

A MOSAIC OF VALUES: THE TRANSFORMATION OF YOUTH ORIENTATIONS IN THE SOCIOCULTURAL DYNAMICS OF KAZAKHSTAN

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Abstract. Employing an interdisciplinary framework, this investigation analyzes how post-Soviet sociocultural shifts in Kazakhstan are redefining youth value orientations. By juxtaposing results from the 2018 World Values Survey with data gathered in a dedicated 2024 youth survey, the study traces emerging priorities, compares them with nationwide trends, and probes the forces driving these transformations. The methodology, combining philosophical hermeneutics with sociological analysis, provides a robust comparative perspective and empirically rich foundation. Key findings reveal a nuanced mosaic of values: rising individualism, self-realization, and pragmatic life priorities (such as financial security and career mobility) are accompanied by a sustained emphasis on family. Young people report higher life satisfaction than older cohorts yet exhibit religious individualization (personalized faith and high tolerance rather than institutional religiosity) and pervasive mistrust of state institutions.



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Notably, youth demonstrate increased civic activism, evident in rising volunteerism and participation in peaceful protests. These findings underscore the study's originality and practical relevance, offering a solid evidence base for shaping youth policy. To facilitate the full social, economic, and political integration of Kazakhstan's rising generation, policymakers should capitalize on youth optimism and activism, broaden institutional pathways for meaningful participation, and recalibrate educational and cultural programs to reflect shifting value orientations.

Keywords: youth value orientations, social transformations, traditional and modernization values, civic identity, social adaptation, youth policy.

Introduction

The transformation of values in Kazakhstan after gaining independence occurs at the intersection of several vectors, on the one hand, there is a departure from the normative-value system inherited from the Soviet period, and on the other hand, there is a revival of traditional national values, as well as an active adoption of global modernization and postmodernist orientations. This renders the process of changing values multifaceted and nonlinear, as it involves both conservative mechanisms for preserving traditional foundations and elements of adaptation to contemporary challenges. Consequently, complex value constructs emerge, combining collectivist and individualistic orientations, pragmatism and moral-ethical ideals, local identity, and elements of global culture.

Studying the value orientations of young people in this context is particularly relevant, since the younger generation serves not only as an object but also as an active subject of social change. Youth adapt more rapidly to new economic, technological, and cultural challenges, yet they also confront dilemmas in choosing between traditional behavioral models and new value orientations. In an era of expanding globalization and intensified intercultural interactions, understanding the mechanisms by which youth values are shaped becomes critically important.

This study is grounded in concepts of sociocultural transformation and theories of value orientations (Ostiguy et al. 2017; Tarasov 2016; Schwartz 2006; Kluckhohn 1951), which consider values a key component of a society's social structure and culture. Examining the dynamics of value attitudes within society requires a comprehensive approach that accounts for the complex nature of values as a social phenomenon. Values are not a static category but rather a flexible, evolving system

shaped by macro- and microsocial factors. At the macro level, value changes are driven by institutional reform, transformations in political ideology, shifts in economic models, and the impact of globalization. An important aspect involves not only the generation of new ideological constructs but also the mechanisms through which they are legitimized in both mass and specialized consciousness. Government institutions, educational systems, and media platforms act as transmitters of value orientations, although the extent to which these orientations are internalized depends on the level of social adaptation and society's receptivity to modernization challenges.

At the level of social groups, value orientations vary according to age, gender, ethnic, territorial, educational, and professional characteristics. Because young people are generally more mobile and responsive to social change, they tend to adopt new value frameworks more readily, whereas older generations are more inclined to maintain traditional orientations. In this context, it is important to consider the generational gap and the extent to which youth are integrated into global cultural processes, as reflected in shifting perceptions of the family's role, career ambitions, political participation, and social responsibility.

The diversity of value orientations is also shaped by their typological nature. Differences among material and spiritual, traditional and innovative, and collectivist and individualistic values produce a multifaceted picture of social dynamics. In societies undergoing modernization, these value systems often enter into competition, leading to the hybridization of value orientations and the emergence of new social identities. In Kazakhstan, this phenomenon manifests in the coexistence of traditional patriarchal norms with elements of a postindustrial worldview, generating a unique dichotomy between cultural heritage and modernization trends.

Kazakhstan is currently undergoing significant sociocultural transformations. This study aims to empirically examine how these transformations are reshaping the social and cultural values of the nation's youth. Particular attention is devoted to identifying key factors driving changes within youth value systems and evaluating how these changes influence societal integration processes. By emphasizing these aspects, this research seeks to clarify the dynamics of shifting values among young people within a rapidly evolving societal context.

This study centers on the value orientations of Kazakhstani youth, treating them as an interconnected yet evolving framework that spans cultural, social, political, and economic facets of young people's lives. Approaching youth values as holistic and fluid, the research recognizes

that these values are both shaped by and interconnected with multiple facets of the contemporary social environment.

The study's central hypothesis proposes that the value orientations held by Kazakhstani youth significantly diverge from predominant attitudes found within broader society. This divergence is expected to be clearly observable when comparing youth value orientations with prevailing national trends documented by the 2018 World Values Survey (WVS). Consequently, the younger generation is hypothesized to demonstrate distinct value priorities that do not fully coincide with those prevalent among the wider population.

Methodology

The theoretical and methodological underpinnings of this study are interdisciplinary, blending hermeneutic, comparative, institutional, event-focused, and content-analytic approaches. These methodological approaches enable a comprehensive exploration of youth value orientations within their sociocultural context, providing deeper insight into the processes that drive value transformation in contemporary Kazakhstani society. Hermeneutics facilitates the interpretation of meanings embedded in cultural phenomena (Rennie 2012), comparative studies highlight the dynamics of change by contrasting different sociocultural systems (Ostiguy et al., 2017), and institutional analysis clarifies how social institutions influence the formation of value orientations (Powell & DiMaggio 2012).

To achieve the objectives of this research, various methods of data collection and empirical analysis were employed. A crucial step involved analyzing secondary data, including a systematic review of archival materials and sociological studies, which helped identify stable trends in value change. In addition, both qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed, allowing for an objective assessment of structural shifts in the youth value system. The use of expert evaluations expanded interpretive possibilities and permitted a multiperspective examination of the issue (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea 2015).

The analytical process is founded on an interdisciplinary approach that synthesizes philosophical, worldview, and sociological perspectives. The study is grounded in theoretical propositions on cultural changes and value shifts developed in Ronald Inglehart's theory of postmaterialist values (Inglehart 2018), while also taking into account contemporary globalization trends (Inglehart 2000).

In pursuit of the study's aims, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was used. The primary source of data was the

seventh wave of the World Values Survey, offering representative information on the sociocultural orientations of Kazakhstani citizens (Haerpfer et al. 2022). This survey encompasses a broad range of issues, including attitudes toward economic development, political institutions, religion, gender equality, social solidarity, and subjective well-being, thereby enabling a holistic examination of the youth value system in the broader context of societal processes.

Within the framework of this study, a series of questionnaire surveys was conducted to identify respondents' value orientations and social guidelines. The data collection methodology adhered to international standards, ensuring the reliability, validity, and representativeness of the collected information (Rea & Parker 2014). A purposive sampling method was utilized to select participants specifically from among university students residing in the cities of Almaty and Astana. The final sample comprised 600 respondents, of whom 346 were women and 254 were men. All participants were between 18 and 23 years of age. This composition was intentionally structured to reflect the demographic profile of the target population. To further enhance representativeness, the sample was balanced across key demographics (including gender) and included students from multiple major universities in each city. As such, although the sampling was purposive (non-random), it provided a broad cross-section of the university student population, bolstering the generalizability of the findings. Eligibility criteria included meeting the specified age range, maintaining active enrollment in a higher-education program, and providing informed consent.

The questionnaire survey was carried out from October through November 2024, a period that allowed for the collection of representative data. The study's methodology conformed to international standards, ensuring the reliability and validity of the outcomes. The questionnaire was developed using standardized questions from the seventh wave of the World Values Survey (WVS7), thereby enabling data comparability with global research initiatives. These questions were adapted to the study's objectives, and translation into Kazakh and Russian minimized language barriers and ensured accurate comprehension of the formulations. The survey was administered through in-person interviews, reducing errors arising from misinterpretation of questions and enhancing overall data quality. The interview procedure adhered to international guidelines, and the interviewers received specialized training, thus limiting the influence of subjective factors.

The study's empirical foundation is reinforced by sociological data drawn from a series of grant-funded projects conducted between 2020 and 2024 under the auspices of the Ministry of Science and Higher

Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan. These applied research initiatives examined cultural development and directly informed the shaping of national cultural policy (Seidumanov & Nurmuratov 2022; Institut 2021). Additional sources include materials from the Ministry of Culture and Information and independent investigations into the modernization of Kazakhstan's cultural sector (Kazakhstan 2020, 2024).

The proposed methodology provides the requisite level of scientific rigor, transparency in data collection and processing procedures, and the potential for replication in analogous sociocultural contexts. The results, derived from a representative sample and validated analytical methods, facilitate the identification of significant patterns in the transformation of Kazakhstani youth's value orientations in the face of contemporary global challenges.

Results

This study aimed to examine the value orientations of Kazakhstani youth and compare them with the findings of the 2018 World Values Survey. This comparative analysis not only documented the core value priorities of Kazakhstani youth but also highlighted significant trends in how those priorities have evolved amid ongoing sociocultural and economic transformations. The results indicate that although traditional values such as family and health remain deeply important, the hierarchy of priorities among Kazakhstani youth has undergone notable shifts, reflecting the influence of globalization, urbanization, and a range of socioeconomic factors.

In the evolving hierarchy of youth values, there is a marked increase in emphasis on material prosperity, economic independence, and leisure pursuits. This shift is often attributed to the influence of market-driven economies, expanded exposure to global information flows, and the changing structure of young people's needs (Butterbaugh et al. 2020). Concomitantly, the importance attached to friendships and conventional career aspirations appears to be waning, perhaps due to intensifying individualism, greater dedication to personal development and strategic career planning, and the transformation of social interactions within an increasingly digital environment (Hojjat & Moyer 2024). Notwithstanding these trends, family continues to be upheld as a cornerstone value among young people, echoing earlier studies that highlight the primacy of familial bonds in collectivist cultural contexts (Thornhill et al. 2014; Lykes & Kemmelmeier 2014).

Overall, the younger generation of Kazakhstani citizens exhibits greater optimism about their current life situation and future

prospects than indicated by data for the country in the 2018 World Values Survey. This result aligns with international studies showing that subjective well-being levels are generally higher among younger cohorts compared with older ones (Inglehart 2002; Twenge et al. 2016). High life satisfaction may stem from young people's adaptability to changing circumstances, wider opportunities for self-realization, fewer social and economic commitments, and positive expectations regarding the future.

Nevertheless, the fact that a substantial portion of respondents reported being dissatisfied with their lives indicates that various socioeconomic obstacles are impeding the potential of young people. Multiple factors likely contribute to this pattern, including precarious job prospects, escalating skill requirements in the labor market, and unequal access to high-quality education and vital social services. This interpretation is reinforced by social mobility research indicating that economic instability and social inequality have a detrimental effect on the life satisfaction of young people (Vancea et al. 2019).

Older adults who rely more on stable social and economic structures often experience increased anxiety during periods of economic instability, changes in health care provision, uncertainty related to pension systems, and other factors that affect their subjective well-being. In contrast, younger adults tend to adapt more easily to change and, accordingly, often report higher life satisfaction. This pattern is consistent with research suggesting that cognitive views about the future vary by age (Vasile 2015). Age differences in well-being assessments have practical implications. For example, maintaining stability in key institutions such as economic systems, health services, and pension schemes may help alleviate the anxiety experienced by many older adults. Conversely, approaches that capitalize on the adaptability of younger adults may help maintain the higher life satisfaction that younger adults typically enjoy.

A high level of life satisfaction among youth plays a pivotal role in establishing favorable conditions for the country's socioeconomic development. Positive subjective assessments of one's life situation correlate with strong motivation for active participation in public affairs, entrepreneurship, volunteer work, and innovative initiatives. These tendencies lay the groundwork for strengthening human capital and fostering a resilient social environment conducive to economic modernization and the expansion of civil society. Accordingly, government youth policy should prioritize supporting active youth involvement in social and economic processes, creating opportunities for self-realization, and removing structural barriers that impede social mobility.

The findings of this study confirm that traditional values remain deeply rooted among Kazakhstani youth. At the same time, certain priorities are beginning to shift, shaped by the interplay of global influences and local context. Notably, young people in Kazakhstan report a high level of life satisfaction, which is a positive indicator of social stability.

However, the presence of a substantial segment of youth who express dissatisfaction with their lives underscores a clear need for enhanced social and economic support measures. From a practical standpoint, policymakers should strengthen youth-oriented support initiatives to address these concerns, which would help further bolster overall stability. Furthermore, future research should delve deeper into the factors driving these evolving value orientations and thoroughly investigate the long-term implications of such shifts for Kazakhstan's socio-economic development.

The research findings indicate that the material circumstances of Kazakhstani youth are generally characterized by limited opportunities, with a significant proportion of young people able to satisfy only their basic needs. This can hamper their personal development, professional progress, and social mobility. At the same time, the level of satisfaction with financial status may be higher among youth than in the general population, which can be attributed to differences in perceptions of economic realities and expectations about the future. Because they are at the early stage of their careers, young people tend to be optimistic about prospective income growth and social status, aligning with the hypothesis regarding age-specific perceptions of economic conditions (Prus, 2004). Nonetheless, this outlook does not negate the objective economic challenges that young people face, particularly in an unstable labor market with limited access to long-term financial resources.

Restricted financial means directly shape young people's consumer behavior, directing their expenditures toward primary needs such as food and clothing while diminishing their capacity for long-term investments in education, professional development, and housing. Compared with data from the World Values Survey, the findings indicate broader economic difficulties that affect overall financial satisfaction in the population, including among youth. Building human capital as a strategic national resource is feasible only through enhancing the material well-being of young people, which necessitates effective policies to support young professionals, expand access to educational opportunities, and create enabling conditions for youth participation in the economy.

Young people tend to rate their own health more highly than older age groups do. This notable advantage in self-assessed health can be

attributed largely to the inherent physiological benefits of youth. Individuals in younger age brackets typically enjoy more robust physical health, and this is naturally reflected in how positively they evaluate their well-being. Consequently, age itself emerges as an important determinant of subjective health perceptions.

Psychological traits common in youth, such as abundant energy, high stamina, and a relatively low incidence of chronic illness, also contribute to an optimistic outlook on personal health. As a result of these combined advantages, young people are the most resilient to adverse health influences. This resilience, however, makes it imperative to implement preventive health initiatives and to promote healthy lifestyle choices early on, so that the current health advantages of youth translate into reduced health risks later in life.

Young people often report high levels of health, a pattern that may be partly attributed to socioeconomic influences such as easy access to information about healthy lifestyles, active participation in sports, and involvement in social activities that promote well-being. Additionally, modern digital technologies provide abundant opportunities to learn about disease prevention and maintain an active lifestyle, which in turn can enhance how individuals perceive their own health.

However, it should be recognized that subjective self-assessments of health do not always coincide with objective indicators of health. In some cases, young people may even underestimate certain health risks, especially those associated with chronic diseases, high stress, or the harmful effects of a sedentary lifestyle. This trend highlights the practical importance of targeted health education and preventive strategies to correct such misconceptions and better align young people's self-assessments of health with their actual health status.

Although most Kazakhstani youth report good health and relative satisfaction with their finances, the evidence shows that they nevertheless face substantial socioeconomic constraints that could hinder their long-term development. To mitigate these obstacles, youth policy should concentrate on three mutually reinforcing priorities, widening access to high-quality education, creating robust pathways to meaningful and stable employment, and promoting healthy lifestyle choices across the youth population. Because the nation's social and economic progress hinges on how effectively young people participate in, and benefit from, these systems, a holistic policy framework aimed at strengthening their well-being and opportunities is essential for sustaining Kazakhstan's future growth.

Although a majority of young people in Kazakhstan indicate that they are in good health and are fairly satisfied with their financial situation, evidence suggests that they still encounter significant

socio-economic barriers that could impede their long-term progress. These underlying challenges risk undermining the initial positive outlook reported by youth. In response to these challenges, youth policy should focus on three key, interrelated priorities: (1) expanding access to high-quality education (to equip all young people with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed); (2) establishing robust pathways to secure and fulfilling employment (to help youth smoothly transition into the workforce and achieve financial stability); (3) promoting healthy lifestyle choices among young people (to improve their well-being and long-term health outcomes).

Differences between youth responses and those of the wider World Values Survey sample suggest that individual value orientations significantly influence how environmental issues are perceived. Young people, in the early stages of their professional lives, frequently concentrate on educational, career, and financial objectives, thereby devoting less attention to environmental concerns. This finding aligns with theoretical models positing that economic instability and low incomes can restrict the public's capacity to adopt environmentally conscious behaviors (Gatersleben et al. 2002). Accordingly, creating balanced public policies that address both economic and environmental objectives becomes essential for sustainable development. Engaging youth in this process through educational and informational initiatives is critical to fostering environmental awareness and cultivating responsible attitudes toward natural resources.

The results indicate that young people in Kazakhstan experience anxiety related to socioeconomic conditions and political challenges. Principal concerns include material well-being, security, employment prospects, corruption, and political instability. These threats can adversely affect the degree of youth integration into society, reduce trust in state institutions, and heighten social tensions. One of the most significant factors contributing to protest sentiments is the rise in prices for essential goods and services, underscoring the pivotal role of economic stability and accessibility of basic necessities in ensuring social harmony and preventing social conflict.

At the same time, young people exhibit a strong commitment to legitimate, institutional means of expressing their civic views. Their pursuit of constructive dialogue with governmental bodies and formal organizations reflects considerable civic maturity and a readiness to participate in democratic processes. Support for participation in authorized protest actions affirms youth awareness of their civic rights and their desire to express dissatisfaction peacefully, within legal boundaries. A comparison with data from the 2018 World Values Survey confirms that youth in Kazakhstan are more likely than the general

population to engage in peaceful demonstrations. This may be attributable to their higher social mobility, broad access to information, and active civic involvement. Their increased sensitivity to economic fluctuations highlights the necessity of considering youth interests when shaping public policy. Economic stability, inflation control, and ensuring the affordability of basic goods and services can help mitigate social tensions and dampen protest sentiments among young people.

Their willingness to participate in official political parties and public organizations suggests potential for further development of civil society and democratic institutions in Kazakhstan. These data indicate that the presence of effective mechanisms for youth inclusion in political processes can bolster social stability and reinforce trust in state institutions. Establishing institutional channels for youth involvement in decision-making at both national and municipal levels, supporting youth-driven initiatives, and expanding civic education programs may enhance the role of youth in the governance and social progress of the country.

The results further reveal a multifaceted interplay among socio-economic, environmental, and political forces that shape the value orientations and behavior patterns of Kazakhstani youth. While young people recognize the importance of sustainable development, they attempt to strike a balance between pursuing economic growth and protecting the environment. Their overall environmental awareness remains comparatively low, as indicated by their lower level of concern about climate change relative to the wider population. Yet despite strong international momentum toward renewable energy, this transition has not gained broad support among Kazakhstani youth, likely due to limited information and a prevailing focus on short-term economic gains over long-term sustainable outcomes.

Analysis of empirical data indicates that although Kazakhstani youth maintain a high degree of religiosity, both its structure and its forms of expression are undergoing notable changes. Young people increasingly gravitate toward individualized expressions of faith, where religious beliefs become a matter of personal choice rather than social convention. Participation in institutional religious practices is showing a downward trend, likely due to factors such as urbanization, expanded access to education, and greater engagement with global cultural currents. Concurrently, a high level of tolerance for religious diversity points to the flexibility of youth worldviews and their capacity to adapt to a pluralistic social environment. These shifts necessitate revisiting traditional models of state religious policy and developing educational programs aimed at cultivating critical thinking while recognizing religious diversity as a key factor in social stability.

Such developments significantly influence the trajectory of religiosity in Kazakhstan, fostering a new type of religious consciousness rooted in personal interpretations of spiritual values and reduced dependence on institutional worship. For governmental and public institutions, an essential challenge lies in formulating policies that support interfaith dialogue, promote secular education, and reinforce a civic identity based on pluralism and mutual respect. Fostering diverse worldviews and creating an environment that encourages critical engagement with religious matters among youth can help strengthen social cohesion and promote a resilient society capable of adapting to global challenges.

The data further show that Kazakhstani youth exhibit a high level of participation in volunteer activities, which may be associated with shifts in their value system. They increasingly view social initiatives as opportunities for self-realization, skill development, and professional growth. For young people, volunteering serves as a way to acquire new competencies, nurture social solidarity, and reinforce collective identity. Incorporating volunteer programs into state youth initiatives, establishing specialized volunteer centers, and implementing educational efforts to develop civic engagement can foster a sustainable social culture that values active citizenship.

Despite a favorable trend among youth, the low level of volunteering in the broader Kazakhstani population may signal the absence of deeply rooted volunteering traditions or the presence of institutional barriers. Constraints such as limited time, inadequate awareness of volunteering possibilities, and insufficient social motivation may restrict citizen involvement in volunteer activities. This reality underscores the need for governmental and civic strategies designed to popularize volunteering among diverse age and social groups. Enhanced institutional support for volunteer initiatives can cultivate a culture of civic responsibility and social engagement. The heightened interest in volunteering among youth may also be interpreted in the context of globalization. Situated within an open international information environment, Kazakhstani youth display a strong receptivity to global trends of social responsibility and civic activism. The country's participation in global processes magnifies the impact of international volunteering practices and youth self-governance, prompting young people to embrace collective forms of social activism and recognize the importance of volunteer efforts in societal advancement.

The findings illustrate fundamental shifts in Kazakhstani youth's value orientations, reflected in the transformation of religiosity, increased tolerance, growing individualization of spiritual practices, and a pronounced interest in social activism through volunteering. These

trends necessitate a reevaluation of state youth policy, with an emphasis on developing programs that promote civic participation, critical thinking, and intercultural as well as interfaith dialogue. Achieving sustainable social development calls for an integrated approach that combines economic, educational, and social support for youth, facilitating the seamless incorporation of contemporary value orientations into the national development strategy.

Discussion

Contemporary Kazakhstani society is undergoing intense socioeconomic and sociocultural transformations, which inevitably lead to significant shifts in its value system. Traditional models of social communication are losing their effectiveness, compelling individuals and social groups to reassess their orientations and adopt new strategies for engaging with a changing social reality. This process gives rise to a phenomenon of value conflict, characterized by a divergence between individual expectations and officially proclaimed societal norms. Such conflict can manifest as social polarization, which can destabilize society, or as the development of value consensus that fosters social cohesion (Thacher & Rein 2004; Siregar 2022).

Understanding contemporary youth perspectives is critical amid ongoing value realignments, as younger cohorts both forge new cultural meanings and often propel modernization. Evidence from the seventh round of the World Values Survey (2017–2022) shows that today's young people are increasingly prioritizing self-expression, individualism, and social justice (Haerpfer et al. 2022). Several factors shape the dynamics of youth value orientations. First, young people are the most sensitive barometers of social change, as their values develop in an environment characterized by modern technology, open communication, and global interconnectedness. As Inglehart (2013) points out, younger cohorts are more likely to embrace post-materialist values, including aspirations for self-realization, social justice, and environmental responsibility. Second, an evident intergenerational gap in value orientations emerges, driven by the different historical experiences and social contexts of distinct generations. Having been socialized in relatively stable normative environments, older adults often approach emerging trends with caution, while younger cohorts readily embrace innovative or experimental ideas. This generational divergence can heighten tension within social interactions.

A salient issue is the discrepancy between officially endorsed societal values and the actual preferences of young people. Cultural

policy favoring the preservation of tradition regularly collides with youth demands for individual freedom, more flexible social norms, and alignment with global standards. This misalignment can impede young people's effective socialization, as multiple sociological studies document growing social apathy and weakening trust in governmental institutions among younger citizens (Cammaerts et al. 2014; Zhelnina 2020). Low levels of youth participation in sociopolitical processes, as evident in WVS7 data, emphasize the need to revise youth policies, focusing on active youth inclusion in governance and decision-making. The challenge of personal choice within a context of value pluralism requires particular attention. Confronted with a variety of alternative social models, young people must determine their own life strategies. When traditional guideposts lose their stability and new values have not yet crystallized into widespread norms, social disorientation and alienation can intensify.

Another key factor is the influence of educational environments on the formation of young people's values. Despite efforts to incorporate civic education principles, many current educational programs remain insufficiently effective in instilling critical thinking skills and a sense of social responsibility. Educational sociology research indicates that when learning institutions prioritize the transmission of factual knowledge while neglecting the cultivation of social competencies, they can inadvertently heighten young people's disengagement from civic life. Hence, there is a pressing need to reevaluate educational strategies, emphasizing practical forms of learning that foster civic competencies and social responsibility.

In Kazakhstani society, students encounter the phenomenon of social hypocrisy, reflected in the mismatch between the aspirations expressed by dominant social groups and their actual behavior. These groups expect young people to participate actively in social and political modernization, while remaining unwilling to forgo their own interests to alleviate social frustration and prevent intergenerational conflict. This asymmetry in societal expectations fosters social tension that, in turn, hinders the development of a collective identity essential for sustainable social development. According to social identity theories (Hogg 2016; Ellemers & Haslam 2012), a sense of belonging to a social group is fundamental to maintaining social cohesion, whereas its absence leads to alienation and heightened individualism.

Modern Kazakhstani youth face a scarcity of social opportunities, intensifying the difficulties inherent to their life stage. Many struggle to forge a coherent social identity, a challenge often accompanied by signs of anomie, situations in which prevailing norms lose relevance and individuals feel disconnected from the wider community. In such

an environment, the emergence of a fragmented society becomes increasingly likely, as collective values lose their integrative power and individual priorities take precedence.

The problem posed by individualistic values, which predominate among youth, grows more acute against the backdrop of socioeconomic uncertainty. Young people's emphasis on personal achievement and material well-being is accompanied by a diminished interest in social initiatives and public responsibility. Research in the sociology of youth confirms that, in conditions of insufficient institutional support, young people tend to adopt strategies of individual success, often neglecting collective objectives (Young 2020). In Kazakhstan, this trend is evidenced by a bifurcation of social reality into two distinct spheres: the sphere of personal life, dominated by the pursuit of individual comfort, and the sphere of social interaction, perceived as external and of limited relevance. This dualistic value framework underpins what is often termed a "value vacuum," wherein the connection between an individual's personal orientations and societal reference points is weakened.

Social isolation of young people within such a value vacuum leads to decreased social responsibility and the emergence of nihilistic attitudes. Deprived of feasible pathways for self-realization within existing social institutions, young people may regard official social norms as irrelevant or even oppressive. Studies on youth alienation in Central Asian nations, where analogous phenomena have arisen, indicate heightened political apathy and diminished trust in governmental structures (Laruelle 2013). These dynamics may spark social unrest, particularly in today's globalized setting where young people increasingly gravitate toward alternative modes of social organization, such as virtual communities and transnational cultural movements, rather than traditional local structures (Castells 2020).

Social planning in this area should reflect principles of inclusiveness and invite youth participation in decision-making processes. Research suggests that young people engaged in the work of public organizations exhibit higher levels of social responsibility and a greater willingness to engage in collective action (Gurstein et al. 2003). In this regard, it is increasingly necessary to broaden youth self-governance practices, implement mentoring programs to reinforce intergenerational connections, and establish forums for open dialogue among diverse age and social groups.

Overcoming social barriers and minimizing the risks tied to growing individualism and alienation among youth constitute vital goals for the sustainable development of Kazakhstani society. Establishing a value structure that merges individual aspirations for self-realization

with a collective focus on social solidarity should be a priority for state youth policy.

Despite the ongoing process of globalization, traditional cultural values continue to hold significant importance within the value systems of Kazakhstani youth. One clear illustration of this enduring cultural influence is the sustained respect shown toward older generations. In particular, our study revealed that 57% of young respondents take into account the opinions of their parents and grandparents when making important life decisions. In comparison, this figure was lower, at 44%, among respondents from the broader sample. These findings support the hypothesis regarding the centrality of family values within Kazakhstani culture and align with data from the World Values Survey (Wave 7: 2017–2022), which suggest that countries with strong family traditions demonstrate more resilient models of social integration (Haerpfer et al. 2022). Respect for elders is prevalent across all social groups, albeit with nuances. Traditionally, young women more frequently seek advice from their mothers and grandmothers on personal and family matters, whereas young men often consult their fathers or prefer to make decisions independently, especially regarding career issues. Youth from rural areas or lower socioeconomic backgrounds, raised in more traditional communities, exhibit even greater respect toward elders compared to their urban, economically privileged peers, who tend toward more individualistic decision-making. Ethnocultural distinctions are also evident, Kazakhstani youth, socialized in a culture emphasizing respect for elders, display slightly higher levels of respect compared to youth from families with European cultural traditions. Nonetheless, respect for older generations remains a shared value among Kazakhstan's multiethnic youth population.

Comparing our findings with data from the World Values Survey 2018 (WVS 2018) reveals both continuity in numerous traditional values and the emergence of new priorities shaped by contemporary socioeconomic realities and global trends. Specifically, our study confirms the enduring significance of family as a fundamental value, identified as the highest priority by 80.1% of surveyed youth. By comparison, according to WVS 2018 data, family was identified as the primary value by 99.6% of Kazakhstan's adult population, indicating a moderate decline in the relative importance of family ties among younger generations. This trend may reflect early stages of cultural transformation typical of modernizing societies. Influenced by global individualistic tendencies, traditional values among youth slightly decrease in importance, although their foundational role remains intact. Additionally, intergenerational differences emerged, with 36% of respondents stating that the views of older generations often do not align with contemporary

realities, limiting their usefulness in decision-making amid rapid socioeconomic changes. Such generational gaps are particularly pronounced among urban, highly educated youth at the forefront of societal transformation, whereas rural and economically disadvantaged youth are more inclined to value the advice of their elders.

Despite growing individualism, family relationships remain highly valued; an overwhelming majority of respondents (91%) emphasize the importance of maintaining close family ties, reflecting the resilience of a cultural code that prioritizes family. Notably, this nearly universal prioritization of family is shared by both young men and women across all social strata, although it is expressed in different ways. For instance, young women often act as custodians of familial bonds, facilitating communication and emotional closeness within the family, whereas young men express their commitment primarily through a sense of responsibility toward providing for and protecting their families. Youth from all socioeconomic groups, including those who are most cosmopolitan and affluent, continue to prioritize family above other values. Members of economically privileged families often emphasize emotional support and quality time together, while less privileged youth primarily view family as an essential source of economic and social security. In ethnically diverse Kazakhstan, the centrality of family remains a common cultural code shared across all groups.

More than half of the respondents (55%) indicated a willingness to follow family traditions only under specific circumstances, whereas only 19% believe that traditions must be observed unconditionally, regardless of context. These findings highlight a trend toward adapting traditional values to contemporary social realities, aligning with research on cultural dynamics in transitional economies (Zver et al. 2004).

This flexible approach to tradition characterizes both young men and young women, albeit with distinct nuances. Young women often bear greater responsibility for maintaining family customs, such as organizing celebrations or conducting rituals, and thus may demonstrate slightly greater adherence to these traditions. Nevertheless, they adopt a pragmatic approach, adapting practices to fit contemporary lifestyles, preserving symbolic aspects of customs while omitting elements that interfere with education or career goals. Young men, although generally respectful toward traditions, typically do not feel obligated to strictly adhere to every custom. Instead, they frequently reinterpret or even reject specific norms, particularly those perceived as restricting personal autonomy or irrelevant within contemporary contexts.

Health has emerged as one of the top priorities within the value system of Kazakhstani youth. In our study, 63% of respondents

identified health among their most important life values, whereas in the World Values Survey, health was not included as a separate category at all. This result likely reflects the increasing attention young people pay to issues of physical and mental well-being, aligning with the global trend toward healthier lifestyles observed in many countries. This heightened focus on health might also be a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which underscored societal vulnerabilities and increased interest in preventive health measures.

The value placed on friendship and social connections demonstrates significant discrepancies between our data and the WVS findings for Kazakhstan. In our research, only 37.9% of young respondents identified friendship as an important life value, compared to 84.1% in the WVS 2018 data. This disparity may be attributed to methodological differences in question wording, as well as a shift in the social priorities of youth toward individualism. Active engagement with social media potentially transforms the nature of friendships, making them more diffuse and utilitarian, contrasting with the deeper and more enduring relationships typical among older generations.

Material well-being continues to occupy an important position within the value orientations of Kazakhstani youth. In our survey, 42.4% of respondents included financial stability among their key life priorities, indicating a pragmatic focus on achieving economic security. This finding aligns with the WVS 2018 survey, in which 78.6% of Kazakhstani respondents identified leisure time and material prosperity as significant. Such trends reflect the development of hedonistic attitudes, emphasizing comfort and leisure.

Professional activity, by contrast, does not rank highly among life priorities for young people. In our study, only 22% of respondents expressed interest in meaningful work or career advancement, whereas, according to WVS 2018 data, work was important for 87% of Kazakhstan's adult population. This discrepancy may be explained by the fact that young people, who are still at the initial stages of their career paths, do not yet perceive work as their primary means of self-realization. Furthermore, labor-market instability and the widespread adoption of flexible employment practices appear to have diminished the value of traditional career trajectories among youth.

According to our study, 73.4% of young respondents reported overall satisfaction with their lives, significantly higher than the 42.3% figure recorded in the World Values Survey of 2018. This discrepancy likely stems from differences in the socioeconomic conditions prevailing at the time each survey was conducted, by 2024, Kazakhstan had achieved relative economic stabilization and had implemented active social-support programs aimed at young people, positively affecting

their subjective assessments of quality of life. Nevertheless, approximately a quarter of respondents (24.2%) remain dissatisfied with their living conditions, indicating the presence of underlying social issues, ranging from unequal access to resources to limited career opportunities and obstacles to social self-realization.

One manifestation of these issues is evident in the financial constraints experienced by youth, as confirmed by the structure of their expenditures. Young people primarily allocate spending toward meeting basic needs, 77% of respondents reported spending significant portions of their income on food, and 66.7% reported substantial expenditures on clothing and footwear. This pattern aligns with broader tendencies observed among youth, who, upon entering independent adulthood, encounter financial challenges and prioritize basic necessities. At the same time, such spending behavior may reflect insufficient resources being allocated to education and skill development, potentially weakening their future competitiveness in the labor market. Moreover, the absence of savings and limited capacity to independently finance higher education impede social mobility, reducing the likelihood that young people will achieve their desired economic status. The most vulnerable segment, comprising 4.2% of the sample, faces severe financial hardship. This finding underscores the existence of a socially disadvantaged group of young individuals encountering substantial barriers to accessing basic resources and opportunities for self-realization.

Additionally, comparisons with WVS data reveal significant generational differences in satisfaction with material conditions. In our study, young respondents tended to provide positive assessments regarding their current financial situations. In contrast, the World Values Survey of 2018 revealed that only 27.1% of Kazakhstan's adult population expressed satisfaction with their economic conditions. This notable difference can likely be attributed to the greater optimism typically held by young individuals who are at the early stages of their professional careers, making them more hopeful about their future economic prospects. Additionally, young people may evaluate their present financial circumstances less critically due to their anticipation of future improvements. In contrast, older generations, possessing fewer opportunities for income growth, typically view their financial situation as more permanent rather than as a temporary stage with potential for improvement.

The self-assessed health of Kazakhstani youth in our research indicates a high level of satisfaction, significantly differing from national indicators. Specifically, 84.7% of respondents rated their health positively (selecting "4" or "5" on the provided scale), considerably higher

than the 68.2% reported in the WVS 2018 data. The difference of 16.5 percentage points is primarily attributable to the age composition of respondents, as younger people generally experience fewer chronic illnesses and are less susceptible to age-related health declines. However, such high subjective evaluations of health do not necessarily correspond to actual physical conditions, as many young individuals may underestimate long-term risks associated with sedentary lifestyles, stress, and unbalanced nutrition.

According to survey results, 78.3% of young respondents consider themselves believers; however, their degree of involvement in religious life varies significantly. Specifically, 43.6% regard religion primarily as a component of personal identity and participate in religious rituals only occasionally, whereas just 16.7% strictly adhere to religious prescriptions. These findings suggest that although religious norms persist among youth, they do not exert a dominant influence on daily behavior. Episodic attendance at places of worship characterizes 18% of respondents, and family was identified as the most influential factor shaping religious beliefs (32.1%).

As with other values, attitudes toward religion among youth vary notably across sociodemographic groups. Gender differences are particularly evident within the Kazakhstani context, young women generally appear more inclined to maintain a religious identity and observe specific religious practices, possibly due to socialization that emphasizes female piety and moral expectations. Conversely, young men generally demonstrate more secular patterns of behavior in their daily lives. Their engagement in religious rituals is typically limited to significant occasions or events. As a result, it is reasonable to assume that within the comparatively smaller segment of strictly religious youth, young men are somewhat less represented. Instead, this strictly religious subgroup likely comprises a slightly higher proportion of young women who regularly observe religious practices (the 16.7% of respondents who rigorously follow all prescriptions), women represent a slightly larger proportion. In contrast, the broader group that identifies as believers but rarely practices religion (43.6%) likely includes a higher proportion of young men, for whom religion serves more as a cultural marker than as an everyday guide.

Socioeconomic context also influences levels of religious engagement. Urban, highly educated youth, who generally lean toward secular viewpoints and contemporary lifestyles, typically perceive religion as merely one aspect of their identity. Such young people usually limit their involvement to celebrating religious holidays or formally acknowledging their faith, without strictly observing rituals. Conversely, youth from traditional rural communities or economically

disadvantaged backgrounds may experience stronger familial and community pressures to participate actively in religious life. Thus, individuals from these backgrounds constitute a significant proportion of both those who occasionally attend religious institutions and those who strictly adhere to religious norms, as their social environments reinforce religious commitment.

Ethnic background additionally contributes to patterns of religiosity in Kazakhstan's multiethnic society. Most young ethnic Kazakhs culturally identify with Islam and constitute the majority of the 78.3% of respondents who identify themselves as believers. Nevertheless, within this group, actual religious practices vary widely, from strict adherence to participation limited to significant life events or celebrations. Conversely, Russian or other non-Muslim youth more frequently identify as secular or nominally religious (e.g., culturally Orthodox but seldom attending church), thus predominating in the segment of youth for whom religion represents an identity with limited active participation. Despite these differences, a commonality remains in the influence of family on shaping religious beliefs, as indicated by 32.1% of respondents.

An analysis of religiosity among Kazakhstani youth reveals that 78.3% of respondents identify themselves as believers, a slightly lower figure compared to the general population, where 81.9% identified as believers, according to WVS 2018 data. This difference may indicate a gradual secularization process occurring within the younger generation. Although the proportion of young people identifying themselves as atheists (1.3%) or agnostics (0.9%) remains small, these figures align with comparable data from the adult population, as 2.1% of adult respondents identified as atheists, according to WVS 2018.

The group of young people (4.1%) who expressed indifference to religion requires further study. A comparison with the WVS 2018 data shows that only 8.2% of the adult population identifies as non-believers or atheists, which is a lower percentage compared to young people. This finding confirms the hypothesis of generational differences in attitudes towards religion and highlights the importance of taking these changes into account when developing state cultural and educational policies.

The views of Kazakhstani youth regarding the future of their country differ significantly. According to our survey, 26.3% of respondents do not anticipate substantial changes in the socioeconomic or cultural trajectory of the state, reflecting an orientation toward stability and a cautious approach to transformation. Another 25% expressed hope that Kazakhstan would retain its status as a modern secular state, thereby supporting governmental neutrality in religious matters and

demonstrating a commitment to social progress. Meanwhile, 22.4% associate the country's future with the establishment of a strong and secure state, highlighting the perceived need for strengthened institutions of security and law enforcement.

A more detailed analysis reveals differences in emphasis among various youth groups. Young women, in particular, actively support the vision of a modern secular Kazakhstan, viewing secularism as a guarantee of civil liberties and gender equality, conditions considered essential for pursuing education and building a career. Consequently, within the 25% of respondents advocating for a secular and progressive future, a significant proportion likely comprises female students who perceive secularism as crucial to safeguarding their rights and enabling social advancement. Young men also highly value a secular, modern state but appear more prominently among the 22.4% of respondents who envision the country's future in terms of a strong and secure state. This preference may reflect young men's inclination toward stability and order, potentially influenced by traditional expectations of men as protectors or by their interests in careers within security services, the military, or governmental institutions.

The group of youth (26.3%) who do not anticipate significant changes includes individuals of both genders and from various social strata; however, their underlying motivations may differ. Young people from relatively prosperous backgrounds, such as the urban middle class, may prefer to avoid drastic changes, as they already benefit from the existing situation and value stability. Conversely, youth from more vulnerable social groups might doubt that transformations will yield improvements, thereby adopting a cautious conservatism.

Socioeconomic status and education level also likely influence these perspectives. Young people with higher education and broader worldviews are more frequently supportive of secular governance and progressive reforms, as they typically have greater awareness of global development trends and desire similar institutions in Kazakhstan. Conversely, youth from less privileged or more traditional communities may gravitate toward the concept of a "strong state," hoping for effective economic governance and security guarantees that, in their view, will protect their communities and ensure their well-being.

Ethnic background additionally introduces nuances. Ethnic minority youth (e.g., Russians, Uyghurs, Koreans, etc.) historically place high value on the secular character of the state, as it ensures freedom of religion and cultural expression; consequently, these groups may particularly strongly support maintaining a modern secular structure.

An analysis of young people's trust in institutions and government authorities reveals a predominance of skepticism. The most prevalent

stance is one of complete distrust, 29.8% of respondents indicated that they do not trust anyone. This finding points to a deeply ingrained critical attitude toward public institutions, likely attributable to general uncertainty within the political and economic spheres, the prevalence of misinformation in digital media, and a perceived lack of transparency in decision-making processes.

Despite this dominant distrust, 25% of respondents nevertheless trust representatives of government institutions, demonstrating continued institutional legitimacy of the state among a segment of the younger generation. Scientists were trusted by 22.8% of respondents, underscoring the significance of expert opinion and scientific knowledge among youth, although trust in the scientific community remains moderate.

Notably, 20.8% of respondents reported trusting prominent public figures, likely due to their extensive media presence and status as role models. In contrast, only 14.2% of youth trust leaders of political parties, and 13.7% trust doctors. These figures confirm a weakening of young people's trust in traditional power structures and professional communities. Especially noteworthy is the finding that despite their popularity, bloggers, viners, and TikTok influencers are trusted by only 10% of respondents, indicating young people's recognition of the primarily entertainment-oriented nature of content produced by influencers and their perception that this content is not a reliable source of information. The relatively low level of trust in doctors may be explained by insufficient communication between the medical community and young people, as well as by the influence of health-related misinformation disseminated through digital platforms.

A comparison of these results with data from the World Values Survey 2018 indicates a generally high level of distrust within Kazakhstani society. According to WVS 2018, 72.6% of Kazakhstanis believe that one should exercise great caution when dealing with other people, whereas only 22.8% believe that most people can be trusted. The WVS 2018 data also show that trust in institutions among the adult population is significantly higher than among youth, 59.3% trust the press, 63.3% trust television, 68.5% trust the government, and 57.4% trust political parties. In contrast, the younger generation demonstrates considerably lower trust levels, approximately 25% of young respondents trust government institutions, and only 14.2% trust political party leaders. This discrepancy likely reflects a growing divide between young citizens and political institutions, resulting in decreased political participation among youth and increased apathy. Overwhelmed by information, young people exhibit greater skepticism and avoid unconditional trust in official sources. However, such skepticism might

also indicate a deeper crisis of political representation, as youth do not perceive themselves as included within the political system and feel alienated from governmental institutions.

Although our research does not provide data specifically regarding young people's trust in traditional media, the generally high level of distrust suggests that young people are less inclined to trust television and print media compared to the population as a whole. This trend likely arises from changing patterns of information consumption, whereby youth increasingly turn to alternative channels such as digital platforms and social networks. Nevertheless, the relatively low level of trust in these alternative media sources, including bloggers and other opinion leaders, demonstrates that the younger generation is aware of manipulative elements within the media environment and is therefore disinclined to place blind trust even in the most popular online personalities.

It is noteworthy that 31.1% of young respondents reported directly perceiving climate change and rising average temperatures. This indicates that a substantial proportion of youth acknowledge the impact of global environmental processes on daily life and environmental quality. At the same time, 23.4% of respondents expressed doubts regarding the reality of climate change, likely due to insufficient environmental education and the ongoing portrayal of climate issues as debatable within the media landscape. Sustainable development themes resonate with youth to some extent, 24.4% of respondents highlighted the need for expanding the use of renewable energy sources.

According to WVS 2018 data, 43.7% of Kazakhstanis believe that environmental protection should be given higher priority, even if doing so slows economic growth and reduces the number of available jobs. However, 42.3% of respondents hold the opposite view, considering economic development and job creation to be more important, even if this negatively impacts the environment. This polarization reflects competing priorities, wherein sustainable development is frequently viewed through the lens of short-term economic gains.

An analysis of the spectrum of socioeconomic concerns reveals that young people are most troubled by material well-being (28.1% of responses) and personal safety, including the safety of their loved ones (27.3%). These findings underscore ongoing economic instability and highlight the necessity of strengthening social protection measures. Employment issues are also significant, with 18.7% of respondents expressing concern about their employment prospects. Available data suggest that current educational programs may not be sufficiently aligned with labor-market demands, resulting in a mismatch between graduates' skills and employers' requirements, and

consequently leading to an imbalance between labor supply and demand.

A high level of corruption remains a serious issue, 16.6% of young respondents identified corruption among their primary concerns. The WVS 2018 data confirm the perception of corruption as widespread, only 6.1% of respondents believe corruption does not exist in Kazakhstan, whereas 40.6% perceive it as systemic. The perception of corruption among youth as a systemic phenomenon may diminish their motivation for civic engagement and intensify apathy regarding participation in political processes. For young people, corruption represents not only a moral and ethical issue but also a structural barrier to socioeconomic development and the achievement of equal opportunities.

Respondents identified rising food prices (28.4%), increasing tariffs for public utilities (26.4%), and escalating medication costs (25.6%) as the key factors that could compel them to participate in protests. Under conditions of instability, economic dissatisfaction becomes a driving force for social mobilization, generating demands for a fairer distribution of resources and greater transparency in governmental economic policy.

An examination of the ways in which young people express dissatisfaction indicates that Kazakhstani youth predominantly utilize institutional channels of engagement with the state. The most common methods include appeals to official government institutions (55.7%), participation in activities organized by registered political parties, movements, and civic organizations (51.5%), and submitting petitions or formal appeals (43.2%). These findings suggest a preference among youth for employing legal mechanisms to protect their interests, indicating a relatively high level of trust in state institutions. Nevertheless, 40.2% of respondents perceive authorized protests, rallies, pickets, and demonstrations as effective, demonstrating a willingness to openly express their civic positions within established legal frameworks. Compared to WVS 2018 data, in which only 20.7% of Kazakhstanis considered participation in peaceful demonstrations acceptable, contemporary youth exhibit a notably higher propensity for collective action than the population as a whole.

According to our study, 73.4% of young respondents reported overall satisfaction with their lives. By comparison, according to the World Values Survey, the corresponding figure was 42.3%. This discrepancy may be explained by differences in the social conditions prevailing at the time the surveys were conducted, by 2024, Kazakhstan had achieved relative economic stabilization and had implemented active social support programs targeting young people, positively affecting

their subjective assessment of quality of life. Nevertheless, the fact that approximately one-quarter of young respondents (24.2%) remain dissatisfied with their living conditions indicates the presence of underlying social issues, including unequal access to resources, limited career opportunities, and barriers to social self-realization.

An analysis of young people's spending patterns confirms that the majority of their expenditures are directed toward basic needs. Specifically, 77% of respondents reported allocating significant portions of their income to food, while 66.7% spent substantially on clothing and footwear. This pattern highlights the predominance of essential needs in the consumption behavior of young people. This result aligns with broader trends, as youth transition to independent adulthood, they face financial constraints and prioritize the fulfillment of primary necessities. At the same time, such a spending structure may indicate insufficient resources allocated toward education, skill development, and professional growth, potentially weakening their future competitiveness in the labor market. Moreover, the absence of savings and limited capacity to independently finance higher education may impede social mobility, thereby reducing young people's likelihood of achieving their desired economic status. The most vulnerable segment, comprising 4.2% of the total sample, lives under extremely difficult financial conditions. This finding underscores the existence of a socially disadvantaged segment of youth experiencing substantial difficulties in accessing resources and opportunities for self-realization.

In comparison, data from the World Values Survey 2018 indicate that only 27.1% of Kazakhstan's adult population reported satisfaction with their financial situation. This suggests a considerably lower level of financial contentment among adults relative to the youth examined in our study. Consequently, the findings highlight a clear generational disparity in perceptions of economic well-being in Kazakhstan. This contrast may be explained by young people's greater optimism regarding future financial well-being as they are at the beginning of their career paths and perceive their current economic circumstances less critically. Conversely, older generations, possessing more limited opportunities for income growth, tend to perceive their financial situation as more permanent rather than as a temporary stage with the potential for improvement.

A sociological analysis of Kazakhstani youth's self-assessed health revealed characteristic trends encompassing both physical well-being and the psychological factors influencing it. According to our findings, 84.7% of respondents rated their health positively, selecting values of "4" or "5" on the provided scale. This figure significantly exceeds the corresponding indicator from the World Values Survey 2018 data for

Kazakhstan, where 68.2% of respondents rated their health as “very good” or “good.” This difference of 16.5 percentage points is primarily attributable to the age composition of respondents, as younger individuals generally experience fewer chronic illnesses and are less susceptible to age-related health decline. However, such high subjective health evaluations among youth do not necessarily correspond to their actual physical condition, as many young people may underestimate long-term risks associated with sedentary lifestyles, stress, and unbalanced nutrition.

Young people most commonly spend their leisure time with family and friends, underscoring the dominant role of microsocial relationships in their leisure activities. Visiting parents was identified as the most common activity (67.8% of respondents). The second most popular leisure preference was the use of social media (66.2%), confirming a persistent trend toward digital communication and the virtualization of social interactions characteristic of youth in a globalized world (Castells, 2020). Meeting with friends is preferred by 49.6% of respondents, and watching online videos ranks fourth (42.2%). Overall, this hierarchy of leisure preferences is generally consistent across youth groups, although gender differences appear in specific leisure forms. For example, young women tend to engage more frequently in family-oriented and domestic activities, such as regularly visiting parents and other relatives and actively using social media to maintain close relationships, reflecting their role in maintaining familial bonds. Young men, although also spending substantial time with family and on social media, more often prioritize leisure activities with friends or individual types of recreation, such as video games and watching online content.

An examination of youth engagement in volunteer activities reveals significant disparities between the younger generation and the general population. According to our data, 17.2% of young citizens of Kazakhstan have participated in volunteer activities at some point, whereas according to WVS 2018 data, the proportion of volunteers among the general population stands at only 2.1%. This difference underscores the crucial role young people play in fostering a culture of civic activism, suggesting that this demographic group possesses a heightened sense of social responsibility and a greater willingness to engage in socially beneficial initiatives.

According to the research data, the value priorities of Kazakhstani youth are significantly centered around family relationships and personal well-being. Specifically, 97% of respondents identified family health and safety as key life values, confirming the resilience of a traditional family paradigm; 96% emphasized the importance of

intrafamilial relationships, and 95% highlighted the significance of the family's material well-being. This pronounced orientation toward family values reflects the characteristics of Kazakhstani culture, in which family traditionally serves as the foundation of social stability. At the same time, 94% of respondents identified living conditions, from developed infrastructure to opportunities for realizing both personal and collective goals, as important, while environmental issues were significant for 90%, aligning with the global trend of increasing environmental awareness among young people (Gifford & Nilsson 2014). Thus, despite differences in emphasis (such as those regarding health, financial planning, or prioritization of life goals), the younger generation demonstrates a pragmatic orientation toward safety, stability, and family well-being. The absence of significant interest in public life, radical changes, or aspirations for fame among all subgroups underscores the worldview of a generation oriented toward achievable personal goals. This fact should be considered when developing future programs and policies, either by adapting them to pragmatic youth aspirations or by seeking to inspire the younger generation toward greater participation in collective and innovative initiatives.

Conclusion

The study is subject to several limitations that readers should consider when interpreting its findings. First, because the sample does not capture the full social and ethnocultural diversity of Kazakhstani youth, future work should broaden the empirical base to improve representativeness. Second, methodological differences between this study and the 2018 World Values Survey limit the precision of direct comparisons, potentially introducing a degree of uncertainty into cross-study findings. Third, the dynamics of value orientations are subject to macroeconomic, political, and technological influences; therefore, the study captures only the current state, whereas long-term trends require additional investigation. Finally, given that participants were exclusively university students from the country's two main cities, the study's analysis and conclusions should be interpreted within the context of this limited sample.

Based on these findings, further research is recommended to conduct a more detailed, long-term exploration of youth value transformations. It is important to broaden the sample by incorporating regional and ethnocultural variations, which will enable the identification of intragenerational differences. Moreover, the inclusion of economic, cultural, and psychological factors in the analysis of youth values will

offer a more comprehensive understanding of how these values develop. Given the rising importance of digital technologies, a promising avenue for investigation is examining how digital environments and social networks influence the formation of youth value orientations, since media spaces have become a primary channel for socialization and self-identification among younger generations.

The study's findings offer actionable insights for crafting youth-focused policies that cultivate supportive environments for the next generation. Governmental and civic institutions can use these data to devise educational programs, social support mechanisms, and incentives that encourage youth initiatives. At the same time, these conclusions should be interpreted in the context of the specific group studied, urban university students. Recognizing youth value orientations is essential not only for promoting their social integration but also for creating the conditions that enable their active participation in Kazakhstan's socioeconomic progress, an endeavor crucial to strengthening the nation's resilience amid global challenges.

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