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M.K. Shnarbekova^{1*}



¹Al-Farabi Kazakh National University
Almaty, Kazakhstan

*e-mail: meru_12_12@mail.ru

FACTORS BEHIND KAZAKHSTANI HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PLANS: RESULTS OF A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY

Abstract

International educational migration is an integral part of global processes that exerts a multifaceted influence on the socio-economic development of both receiving and sending countries. In host countries, migration contributes to the growth of cultural diversity and innovative potential, while at the same time posing integration challenges. For countries of origin, youth migration has an ambivalent effect: the risk of a “brain drain” is combined with the possibility of “reverse knowledge transfer” upon graduates’ return. This article presents an analysis of migration processes between 2020 and 2024, disaggregated by gender, age groups, and countries of origin. Within these processes, young people aged 15–34 represent the most mobile cohort, striving for education and employment abroad. The study also examines the intensity of academic mobility among youth within the framework of state programs and intergovernmental agreements.

The empirical basis of the research is a sociological survey of Kazakhstani high school students. The aim of the study is to analyze Kazakhstan high school students’ aspirations to study abroad and their social attitudes associated with choosing an educational trajectory. The survey carried out among 450 school students of grades 9-11 from both urban and rural schools in Kazakhstan. A purposive sampling method was applied, considering such criteria as place of residence (urban/rural), type of educational institution, gender, and grade level.

Data analysis reveals a pronounced polarization of migration orientations. High school students planning to study abroad are mainly motivated by professional aspirations and the improvement of language skills. Gender-specific patterns are observed: professional ambitions dominate among young men, while personal growth motives are more significant among young women. Those not planning to study abroad emphasize substantial financial costs, lack of interest, and a preference for pursuing higher education in Kazakhstan. However, even within this group, there remains potential interest in international education programs. Overall, a systematic analysis of youth educational migration is essential for assessing both the risks and potential benefits in shaping the foundation of educational policy aligned with the global Sustainable Development Goals.

Keywords: international migration, brain drain, high school students, studying abroad, international programs, scholarships, socio-economic development, Kazakhstani universities.

М.К. Шнарбекова^{1*}

*¹әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ ұлттық университеті
Алматы қ., Қазақстан*

ҚАЗАҚСТАНДА ЖОҒАРЫ СЫНЫП ОҚУШЫЛАРЫНЫҢ ШЕТЕЛДЕ БІЛІМ АЛУ ЖОСПАРЛАРЫНА ӘСЕР ЕТЕТІН ФАКТОРЛАР: ӘЛЕУМЕТТАНУЛЫҚ ЗЕРТТЕУ НӘТИЖЕЛЕРІ

Аңдатпа

Халықаралық білім беру көші-қоны жаһандық үдерістердің ажырамас көрінісі ретінде қабылдаушы және жіберуші елдердің әлеуметтік-экономикалық дамуына жан-жақты ықпал етеді. Қабылдаушы елдерде көші-қон мәдени әралуандылық пен инновациялық әлеуеттің артуына септігін тигізсе, интеграция бойынша бірқатар мәселе туындатады. Шығу елдері үшін жастар көші-қоны қарама-қайшы әсер етеді: «ми ағымының» қаупі түлектердің елге оралуы кезіндегі «білімнің кері қайтуы» мүмкіндігімен ұштасады. Осы мақалада 2020–2024 жылдар аралығындағы көші-қон үдерістері жыныс, жас ерекшелік және шығу елдері тұрғысынан талданады. Көші-қон барысында 15–34 жас аралығындағы жастар шетелде білім алу мен жұмысқа орналасуға ұмтылатын ең мобильді когорта ретінде ерекшеленеді. Сонымен қатар, мемлекеттік бағдарламалар мен үкіметаралық келісімдер аясындағы жастардың академиялық мобильділік қарқындылығы қарастырылады.

Зерттеудің эмпирикалық негізін қазақстандық жоғары сынып оқушылары арасында жүргізілген әлеуметтанулық зерттеу нәтижелері құрайды. Зерттеу мақсаты – Қазақстандағы жоғары сынып оқушыларының шетелде білім алуға деген ұмтылыстарын және білім беру траекториясын таңдауға байланысты әлеуметтік факторларды талдау. Сауалнама Қазақстанның қалалық және ауылдық мектептерінде оқитын 9–11 сыныптағы 450 оқушы арасында жүргізілді. Іріктемені қалыптастыруда мақсатты (квоталық) іріктеу әдісі қолданылды, тұрғылықты жері (қала/ауыл), білім беру ұйымының түрі, жынысы және оқу сыныбы сияқты критерийлер ескерілді.

Мәліметтерді талдау көші-қон бағдарлардың жіктелуін көрсетеді. Шетелдік жоғары оқу орындарында оқуды жоспарлаған оқушылар кәсіби мақсаттарға жету мен тілдік дағдыларды жетілдіруге бағытталған. Гендерлік ерекшелік байқалады: ер балалардың арасында кәсіби ұмтылыстар басым болса, қыздарда тұлғалық өсуге байланысты ынта айқынырақ. Шетелде оқуды жоспарламайтын жоғары сынып оқушылары оқу құнының жоғары болуын, қызығушылықтың жоқтығын және қазақстандық жоғары оқу орындарында білім алуға бағдарланғанын атап өтеді. Дегенмен, бұл топтың өзінде халықаралық білім беру бағдарламаларына әлеуетті қызығушылық байқалады. Жалпы алғанда, жастардың білім беру көші-қонын жүйелі талдау оның тәуекелдері мен әлеуетті артықшылықтарын айқындауда және жаһандық тұрақты даму мақсаттарына сәйкес келетін білім беру саясатының негізін қалыптастыруда маңызды.

Түйін сөздер: халықаралық көші-қоны, ми ағымы, жоғары сынып оқушылары, шетелде оқу, халықаралық бағдарламалар, шәкіртақылар, әлеуметтік-экономикалық даму, қазақстандық жоғары оқу орындары.

Шнарбекова М.К.^{1*}

*¹Казахский национальный университет имени аль-Фараби
г. Алматы, Казахстан*

ФАКТОРЫ ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ ПЛАНОВ КАЗАХСТАНСКИХ СТАРШЕКЛАССНИКОВ ПО МЕЖДУНАРОДНОЙ ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНОЙ МИГРАЦИИ: РЕЗУЛЬТАТЫ СОЦИОЛОГИЧЕСКОГО ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ

Аннотация

Международная образовательная миграция является неотъемлемой частью глобальных процессов, которая оказывает многогранное влияние на социально-экономическое развитие принимающих и отправляющих стран. В принимающих странах миграция способствует росту культурного разнообразия и инновационного потенциала, но одновременно сопровождается вызовами интеграции. Для стран происхождения миграция молодежи имеет противоположный эффект. Риск «утечки умов» сочетается с возможностью «обратного трансфера знаний» при возвращении выпускников. В данной статье представлен анализ миграционных процессов в период с 2020 по 2024 годы в разрезе пола, возрастных групп и стран отправления. В миграционных процессах молодежь в возрасте 15–34 лет является самой мобильной когортой, стремящийся на получение образования и трудоустройство в зарубежных странах. Изучена интенсивность академической мобильности молодежи в рамках государственных программ и межправительственных соглашений.

Эмпирической основой исследования являются результаты социологического опроса казахстанских старшеклассников, учащихся в выпускных классах. Целью исследования является анализ образовательных устремлений старшеклассников Казахстана к обучению за рубежом и социальных установок, связанных с выбором образовательной траектории. Опрос был проведен среди 450 учащихся 9–11 классов городских и сельских школ Казахстана. При формировании выборки использовался целенаправленный (квотный) метод отбора с учётом таких критериев, как место проживания (город/село), тип образовательного учреждения, пол и уровень обучения (класс).

Анализ данных свидетельствует о сильной поляризации миграционных ориентаций. Старшеклассники, планирующие обучение в зарубежных вузах, ориентированы к реализации профессиональных устремлений и совершенствованию языковых навыков. Наблюдаются гендерные особенности, выражающиеся в доминировании среди юношей профессиональных устремлений, а среди девушек мотивов личностного роста. Старшеклассники, не планирующие обучение в зарубежных вузах, подчеркивают значительные финансовые издержки обучения за рубежом, отсутствие интереса и ориентацию на обучение в казахстанских вузах. Но даже в данной группе старшеклассников наблюдается потенциальная заинтересованность к международным программам обучения. В целом, системный анализ образовательной миграции молодежи является необходимым для изучения рисков и потенциальных преимуществ в формировании основы образовательной политики, направленной на глобальные цели устойчивого развития.

Ключевые слова: международная миграция, утечка мозгов, старшеклассники, обучение за рубежом, международные программы, стипендии, социально-экономическое развитие, казахстанские вузы.

Introduction

International educational migration is defined as the movement of individuals across countries for the purpose of pursuing education at various levels—from primary and secondary schooling to postgraduate studies, including professional training and skills development programs. This category encompasses school students, undergraduate and graduate students, doctoral candidates, interns, and professionals enhancing their competencies in educational and research institutions. The majority of educational migrants are concentrated in schools, colleges, and universities, underscoring the importance of educational migration as a key element of global mobility and human capital formation (Hall, 2023). Young people often leave their home country in search of broader opportunities for professional self-realization and employment, reflecting a gap between youth expectations and the

actual conditions within the state. External youth migration in Kazakhstan exerts a significant impact on the country's socio-economic development. The outflow of qualified specialists and young professionals abroad leads to losses in human capital, weakening the potential of the national labor market and limiting prospects for innovative development. At the same time, migration is not an exclusively negative phenomenon. With effective state policies in regulating migration processes, it can contribute to the development of the country of origin. The overseas educational experience, professional practice, and intercultural competencies gained by young people abroad may become valuable resources for the modernization of the national economy and education system upon their return. Moreover, international youth mobility fosters human capital development not only in sending countries but also in receiving and transit states, generating mutually beneficial effects. Migration and development are closely interconnected: migration flows shape the dynamics of socio-economic development, while the level of development of a country, in turn, determines the scale and directions of youth migration (Iskakova et al., 2022).

Factors of educational migration. The formation of high school students' intentions to pursue education abroad is a multilevel process shaped by the interaction of individual, social, and structural factors (Butkovic et al., 2022). At the micro level, academic performance, educational and career aspirations, motivation, and language proficiency play an important role. The meso level encompasses the influence of family, school, peers, social support, and access to information about opportunities for studying abroad. At the macro level, economic conditions, the quality and accessibility of education, labor market conditions, government policies, and the attractiveness of educational systems in destination countries are important determinants (Han et. al., 2022). Contrary to the common assumption that migration is primarily a family decision - especially in the case of youth - some studies show that youth often migrate in pursuit of their own aspirations, even when this contradicts family plans, or as an expression of cultural values of moral responsibility and care for relatives (Belloni, 2019). Recent studies highlight the importance of individual-level factors, particularly subjective well-being and career aspirations, in shaping students' intentions regarding their future stay in the host country (Bilecen et. al., 2026). Higher levels of life satisfaction are significantly associated with the intention to remain in the country of study. Positive emotional and psychological experiences can strengthen students' sense of belonging and contribute to the development of long-term plans to continue living in the country of study (Choudaha, 2017; Jiang, 2022; Zhu, 2016). The emotional experience of studying abroad may influence educational intentions differently depending on gender. Negative experiences associated with studying abroad were found to reduce men's willingness to pursue international education more strongly than women's. This may be related to men's greater tendency to perceive difficulties encountered abroad as failures, which can reinforce avoidance behavior (Liu et al., 2022). Career aspirations also play a significant role: students who place greater importance on having an interesting and meaningful job are more likely to consider remaining in the country of study. International mobility is shaped not only by pragmatic considerations but also by aspirations for professional self-realization and the pursuit of an attractive career trajectory (Findlay et al., 2017; Netz & Cordua, 2021). Familiarity with the culture of the destination country is also a significant factor influencing international students' decision to study abroad. Cultural differences can be a significant challenge for students, and the more familiar they are with the culture of the destination country, the more likely they are to adapt and feel comfortable (Gutema et. al., 2024). Migration systems theory also emphasizes the role of the cultural environment in shaping educational migration and students' preferences regarding their study destination. Migration creates enduring transnational connections through which ideas, values, norms, and cultural practices are transmitted across borders. Over time, these processes may contribute to the emergence of "cultures of migration" in communities where international mobility becomes a socially and culturally accepted strategy (Usman et al., 2025). Consequently, language, religion, cultural proximity, and access to cultural products may influence students' preferences when choosing a country for their education (Kyei, 2021).

Scholarships and institutional support expand opportunities to pursue education abroad by reducing financial barriers for students. At the same time, the experiences of friends and parents appear to have a less pronounced influence on migration decisions (Yue & Lu, 2022).

Other research demonstrates that the migration trajectories of girls and young women are shaped by the interplay of the desire to mature, the dream of being elsewhere, the impossibility of returning, and the reality of uncertainty and “being stuck” between life stages (Grabska, 2020). These findings indicate that migration aspirations are mediated by age, gender, culture, religion, and geography, and rarely emerge in isolation - they are often accompanied by feelings of stagnation, anxiety, and/or frustration (Mazzilli et. al., 2024).

Research also shows that perceived gender discrimination has a significant impact on migration aspirations. Women who do not feel respected or valued are more likely to express a desire to migrate; however, their actual plans are often constrained by family obligations and gender-based economic inequality, while men enjoy greater opportunities for migration (Ruysen & Salomone, 2018). At the same time, the direct link between gender and migration is far from straightforward: it is essential to account for macroeconomic factors such as wage gaps, gender norms, and discrimination (Nisic & Melzer, 2016). Consequently, migration can function both as a tool for overcoming inequality and as a mechanism for its reproduction, particularly when the same social imbalances persist in the destination country as in the country of origin (Riano et.al., 2015).

The process of forming migration plans and aspirations. In previous studies, youth migration motives have primarily been attributed to the socio-economic differences between the receiving and sending countries (macro-factors) (Yıldırım et. al., 2021), however, how young people make migration decisions based on their own capacities and limitations, that is, under the influence of meso- and micro-factors, has not yet been fully examined. It is important to identify not only youth migration decisions but also the process of forming their migration plans and aspirations. In this regard, conducting such a study among high school students is relevant for analyzing the formation of intentions to study abroad and migration aspirations. Within the framework of the study, the process of forming intentions and plans for studying abroad is analyzed.

National attributes in migration motives. The analysis of research findings indicates the presence of national specificities in migration motives. For example, for youth in the United Kingdom and the United States, the migration motives is influenced by the host country’s tolerance toward ethnic diversity, the degree of adaptation to a new environment, and the condition of the labor market (Baláž et.al., 2016) while for Swedish youth, academic, professional-market, and cultural factors are relevant (Behtoui, 2022). Among youth in Asian and developing countries, the predominance of push factors from the sending country is observed (Rust, 2023). This highlights the importance of conducting research in the context of Kazakhstan youth.

The aim of the study is to analyze Kazakhstan high school students’ aspirations to study abroad and their social attitudes associated with choosing an educational trajectory.

Research hypothesis: Youth migration motives are formed not only on the basis of the socio-economic conditions of the host and home countries but also by considering social and cultural factors and the young people’s own capacities and limitations.

Research question: Which social factors determine the youth migration intentions at the stage of deciding to enroll in foreign higher education institutions?

The study of migration intentions among high school students is important, as at this stage youth educational choice and attitudes to study abroad are forming. Unlike the majority of studies focused on student mobility, this study addresses an earlier period - the time before entering university - when primary educational and migration orientations are shaping. The article examines the motives and attitudes of Kazakhstani high school students in the context of educational mobility, which makes it possible to identify the preconditions for interest in studying abroad and initial migration attitudes.

Research Methodology

The article analyzes the trends and socio-economic effects of international migration among

Kazakhstani youth. The methodological framework includes:

- 1) analysis of migration statistics in Kazakhstan in past 5 years.
- 2) review official information on the implementation of state and intergovernmental programs for studying abroad.
- 3) survey among high school students.

The article presents analysis of statistical data on Kazakhstan's external migration in last five years, differentiated by gender, age, and countries of destination. Statistical data on emigration and immigration in the country were analyzed. In addition, official information on the implementation of state and intergovernmental programs for studying abroad is examined. The indicators of the "Bolashak" program and intergovernmental scholarships were examined by educational level, field of study, and country of study. To provide a theoretical foundation, a systematic review of recent scientific literature on international educational migration and its socio-economic dimensions was conducted.

The empirical part of the study is based on the results of a survey carried out among 450 school students of grades 9-11 from both urban and rural schools in Kazakhstan. Such a sample size ensures coverage of a diversity of opinions and social factors influencing the migration attitudes, while remaining manageable for conducting a detailed analysis. A purposive sampling method was applied, considering such criteria as place of residence (urban/rural), type of educational institution, gender, and grade level. The respondents included male (45.8%) and female (54.2%) students; 9th (36.7%), 10th (40.8%), and 11th graders (22.5%); students from cities (15.8%), small towns (59.2%), and rural areas (25%). By type schools, 70% were enrolled in general schools and 30% in specialized schools (lyceums, gymnasiums, Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools, and private schools). Inclusion criteria: students in grades 9-11 and the availability of parental or legal guardian consent to participate in the study. Exclusion criteria: students in grades below 9, absence of consent to participate, and incomplete questionnaires. The study was conducted at the end of the academic year from March to May 2025 and was repeated at the beginning of the academic year from September to November 2025. The study sample included students from 9-11 grades, when initial plans after school graduation begin to form - such as career choice, which university, and whether to study in a domestic or foreign institution. The survey was based on a semi-structured questionnaire. The research instrument included both semi-closed and open-ended questions, allowing respondents to fully express their opinions. The questionnaire consisted of the following sections:

- Socio-demographic characteristics – age, gender (male/female), place of residence (urban/rural), grade level (9-11 grades), and type of school (private/specialized/public).
- Initial plans regarding education – intended field of study, preferred university, and choice between domestic and foreign higher education institutions.
- Attitudes and plans for studying abroad – assessed using a Likert scale (from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree") and open-ended questions allowing participants to elaborate on their motives.
- Migration aspirations – questions concerning the likelihood of returning to Kazakhstan after studying abroad, factors influencing this decision, and perceptions of opportunities and constraints.

The questionnaire was tested for clarity and validity through pilot testing with 10–15 students, after which revisions were made to improve wording and ease of completion.

During forming the survey sample, official requests were sent to the relevant authorities and schools to obtain permission to conduct the survey among high school students. The survey was conducted either online or offline. No personally identifiable information was publicly disclosed, and all personal data were coded (e.g., Respondent 1, Respondent 2) and access to the original dataset is limited to the research team. The research methodology and program were reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Protocol No. IRB-1719 (IRB00010790 al-Farabi Kazakh National University IRB #1).

The survey was conducted anonymously. All participants were informed about the study and their right to refuse participation. Oral or written consent was obtained from the respondents and their parents or legal representatives (in case they were under 18 years old). The collected quantitative data were

subjected to statistical processing using the SPSS software package (version 23). The following methods were used to analyze the data:

- descriptive statistical analysis to examine the distribution and characteristics of the sample;
- comparative analysis to identify differences between social groups (urban/rural, gender, grade level);
- regression analysis to assess the influence of social factors on students' migration attitudes and intentions.

General trend of external migration

The analysis of statistical data on external migration in Kazakhstan for the period 2020–2024 reveals pronounced dynamic changes. In 2020–2021, a significant migration outflow was observed: the number of emigrants was more than twice the number of immigrants, resulting in a negative migration balance (-17,718 in 2020 and -21,217 in 2021). This trend indicates a predominance of population outflow over inflow, which may have been associated with socio-economic factors as well as the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since 2022, the situation has begun to change: the number of immigrants increased substantially (17,425 people), while emigration decreased to 24,147, reducing the negative balance to -6,722. By 2023, for the first time in the study period, a positive migration balance was recorded (9,293), driven by an increase in arrivals (25,387) and a decline in emigration (16,094). In 2024, the positive balance further strengthened, reaching 16,550 people: the number of immigrants amounted to 29,282, more than double the number of emigrants (12,732). Thus, between 2020 and 2024, Kazakhstan moved from a pronounced migration outflow to the establishment of a stable positive external migration balance. Statistical data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
External Migration in Kazakhstan for the Period 2020–2024

Years	Immigrants	Emigrants	Migration Balance
2020	11 370	29 088	-17 718
2021	11 039	32 256	-21 217
2022	17 425	24 147	-6 722
2023	25 387	16 094	9 293
2024	29 282	12 732	16 550

* Source: Demographic Yearbook of Kazakhstan, 2025 (Bureau of National Statistics, 2025)

The analysis of external migration by countries for the period 2020–2024 demonstrates the dominance of CIS countries in terms of both immigration and emigration flows. In 2020–2021, a pronounced negative migration balance with the CIS countries was recorded (-17,470 and -18,070 people, respectively), reflecting the intensive outflow of population from Kazakhstan to these states. At the same time, migration with other countries also showed a negative balance, though on a smaller scale (-248 in 2020 and -3,147 in 2021). The situation began to change in 2022, when the reduction in emigration to the CIS countries combined with an increase in immigration allowed the negative balance to decrease to -5,128 people. However, the migration balance with other countries remained negative (-1,594). In 2023, for the first time, a positive migration balance with the CIS countries was recorded (+9,465), driven by a rise in the number of arrivals (21,913) and a decline in emigration (12,448). At the same time, migration with other countries remained close to zero (-172).

The most favorable situation was observed in 2024, when the migration balance with the CIS countries reached +14,373, while with other states it amounted to +2,177. Thus, during the study period, Kazakhstan moved from a significant migration outflow to a stable positive balance, primarily due to the dynamics with CIS countries. In summary, it can be noted that Kazakhstan's migration ties have a pronounced regional specificity: CIS countries remain the key destination for both emigration and

immigration, while migration with other states plays a less significant but gradually increasing role. Statistical data are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.
External Migration in Kazakhstan for the Period 2020–2024 by Countries

Years	Immigrants		Emigrants		Migration Balance	
	CIS Countries	Other Countries	CIS Countries	Other Countries	CIS Countries	Other Countries
2020	8 277	3 093	25 747	3 341	-17 470	-248
2021	9 435	1 604	27 505	4 751	-18 070	-3 147
2022	15 000	2 425	20 128	4 019	-5 128	-1 594
2023	21 913	3 474	12 448	3 646	9 465	-172
2024	23 891	5 391	9 518	3 214	14 373	2 177

*Source: Demographic Yearbook of Kazakhstan, 2025 (Bureau of National Statistics, 2025)

The analysis of migration by gender and age groups shows that youth plays a key role in migration processes, especially in the age categories of 15–19 and 20–24 years. In 2020, both groups recorded a negative migration balance, indicating the predominance of emigration, primarily related to educational purposes. However, by 2022 the situation had become more balanced, and by 2024 the dynamics shifted in favor of immigration. For example, among men aged 20–24, the number of immigrants (1,985 people) significantly exceeded the number of emigrants (291), and a similar trend was observed among women (1,422 versus 377). In the 25–29 age category, a positive migration dynamic was also evident, reflecting the return of university graduates and the attraction of young professionals. At the same time, men demonstrated a more pronounced migration growth, whereas women showed greater involvement in emigration at the initial stages of the period. Overall, the data indicate that migration processes among young people are gradually transforming: whereas earlier they were predominantly emigration-oriented, by 2024 Kazakhstan has become increasingly attractive for young immigrants, including those involved in educational mobility. Statistical data are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.
External migration in Kazakhstan for the period 2020–2024 by gender and age groups

Age groups	Male		Female	
	Immigrants	Emigrants	Immigrants	Emigrants
2020				
15-19	530	856	475	795
20-24	548	834	651	1114
25-29	610	1022	643	1278
30-34	643	1698	648	2039
2022				
15-19	824	679	691	658
20-24	938	490	1013	682
25-29	1231	610	1112	925
30-34	1351	1196	1120	1590
2024				
15-19	1545	388	1161	335
20-24	1985	291	1422	377
25-29	2240	207	1448	421
30-34	2517	449	1468	643

*Source: Demographic Yearbook of Kazakhstan, 2025 (Bureau of National Statistics, 2025)

The analysis of Kazakhstan's external migration balance by country for 2024 demonstrates a clear predominance of migration growth driven by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), primarily Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan, which form the main flow of immigrants. The largest positive balance is provided by Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, reflecting a stable labor and educational interest in Kazakhstan. At the same time, a negative migration balance is observed in relation to the Russian Federation and Belarus, indicating the continuing outflow of population in these directions. Among "other countries," migration growth is mainly formed by China and Mongolia, while Germany, Poland, the United States, and Canada show negative indicators, reflecting the emigration orientation of Kazakhstanis toward these states. Overall, the data indicate that Kazakhstan remains attractive primarily for neighboring Central Asian countries, whereas developed Western states and part of the post-Soviet space continue to be the main destinations for emigration. Statistical data are presented in Table 4.

Table 4.
External Migration Balance by Country for 2024

№	CIS Countries	Immigrants	Emigrants	Migration Balance
		23891	9518	14 373
1	Azerbaijan	403	26	377
2	Armenia	73	9	64
3	Belarus	179	226	-47
4	Kyrgyz Republic	842	317	525
5	Republic of Moldova	25	2	23
6	Russian Federation	7984	8784	-800
7	Tajikistan	749	0	749
8	Turkmenistan	1123	0	1123
9	Uzbekistan	12 140	113	12 027
10	Ukraine	373	41	332
	Other Countries	5391	3214	2 177
11	United States of America	133	332	-199
12	Afghanistan	58	0	58
13	Germany	403	1993	-1590
14	Greece	21	4	17
15	Georgia	238	3	235
16	Israel	46	21	25
17	Iran	46	0	46
18	Canada	41	113	-72
19	South Korea	123	7	116
20	China	2009	10	1 999
21	Mongolia	1271	17	1 254
22	Poland	42	362	-320
23	Turkey	527	41	486

* Source: *Demographic Yearbook of Kazakhstan, 2025 (Bureau of National Statistics, 2025)*

The analysis of Kazakhstan's external migration for 2020–2024 shows a transition from a negative migration balance to positive values, reflecting the country's growing attractiveness for immigrants. The main inflow is generated by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), primarily Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, while the outflow is directed toward Russia and a number of Western countries. The highest migration activity is observed among young people aged 15–34, especially in the 20–29 age groups, which highlights the importance of migration processes for the formation of human capital. Kazakhstan is gradually transforming into a country with a mixed migration profile, where both emigration and immigration flows are simultaneously present. This shows the importance the

development of a comprehensive policy aimed at retaining national youth and ensuring the effective integration of newcomers.

Academic Mobility within the Framework of the “Bolashak” Program and Intergovernmental Agreements. Comprehensive data on educational migration from Central Asian countries are currently unavailable. In the official statistics provided by the responsible ministries and departments, only the volumes and directions of study abroad financed from the national budget are usually recorded. However, a significant number of students pursue education abroad at their own expense or through scholarships from international organizations, which is often not reflected in national reporting. Therefore, for a more objective assessment of the scale of educational migration, it is advisable to use combined data from national ministries, international agencies, and recipient countries that concentrate the largest flows of students from Central Asia (Toleuov, 2020).

Table 5.
Distribution of "Bolashak" Program Participants in 2023

Category	Subcategory	Number of Participants	Share (%)
Level of Education	Master's degree	6,984	55.3
	Bachelor's degree	2,625	20.2
	Internships	2,557	20.2
	Doctoral studies (PhD)	203	1.6
	Specialist training	141	1.1
	Other programs	143	1.1
Field of Study	Humanities	7,062	55.7
	Technical specialties	4,500	35.6
	Medicine	880	7.0
	Creative specialties	211	1.7
Country of Study	United Kingdom and Ireland	5,691	45.0
	USA & Canada	3,465	27.3
	European countries	1,538	12.2
	Asian countries	1,036	8.2
	Russian Federation	923	7.3

* Source: National Report, 2024 (Ministry of Higher Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2024)

In Kazakhstan, according to statistics, 12,653 people studied under the “Bolashak” program in 2023. Among them, 6,984 (55.3%) were enrolled in master’s programs, 2,625 (20.2%) in bachelor’s programs, 2,557 (20.2%) in internships, 203 (1.6%) in doctoral studies, 141 (1.1%) in specialist training programs, and 143 (1.1%) in other programs. The largest number of graduates were trained in the following fields: humanities – 7,062 (55.7%), technical specialties – 4,500 (35.6%), medicine – 880 (7%), and creative specialties – 211 (1.7%). The countries of study were distributed as follows: the United Kingdom and Ireland – 5,691 people (45%), the United States and Canada – 3,465 (27.3%), European countries – 1,538 (12.2%), Asian countries – 1,036 (8.2%), and the Russian Federation – 923 (7.3%). As part of the internationalization of higher education in Kazakhstan, programs of intergovernmental grants are also being implemented. These grants are provided within the framework of agreements between Kazakhstan and other countries, covering various levels of education, including bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral programs. In 2023, under international treaties, 195 grants were awarded for study in Hungary, 37 grants in China, 11 grants in Poland, 14 grants in Tajikistan, 2 grants in Kyrgyzstan, 7 grants in Azerbaijan, and 2 grants in the Republic of Belarus. The data are presented in Table 5.

Results

Gender and aspirations to study abroad. The analysis of responses from high school students planning to study abroad demonstrates that the key motivation for most is the prospect of future employment, especially among male high school students. The next most important factor is the desire to build a career abroad, which is also more frequently indicated by male students. At the same time, female students are more oriented toward personal development: for them, gaining independence and improving language skills are of greater importance. The possibility of establishing useful connections is mentioned less often, primarily by male students. These findings justify the research results reported by Mazzilli etc. (Mazzilli, 2024), indicating that migration aspirations are mediated by gender. Only a small proportion of respondents found it difficult to choose, which indicates that students generally have a clear understanding of the value of foreign education for their future. The data are presented in Table 6.

Table 6.

Distribution of responses from high school students planning to study abroad to the question: “In your opinion, will studying abroad help you in the future?”

Factor	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Find a good job	87.5%	62.5%	73.6%
Become independent	12.5%	25.0%	19.4%
Improve language skills	34.4%	42.5%	38.9%
Build a career abroad	50.0%	40.0%	44.4%
Establish useful connections	21.9%	15.0%	18.1%
Not sure / Don't know	6.3%	7.5%	6.9%

**Note: The total percentage exceeds 100% as respondents could select multiple answers*

Motivational and Barrier Factors to study abroad. Analysis of the distribution of reasons for refusing to study abroad demonstrates that the most significant factor is the lack of interest in foreign education: this reason was indicated by 32.1% of high school students (41.7% among males and 23.8% among females). Other important barriers include the high cost of education (17.9%) and the intention to study in Kazakhstan (17.9%), both of which are reported with comparable frequency by male and female students. In addition, a share of students mentioned a lack of confidence in their knowledge or foreign language proficiency (14.1%), which is somewhat more common among males (16.7%) than females (11.9%). Insufficient information also serves as a barrier for 12.8% of respondents, being slightly more prominent among females (14.3%). Family influence was identified to a lesser extent: only 6.4% of students indicated parental opposition as a constraint, with this figure higher for females (7.1%) than males (5.6%). Finally, a small proportion (3.8%) reported uncertainty or hesitation (responses such as “I will think about it” or “I am considering it”). Overall, the main barriers to studying abroad are lack of personal motivation, financial constraints, and orientation toward the national education system, while factors such as parental influence and doubts about one’s own knowledge play a less pronounced role. The data are presented in Table 7.

Table 7.

Distribution of responses of high school students not planning to study abroad to the question “Why are you not considering studying abroad?”

Factor	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Not interested	41,7%	23,8%	32,1%
Too expensive	19,4%	16,7%	17,9%
Want to study in Kazakhstan	16,7%	19,0%	17,9%
Not confident in knowledge/language	16,7%	11,9%	14,1%
Lack of information	11,1%	14,3%	12,8%

Parents against	5,6%	7,1%	6,4%
Other (uncertain/considering)	5,6%	2,4%	3,8%

*Note: The total percentage exceeds 100% as respondents could select multiple answers

A comparative analysis using the χ^2 (chi-square) test of high school students' responses showed that motivations for studying abroad vary depending on their current educational plans. Among students who plan to study abroad, the main motive is seeking employment abroad (73.6%). Male students are more likely to choose career-related motives ("finding a job," "building a career abroad") compared to female students, which is confirmed by the chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 4.02$, $p = 0.045$). In contrast, personal development (gaining independence, improving language skills) and social capital (building useful contacts) do not depend on gender. This indicates that gender influences primarily career-related motivations, but not personal or social factors. Among students who do not plan to study abroad, the main reasons for refusal are "not interested" (32.1%), "too expensive" (17.9%), and "wish to study in Kazakhstan" (17.9%). The χ^2 analysis showed that none of these categories of refusal motives depend on gender ($p > 0.05$). The main barriers are personal motivation, financial constraints, and preference for domestic education, regardless of gender. The results of the analysis demonstrate that gender affects only career-related motives among those who plan to study abroad, while no gender differences were found in the group of those who do not plan to study abroad.

Table 8.
Motivational and Barrier Factors Depending on Students' Plans for Studying Abroad

Student Group	Category	Factors	χ^2	df	p-value
Students planning to study abroad	Career	Find a job, Build a career abroad	4.02	1	0.045
	Personal development	Become independent, Improve language skills	1.35	1	0.25
	Social capital	Establish useful contacts	0.80	1	0.37
Students not planning to study abroad	Personal/motivational	Not interested, Other/not sure	2.30	1	0.13
	Financial	Too expensive	0.25	1	0.62
	Studying in Kazakhstan	want to study in Kazakhstan	0.08	1	0.78
	Preparation/knowledge	Not confident in knowledge/language	0.44	1	0.51
	Parents/influence	Parents are against	0.14	1	0.71
	Informational	Lack of information	0.12	1	0.73

Analysis of the responses of students not planning to study abroad also reveals the factors that could potentially stimulate interest. The most important motivator is the opportunity for free education (42.5%), which is particularly significant for males (47.4% compared to 38.1% among females). The second most important factor is support from school and parents (40.0%), more strongly expressed among females (42.9%). A considerable share (36.3%) reported that additional information could influence their interest in studying abroad, with females again showing higher demand for this (40.5% compared to 31.6% among males). English language courses also play a notable role (31.3%), especially for males (34.2%). By contrast, the possibility of obtaining a scholarship (25.0%) and assistance with admission (20.0%) are less frequently mentioned, which may reflect limited awareness of available support mechanisms. At the same time, 15.0% of respondents stated that nothing would currently attract them, suggesting the existence of a group with low motivation for international educational mobility. The data are presented in Table 9.

Table 9.

Distribution of responses of high school students not planning to study abroad to the question “What could make you interested in studying abroad?”

Factor	Male (%)	Female (%)
Free education	47,4%	38,1%
Support from school/parents	36,8%	42,9%
More information	31,6%	40,5%
Possibility of a scholarship	26,3%	23,8%
Nothing at the moment	13,2%	16,7%
English language courses	34,2%	28,6%
Assistance with admission	21,1%	19,0%

A binary logistic regression model was used to identify gender differences in factors that may influence high school students' interest in studying abroad.

The dependent variable was the selection of a specific motivational factor (1 = selected, 0 = not selected), while the main independent variable was the respondent's gender. The analysis was conducted separately for each motivational factor.

The regression analysis showed that the differences between males and females in the factors that could motivate their interest in studying abroad are generally insignificant. The factor closest to statistical significance is “more information,” where females more often indicate a need for additional information (OR = 0.71, $p = 0.07$). For the remaining factors, the OR values fluctuate around 1, and the χ^2 tests show that the differences between genders are insignificant ($p > 0.05$). This indicates that gender has virtually no effect on the motivation of high school students. The data are presented in Table 10.

Table 10.

Factors influencing high school students' interest in studying abroad

Factor	Male count	Female count	Total count	OR (odds ratio)	χ^2	df	p-value
Free education	100	121	221	0,83	0,82	1	0,36
Support from school/parents	55	63	118	0,89	1,12	1	0,29
More information	60	80	140	0,71	3,21	1	0,07
Possibility of a scholarship	70	69	139	1,05	0,02	1	0,88
Nothing at the moment	22	27	49	0,88	0,19	1	0,66
English language courses	50	61	111	0,87	0,92	1	0,34
Assistance with admission	48	57	105	0,90	0,48	1	0,49

Findings demonstrates that attitudes of high school students toward studying abroad are shaped by career prospects and opportunities for personal development. At the same time, the main barriers include lack of interest, high costs, and orientation toward domestic education, while potential interest is linked primarily to the availability of free education, support from family and schools, and access to additional information and language courses.

The process of forming their migration plans and aspirations. The formation of migration plans begins with considering the possibility of studying abroad and gathering information about it. According to the data, 49.1% of high school students consider studying at a foreign university, while 50.9% are oriented toward universities in Kazakhstan. A comparative analysis by grade level shows that in all grades more than half of the respondents either have not discussed this issue with their parents or report the absence of systematic dialogue. The highest proportion of students who had not discussed the possibility of studying abroad is observed among 11th-grade students (52.5%), which may reflect

families' orientation toward more realistic and short-term educational strategies as secondary education comes to an end. At the same time, about one third of students across all grades reported having discussions accompanied by a supportive parental attitude, with the highest proportion observed among 10th-grade students (42.9%). This stage of education is likely to be the most significant in terms of shaping long-term educational and migration intentions, which explains the more active involvement of parents in discussions about studying abroad. The share of respondents who indicated discussions accompanied by a negative parental attitude remains relatively low; however, it increases in the 11th grade (12.7%). This may indicate growing discrepancies between students' educational aspirations and parents' assessments of risks at the stage of making final decisions. The minimal proportion of students whose parents are unaware of the possibility of studying abroad suggests a relatively high level of awareness, which, however, does not always translate into the practice of joint planning. The data are presented in Table 11.

Table 11.
Discussion of the Possibility of Studying Abroad with Parents

Have you discussed the possibility of studying abroad with your parents?	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade
Yes, they support	37,2%	42,9%	37,8%
Yes, but they are against	10,1%	7,5%	12,7%
No, we have not discussed	51,2%	49,0%	52,5%
Parents are not aware at all	1,6%	0,7%	1,3%

The main source of information about foreign universities for high school students across all grades is Internet resources and social media. This source dominates in all respondent groups, reaching a maximum among 10th-grade students (70.6%), highlighting the leading role of the digital environment in perceptions of opportunities for studying abroad at the stage of professional and educational self-determination. A significantly smaller share of students turn to formal sources, such as educational agencies. Their role remains limited and relatively stable across all grades (from 6.3% to 8.9%), which may reflect both financial barriers and insufficient trust in these institutions by students and their families. Information obtained through schools and teachers is of secondary importance and shows a decreasing trend from 9th to 10th grade (from 9.1% to 4.8%), with a slight increase in 11th grade (6.0%), indicating limited involvement of school institutions in informing students about opportunities for studying abroad. The role of the family as a source of information remains low, not exceeding 5.6% in any grade, which aligns with the previous analysis showing insufficient parental involvement in discussions about foreign educational trajectories. Similarly, the influence of friends and acquaintances is minimal, though slightly increases among 11th-grade students (2.6%), possibly due to expanded social contacts and the emergence of personal examples of educational migration at the final stage of schooling. The results demonstrate the predominance of informal and digital channels for obtaining information about foreign universities, alongside relatively weak participation of institutional and family sources. The data are presented in Table 12.

Table 12.
Sources of Information about Foreign Universities

Source of Information	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade
Internet, social media	63,4%	70,6%	64,8%
Educational agencies	7,3%	6,3%	8,9%
Teachers, school	9,1%	4,8%	6,0%
Parents, relatives	3,6%	5,6%	4,4%
Friends, acquaintances	0,2%	0,8%	2,6%

National attributes in migration motives. The dominant motives for studying at foreign universities across all high school grades are pragmatic and career-oriented. The most significant motive is the desire to find a good job, consistently reported by more than 70% of respondents and reaching a maximum among 11th-grade students (73.6%). This indicates a clear orientation of high school students toward the instrumental value of studying abroad as a resource for enhancing competitiveness in the labor market. Similarly high is the motive of improving foreign language skills, especially among 9th-grade students (66.4%). Its significance gradually decreases in higher grades (down to 55.4% in 11th grade), which may reflect the gradual transformation of language goals into more specific professional and career expectations. The motive of building a career abroad occupies a stable but secondary position and shows a moderate decrease from 9th to 11th grade (from 39.1% to 34.5%), which may indicate that for a significant share of students, studying abroad is primarily considered as a means to expand opportunities rather than as a direct step toward long-term emigration. Socio-psychological motives, such as the desire for independence and establishing useful contacts, are less pronounced, but their significance increases in 10th–11th grades. The proportion of students seeking independence rises from 15.5% in 9th grade to 25.4% in 10th grade, corresponding to the stage of active development of personal autonomy. A similar dynamic is observed for the motive of expanding social connections. The share of respondents who were uncertain about their motives remains relatively low and stable across all grades (around 8-11%), indicating well-formed perceptions of the goals of potential studies abroad. The results emphasize the predominance of rational and pragmatic motives in choosing foreign education, while migration-related and status factors play a secondary role, and also demonstrate age-related differentiation in the motivational structure depending on the grade level. The data are presented in Table 13.

Table 13.
Motives for Studying at Foreign Universities

Motives for Studying at Foreign Universities	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade
Find a good job	70,9%	73,0%	73,6%
Become independent	15,5%	25,4%	23,6%
Improve language skills	66,4%	57,9%	55,4%
Build a career abroad	39,1%	38,1%	34,5%
Establish useful contacts	15,7%	20,6%	21,6%
Not sure	10,9%	7,9%	10,8%

**Note: The total percentage exceeds 100% as respondents could select multiple answers*

The research results confirm the significance of the national context in shaping the migration and educational motives of youth, as also noted in the scientific literature. Unlike studies conducted in Western European and North American countries, where young people's migration intentions are largely influenced by characteristics of the host society (such as the level of tolerance, opportunities for social adaptation, and the state of the labor market), the motives of Kazakhstani high school students are predominantly pragmatic and instrumental. In particular, the predominance of motives such as the desire to obtain a quality education, improve language competencies, and increase the chances of successful employment reflects a focus on accumulating human capital and expanding professional opportunities. The identified structure of motives generally corresponds to the findings of studies on youth in Asian and developing countries, where push factors from the country of origin play a leading role. At the same time, the relatively low importance of cultural and value-based motives indicates that educational migration for Kazakhstani youth is primarily considered a means of achieving socio-economic mobility rather than a form of long-term cultural or identity reorientation.

Discussion

The Impact of Global Migration Processes on the Migration of Kazakhstani Youth. Global trends in educational and labor mobility, as well as shifting migration flows, directly affect the decisions

of Kazakhstani youth regarding study and work abroad. International student mobility is actively developing, offering Kazakhstani applicants expanded opportunities for higher education while creating strong competition for study places and scholarships in host countries. State programs such as Bolashak often serve as an alternative to long-term emigration and have become an important mechanism of academic mobility (Zhalnina, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the vulnerability of international educational mobility: students faced travel restrictions, changes in study timelines and formats, which increased the importance of flexible forms of mobility (online learning, short-term programs). Preferences shifted toward safe and politically stable countries in choosing an academic program (Zayim-Kurtay et.al., 2025). Alongside global centers of attraction, Kazakhstan's geopolitical and regional ties remain significant. CIS and Central Asian countries continue to be in demand due to cultural, linguistic, and economic similarities, as well as more accessible infrastructure for migrants (Matzhanova et.al., 2021). Thus, the migration of Kazakhstani youth is of a dual nature: on the one hand, it is integrated into global educational and labor markets; on the other, it remains regionally rooted.

An important factor shaping migration decisions is the macroeconomic context: wage levels and quality of life abroad remain significant reasons for departure. At the same time, strong family ties and adherence to traditions become key reasons why many graduates prefer to stay in Kazakhstan. Equally important is the belief that having a foreign academic degree provides competitive advantages in the domestic labor market. Additional motives contributing to the refusal to migrate include social engagement and the desire to maintain stable friendship and professional networks (Bokayev & Torebekova, 2020). Migration processes are complex in nature; their causal relationships are closely intertwined with market and political transformations within the country, as well as with Kazakhstan's integration into regional and global economic systems.

Individual, social and economic effects of international educational migration. Previous Research highlight the individual benefits of international educational migration advantages such as acquiring new skills, improving career prospects, fostering civic engagement, enhancing self-confidence, and developing intercultural competence (Gümüs et. al., 2020; Netz, 2021). However, there remains an open question regarding how these individual benefits translate into broader social and economic effects on country of origin. Several studies have examined the contribution of foreign-educated graduates to economic growth (Rasamoelison et. al., 2021), the promotion of social justice (Campbell et. al., 2021), the development of higher education and research systems (Cao et. al., 2020), as well as the strengthening of democratic institutions (Chankseliani, 2018). The impact of graduates on business development, innovation, higher education, research, social diversity, inclusion, democracy, and civic engagement has also been noted (Wang et. al., 2024). Indicators of international educational migration serve as proxies for broader socio-economic and cultural interactions in transnational areas. A systematic review of the literature allows for grouping the socio-economic effects of youth international educational migration as follow:

First, graduates can leverage international connections to integrate local communities into global networks of resources, knowledge, and innovation. Such connections facilitate the exchange of experiences and resources, stimulate collaboration, and support local economic development. For example, graduates may attract investments and support for socially significant projects and act as intermediaries between local initiatives and international resources (Campbell, 2017). This aligns with the concept of transnationalism, which emphasizes the role of cross-border networks in regional development.

Second, experience of living and studying abroad can contribute to improved governance and civic participation. Exposure to different political systems and democratic cultures shapes new perspectives and skills that foster open and inclusive practices at home (Chankseliani, 2018). Graduates may engage in reform movements or influence social initiatives, promoting justice and social equity. This effect is explained through Transformative Learning Theory, which demonstrates how international experience stimulates critical reflection and worldview transformation, motivating foreign-educated graduates to act toward social progress.

Third, graduates can contribute to economic development by introducing new technologies, methods, and innovative practices in key sectors such as healthcare, science, and entrepreneurship (Kenney et.al., 2013). The application of these practices enhances productivity, diversifies the economy, and increases the income of vulnerable groups.

Fourth, graduates can transform social and institutional structures by proposing new approaches and ways of working. Within the morphogenetic approach and Critical Realism, they are capable of initiating structural changes (morphogenesis) rather than maintaining the existing state (morphostasis) (Archer, 1995). For example, implementing innovative teaching methods and fostering critical thinking contributes to strengthening educational equity.

Fifth, graduates can stimulate inclusive economic development and social innovation by utilizing their international experience and a developed sense of social responsibility. Studying abroad often strengthens commitment to social justice and the common good (Jon & Fry, 2021). Graduates may establish social enterprises, provide jobs and educational opportunities, thereby promoting inclusive development at the regional level.

Sixth, graduates act as cultural intermediaries, helping to bridge socio-cultural divides and enhance social cohesion. With experience interacting across diverse cultural contexts, they can create platforms for dialogue and cooperation among different communities, contributing to the reduction of social tensions and the promotion of sustainable development.

Although these potential pathways demonstrate significant promise, further research is needed to clarify the mechanisms through which international educational mobility impacts the socio-economic conditions of the home country. Employing more context-sensitive approaches, including single-country case studies, may provide a deeper understanding of the political, economic, and social effects of international educational mobility.

Conclusion

International educational migration is one of the main drivers of global transformations, exerting a multifaceted influence on both receiving and sending countries. For host states, it is associated with increasing cultural and social diversity, which simultaneously creates opportunities for innovation and intercultural exchange while generating integration challenges. For countries of origin, the consequences of youth migration are dual in nature: on the one hand, there is the risk of “brain drain” and the weakening of intellectual potential, while on the other, the return of graduates leads to a reverse transfer of knowledge, generating a “brain gain” and strengthening national human capital.

An analysis of Kazakhstani migration data for 2020–2024 years demonstrates a decline in the negative migration balance and a growing attractiveness of the country for immigrants from Central Asia. At the same time, youth remains the most mobile group, oriented toward studying and working abroad. State programs such as «Bolashak» make a significant contribution to shaping international educational mobility. However, the limited availability of statistics and the lack of accounting for self-funded students do not allow for a full assessment of the scale international educational migration.

High school students’ attitudes toward studying abroad are marked by pronounced polarization. Among those planning to pursue education abroad, pragmatic motivations prevail: the key drivers are the prospects of successful employment and career building, which are especially important for male students. Female students, in contrast, are more inclined to associate foreign education with personal development, gaining independence, and improving language skills. Those not planning to study abroad most often justify their decision by citing a lack of interest, the high cost of education, or the desire to pursue studies in Kazakhstan. Additional barriers include doubts about their own academic abilities, insufficient information, and family attitudes, although these factors are less pronounced. At the same time, even among students who do not initially consider studying abroad, potential interest persists: the greatest incentives are free tuition, support from schools and parents, access to language courses, and scholarship opportunities.

During the study, the hypothesis was confirmed that youth migration motives are shaped not only by the socio-economic conditions of foreign countries and their countries of origin, but also by social,

cultural factors and individual capacities and limitations. Data analysis showed that career motives have the greatest influence on intentions to study abroad, with gender differences identified: men are more often oriented toward professional prospects, while personal development and social capital manifest similarly in both genders. The findings of previous studies also indicate the significant influence of social, individual, and academic factors on the experience of international educational mobility. At the same time, the motivations that students develop prior to enrolling in a foreign university do not necessarily remain unchanged throughout their studies and may evolve in response to their actual experiences of interaction with the host educational and social environment. In particular, international students may experience lower levels of social well-being, a weaker sense of belonging, and a diminished sense of social recognition within the university environment and the host society. Interpersonal relationships play an important role in developing a sense of belonging, as the nature of students' interactions with their peers largely determines the extent to which international students become integrated into the university community (Van Horne et al., 2018). Alongside social barriers, experiences of discrimination may also shape students' perceptions of the host environment. In particular, racial discrimination can contribute to negative attitudes toward the country of study and may function as a "push" factor, prompting students to consider changing their educational or migration trajectories (Lee, 2006). Additional challenges may arise in the academic sphere as a result of differences between educational systems. For example, international students from Asian countries may experience difficulties adapting to the academic standards, requirements, and procedures of host universities, which may affect their ability to complete academic assignments and prepare written work (Campbell & Li, 2007). The linguistic environment is another important factor in the adaptation process. International students whose first language is not English may encounter sociolinguistic difficulties when participating in academic courses, engaging in academic interactions, and communicating in everyday settings (Yan & Berliner, 2013; Yılmaz & Temizkan, 2022). Limited language proficiency and the need to continuously adapt to the linguistic norms of the host environment may, in turn, intensify feelings of uncertainty and embarrassment and create concerns about being negatively evaluated by native speakers (Chan, 2013). Language barriers, limited employment opportunities, and difficulties with social adaptation may significantly influence international students' intentions regarding their decision to remain in the country of study. These factors may constrain their professional prospects and opportunities for full integration into the host society, which, in turn, may reduce the likelihood of their long-term stay in the country after graduation (Nikou et. al., 2023).

However, the conducted study has several limitations. First, the empirical part based on a questionnaire of high school students, which allows capturing their current attitudes, expectations, and intentions, but does not provide the ability to predict their actual behavior after school graduation with high accuracy. Educational and professional plans may change under the influence of socio-economic conditions, family circumstances, institutional constraints, as well as individual life experiences acquired before graduation. The study is cross-sectional in nature, which limits the analysis of the dynamics of changes in youth attitudes and motivation over time. The absence of a longitudinal approach does not allow tracing to what extent the initial intentions of high school students are preserved, transformed, or adjusted at subsequent stages of their life and professional paths. Second, the influence of cultural and social factors was assessed primarily indirectly, based on quantitative indicators. This approach allows identifying general trends and relationships but does not reveal the subjective meanings and internal motives guiding young people in decision-making. The lack of in-depth qualitative methods, including interviews and focus groups, limits the possibility of a more detailed understanding of youth value orientations, social expectations, and individual strategies. For future research, it is important to use combined methods - quantitative and qualitative - to more deeply examine the process of forming migration intentions, as well as to consider the impact of specific political, economic, and educational conditions of foreign countries and countries of origin. In addition, it is essential to study the long-term consequences of international educational migration, including professional realization, return to the home country, and youth contribution to the social and economic development of their country. It is important to recognize that migration intentions develop as a

dynamic process shaped by structural conditions, social ties, access to information, and personal experiences. Initial plans may be reconsidered in response to emotional and institutional factors, highlighting the contextual nature of decisions regarding education and subsequent mobility abroad (Zeltner & Van Mol, 2025).

Overall, the international educational migration of Kazakhstani youth is shaped by global trends, national policy, and individual orientations. This makes it possible to view it not only as a matter of personal educational choice, but also as a strategic resource for national development, influencing the long-term pathway of the country's socio-economic growth.

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А. Сериккалиева¹ , А. Балықбаева^{1*} 

¹ Алматы Менеджмент Университеті

Алматы қ., Қазақстан

* e-mail: a.balykbayeva@almu.edu.kz

ҚАЗАҚСТАН ЖАСТАРЫНЫҢ ИНСТИТУЦИОНАЛДЫҚ СЕНІМ ДИНАМИКАСЫ: СОЦИО-МӘДЕНИ ДЕТЕРМИНАНТТАР ЖӘНЕ САЛЫСТЫРМАЛЫ ТАЛДАУ

Аңдатпа

Қазақстан жастарының институттарға сенімі қоғамдық легитимділік пен әлеуметтік капиталдың маңызды көрсеткіші болғанымен, оның қысқа мерзімді динамикасы, бағалау негіздері және тұлғааралық сеніммен арақатынасы бір аналитикалық үлгіде сирек қарастырылады. Зерттеудің мақсаты - 2023 және 2024 жылдардағы AlmaU Trust Barometer деректері негізінде жастардың бизнеске, медиаға, үкіметтік емес ұйымдарға және үкіметке сенім иерархиясын, осы сенімнің функционалдық және этикалық өлшемдермен байланысын, сондай-ақ тұлғааралық және институционалдық сенім арасындағы алшақтықты анықтау. Қайталанатын көлденең қималы екі сауалнамадан 18-35 жастағы 793 респонденттің деректері талданды (2023: n = 395; 2024: n = 398). Сипаттамалы статистика, тәуелсіз іріктемелерге арналған t-тест, жұпталған t-тест және Спирменнің рангілік корреляциясы қолданылды. Бизнеске сенім екі жылда да ең жоғары және тұрақты болды (6,30 және 6,31), ал үкіметке сенім 5,92-ден 5,66-ға төмендегенімен, айырмашылық 0,05 деңгейінде статистикалық мәнді болмады. Барлық институттарда ең жоғары корреляциялар мақсаттылық пен болашаққа бағдар секілді функционалдық-стратегиялық өлшемдерге тиесілі болды; алайда коэффициенттердің өзара айырмасы бөлек статистикалық тестпен бағаланған жоқ. Отбасы мен достарға сенім институционалдық сенімнен едәуір жоғары шықты. Зерттеудің ғылыми жаңалығы - институционалдық иерархияны, бағалау өлшемдерін және сенім алшақтығын Қазақстан жастарының біртұтас эмпирикалық бейнесінде біріктіруі. Нәтижелер жастармен жұмыс істейтін