of interethnic conflicts according to the youth's opinion?
2. What behavioral strategies guide youth in situations of potential interethnic tension and conflict?
3. How does Kazakhstani youth evaluate the state's policies in the sphere of interethnic relations?

The research instrument is a simple questionnaire, structured around three categorical variables: socio-economic wellbeing; interethnic relations and conflict potential; migration activities. Operational indicators have been delineated to assess the conflict aptitude and research interethnic relations among students in Kazakhstan, as well as to ascertain the causative factors of interethnic conflicts.

1. Satisfaction, educational organization issues, financial situation, level of prosperity, and income (under the grouping variable – socio-economic well-being).
2. State policies, personal attitudes, beliefs, prerequisites, ethnic identity (under the grouping variable - interethnic relations and conflict potential).
3. Migration intentions, migration direction, reasons for migration (under the grouping variable - migration activities).

The designated variables enable an assessment of socio-economic wellbeing as a prospective condition to interethnic tensions, with increased migration and heightened migration activities representing potential

outcomes. These factors facilitate an evaluation of conflict potential and an exploration of interethnic relations within the student environment of Kazakhstan.

The questionnaire survey involved 1,500 respondents from 20 regions of Kazakhstan. This study focused on comparing the responses of young individuals from Kazakh and Russian ethnic groups. Sampling strategy was conducted according to specified quotas, including criteria such as gender, age, ethnic affiliation, marital status, and education. In total, 54% of the respondents were female and 46% were male. The age of respondents ranged from 18 to 25 years (born between 1998 and 2005). Representatives of both ethnic groups belong to the third generation, born in independent Kazakhstan. Respondents were also categorized based on educational levels: secondary vocational education, higher education; postgraduate education (master's, doctoral studies).

The survey results were analyzed using the SPSS software, segmented by ethnic affiliation.

## RESULTS

During the analysis of the obtained data, the method of pairwise correlation was applied, with the Spearman correlation coefficient chosen as it corresponds to the conditions of normal distribution, sample size, and types of scales. Subsequently, the article text and correlation tables will indicate the Spearman correlation coefficient values with the specified significance level of  $p \leq 0.01$ .

The first research question explored young people's attitudes toward interethnic communication, discrimination, and its causes. We aimed to understand how students communicate across ethnic lines, what triggers interethnic conflicts, their attitudes toward other ethnic groups, and factors influencing interethnic tension. We examined the role of socio-economic well-being, including life satisfaction and family income, in shaping these attitudes. Our findings indicate that the majority of young individuals, regardless of ethnicity, reported satisfaction with their lives, with 77.3% expressing contentment (Table 1).

**Table 1. Distribution of Responses to the Question: "To what extent are you personally satisfied with the life you lead as a citizen of Kazakhstan?" (%)**

Ethnicity	Fully satisfied	Mostly satisfied	Mostly dissatisfied	Not satisfied	Difficult to answer
Kazakh	46,7%	34,1%	11,4%	5,1%	2,7%
Russian	29,3%	42,4%	15,8%	1,6%	10,9%
Other ethnicity	39,4%	39,4%	6,4%	7,4%	7,4%
Total	39,4%	37,9%	12,0%	4,3%	6,4%

We identified the top concerns among young people, with economic issues like rising fees and prices (38.3%), low wages (24.2%), unemployment (17.3%), and corruption (15.7%) being the most cited. Regarding interethnic tension, 5.2% mentioned specific reasons, while 5.8% acknowledged potential conflicts with interethnic implications.

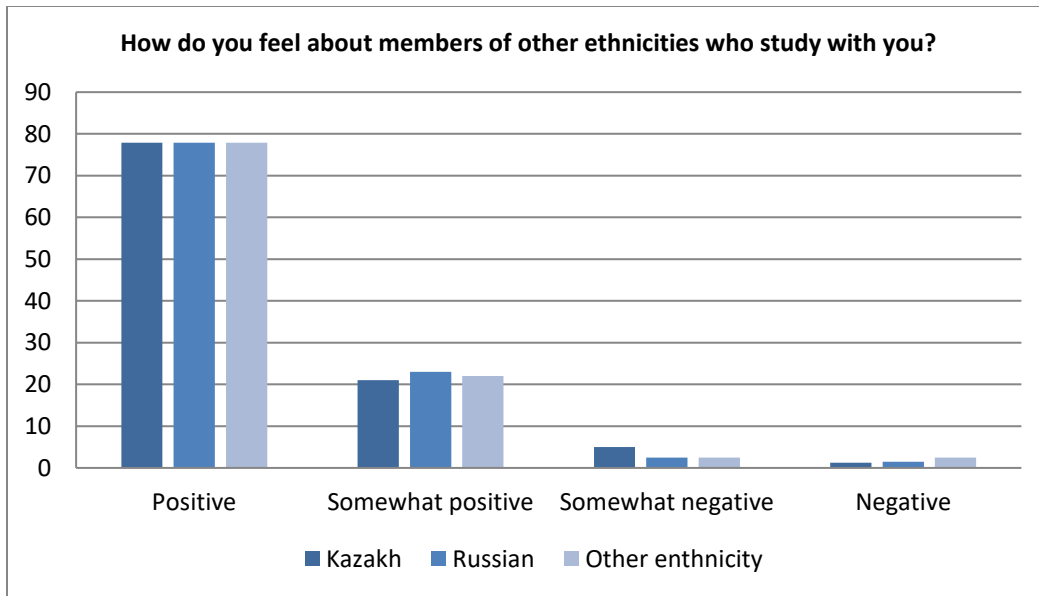
When asked about their family's financial status, 67.5% reported living satisfactorily with all needs met, while 16.6% said they live comfortably. 7.7% manage to meet only basic needs, and 7.2% struggle to meet their needs, compromising on many things. Additionally, 1% stated they live in poverty and can't fulfill basic needs.

The majority of young respondents believe that interethnic relations in their communities have either stayed the same or gotten better in the last six months, with only a small number reporting a decline. Kazakhs are more likely than Russians to see improvements: 23.9% of Kazakhs and 13.6% of Russians said relations had significantly improved, while 20.4% of Kazakhs and 14.1% of Russians felt relations had somewhat improved. 42.4% of Kazakhs and 49.5% of Russians believe relations have stayed calm. Interestingly, respondents from other ethnic groups tend to view changes in interethnic relations more negatively overall (Table 2).

**Table 2. Distribution of Responses to the Question: "To what extent are you personally satisfied with the life you lead as a citizen of Kazakhstan?" (%)**

Ethnicity	Significantly improved	Somewhat improved	Remained calm	Somewhat worsened	Significantly worsened	Remained restless	Difficult to answer
Kazakh	23,9%	20,4%	42,4%	3,5%	1,6%	0,8%	7,5%
Russian	13,6%	14,1%	49,5%	2,2%	2,7%	1,1%	16,8%
Other ethnicity	20,2%	20,2%	33,3%	7,4%	3,2%	5,3%	10,6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,7%</b>	<b>18,2%</b>	<b>43,2%</b>	<b>3,8%</b>	<b>2,3%</b>	<b>1,7%</b>	<b>11,3%</b>

Frequency distributions describing attitudes towards other ethnic groups indicate that regardless of ethnicity, young people tend to have a more positive attitude towards members of other ethnicities with whom they study together. The student group, as one of the significant small groups, is characterized by a high degree of personal contact and prolonged interaction over time, which allows us to speak with a high degree of probability about tolerance among the surveyed youth (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Distribution of Responses to the Question about Attitudes towards Other Ethnicities segmented by Ethnicity (%).

The majority of respondents form their attitudes toward other ethnicities through personal interactions, family upbringing, cultural factors, and education. Kazakh respondents are influenced more by cultural factors, while Russian respondents and those from other ethnic backgrounds rely more on personal communication.

77.9% of respondents have not experienced interethnic conflicts in educational institutions, while 11.9% have encountered such conflicts. This pattern is consistent across various ethnic groups.

Most respondents identify several reasons for interethnic conflicts. The majority (32.5%) cite inequality in the legal status of ethnic groups, while 32% attribute conflicts to low cultural development. Additionally, 24% mention exaggerated or underestimated ethnic self-awareness as a cause. Historical relationships (19.2%) and differences in religious affiliations (16.9%) are also seen as contributing factors. A smaller percentage attribute conflicts to a lack of knowledge about ethnic history (11.4%), socioeconomic inequality, and the diminishing role of Kazakhstani intellectuals (8.6% each). In summary, surveyed youth believe interethnic conflicts mainly result from legal status inequality, low cultural development, and exaggerated or underestimated ethnic self-awareness.

A correlation matrix was separately generated for the factor of ethnic belonging. We were primarily interested in the main ethnic groups – Kazakhs and Russians. Significant associations were found among factors such as life satisfaction, evaluation of the standard of living compared to the previous year, economic status, and attitudes towards other ethnic groups.

Research findings suggest that improvements in social and economic well-being are linked to better interethnic relations among respondents, including those studying together. While both Kazakhs and Russians showed a significant correlation between life satisfaction and perceptions of relationships between people of different ethnicities, there were some differences in other parameters.

For Kazakhs, unlike Russians, we found a slight positive link (0.089) between life satisfaction and understanding concepts like "ethnicity" and "nation", likely due to a more sensitive view of ethnicity and general life contentment. Economic status also has a stronger correlation (0.209) with understanding ethnic differences for Kazakhs. Among Kazakh youth, factors like life satisfaction and economic status are significantly linked to negative attitudes from university/college administration and staff, with a slight positive correlation (0.127). Relationships between socio-economic well-being and evaluations based on ethnicity, rather than other criteria like moral qualities or professional skills, have varied and less significant associations (Table 3).

**Table 3. Distribution of Responses to the Question: "To what extent are you personally satisfied with the life you lead as a citizen of Kazakhstan?" (%)**

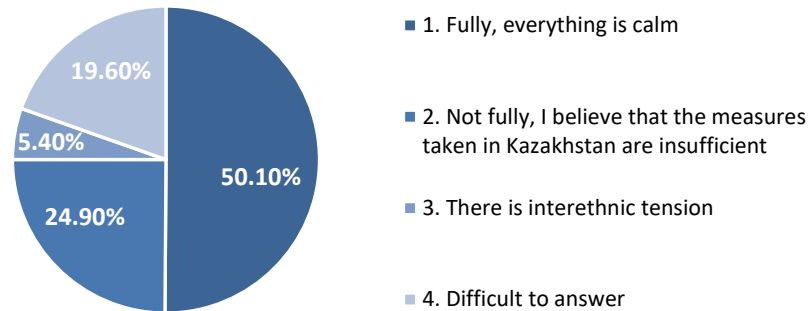
	What difference, in your opinion, exists between the concepts of "ethnicity" and "nation"?	In your opinion, over the past six months, have relations between people of different ethnicities in your surroundings improved or worsened?	How do you feel about members of other ethnicities who study with you?	Have you ever experienced unfriendly treatment in the student community from fellow students because you are a member of a different ethnicity?	Have you ever experienced unfriendly treatment from the faculty, administration, or staff of your university/college because you are a member of a different ethnicity?	To what extent do you consider the possibility that a young person may be judged based on their ethnicity rather than their moral and professional qualities?	Do you think that an interethnic conflict is possible in the place (city) where you study?
To what extent are you personally satisfied with the life you lead as a citizen of Kazakhstan?							
Kazakh	,089**	,267**	,097**	,076*	,098**	-0,026	-0,026
Russian	0,099	,208**	,199**	0,123	,173*	-0,071	0,01
Financially compared to last year, have You (Your family) started living...							
Kazakh	0,057	,290**	,117**	0,045	,077*	-,063*	-0,001
Russian	0,022	,171*	-0,001	-0,031	0,101	-0,064	-0,006
How would you characterize the level of prosperity of your family?							
Kazakh	,209**	,105**	,162**	,085**	,127**	,195**	,091**
Russian	-0,013	0,078	0,094	-0,036	0,129	-0,041	0,015

\*\*Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)  
\*Correlation significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed)

The second research question explored Kazakhstani youth's attitudes toward state and university policies regarding interethnic relations.

The survey revealed that most young people view the state's interethnic policies positively, with a majority expressing satisfaction. Over half of the respondents find these measures adequate and perceive interethnic relations as peaceful. However, a notable portion refrained from responding, which could be attributed to factors like low political awareness, limited knowledge, or disinterest (Figure 2).

**To what extent, in your opinion, does the state pursue a policy to preserve interethnic consensus among student youth?**



**Figure 2.** Evaluation of the state's interethnic policy from the perspective of student youth

Frequency distribution by ethnicity shows that 51.8% of Kazakhs, 41.8% of Russians, and 42.6% of representatives of other ethnicities believe that the measures taken by the state to maintain interethnic harmony among college students are sufficient. Only 6.3% of Kazakhs, 8.2% of Russians, and 4.3% of representatives of other ethnicities indicated that there is interethnic tension and, accordingly, evaluated the state's policy aimed at maintaining interethnic harmony as low. Thus, from the respondents' answers, we see that representatives of the Russian ethnicity have more grievances towards the policy.

The proportion of those who positively evaluated the policy implemented by the university/college to maintain interethnic harmony was also quite high. Specifically, 70.8% of respondents considered it sufficient, 8.8% found it insufficient, and 2.8% noted interethnic tension. The percentage of those who chose the option "hard to answer" is significant at 17.4%, which may also indicate a lack of interest, ignorance of the measures, or the absence of the measures themselves. No significant differences were found in the evaluation of the university/college's interethnic policy across different ethnic groups (Table 4).

**Table 4. Correlation between evaluation of state policy and interethnic tension (by ethnicity)**

	What is the difference between the concepts of "ethnicity" and "nation"?	Do you think that over the past six months, other relations between people of different ethnic groups in your environment have become better or worse?	How do you feel about representatives of ethnic groups studying with you?	Have you ever experienced an unfriendly attitude among students or among college students because you are representative of a different ethnic group?	Have you experienced an unfriendly attitude among your teaching staff, university/college administration due to the fact that you are a representative of a different ethnic group?	To what extent do you know the history of rights of ethnic groups and would you like to know more?	Have you observed violations of the rights of people based on ethnicity in the place where you studied?	Have you encountered interethnic conflicts in your educational institution?	Do you think friendship is only possible between representatives of the same group?	For what reason, in your opinion, is friendship possible between ethnic groups?	Do you think marriage is possible between ethnic groups?	To what extent do you accept the idea of man can be assessed by his ethnicity and not by his moral and professional qualities?	What will be your actions in the place (city) of your study there is interethnic conflict involving representatives of your ethnic group?	Are you going to change your place of residence near the future?	For what reasons are you planning to move?	
The extent of the state's policy to preserve inter-ethnic harmony among students?																
Kazakh	,076	,222**	,186**	,070	,090*	,112*	,024	,064	,075	,042	,091*	,187**	,139**	-,007	,004	
Russian	,122**	,372**	,201**	,121**	,176**	,222**	,105**	,119**	,117**	,090**	,144**	,132**	,141**	,103**	,098**	



The extent of the policy's realization for preserving inter-ethnic harmony among students at your university/college															
Kazakh	,098*	,261**	,173**	,051	,134**	,198**	,059	,042	,022	-,048	,075	,107*	,089*	-,040	,021
Russian	,127**	,379**	,219**	,134**	,176**	,209**	,120**	,139**	,076*	,113**	,176**	,147**	,170**	,097**	,075*

\*\*Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).  
\*Correlation significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

During the correlation analysis, we discovered a moderate positive correlation between how respondents evaluated the state's interethnic policy and the relationships between people of different ethnicities around them. For Kazakh respondents, this correlation was slightly weaker (0.297) compared to Russian respondents (0.403). This suggests that the higher respondents rated the government's interethnic policy, the better they perceived interethnic relations in their environment.

The correlation between peaceful ethnic relations in the respondents' environment and the educational institution's (universities/colleges) policy supports the effectiveness of both state-level and institutional policies. This holds true for both Russian (0.419) and Kazakh (0.328) respondents. It suggests that the university's ethnic policy has a greater impact on personal attitudes toward other ethnic groups, especially for Kazakh respondents (0.215), than the state-level policy.

We found that correlations between state policy and its impact on forming friendly relations (0.113) and marriage within the same ethnicity (0.127) are more significant for Kazakhs than for Russians (no statistically significant correlations were found).

When analyzing youth behavior strategies in potential interethnic tension situations, we explored their responses to encountering interethnic conflicts and their migration incentives.

We surveyed respondents to understand if they had experienced interethnic conflicts in their educational institutions and if they believed such conflicts could occur there. The majority (77.9%) hadn't encountered such conflicts, while 11.9% had.

Regarding the possibility of interethnic conflicts in their city of study, about half (47.3%) considered it possible or rather possible, while 42.5% viewed it as "rather impossible" or "impossible". This suggests that while many deny experiencing interethnic conflicts personally, they acknowledge the possibility of such conflicts occurring.

The survey revealed the different actions respondents would take if an interethnic conflict involving their ethnicity occurred at their place of study. The majority (21.1%) would defend themselves in extreme cases, while 15.6% would demand action from authorities. 13.2% would wait for help from law enforcement, and 10.4% were indifferent. Only a small percentage would defend themselves at the informational level (4.8%) or try to leave the country (3.7%). Interestingly, Kazakh respondents were more likely than others to demand action from authorities and defend themselves at the informational level. Russian respondents and those of other ethnicities mostly showed indifference or readiness to defend themselves in extreme cases. Overall, the responses indicate that young people generally resort to two main strategies in interethnic conflicts: self-defense and seeking help from the state. However, more than a quarter of the respondents, regardless of ethnic background, had difficulty answering this question due to their unwillingness to accept such situations. It can be assumed that for these respondents, confusion and non-acceptance of such conflicts are characteristic (Table 5).

**Table 5. Distribution of Responses to the Question: "What will be your actions if in the place (city) of your study there is an interethnic conflict involving representatives of your ethnic group?" (%)**

Question	Answers	Kazakh	Russian	Other ethnicity	Total
What will be your actions if in the place (city) of your study there is an interethnic conflict involving representatives of your ethnic group?	I will demand that the authorities take action	16,50%	8,70%	11,10%	12,90%
	I will wait for help from law enforcement agencies	9,80%	9,20%	10,60%	9,80%
	ready to defend in case of emergency (own home, family)	20,40%	16,80%	26,60%	20,30%

I will try to leave the state if possible	3,10%	4,30%	6,40%	4,10%
I will try to leave the area where I live	3,50%	3,30%	3,20%	3,40%
ready for protection at the information level	6,30%	4,30%	4,30%	5,30%
ready to defend on a physical level (with weapons in hand)	3,10%	2,20%	2,10%	2,60%
completely indifferent	11,80%	19,60%	9,60%	14,10%
Difficult to answer	25,50%	31,50%	25,50%	27,80%

The survey responses regarding migration incentives showed that the majority of respondents (31.5%) are open to relocating depending on circumstances. Another significant portion (28.5%) currently does not plan to move but is open to the idea in the future. A smaller group (16.2%) has no intention of moving, while 14% found it difficult to answer. A small percentage (9.8%) plans to move soon. There weren't significant differences based on ethnic background. Overall, most students do not have immediate plans to move, but they are open to the possibility under certain conditions (Table 6).

**Table 6. Distribution of Responses to the Question: "Are you going to change your place of residence in the near future?" (%)**

Question	Answers	Kazakh	Russian	Other ethnicity	Total
Are you going to change your place of residence in the near future?	Yes, I'm planning to move in the near future	9,80%	7,60%	11,70%	9,40%
	Not at the moment, but will move to another location in the future	23,50%	28,30%	23,40%	25,10%
	So far there have been no thoughts about moving, but everything will depend on the circumstances	40,00%	34,20%	38,30%	37,50%
	No, I'm not planning to move under any circumstances.	14,10%	12,50%	9,60%	12,80%
	Difficult to answer	12,50%	17,40%	17,00%	15,00%

In our investigation of potential relocation reasons, the majority of respondents, regardless of ethnicity, cited economic factors like dissatisfaction with the economic situation (10.1%), job opportunities (16.7%), and a desire for new experiences or travel (15.4%). While factors related to deteriorating interethnic relations (0.9%), social injustice based on ethnicity (0.9%), and language issues (1.5%) could contribute to worsening interethnic relations, they weren't significant reasons for migration among respondents (Table 7).

**Table 7. Correlation between the assessment of socio-economic well-being and attitudes towards friendship, marriage between representatives of the same ethnic group, and migration sentiments (by ethnicity)**

	Do you think that friendship is only possible between representatives of the same ethnic group?	Do you think that marriage is only possible between representatives of the same ethnic group?	What will be your actions if in the place (city) of your study there is an interethnic conflict involving representatives of your ethnic group?	Are you going to change your place of residence in the future, where are near future?	If you are planning to leave in the near future, where are you going to move?	For what reasons are you planning to move?
To what extent are you personally satisfied with the life you lead as a citizen of Kazakhstan?						
Kazakh	,059	,086**	,102**	-,052	-,042	,129**
Russian	,004	-,005	,280	0,07	-,054	,162*
How would you characterize the level of prosperity of your family?						
Kazakh	,087**	,120**	,070*	,047	,021	,089**
Russian	-,020	-,136	-,013	,008	0,36	0,023
How do the media (social networks, television, press, etc.) influence changes in your attitude/worldview						

towards representatives of another ethnic group?						
Kazakh	,282**	,244**	,218**	,363**	,248**	-,067*
Russian	,351**	,323**	,395**	,275**	,171*	-,189*
**Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)						
*Correlation significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed)						

The correlation analysis showed a weak positive correlation of moderate significance between income level and friendship (0.087), marriage within the same ethnicity (0.120), and reasons for relocation (0.089) among individuals of Kazakh ethnicity. Higher correlation values suggest a stronger influence of the media on perceptions of friendship (0.282), marriage within the same ethnicity (0.244), desire to relocate (0.363), and choice of destination (0.248).

For individuals of Russian ethnicity, the influence of the media on perceptions of friendship (0.351) and marriage within the same ethnicity (0.323) was found to be more significant, indicating a moderate correlation compared to Kazakh ethnicity. However, the influence of the media on migration intentions, such as the desire to relocate (0.275) and choice of destination (0.171), showed a weak positive correlation (Table 8).

**Table 8. Correlation between media influence and interethnic intensity (by ethnicity)**

	Have you ever experienced an unfriendly attitude among students or among students because you are a representative of a different ethnic group?	Have you experienced unfriendly attitude among the teaching staff, university/college administration due to the fact that you are a representative of a different ethnic group?	In your opinion, what most contributes to the separation of young people of different ethnic groups?	In your opinion, what most contributes to the separation of young people of different ethnic groups?	Have you encountered conflicts based on ethnic hostility on social networks?	Do you think interethnic conflict is possible in the place (city) of your study?
How do the media (social networks, television, press, etc.) influence changes in your attitude/worldview towards representatives of another ethnic group?						
Kazakh	,153**	,213**	,096**	,314**	,421**	,423**
Russian	0,13	,246**	0,011	,347**	,290**	,367**
**Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)						
*Correlation significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed)						

We found a moderate positive correlation, statistically significant, between the influence of the media on changing attitudes toward other ethnic groups and the tendency to judge individuals based on their ethnicity rather than their moral or professional qualities. This correlation was 0.314 for Kazakh ethnicity and 0.374 for Russian ethnicity. Additionally, we observed the influence of the media on the emergence of interethnic conflicts on social networks (0.421 for Kazakh ethnicity and 0.290 for Russian ethnicity) and in the place of education (0.423 for Kazakh ethnicity and 0.367 for Russian ethnicity).

Overall, the media significantly shape youth perceptions regarding friendship, marriage, migration intentions, and interethnic tension.

**DISCUSSION**

For contemporary Kazakhstani students, tolerance and peaceful interethnic relations are characteristic. The majority of respondents deny situations of interethnic conflict; however, we cannot entirely dismiss the presence of interethnic tension and conflicts, as approximately one-tenth of respondents have encountered interethnic conflicts in universities. We are also not entitled to exclude the emergence of various "defects" in interethnic relations because numerous factors can serve as both causes and triggers for conflicts. Respondents believe that the main reasons for interethnic conflicts lie in the inequality of the legal status of ethnic groups, the low level of cultural development of individuals, and the exaggerated/inflated level of ethnic self-awareness. Socioeconomic well-being also influences interethnic tension and migration intentions since material prosperity

and life satisfaction are significant factors affecting anxiety and conflict levels. The more satisfied respondents are with their financial situation and family wealth, the more favorably they perceive individuals of other ethnicities and evaluate interethnic relations in their surroundings.

Students believe that the measures taken by the state to preserve interethnic harmony are generally sufficient, but their implementation is more significant for representatives of the Russian ethnicity. Policies aimed at maintaining interethnic harmony implemented in universities are also assessed as sufficiently effective, influencing to a greater extent the interethnic relations of a personal nature, interactions between representatives of different ethnic groups in student groups, but the measures taken by universities/colleges are more significant for respondents of Kazakh ethnicity.

Experience with the topic of interethnic relations allows us to suggest that some of the Russian ethnic youth interpret interethnic relations within the framework of the "peoples' friendship" ideology, so state policies play a more significant role for them, whereas representatives of the Kazakh ethnicity interpret the issue of interethnic relations within the framework of the idea of national self-awareness growth.

Young people have two main strategies in situations of interethnic conflict – readiness to defend themselves and an appeal to the state for assistance. However, more than a quarter of respondents, regardless of ethnic background, had difficulty answering this question due to unwillingness to accept such situations. This suggests that these respondents are characterized by confusion and non-acceptance of such conflicts. Migration intentions are generally not characteristic of respondents, and the main reasons for relocation are related to economic factors and the desire to travel and explore something new.

The media have a significant influence on perceptions of friendship, marriage among members of the same ethnic group, youth migration intentions, interethnic conflicts in social networks, and in the place (city) of education.

Also, political and economic factors influence the formation of interethnic relations within a pluralistic society (Yakasai, 2024). Institutional, family, and individualistic factors significantly impact the perpetuation/strengthening or mitigation of ethnic inequality and interethnic conflicts within the educational environment.

It can be assumed that Kazakhstan will be able to maintain itself as an example of a state with policies promoting equal interethnic rights and will avoid serious interethnic conflicts. Nevertheless, episodes of household nationalism, interethnic tension, and conflict should not be ignored or silenced.

## **CONCLUSION**

In the current global political and economic situation, Kazakhstan has managed to maintain interethnic peace and stability. Even though several cases of interethnic clashes have occurred since independence, they were prevented in such a way that not a single incident escalated into extreme forms of violence. Of all the post-Soviet countries that have gained independence, Kazakhstan can rightfully be considered a successful example of interethnic peace and stability, since we managed to avoid major conflicts. Nevertheless, the cases of interethnic struggles that have taken place indicate certain weaknesses associated with economic and social inequality between ethnic groups, domestic nationalism, and the growth of national identity. Under these conditions, Kazakhstan systematically implements the concept of multiculturalism, which advocates the ideas of solidarity, tolerance, and unity through social institutions, where the institutions of family and education play a dominant role.

Thus, our research has confirmed the positive influence of the multiculturalism framework on the formation of values of interethnic solidarity among Kazakhstani youth. At the same time, in the context of the political, economic, and social environment in the world community, tools of a preventive nature are needed.

Within the framework of the project titled "Institutional Regulation of Preventing Interethnic Conflicts among Student Youth in the Context of Socio-Cultural Transformation of Kazakh Society", funded by the Ministry of

Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, we propose a set of additional measures for the capacity building of interethnic solidarity of Kazakh society to implement the principle of “Different views - one nation”. These measures are aimed at preserving the foundations of national identity and unity of the people of Kazakhstan within the framework of the socio-cultural transformation of Kazakh society:

- (i) The digital platform “Intercultural Dialogue” as part of a new socio-cultural environment and a communicative multicultural space focused on information and explanatory work in preventing interethnic conflicts, conducting intercultural dialogues, conferences, and debates foreseen to alleviate interethnic tension.
- (ii) Club “Unity of culture”, the purpose of which is to involve young people in the system of interethnic public relations and conduct events promoting the ideas of multiculturalism.
- (iii) Educational and methodological support for the prevention of interethnic conflicts among students, including the advanced training course for university teachers “Prevention of interethnic conflicts in the student environment”, methodological recommendations “Innovative pedagogical technologies for the prevention of interethnic conflicts in the student environment” and the textbook “Interethnic relations in the context of socio-cultural transformation” of the Kazakh society”.

These measures will be implemented as part of a pilot project at the Abylka Saginov Karaganda Technical University, which will become the basis for further research on ways to form interethnic solidarity in Kazakhstani society based on the implementation of the concept of multiculturalism among students.

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