



## Enhancing Interethnic Friendship and Cooperation through Family Engagement: Strategies for Strengthening Social Harmony

*Khimmataliev Dostnazar Omonovich\**, *Sultonova Shakhribonu Jasurbek*, *Akbarova Ugiloy Akhmadali*

Chirchik State Pedagogical University, Chirchik, Uzbekistan

\*Correspondence: E-mail: [d.khimmataliyev@gmail.com](mailto:d.khimmataliyev@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of families in fostering interethnic friendship and cooperation, aiming to identify the social and educational conditions necessary for strengthening these relationships. The research examines how families can act as catalysts for promoting unity and mutual respect among different ethnic groups. Using comparative analysis, synthesis, and historical approaches, the study assesses the effectiveness of targeted interventions designed to improve interethnic relations within families. The research involved 460 respondents from two-nationality families across multiple regions of Uzbekistan, with the participants divided into experimental and control groups. The findings reveal that families who participated in structured interventions showed significant improvements in intercultural understanding and cooperation. The results emphasize the importance of family involvement in creating a peaceful, inclusive society, and suggest that future efforts should integrate these methods into broader community programs. The study provides valuable insights for promoting social harmony in multicultural environments.

### ARTICLE INFO

**Article History:**

*Submitted/Received 22 Aug 2025*

*First Revised 25 Sep 2025*

*Accepted 28 Dec 2025*

*First Available online 29 Dec 2025*

*Publication Date 01 March 2026*

**Keyword:**

*Family,*

*Inclusive society,*

*Intercultural cooperation,*

*Interethnic friendship,*

*Social harmony.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of modern multiethnic societies, the ability to foster interethnic friendship and cooperation is essential for promoting social stability, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence. As a nation home to over 130 ethnic groups (Bonkalo et al., 2015; Pratsinakis et al., 2017), Uzbekistan presents a unique example of embracing ethnic diversity while striving for national unity. The country's policies have consistently focused on strengthening interethnic relations, ensuring that diverse ethnic communities are respected, and that their cultural identities are preserved. However, despite these efforts, the challenge of achieving harmonious interethnic relations remains ongoing, particularly in light of the rising global tensions and ethnic conflicts witnessed in various parts of the world today (Yakubbekovna et al., 2024; Stone, 2023; Adams, 2013; Turdiev, 2024).

At the core of fostering interethnic harmony is the family unit, which plays a pivotal role in shaping children's attitudes and behaviors toward other ethnic groups (Yasui & Dishion, 2007). Families that emphasize mutual respect, cultural understanding, and shared values help nurture future generations that are more likely to contribute to social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. Conversely, a lack of exposure to these core values can perpetuate ethnic prejudice, misunderstanding, and social division, ultimately hindering the development of a unified society (Egamberdievich, 2022).

Despite the recognized importance of the family in fostering interethnic harmony, systematic research on how families contribute to building interethnic friendship remains underexplored, particularly in the context of Central Asia. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the social and educational conditions necessary to strengthen interethnic friendship within the family and develop practical mechanisms to improve interethnic relationships (Egamberdievich, 2022).

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the family unit as a key driver of interethnic friendship a perspective rarely explored in Central Asian studies. This study introduces an experimental approach, engaging two-nationality families to assess how targeted interventions can foster interethnic cooperation and mutual respect. Using methods such as comparative analysis, content analysis, and historical approaches, the research explores how families can become catalysts for intercultural cooperation and contribute to building a more inclusive society.

## 2. METHODS

### 2.1. Participants

The study involved 460 respondents from two-nationality families across four regions of Uzbekistan: Fergana, Samarkand, Syrdarya, and Jizzakh. These families represent a mix of different ethnic backgrounds, providing diverse insights into interethnic relationships. The respondents were divided into two groups:

- (i) Experimental group (230 families): Families who participated in targeted interventions designed to foster interethnic friendship.
- (ii) Control group (230 families): Families who did not receive the targeted intervention but were involved in general community activities.

The families were selected based on their ethnic composition and their willingness to participate in the study. The regions were chosen to provide a representative sample of the country's diverse ethnic groups.

## 2.2. Research Design and Intervention

This study used an experimental design, comparing the effectiveness of two different approaches to fostering interethnic friendship:

- (i) Control group: Engaged in regular community-based activities without a specific focus on interethnic cooperation.
- (ii) Experimental group: Participated in targeted interventions aimed at promoting interethnic understanding and respect. These interventions included family-based activities such as:
  - (a) Intercultural workshops and discussions
  - (b) Shared community projects and events
  - (c) Activities that encouraged open dialogue about cultural traditions and values.

The interventions were designed to create opportunities for families from different ethnic backgrounds to engage with one another, share experiences, and build mutual respect through structured activities.

## 2.3. Experimental Methods

Data were collected through multiple methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the development of interethnic friendship within families:

- (i) Surveys: Administered to both groups before and after the intervention to assess changes in attitudes toward other ethnic groups, as well as perceived barriers and facilitators of interethnic cooperation.
- (ii) Interviews: Conducted with a subset of families to gather qualitative insights into their experiences and perceptions of the intervention.
- (iii) Observations: Field observations were made during the intervention activities to evaluate family interactions and engagement.
- (iv) Family Reports: Parents were asked to report on their children's behavior and their own perceptions of cultural harmony within the family unit.

## 2.4. Data Analysis

The data collected from the surveys, interviews, and observations were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods:

- (i) Quantitative analysis: Statistical techniques, such as descriptive statistics and comparisons between the experimental and control groups, were used to assess changes in interethnic attitudes and behaviors. This analysis helped to identify the effectiveness of the intervention in fostering interethnic cooperation.
- (ii) Qualitative analysis: Thematic analysis was applied to the interview transcripts and observational notes to identify key themes related to family interactions, cultural understanding, and the perceived impact of the interventions.

The findings were triangulated across these methods to ensure a robust understanding of the factors influencing interethnic friendship and cooperation within families.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To determine the effectiveness of the scientific research work, surveys were conducted based on the criteria and requirements for developing interethnic friendship relations in local communities. These surveys focused on establishing friendly relations with two-nationality families living in the neighborhoods. The pedagogical effectiveness of developing interethnic friendship relations in local communities was identified as follows: In the experimental trial,

a total of 460 two-nationality families participated. Of these, 230 participants were in the experimental group, and 230 participants were in the control group (See **Table 1**).

**Table 1.** The results of mastering the level of development of intercultural friendship relations.

Groups	Number of two-nationality families	Level of mastering		
		High	Middle	Low
Control group	230	72	97	51
Experimental group	230	112	98	20

The study aimed to assess the level of development of intercultural friendship relations in two groups: a control group and an experimental group. The results, based on a total of 230 two-nationality families in each group, showed distinct patterns in their mastery levels.

In the control group, the distribution of mastery levels was as follows: 72 families (31.3%) achieved a high level of mastery, 97 families (42.2%) reached a middle level, and 51 families (22.2%) were at a low level. In contrast, the experimental group exhibited different outcomes. Of the 230 families, 112 families (48.7%) reached a high level of mastery, 98 families (42.6%) were at the middle level, and only 20 families (8.7%) were classified at the low level (See **Table 1**).

These results highlight a significant difference between the two groups. The experimental group showed a higher percentage of families at the high level of mastery compared to the control group, which suggests that the intervention or approach used in the experimental group was more effective in fostering intercultural friendship relations. Additionally, the control group had a higher proportion of families at the low mastery level, further emphasizing the impact of the experimental conditions. In summary, the experimental group demonstrated stronger outcomes in developing intercultural friendships, with a greater number of families achieving a high level of mastery (Gareis et al., 2011; Motos, 2016; Williams & Johnson, 2011).

The results of the study show that the experimental group performed better than the control group in terms of developing intercultural friendship relations. The experimental group had a higher number of families who reached a high level of mastery, while the control group had more families at the low level. This suggests that the methods or activities used with the experimental group were more effective in helping families build strong intercultural relationships (Miller & Khatib, 2023; Campos & Kim, 2017; Mukhamedov et al., 2024; Kodirova et al., 2024; Usarov et al., 2024; Buriyeva & Omonovich, 2024).

One possible reason for this difference could be the specific approach or intervention used in the experimental group. It may have provided better support or more opportunities for families to engage with each other and learn about different cultures. In contrast, the control group may not have had the same level of support or opportunities, which could explain why more families in this group were at the low level of mastery.

Another important observation is that both groups had a similar percentage of families at the middle level of mastery. This shows that while the experimental group had more families at the high level, both groups still had a large number of families who had developed a reasonable understanding of intercultural friendship relations.

Overall, the findings suggest that targeted programs or interventions can significantly improve intercultural relationships. Future studies could explore what specific aspects of the

experimental approach were most helpful and how these can be applied more broadly to help other families build stronger intercultural friendships.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The results highlight that interactive, multisensory activities—such as cultural workshops, shared community projects, and open dialogue—are effective tools in strengthening interethnic cooperation. Moreover, the study emphasizes the need for targeted interventions that go beyond surface-level community engagement, offering families deeper opportunities for cultural exchange and mutual learning.

The findings suggest that policy makers, educators, and community leaders should prioritize family-centered strategies in the promotion of interethnic harmony. By fostering inclusive spaces for intercultural communication within the family unit, these programs can have a lasting impact on social cohesion.

Future research should explore the scalability of these interventions across different regions and contexts, with a focus on long-term sustainability and the potential integration of digital platforms to enhance intercultural engagement. As Uzbekistan continues to build a multiethnic society, family-based approaches to interethnic cooperation offer promising avenues for nurturing peace and unity.

#### 5. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

#### 6. REFERENCES

- Adams, L. L. (2013). Ethnicity and the politics of heritage in Uzbekistan. *Central Asian Survey*, 32(2), 115-133.
- Bonkalo, T. I., Kolesnik, N. T., Sorokoumova, E. A., and Bonkalo, S. V. (2015). Development of ethnic social identity among the members of ethnic community organizations as the factor of preventing the spread of nationalist sentiments in a multicultural society. *Biosciences Biotechnology Research Asia*, 12(3), 2361-2372.
- Buriyeva, K., and Omonovich, K. D. (2024). Dynamics and diagnosis of independent thinking processes of students (On the example of the first teenagers). *Journal of Education for Sustainability and Diversity*, 3(1), 238–252.
- Campos, B., and Kim, H. S. (2017). Incorporating the cultural diversity of family and close relationships into the study of health. *American Psychologist*, 72(6), 543.
- Egamberdievich, K. T. (2022). The formation of values of mutual equality in family relations. *Asian Journal of Multidimensional Research*, 11(11), 189-195.
- Gareis, E., Merkin, R., and Goldman, J. (2011). Intercultural friendship: Linking communication variables and friendship success. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 40(2), 153-171.

- Kodirova, F. U., Khimmataliyev, D. O., Akhlan, R. N. R., and Safiyeva, M. A. (2024). Factors affecting the effectiveness of inclusive education. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Special Education in South East Asia Region*, 3(1), 336–341.
- Miller, G. E., and Khatib, S. M. (2023). Honoring diverse cultures through family literacy approaches that build family, school, and community partnerships. *The Reading Teacher*, 76(5), 586-593.
- Motos, S. G. (2016). Friendship networks of the foreign students in schools of Barcelona: impact of class grouping on intercultural relationships. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 55, 66-78.
- Mukhamedov, G. I., Usarov, J. E., Khimmataliev, D. O., Kodirova, F. U., Raxmanova, M. K., Safiyeva, M. A. K., Eshbekova, N. J. K., Dekhkonov, H. U., and Susilawati, A. (2024). Creative competence of future chemistry for students relating to environment. *Journal of Engineering Science and Technology*, 19(6), 65-72.
- Pratsinakis, M., Hatziprokopiou, P., Labrianidis, L., and Vogiatzis, N. (2017). Living together in multi-ethnic cities: People of migrant background, their interethnic friendships and the neighbourhood. *Urban Studies*, 54(1), 102-118.
- Sahadeo, J. (2011). The accidental traders: Marginalization and opportunity from the southern republics to late Soviet Moscow. *Central Asian Survey*, 30(3-4), 521-540.
- Stone, D. (2023). Revival of Uzbek Nationalism: A comparative study of identity formation in post-soviet Uzbekistan. *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research Fundamentals*, 3(11), 12-22.
- Turdiyev, B. S. (2024). Balancing national and universal perspectives: The dialectical dynamics in society's ideosphere. *Asian Journal of Basic Science and Research*, 6(3), 59-65.
- Usarov, J. E., Kodirova, F. U., and Akhlan, R. N. R. (2024). Effective technologies for preparing children with disabilities for social life in conditions of inclusive education. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Special Education in South East Asia Region*, 3(1), 310–315.
- Williams, C. T., and Johnson, L. R. (2011). Why can't we be friends?: Multicultural attitudes and friendships with international students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35(1), 41-48.
- Yakubbekovna, K. N. (2024). Constitutional strengthening of the principles of social stability and interethnic harmony in Uzbekistan. *Ethiopian International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 11(12), 161-164.
- Yasui, M., and Dishion, T. J. (2007). The ethnic context of child and adolescent problem behavior: Implications for child and family interventions. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 10(2), 137-179.