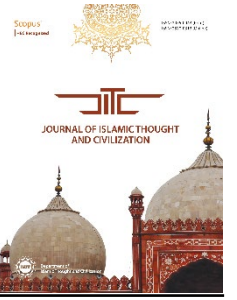
Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization (JITC)
Volume 15 Issue 1, Spring 2025
ISSN$_{(P)}$: 2075-0943 ISSN$_{(E)}$: 2520-0313
Homepage: https://journals.umt.edu.pk/index.php/JITC

Article QR



Title: **The Role of Religious Spirituality in the Social Development of Public Consciousness: An Approach to Interpersonal Relationships in Kazakhstan**

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.151.10

History: Received: November 06, 2024, Revised: March 10, 2025, Accepted: March 13, 2025, Published: April 25, 2025

Citation: Abikenov, Zharkynbek., Makhpal Syzdykova, Aigul Abdiramanova, and Sergazy Kudaibergenov. "The Role of Religious Spirituality in the Social Development of Public Consciousness: An Approach to Interpersonal Relationships in Kazakhstan." *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 15, no. 1 (2025): 166–184. https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.151.10

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Conflict of Interest: Author(s) declared no conflict of interest

A publication of
Department of Islamic Thought and Civilization, School of Social Science and Humanities
University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

The Role of Religious Spirituality in the Social Development of Public Consciousness: An Approach to Interpersonal Relationships in Kazakhstan

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Abstract

From the Islamic point of view, preserving spiritual integrity and moral values is crucial for the welfare of society, which makes the study of this degradation particularly urgent. This study looks at important reasons for the decline of Kazakh culture. It highlights the loss of moral values and cultural traditions, as well as the impact of outside social and technological forces. The research employs a mixed approach, including a structured online survey of 597 respondents from seven large cities in Kazakhstan. The data is analyzed using statistical and thematic methods to identify key themes of spiritual degradation, cultural identity, and the role of Islamic values. The results show that 47% of respondents link cultural degradation primarily with blurring moral and ethical norms, and 20% consider the loss of cultural traditions as the key factor. Other contributing factors include urbanization, economic inequality, technological influences, and dependent mentality. Traditional Islamic values are highlighted as potential guiding principles for combating these trends. The study finds that the spiritual decline in Kazakhstan is a complex issue that needs a wide range of solutions. These solutions should include Islamic principles, protection of culture, and efforts to reduce the economic differences that lead to moral issues. Effective state programs, combined with a cultural shift toward ethical responsibility, are needed to counter these trends and form a more spiritually and morally sound society.

Keywords: Consciousness, Discourse, Ethnics, Society, Innovations, Mentality, Nation, Traditions

Introduction

Today, there is an urgent problem of forming and developing public consciousness in the context of modern global phenomena and ever-evolving technological progress. Given that human resources have special potential for state development, it is important to develop a national public consciousness. For the sake of national development, it is imperative to inculcate humane and moral standards in shaping the quality and ethics of the nation. This lays down the foundation for effective socialization through basic social institutions. To achieve these goals, fostering public awareness is crucial. It must engage every individual. The growth of both the population and society, alongside active public participation in decision-making, fosters a sense of collective responsibility and state cooperation. In terms of the Islamic values, it has historically played a crucial role in shaping Kazakh social ethics, traditions, and public consciousness. As Islam emphasizes moral responsibility, justice, and social cohesion, it provides a framework for addressing contemporary challenges, such as moral

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erosion, cultural identity loss, and social fragmentation. Integrating Islamic principles in social policies and educational reforms can help strengthen ethical governance and preserve national values.

To outline the focus and goals of this study, we should turn to the definitions of the public and ordinary consciousness.

Public consciousness reflects public life and the aggregate of collective ideas characteristics of the given age. The term was first coined by F. Hegel.[1] The structure of public consciousness is composed of several levels: elementary consciousness, social psychology, and social ideology.

Ordinary consciousness is a type of practical consciousness formed in relation to people's daily lives, actions, and deeds. People also subject their practical lives to a simple logic of thinking in mundane situations. U. Neisser with his book “Cognitive psychology” played a prominent part in explaining perception and attention processes, particularly through his concept of selective attention and ecological approach to cognitive psychology.[2] Another influential work in this area is "Thinking, Fast and Slow" by D. Kahneman.[3] Heuristics studies by Farrar, Straus, and Giroux have helped to analyze the mechanisms underlying decision-making and reasoning in ordinary consciousness, providing valuable insight into the cognitive processes behind human behavior. Research on memory and reading presented by E. Loftus in, “Leading questions and the eyewitness report” tells a story that profoundly affects the understanding of the simple encoding and retrieval of memory.[4] W.S. Haney's *Culture and Consciousness* has had an enormous influence on cultural studies in the study of ordinary consciousness.[5] Haney demonstrates that to date, theoretical debates on the issues of truth and language could not be resolved without resorting to interactions that lead to agreement.

Social psychology is an expression of emotional mood and character formed at the level of elementary consciousness and manifested in activity in everyday life. At the level of national consciousness, it is stable because of its subordination to culture. Social psychology has been an actively researched area contributed to by numerous influential scholars. Among these researchers, one representative of social psychology is S. Milgram. In *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View*, Milgram highlights differences in the perception of power and the norms of obedience across cultures and emphasizes the role of cultural factors in the formation of behavior.[6]

In the same book, Milgram researches the mechanisms of social identity and obedience, explaining how authoritative persons and social norms affect public consciousness.[7] C. Rogers, exploring the nature of interpersonal relationships, underscores the importance of compassion, sincerity, and unconditional positive attitudes in forming healthy interpersonal bonds.[8]

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[1]Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lektsii po Filosofii Istorii* [Lecture on the History of Philosophy] (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 1993).

[2]Ulric Neisser, *Cognitive Psychology* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts 1967).

[3]Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (Penguin, 2011).

[4]Elizabeth F. Loftus, “Leading Questions and the Eyewitness Report,” *Cognitive Psychology* 7 (1975): 560-72.

[5]William S. Haney, *Culture and Consciousness: Literature Regained* (London: Bucknell University Press, 2002).

[6]Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).

[7]Ibid.

[8]Carl R. Rogers, “A Theory of Therapy, Personality and Interpersonal Relationships as Developed in the Client-Centered Framework,” in *Psychology: A Study of Science,* Vol. 3: *Formulations of the Person and the Social Context*, ed., by S. Koch (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), 184-256.

The Culture of Narcissism by C. Lasch investigates the rise of narcissism in American culture and its impact on social psychology. According to Lasch, concentration on material success and constant pleasure give rise to a shallow and hedonistic culture. The weakening of social bonds and common values leads to a feeling of spiritual degradation in national psychology.[9]

Social ideology is the theoretical and conceptual framework that reflects the existence of society, expressed through concepts, beliefs, theories, and perspectives. Its purpose is to serve the interests and objectives of society while promoting the ongoing enhancement of its life. One prominent figure in the study of social ideology is K. Marx, whose, *Das Kapital*. *Verlag von Otto Meisner*, delving into class struggle and the capitalist mode of production, lays the foundation for a critical analysis of social inequality and exploitation.[10] Marx's ideological theory highlights how dominant ideas legalize and perpetuate established power relations, hiding the real interests of the ruling class.

C. Geertz in, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, sees ideology as the sole essence and system of culture.[11] According to Geertz, ideology is an orderly system of cultural symbols whose content and state contain the information necessary to organize the social and psychological process.

The ideas and theories of J. Habermas have had a profound influence on the study of public consciousness and interpersonal relations. One of Habermas's most influential works is *Social Development of Culture in Public Consciousness: An Approach to Interpersonal Relations*. In it, Habermas explores the historical development of the public sphere and its role in contemporary society. Habermas examines how public consciousness emerged as a space for critical discussions, the formation of public opinion amid the flourishing of bourgeois society and enlightenment, and the topics connected with culture and interpersonal relations.[12]

Habermas' *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* and the concept of system give an idea of the interaction of culture, social structures, and interpersonal relations.[13]

In Kazakh discourse, the conceptual content of the term, "public consciousness," is associated with human activity in its various forms. According to R. Kadyrzhanov, "public consciousness, contrasted with the social existence of human society, concretizes the substantive-practical activity of man."[14]

[9]Jan De Vos, "Christopher Lasch's the Culture of Narcissism: The Failure of a Critique of Psychological Politics," *Theory and Psychology* 20, no. 4 (2010): 528-48, https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354309351764

[10]William Outhwaite, "Book Review: Das Kapital," *Journal of Classical Sociology* 19, no. 1 (2019): 105-7, http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1468795X18810581

[11]Clifford Geertz, *Interpretatsiia Kultur* [The Interpretation of Cultures], trans. from English (Moscow: Political Encyclopedia Publishers, 2004), 46.

[12]Thomas L. Jacobson, "Participatory Communication for Social Change: The Relevance of the Theory of Communicative Action," *Annals of the International Communication Association* 27, no. 1 (2003): 87-123, https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2003.11679023.

[13]Gerald A. Hauser, "The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society by Jürgen Habermas, Thomas Burger," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 27, no. 1 (1994): 70-76.

[14]Rustem Kadyrzhanov, "Rukhani Zhangyru: A Kazakhstan's Model of Modernization of Values," *Scientific Journal "Kazakhstan – Spektr"* 1 (2018): 39.

As a result of long-standing policies, Kazakhstan's public consciousness became subject to official Soviet culture relying on classical Marxist ideology and communist upbringing.[15]

Thus, the stereotypes, skills, and Soviet ideological principles that dominated Kazakhstan in the 20th century left their imprint on Kazakh society's consciousness. In temporal terms, two generations were taught the ideology of the Soviet cultural space, which led to aspects of it intertwining with national traditions.

We can identify four key dimensions of public consciousness in the national identity of Kazakh citizens:

- nomadic Kazakh traditions and lifestyle;
- Imperial-colonial;
- the totalitarian Soviet period;
- the changes brought by Kazakh independence[16]

Due to the predominance of today's market economy, the infiltration of network technology in all spheres of public life, and the influence exerted by the intervention of migration, values have been changing and the values of citizens have been growing more complex. These changes entering the culture have affected its uniqueness, contributing to citizens' cultural knowledge, and giving rise to new norms and rules of behavior.

For these reasons, the primary problem is to identify the factors connected with spiritual degradation in modern Kazakh values.

To achieve the purpose of the study, we posed the following research objectives:

1) to identify the spiritually degraded aspects of Kazakh society;
2) to determine the leading factors contributing to spiritual degradation;
3) to establish the value orientations of society;
4) to analyze socioeconomic, cultural, and institutional criteria;
5) to determine the nature of negative habits in national psychology

In examining this problem, we also provide recommendations on settling difficult issues between cultural factors, social dynamics, and the primary goal of the strategy to promote social cohesion and cultural development in Kazakhstan.

2. Methods

2.1. Study Design

We employed a mixed approach combining qualitative and quantitative data. The study was conducted from 2023 to 2024 at Korkyt Ata Kyzylorda State University.

2.2. Study Stages

In the initial stage, we reviewed scientific literature to establish the theoretical foundation of our research, focusing on perspectives and positions regarding the characteristics of public consciousness

[15]Botakoz R. Shakeeva, “Kazakh Ethnicity in the Framework of Formation of National Identity in Kazakhstan” (PhD diss., Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, 2022), 105.
[16]Ibid, 123.

and cultural types. This conceptual analysis was guided by the principles of scientific integrity, historical context, and a variety of methods, including formal-logical, abstract, analogical, cultural-sociological, historical-sociological, and systematizing approaches. The second stage involved an empirical study in the form of an online survey.

2.3. Study Participants

Initial data were collected through an online survey on Google Forms (n = 1,999), conducted in seven cities in southern Kazakhstan in May and June of 2023 and including 597 respondents. The study used a stratified multi-stage model with the quota method to select control units. The sampling error with a 95% confidence probability does not exceed ± 5%.

The sample is representative of the adult population of Kazakhstan aged 18 and older by the place of residence, the administrative-territorial status of the settlement, sex, and age.

The study conformed with ethical principles, guaranteeing confidentiality and anonymity to all respondents. Informed consent was obtained from all survey and interview respondents, and the study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Kazakhstan.

The survey included questions about how culture develops in society, how people's attitudes towards relationships have changed, how individuals see themselves today, the importance of family values in the economy, and harmful habits that are still present in national attitudes.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data from both research phases were analyzed using statistical and thematic analysis. Survey responses were analyzed through descriptive statistics with such key variables as the perception of cultural degradation, ethical erosion, and the factors contributing to these problems. Contingency tables were used to study the relationships between demographic variables (age, sex, region) and attitudes toward spiritual degradation. We created headers using line-by-line coding, which allowed us to identify recurring themes of cultural identity, Islamic values, and social changes.

3. Results

The moral degradation of individuals, society, and mankind is an urgent issue. Moral norms are based on the regulation of people's behavior. However, the moral foundations of society and the norms of human behavior are ever-changing.

There are a multitude of reasons for social degradation. Many people today focus on egoism and materialism, forgetting traditional values, such as family, faith, moral principles, and laws. This leads to societal change.

Second, the cause of degradation may lie in insufficient education, given that education is a critical factor.

The third reason is increased violence and crime, which can destroy the foundations of society and bring chaos and anarchy. To counter this phenomenon, measures need to be taken to strengthen law and order and create the conditions for social protection and stability.

Personal degradation implies the loss of mental stability, the inhibition of activity and performance, and the loss of characteristic traits under the influence of this mental instability. This problem is firmly entrenched in society and needs to be investigated and addressed urgently, given that Kazakh society is suffering from moral degradation.

Our study sheds light on how respondents understand spiritual degradation (Figure 1).

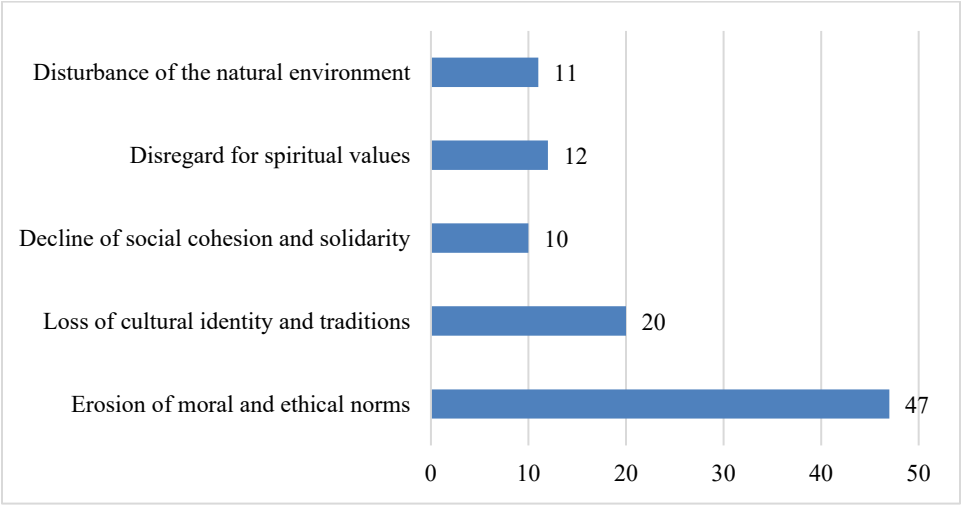


Figure 1. The Implications of Spiritual Degradation of Kazakh Society

As demonstrated in Figure 1, 47% of the respondents interpret the spiritual degradation of Kazakh society as the erosion of moral and ethical norms. These respondents believe that the key reasons include the rise of corruption, a lack of responsibility, and a decline in ethical behavior.

20% refer to the loss of cultural identity and traditions. These respondents see spiritual degradation as citizens' disregard of cultural heritage, the illiteracy of the local population, reduced interest in culture, and the loss of cultural identity and traditions.

Cultural views and social norms play a prominent part in ethical standards.[17] If a culture does not seek to correct unethical behavior, people in this society may engage in it more.

The reason mentioned by 10% is a decrease in social cohesion and solidarity, which suggests that increased social stratification, discrimination, and the disruption of social ties lead to spiritual degradation.

Disregarding spiritual values is mentioned by 12%. They are convinced that reduced attention to spirituality in society and the loss of faith lead to degradation.

11% point to environmental disturbances. These respondents noted that the lack of environmental consciousness and the pollution of natural resources and ecosystems lead to spiritual degradation.

The spiritual degradation in Kazakhstan is a multifaceted problem caused by several factors. The fact that most surveyed representatives of Kazakh society highlight the erosion of moral and ethical values illuminates this problem. Several factors contribute to this phenomenon. The underlying causes include cultural changes, the rapid development of technology, economic

[17]"Review Article: Geert Hofstede: Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work Related Values: 1980, Beverly Hills/London: Sage. 474 pages," *Organization Studies* 4, no. 4 (1983): 390-1, https://doi.org/10.1177/017084068300400409; Joel Feinberg and Jan Narveson, "The Nature and Value of Rights," *Journal of Value Inquiry* 4, no. 4 (1970): 243-60, https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00137935.

inequality, political factors, social media, and digital culture, which generate new ethical dilemmas regarding confidentiality.

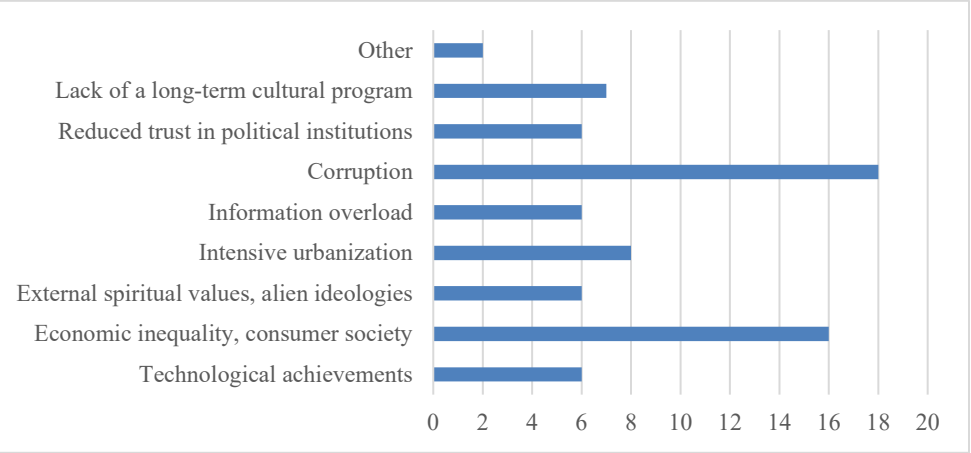


Figure 2. Factors Contributing to the Spiritual Degradation of Kazakh Society

Figure 2 indicates that 23% prioritize external cultural values and ideologies among the factors contributing to spiritual degradation. 18% believe corruption is a factor leading to spiritual degradation. Corruption in Kazakhstan encompasses all spheres associated with spirituality, hindering human capital development. Cases of corruption are mostly reported in agriculture, customs, construction, education, public utilities, and health services.

16% argue that spiritual degradation is promoted by economic inequality and consumer society. These respondents prefer a lack of economic inequality with reduced consumption. Kazakh citizens believe that with fair policies, resources will be distributed fairly, and the model of consumption will be sustainable.

Excessive information volumes are noted by 15%, who suggest that spiritual degradation is facilitated by information overload. 6% believe the reason is intensive urbanization. Urbanization has been gaining momentum, with the share of the urban population rising. Reduced trust in political institutions, which highlights the problems and contradictions that hamper political culture, is mentioned by 8%. The respondents who consider technological achievements as a factor affecting the spiritual crisis (6%) note that these advancements have positive and negative aspects as applied to culture and spirituality.

7% of respondents highlight the absence of a long-term spiritual program. While Kazakhstan has long-term initiatives in place, these programs, despite their scale, often remain limited to actions rather than comprehensive plans. As a result, their implementation is flawed. If the concept behind the program is fully realized, it could effectively contribute to spiritual modernization.

Reviewing the survey results, we observed that the factors contributing to spiritual degradation are interconnected. Having analyzed the criteria, we believe that the leading factors are corruption and ineffectively implemented technological achievements. This conclusion relies on the fact that corruption leads to improper implementation of long-term spiritual programs, intensive urbanization, economic inequality, and reduced trust in consumer society and political institutions. Due to the ineffective utilization of technological achievements and the lack of filters, the information flow grows larger, which affects the perception of external cultural values and ideologies. Preventing these problems requires a comprehensive approach.

Table 1. Common negative habits or behaviors in the national mentality of southern regions

	widely common	partly common	uncommon	difficult to answer
Gender inequality	34%	39%	14%	13%
Tribalism or regionalism	33%	39%	11%	17%
Obscene language	55%	35%	4%	6%
Spitting in public places	45%	38%	9%	8%
Dependent consciousness	33%	38%	13%	15%
Flattery	50%	37%	5%	8%
Competition	52%	35%	5%	8%

While Kazakhstan is reviving indigenous traditions and customs, the sociopolitical, cultural, and spiritual directions of state development are to ensure its unity and sustained prosperity, and reproduce the national identity. Since the inception of the national identity, Kazakh society has taken great care of two things: language and customs. This demonstrates that structure is the most important value in life and worldview. According to Table 1, the prevalence of negative habits in national mentality can be attributed to a combination of social factors. Among the negative habits and behaviors established in the national psychology of southern regions, 55% refer to obscene language, 52% competition, and 50% flattery, and 45% spitting in public places.

Gender inequality and tribalism are perceived as somewhat prevalent by 39% of respondents. The root cause of this inequality is attributed to the norms of today's traditional patriarchal society. Another behavior regarded as moderately common is the dependent mentality—a view we also share. These factors are seen as key contributors to the evolving national mindset. A dependent mentality hinders the growth and prosperity of society. Dependent consciousness goes even further, making people put their lives into the hands of the state. This has an even greater influence on the development of society. This psychology was formed during the Soviet era.

Exploring this aspect of the survey, we concluded that curbing negative habits in national mentality involves integrated personal, social, and systemic work. The change of the national mentality requires constant efforts on the part of various social strata. The combination of these strategies with striving for understanding fosters a healthy and positive national consciousness.

Negative habits in the national mentality depend on the person's psychotype. Thus, based on the respondents' answers, preventing degradation requires developing sociopolitical institutions (Figure 4).

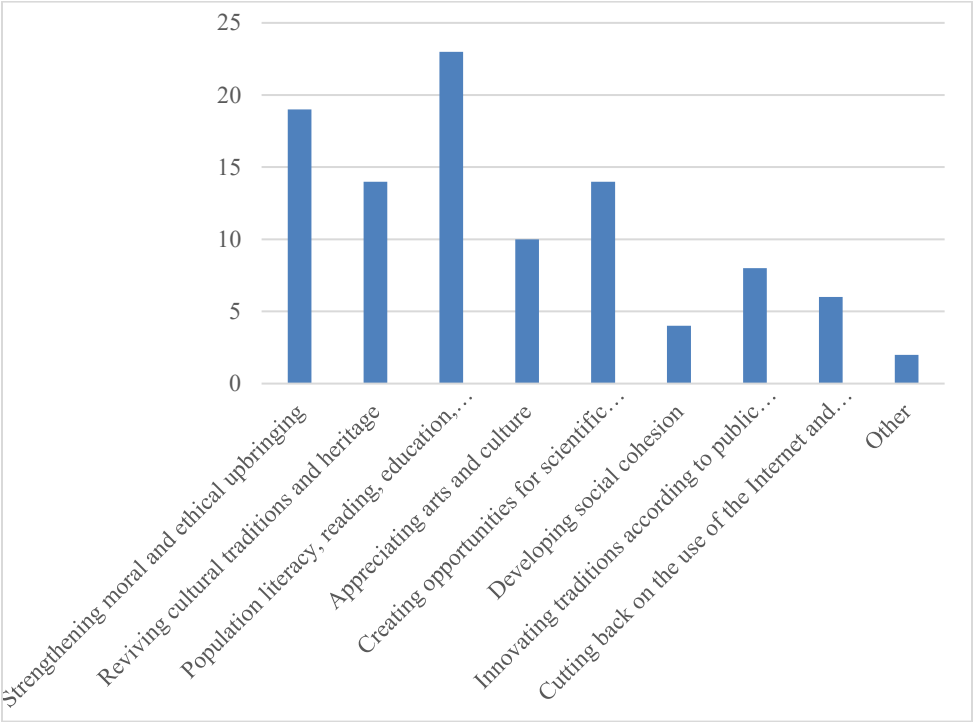


Figure 4. Most advisable are the efforts to prevent spiritual degradation?

As demonstrated in Figure 4, 23% of respondents point to the need to improve "population literacy, reading, education, passion for books" to prevent spiritual degradation. In our view, this sentiment is very reasonable, particularly given that literacy is important for analyzing information.

In the meantime, 19% of respondents argue for the need to "strengthen moral and ethical upbringing," and 14% point to the importance of "reviving cultural traditions and heritage" and "creating opportunities for the development of science." "Appreciation of art and culture," is deemed crucial by 10% of respondents. Finally, 4% of respondents give priority to, "developing social cohesion," 8% to "innovating traditions in accordance with public demand," and 6% to, "cutting back on the use of Internet and social media."

Thus, today's Kazakh society has high hopes for science and technology. When the spiritual culture of society is on the rise, freedom becomes the predominant value, hampering the influence of external forces.

4. Discussion

4.1. Socioeconomic and Cultural Drivers of Spiritual Degradation

We view Kazakhstan's spiritual degradation as a multifaceted problem shaped by several factors. One aspect of Kazakh society that is truly degraded manifests in the erosion of moral and spiritual values. Our analysis indicates that the key factor contributing to spiritual degradation is the influence of cultural values and ideologies.

After the collapse of the USSR and Kazakhstan's independence, new authorities faced serious problems. Economic renewal and the adoption of laws came to the fore. Social, cultural, and spiritual issues remained in second place. Kazakhstan developed several ideological currents.

Another factor contributing to spiritual degradation is corruption. The prevalence of corruption interferes with Kazakhstan's development. In 2022 alone, law enforcement and specialized government agencies reported 1,724 corruption crimes.

The anti-corruption movement Transparency International published the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2023 on its official website. As of the end of 2023, Kazakhstan was among the countries with high corruption, scoring 39 points out of 100, ranking 92nd out of 180 countries.[18]

Systemic work on developing an anti-corruption culture continues. To prevent corruption, private individuals and organizations must build strong ethical principles, create trust systems, and develop a culture of honesty.

Our study demonstrates that important factors include economic inequality and consumer society. Kazakh citizens believe that with just policies, resources will be distributed fairly, and the consumption model will be sustainable.

Economic inequality stems from the influence of corruption. Corruption gives rise to various societal factors, such as systemic discrimination and inequality in education and employment opportunities.

Consumer society is marked by a dominating focus on consumption as the main driving force of economic activity and social welfare.[19] Being aware of the positive aspects of the market, civilized countries complete entrepreneurship with ethics rather than limiting it to technological activities.

In today's digital space, excessive amounts of information, especially when not properly filtered on the Internet and social media, contributes to the acceleration of negative social processes. Uncontrolled information flow shapes cultural and behavioral patterns that can destabilize the moral and spiritual bases of society. The only effective tool to counter this phenomenon is ensuring information security at the state level and implementing a system to filter and control the quality of information. From an Islamic perspective, this decline can be addressed by reinstating ethical accountability, fostering spiritual education, and promoting values such as trust, integrity, and justice.

Only in a well-protected informational environment can digitalization become a resource for developing intellectual and humanitarian values capable of supporting spiritual and cultural revival. The appropriate use of the Internet and social media minimizes the risks of negative influence and creates conditions for the preservation and transmission of cultural values to the next generations, crucial for sustained sociocultural development.

Intensive urbanization exerts a specific influence. In recent years, urbanization has been gaining momentum. Kazakhstan is seeing a significant increase in urban population in line with the global urbanization trend. Although urbanization brings benefits, such as economic development and access to modern infrastructure, it also bears considerable drawbacks, which can have negative effects if not managed effectively. A key problem is growing economic inequalities caused because of the concentration of resources and opportunities in urban centers, leading to the marginalization of rural

[18]"Corruption perceptions index (CPI) 2023," *Transparency International*, https://www.transparency.am/en/cpi

[19]Nnamdi O. Madichie, "Consumer Behavior: Buying, Having, and Being (8th ed.)," *Management Decision* 47, no. 5 (2006): 845-848, https://doi.org/10.1108/00251740910960169; Joel Stillerman, *The Sociology of Consumption. A Global Approach* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015).

and peripheral regions. While large cities develop a favorable economic environment, the development of small towns is virtually halted. A society with low social status, favoring values in an aggressive sense, brings its culture and economy to hardships, allowing degradation.

As found by M. Garcia, citizens moving to large cities face economic and social problems, including high competition in the labor market, difficulties obtaining stable services, and housing problems.[20] A significant part of their income goes to rent, which limits opportunities for spiritual and cultural life. Under these financial limitations, manu urban residents cannot pay enough attention to the cultural and spiritual aspects of their lives. This aggravates their detachment from traditional values and spiritual growth.

In Kazakhstan, the urbanization process can be divided into two key stages:

1. The Soviet period (1960-1991) characterized by Soviet urban planning. A distinctive feature of this period was the lack of connection between urban and economic growth.
2. Independent Kazakhstan (from 1991 to present) characterized by state creation: relocation of the capital, repatriation of ethnic Kazakhs, promotion of a multi-ethnic society, and transition to a market economy.[21]

According to Kazakhstan's state program of territorial development for 2020-2025, the level of urbanization in the country should reach 62% by 2025. To achieve stability, the state needs to resolve urbanization challenges. Urbanization emphasizes the need for regulation through state policy.

Low trust in political institutions in Kazakhstan indicates the problems hindering the development of political culture. Political culture in the framework of ensuring political stability needs to be considered systemically. Citizens' constant attention to the political conditions and trends taking place in the state, their constant observation, and self-evaluation are manifestations of civic culture.

Technological achievements present an important factor in a spiritual crisis. These advancements have positive and negative effects on culture. On the one hand, technological progress provides access to knowledge, accelerates communication, and simplifies daily life, which can support the development of society. On the other hand, these achievements often bring about the downfall of traditional cultural values that had long been the core of society's spiritual life. The spread of digital communication and social networks has majorly changed the form and content of human communication, diminishing the significance of live interactions. In Kazakhstan, this translates into a decline in the influence of traditional customs, which exacerbates spiritual degradation and contributes to a further crisis of cultural identity.[22]

The impact of technology on culture and spirituality depends on how it is used and incorporated into society. It is up to individuals and communities to consciously and ethically manage these changes.

[20]M. Garcia, "Financial Constraints and the Impact on Spiritual Culture Development among Urban Residents," *Urban Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (2021): 278-91.

[21]Bibigul B. Byulegenova and Olzhas Zh. Turemuratov, "Urbanization as a Global Trend: Causes and Consequences," *Bulletin of L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University. Political science. Regional studies. Oriental studies. Turkology Series* 1 (142) (2023): 39, https://doi.org/10.32523/2616-6887/2023-142-1-37-42

[22]M. Garcia, "The Impact of Digital Communication and Social Media on Meaningful Human Contact," *Communication Studies Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (2020): 78-92.

4.2. Ideological and Religious Challenges in National Identity Formation

Kazakhstan has developed long-term programs focused on spiritual and cultural development. Despite their expansive concepts, their practical implementation primarily consists of one-time actions. These programs are limited to mass events, such as concerts and flash mobs, which do not reach deep cultural and spiritual changes in society. This approach reduces the effectiveness of programs and renders them incapable of real spiritual modernization.

Spiritual modernization requires full and systemic implementation of the program. For these programs to help strengthen national identity, build moral values, and support the long-term growth of Kazakh society, well-rounded approach and ongoing efforts in spiritual and cultural activities should be prioritized. A complete realization of these programs is key in creating a harmonious and spiritually rich society.

The prevalence of negative habits in national mentality can be explained by social factors. Social and cultural norms determine behavior.[23] People are more prone to these behaviors if the negative habits are considered normal in the given social context.

The range of negative habits and behaviors inherent in the national mentality of southern regions also includes tribalism and regionalism. This is what S. Junger[24] refers to by saying that, "people have an innate need for a sense of belonging and community, and this need is often achieved through the formation of tribal ties."

The colonial policy of the Russian Empire between the 18th and 20th centuries capitalized on this situation. Tsarist Russia's method of colonization fostered division among clans rather than unity, encouraging internal conflict. In the event of a dispute or scandal, Kazakhs were compelled to seek justice from Russian authorities. Tsarist officials were most interested in preserving the clan system. They fostered obedience even further. This was a serious obstacle to the establishment of the Kazakh people as an integral nation.

A useful aspect of tribalism is that relatives do not marry each other for up to seven generations: a strict legal rule that has been around for a long time. This is a precautionary measure designed to prevent physical and psychological disorders and disease-causing genetic changes.

Eribalism, i.e., the preservation of one's surname and blood purity, contributed to the transformation of the Kazakh people into a single ethno-organism, perpetuates kinship ties in traditional Kazakh society.

Tribalism, which has lasted until now, is the biggest problem in implementing personnel policy and selecting personnel. For example, the appointment of the head is influenced by tribalism, and everyone wants the people of their clan to be leaders. The consequences of tribalism are seen in all spheres concerning public and social, cultural, and spiritual development. They belong to the archaic cultural type. This issue has been extensively explored by A. Toynbee. Toynbee argues that, "the archaic cultural orientation is evident in behavioral attitudes, art, language, religion, economics, and politics."[25] Tribalism and a return to the clan and tribal system of government instead of civil society are manifestations of archaism. In developed countries, this issue is a part of upbringing and memory, giving way to new civilizational values.[26]

[23]Harry C. Triandis, *Individualism and Collectivism* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995).

[24]Sebastian Junger, *Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging* (New York: Twelve, 2016), 26.

[25]Arnold J Toynbee, *Issledovaniye Istorii* [History Research]: In 3 vols. Vol. 1 (St. Petersburg: Publishing House of St. Petersburg University, 2006), 68.

[26]T.H. Gabitov, *History of Kazakh Culture: Textbook* (Almaty: Kazakh University, 2016), 241.

A negative aspect of Kazakh society is gender inequality. The reason for this inequality is the demands of today's traditional patriarchal society. Traditional culture believes that a woman should not get too involved in politics. Many families in Kazakhstan bring up girls not as individuals, but as property or appliances they prepare for someone else.

The Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) classifies countries into five categories based on the level of gender discrimination, ranging from 'very low' to 'very high.' In 2023, Kazakhstan ranked among the top 30 countries with a low level of gender discrimination, scoring 20.9 points.[27]

According to UN statistics, as of January 1, 2023, Kazakhstan was 152nd in the world in the share of women in the country's Cabinet of Ministers with 10.5%. More specifically, out of the 19 ministers of Kazakhstan, two were women. However, after the Message of the Head of State on September 1, 2023, five new ministries were created by restructuring three pre-existing ones. In this process, the composition of ministers changed, and now the Government of Kazakhstan has four female ministers.[28]

In UN statistics on the share of women in the Parliament (as of January 1, 2023), Kazakhstan ranked 84th. In the lower house of the Parliament, 29 out of 107 deputies were women (27.4%), and in the upper house, 9 out of 50 deputies were women (18.8%). After the elections for the 8th term of the Parliament in March 2023, these statistics changed. In the 8th convocation, the number of women reached 11 out of 50 deputies in the Senate and 19 out of 107 deputies in the *Mäjilis*.[29]

We hold the view that women and men must be equal, and Kazakh society needs more educated women. This relates to the fact that women's participation in politics reinforces the democratic basis of Kazakh society. As asserted by K. Crenshaw,[30] "There is a need for a sustained and systematic approach to addressing gender development issues in politics." Accelerating the eradication of gender inequality requires the involvement of all actors, i.e., policy makers, international organizations, the private sector, the academic community, and civil society.[31]

The competitiveness of Kazakh citizens is viewed by our respondents as a vital positive trend. The negative aspect of this is citizens' competition in everyday culture. These people can be classified as the market type of individuals, because they constantly compete in consumer society to keep up with others in material terms. Most often, this level of consumption is achieved by taking out a bank loan. Banks grant loans at very high interest rates. As a result, those who receive non-targeted loans end up in moral and ethical turmoil. These individuals now make up a significant portion of the population, reaching a critical limit from the point of state security. The reason behind this, for the

[27]OECD, *SIGI 2023 Global Report: Gender Equality in Times of Crisis, Social Institutions and Gender Index* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2023), https://doi.org/10.1787/4607b7c7-en

[28]"Facts and Figures: Women's Leadership and Political Participation," UN, page updated October 2, 2024, https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures#83879

[29]"Women's Leadership and Political Participation," *UN,* 2023, https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation.

[30]Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241, https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039

[31]Bell Hooks, *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2000).

most part, is financial illiteracy. Careless spending of earned income is a major factor that reduces the person's subsistence level of income.[32]

Dependence on loans and debt is a phenomenon directly connected with one's psychological state. In most cases, those suffering from these spending patterns want to experience an emotion rather than fix their household. It is a form of living with a light thought.[33] In our view, the best course of action in this case is to combine culture with a system of humanitarian market ethics.

Negative habits in the national mentality also include obscene language. Profanity is common in Kazakh society. Profanity is strictly forbidden in everyday life. Foul language is used to express feelings that do not "pass the filter". This means that the person fails to control their emotions when using profanity. In Kazakhstan, profanity in public places is punishable by a fine of 69 thousand tenge or a 30-day arrest.

The survey results allow us to conclude that reducing negative habits in national mentality involves integrated personal, social, and systemic work. Change in the national mentality requires continuous efforts on the part of different social strata. Combining these strategies with a desire to understand can foster a healthy and positive national consciousness.

4.3. Spiritual and Cultural Revitalization

Our analysis points to ideological threats contributing to spiritual degradation. This includes the intensive infiltration of religious movements alien to the national worldview. Kazakhstan's policy "economy first, politics later" has weakened its spiritual culture. There was a need for a spiritual platform that would serve the ideological field. This function was fulfilled not by education and science but by intensively developing religion. Religious beliefs of a completely different direction appeared, inconsistent with the worldview of Kazakhs. Thus, the incessant religious expansion reached its goal. Priority in the value system in the national consciousness was centered on religion. Instead, the only priority of Kazakhstan should have been be education.

However, while external religious influences have introduced ideological challenges, Islam itself remains deeply ingrained in Kazakh national identity, shaping values such as justice, ethical responsibility, and communal harmony. These principles align with the ethical dimensions of national identity and can serve as a stabilizing force against the erosion of moral values. By integrating Islamic ethical thought within educational curricula, legal frameworks, and public institutions, Kazakhstan can reinforce civic responsibility while maintaining a balance between spiritual values and modernization efforts. This form of spirituality is not merely confined to religious practice but extends into the ethical dimensions of daily life, reinforcing concepts of communal responsibility, respect for ancestors, and the pursuit of knowledge.

Until we can completely shed the totalitarianism of the Soviet Union, a new religious totalitarianism seems unnecessary. This comes from the fact that the cultural influence of soft power remains in the general socialization.[34] The communications that cause this, occur over a prolonged period.[35] The mechanisms of cultural transmission, whether through education, media, or public

[32]Ankit Suri and Lokesh Jindal, "Financial Literacy for Well-Being: Scientific Mapping and Bibliometric Analysis," *Citizenship, Social and Economics Education* 21, no. 3 (2022): 209-33, https://doi.org/10.1177/14788047221120917

[33]A. Johnson, "The Consequences of Dependence on Credit and Debt in Modern Society," *Economic Review* 76, no. 2 (2018): 107.

[34]R. Williams and S. Davis, "Assessing Civic Literacy: A Comparative Study of Educational Programs," *Journal of Political Education* 42, no. 2 (2020): 67-82.

[35]Victoria Hudson, "The impact of Russian Soft Power in Kazakhstan: Creating an Enabling Environment for Cooperation between Nur-Sultan and Moscow," *Journal of Political Power* 15, no.

institutions, shape public perceptions and influence behavioral patterns over extended periods. This underscores the importance of strategic policymaking in ensuring that Kazakhstan's cultural and ideological development is rooted in historical continuity rather than abrupt ideological shifts. Religious totalitarianism, if left unchecked, could present a structural challenge to national development by restricting intellectual plurality, undermining scientific progress, and reducing the space for critical inquiry. In contrast, a balanced approach that incorporates Islamic ethical principles while preserving civic freedoms can offer a framework for moral stability without imposing ideological rigidity.

Furthermore, Kazakhstan's position within a complex geopolitical and cultural landscape necessitates a nuanced strategy for ideological resilience. Kazakhstan is located between Confucian and Orthodox civilizations. The most important and territorial cultural group that determines the internal state of modern Kazakhstan is the representative of the Eurasian mentality. There is a large Slavic group in Kazakhstan. As a result of their coexistence over several centuries, there have been some changes in the cultural structure of the Kazakh people. This process primarily concerned language and created the issue of Russian-speaking Kazakhs.

At present, the Eurasian cultural type is a synthesis of traditional culture and the achievements of Western civilization. This testifies to the high adaptability of Kazakh society in the context of cultural dialogue. This flexibility allows Kazakhstan to successfully integrate elements of modern Western values with established cultural norms and traditions. Effective realization of the potential of the Eurasian cultural type requires deep integration with the traditional aspects of Kazakh culture. This will allow preserving national identity while accepting the challenges and opportunities of the globalized world.

To prevent ideological polarization, state policies should focus on fostering inclusive national identity narratives that accommodate spiritual, cultural, and intellectual diversity. By positioning Islamic spirituality as a moral and ethical guide rather than an exclusive ideological authority, Kazakhstan can strike a balance between tradition and modernity, ensuring that religion functions as an ethical compass rather than a restrictive system of governance.

5. Conclusions

This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the spiritual degradation of Kazakh society, focusing on sociocultural, economic, and psychological factors. We touched upon such key aspects as the erosion of moral and ethical norms, the loss of cultural identity, and the emergence of negative social habits developed in the national psyche. Through a combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, we examined the impact of external cultural influences, technological advances, urbanization, and economic inequality on the moral structure of society. The findings show that these factors fuel the spiritual crisis, exacerbating the challenges of maintaining a cohesive and ethically grounded society.

The article emphasizes the significant role of long-term state programs aimed at spiritual and cultural modernization. We concluded that addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive and sustainable approach that includes effective government programs and a cultural shift toward greater self-reliance, moral responsibility, and the revival of traditional values. To promote spiritual growth and social cohesion, Kazakhstan must balance the benefits of modernization with preserving its cultural heritage and ethical principles.

3 (2022): 469-94, https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2022.2127280; Bruce G. Link and Jo C. Phelan, "Conceptualizing Stigma," *Annual Review of Sociology* 27 (2001): 363-85, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.27.1.363

Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

The corresponding author will provide the data associated with this study upon request.

Funding Details

This research was funded by the Science Committee of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Grant AP19577138. Cultural analysis of traditional and innovative value processes in the southern regions of Kazakhstan.

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