

Mongolian institute for innovative policies

Young Mongolians and the World in 2024

(National Opinion Poll Results)



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Introduction

In 2021, we conducted our first-ever survey exploring youth views and their perceptions of international relations, Mongolian foreign policies, and other countries. This time, we conducted our second national poll results to understand how these perceptions and views have evolved over the years. In doing so, we aimed to identify how Mongolian youths engage with significant changes in other countries' foreign policies and some issues within our own country's foreign policies that attract public attention. This survey is particularly notable as it was conducted in the middle of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war and after the subsiding of the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are surveys that gauge public opinion on Mongolia's two neighbouring countries and "third neighbours", which cover a broader range of socio-economic and political issues. However, these are limited in their ability to conduct in depth research on public perception, specifically on youth perceptions on particular issues of international relations and foreign policies. Therefore, our survey focuses solely on understanding youth views on these matters.

Decisions on Mongolian foreign policy issues and policy discussions are typically formulated based on the views of policymakers, while taking into account the views of Mongolian scholars, researchers and experts in relevant fields. However, they often do not consider the opinions of the public, and in particular, Mongolian youths, who are rhetorically addressed as the "future of the nation", in how they assess international relations and global affairs, and their position of what stance the government should take on foreign policy. Yet, in the domestic sphere, public opinion and especially the participation of the general public and interest groups have a significant impact in the foreign policy decisions of any democratic country. There are also currently no adequate sample surveys of youths in Mongolia examining where and how they receive information about the outside world, and how they value and rank foreign countries, languages, and cultures.

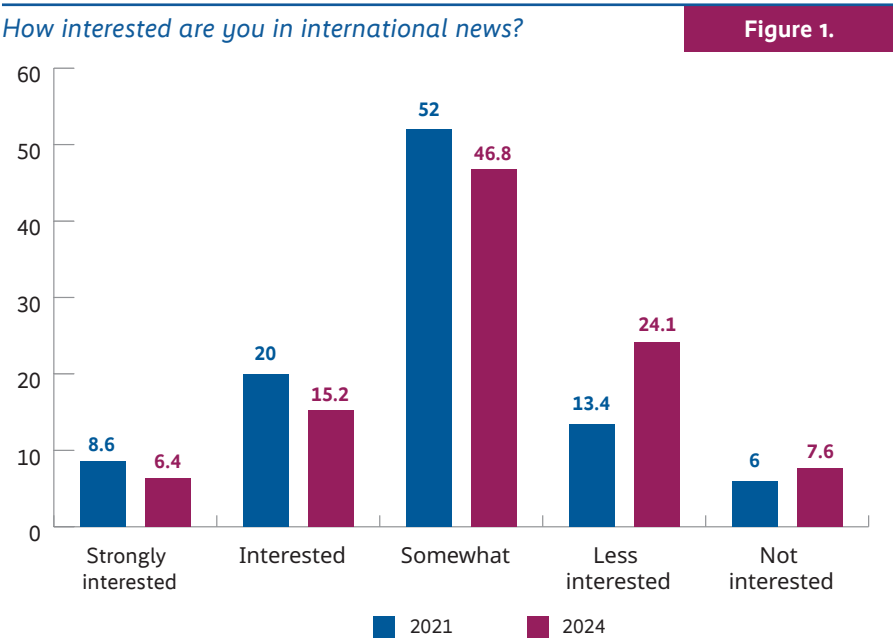
Therefore, the Mongolian Institute for Innovative Policies, with the generous support of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung of Germany, conducted this survey and published the results in an effort to clarify the perceptions, values, knowledge, level of information, and stances of the issues of international relations, Mongolian foreign policy, and views on other countries of Mongolian youths between

18-35 year old. The survey was conducted in Ulaanbaatar City, Orkhon Aimag (Erdenet City), Bulgan Aimag and Tuv Aimag between September-October 2024 with a total of 1,200 people participating in the survey based on random sampling.

Youth views and perceptions on international relations and foreign policy

Interest and Knowledge

In the survey, 21.6 percent of the youths said they are “interested” in international news while the majority or 46.8 percent said “somewhat or neutral”. However, 24.1 percent said “less interested” in the same question. Even though youths said they are interested in international events and foreign news, compared to the previous survey carried out in 2021, the results show their interests have slightly decreased (Figure 1).

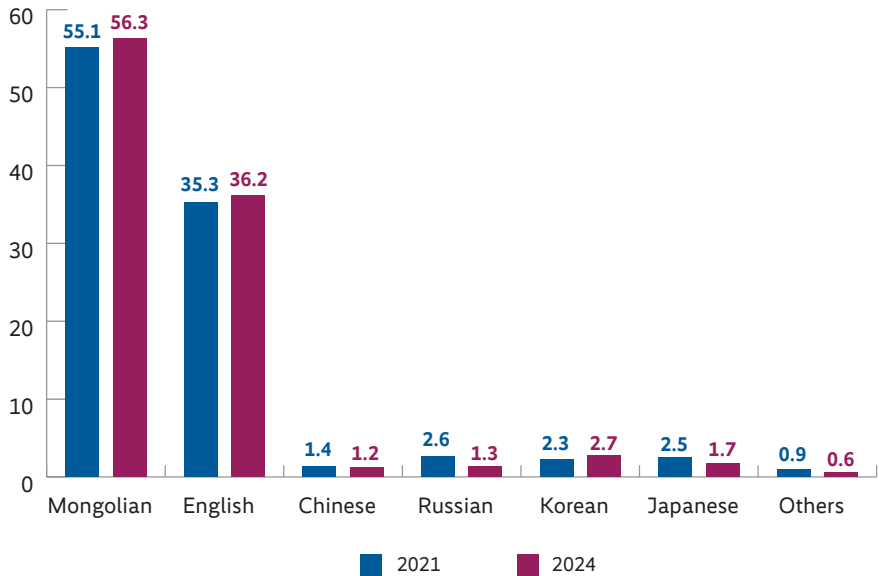


The majority of the participants or 56.3 percent receive international news in the Mongolian language. On the other hand, 43.7 percent receive international news in a foreign language, of which 36.2 percent of the youths receive in the English language while around 7 percent receive them in Russian, Chinese, Korean, and Japanese. Very few youths use any other languages to get their news at 0.6 per-

cent (Figure 2). This is similar to the results of the previous survey.

What language do you use to get international news?

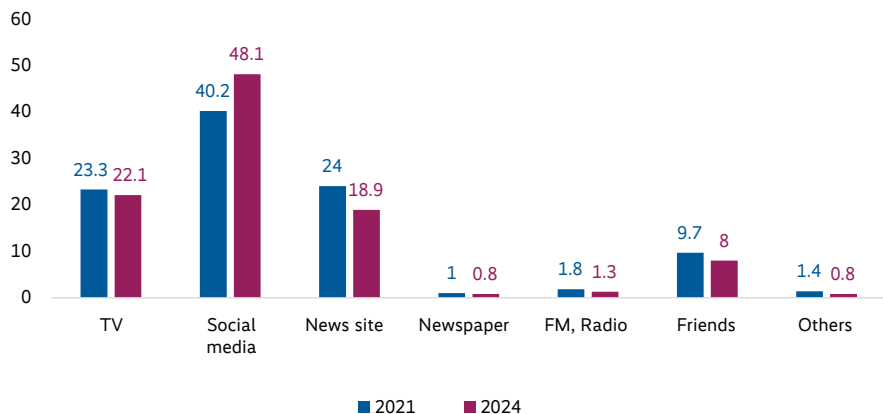
Figure 2.



The main sources of international news for youths appear to be social media and online platforms. In this survey, 48.1 percent and 22.1 percent of the youths answered that they get foreign news through social media and television, respectively. Compared to the previous survey results, the number of youths obtaining international news from social media has gone up by about 8 percent while those getting it from television has gone down by 1.2 percent. Overall, 67 percent of the participants receive international news through online platforms, such as social media and news websites (Figure 3).

What sources do you mostly use to get international news?

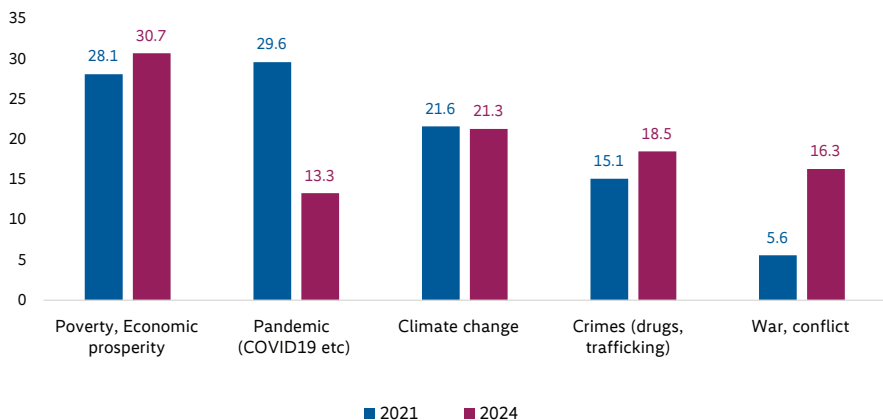
Figure 3.



From the list of global issues, Mongolian youths still prioritize poverty and economic development worldwide. Compared to the previous survey results, the focus on the pandemic has decreased while the perception that war-related issues are the most critical has increased. The Russia-Ukraine war appears to have played a significant role in shaping this shift (Figure 4).

What do you think are the most globally important issues to address today?

Figure 4.



When we studied the youths’ views towards other countries and how their views changed over the years, “very positive” perceptions of individual countries have decreased while “generally positive” views of foreign countries in general have increased. While Mongolian youths still tend to view South Korea and Japan as “very positive” and China as “very negative”, it is expected that more youths will adopt a positive view toward China in the long run (Table 1).

What is your understanding about the following countries?

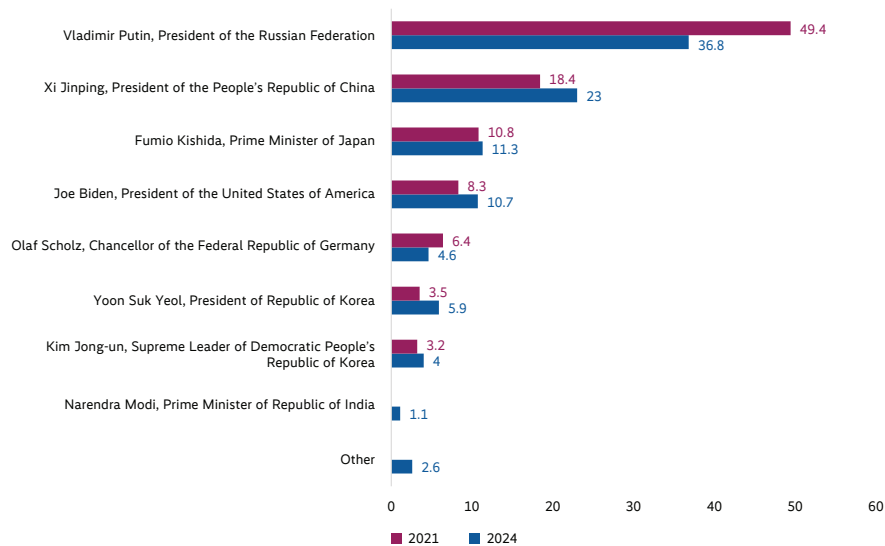
Table 1.

Countries	Generally positive		Somehow positive		Generally negative		Very negative		Don't know	
	2021	2024	2021	2024	2021	2024	2021	2024	2021	2024
The Russian Federation	32.9	16.7	52.2	57.8	3.1	15.9	6.1	2.6	5.7	6.9
The People's Republic of China	11.3	7.0	38.0	41.6	13.7	32.4	30.4	12.5	6.6	6.5
The United States of America	29.2	18.5	52.8	56.2	2.9	13.4	6.5	2.2	8.6	9.7
The Federal Republic of Germany	27.6	17.1	45.5	52.2	5.8	11.0	2.4	2.8	18.7	16.9
Japan	42.6	25.5	40.8	51.9	2.4	9.9	5.0	1.6	9.0	11.2
Republic of Korea	38.5	26.9	46.9	54.3	1.7	8.7	4.6	2.3	8.3	7.7

Mongolian youths consider the leaders of the two neighbouring countries, Vladimir Putin, and Xi Jinping, to be leaders who lead their countries well. Compared to the previous survey results, youths chose Vladimir Putin, the President of the Russian Federation, as a great leader 12.6 percent less while Xi Jinping, the President of the People’s Republic of China, was chosen 4.6 percent more in this survey (Figure 5).

What is your opinion on how well these foreign leaders guide their countries?

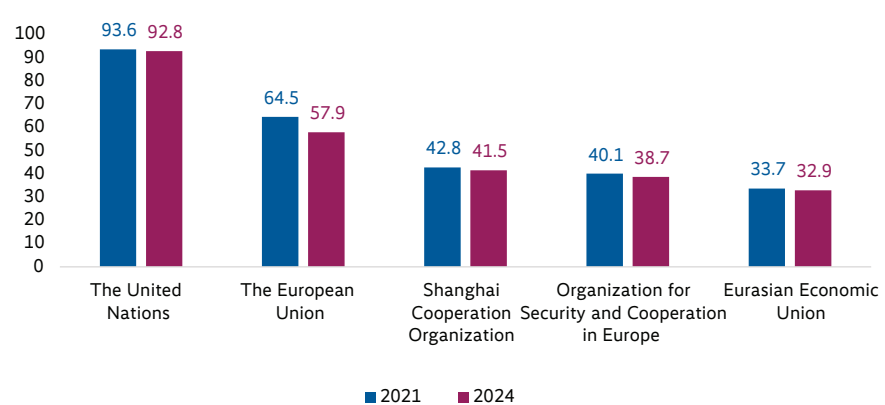
Figure 5.



No significant change in perceptions and awareness of international organizations among youths has been found, having a similar level of understanding as the previous survey. However, the respondents who stated that they “do know” international organizations have slightly decreased compared to the previous survey (Figure 6).

How much do you know about these international organizations?

Figure 6.

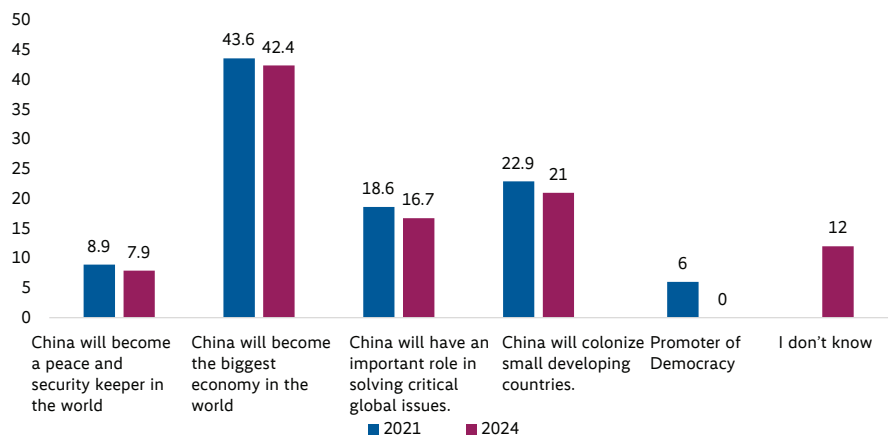


Future expectations

Youth perspectives on the future of the two world powers, the United States of America (USA) and China, remain similar to previous survey results. Regarding China, 42.4 percent of youths believed that China would be the world’s leading economy, 7.9 percent said China would be a peace-loving nation, 16.7 percent agreed that China would have an important role to play in resolving global challenges. However, 21 percent believed that China would be a colonizing/imperial nation in the future (Figure 7).

What is your opinion on China’s future role in international relations?

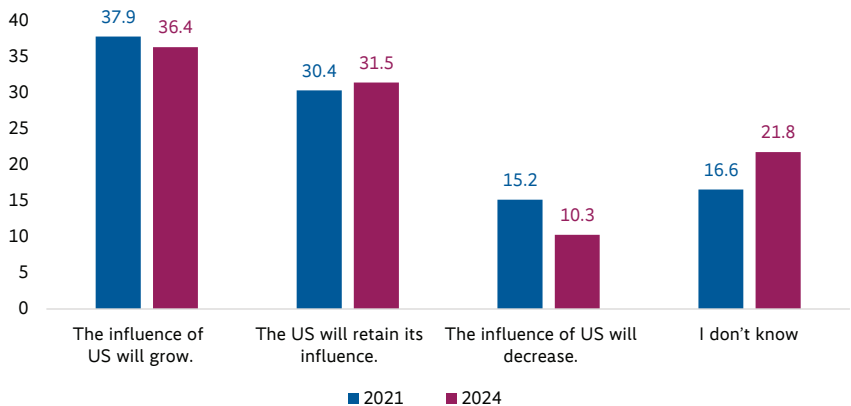
Figure 7.



Youths who responded that the USA would increase its influence in the future international relations decreased by 1.5 percent from the previous survey. Meanwhile, youths who answered that the United States would retain its influence decreased by 1.1 percent from the previous survey. However, the percentage of youths believing the US’s influence would increase in the future has dropped by around 5 percent. These results suggest that Mongolian youths expect China’s influence in international relations to grow, while the USA’s influence to diminish (Figure 8).

What is your perspective on the USA's influence in international relations in the future?

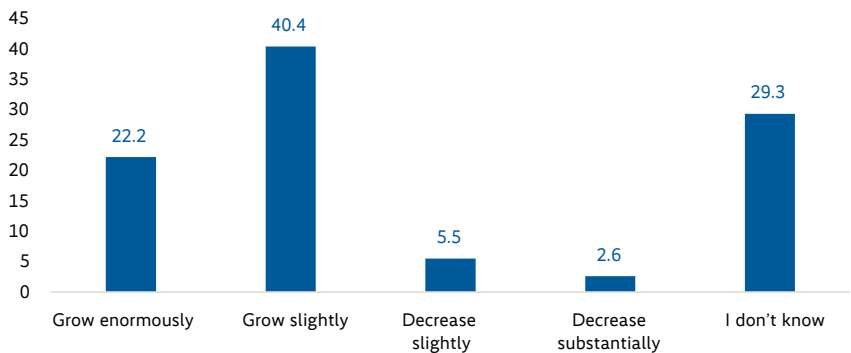
Figure 8.



In this regard, youths tend to think that the competition and tension between China and the USA will increase in the future. According to the survey results, 22.2 percent of the respondents said the tension between the two countries will increase significantly while 40.4 percent of them said it will increase only somewhat. Together, these responses account for 62.6 percent. On the other hand, 8.1 percent of youths responded that the competition and tension between these two powers will decrease (Figure 9).

Do you believe that competition and tensions between China and the USA would grow in the future?

Figure 9.



Youths tend to think that their countries' two neighbors have the most influence on the future development of Mongolia. About half of them indicated that Russia and China have a significant amount of influence, which shows a 5 percent drop compared to the findings of the 2021 survey. Young people do not view India as a significant influence on Mongolia's future. The number of young people who consider the USA, Germany, and Japan to have low influence has decreased while those who see them as having a moderate influence has increased (Table 2).

In your opinion, how much influence do these countries have on Mongolia's future?

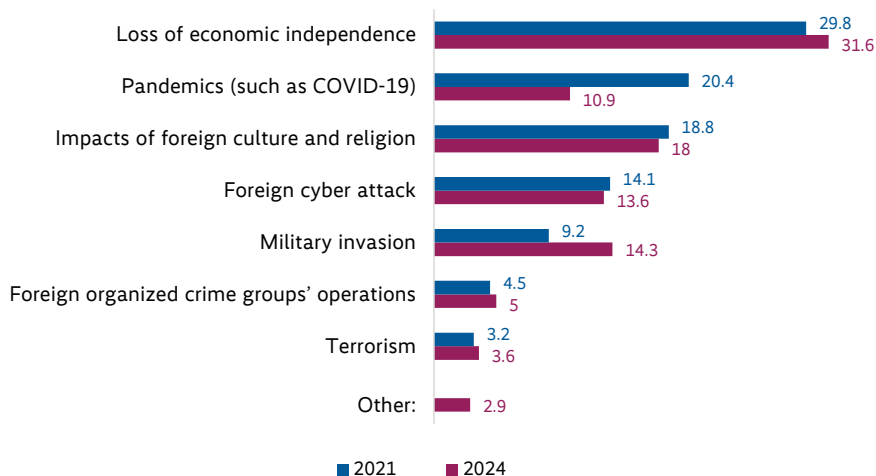
Table 2.

Countries	Very much		More		Neutral		Less		Don't know	
	2021	2024	2021	2024	2021	2024	2021	2024	2021	2024
The Russian Federation	56.2	50.3	28.5	34.2	9.9	10.3	1.8	0.9	3.7	4.3
The People's Republic of China	53.3	48.5	29.0	33.0	9.8	10.9	3.2	2.7	4.7	4.9
Japan	19.2	18.4	36.2	35.9	29.5	31.3	6.2	4.3	8.8	10.2
The United States of America	16.4	16.4	31.0	31.6	30.7	35.1	11.0	6.1	10.9	10.7
The Federal Republic of Germany	8.3	6.2	20.2	20.3	32.1	42.4	18.9	13.6	20.5	17.5
The Republic of India	-	4.3	-	16.2	-	37.8	-	20.7	-	21.0
Republic of Korea	-	17.1	-	32.0	-	31.7	-	7.3	-	11.9

Youths named the loss of economic independence as the currently biggest foreign threats to Mongolia. This percentage is expected to increase over the years. They also consider the influence of foreign culture and religion, cyber attack, military invasion to have a negative impact on Mongolia's security. While pandemic and infectious diseases were viewed as a threat in the previous survey as it had been conducted during the pandemic, this year's survey shows this issue is not concerning as much as the previous survey results (Figure 10).

In your opinion what is the biggest foreign threat to Mongolia now?

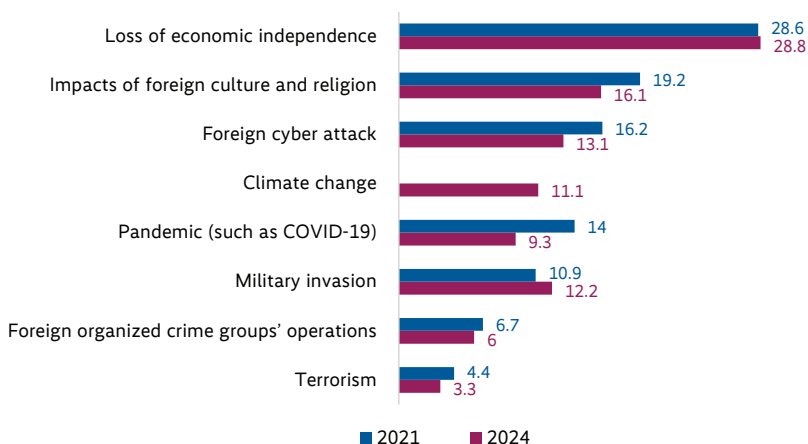
Figure 10.



According to the youth's perspective, the challenges and difficulties facing Mongolia's security are likely to continue over the next decade. They believe there is a high probability of losing economic independence as well as being influenced by foreign cultures and religions. More than 10 percent of them are concerned about climate change (Figure 11).

In your opinion what could be the biggest foreign threat to Mongolia in the next 10 years?

Figure 11.

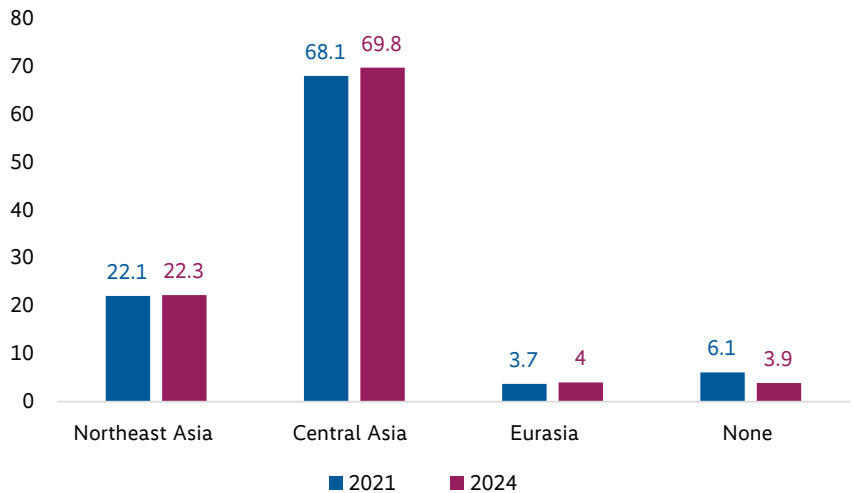


Mongolian foreign policy

When asked whether Mongolia belongs to Northeast Asia or Central Asia geographically and geopolitically, the majority of the youths surveyed picked the Central Asian region (Figure 12). During the data collection process, it was observed that youths primarily viewed and selected this based on geographical location. Compared to the previous survey findings, there has not been a significant change in this understanding and perceptions of the region.

Which region do you think Mongolia belongs to?

Figure 12.



Youths tend to view the two neighbouring countries as the closest allies of Mongolia. Among the third neighbour countries, many of them perceive South Korea and Japan as close allies. However, they do not see the USA, Germany, or India as close partners to Mongolia (Table 3). In choosing close partners, the youth's opinion can be influenced by not only Mongolia's geopolitics, but also how many Mongolians live and work in these countries. In other words, it is likely that they receive positive information about countries where many Mongolians work and live through their family, friends, and social media.

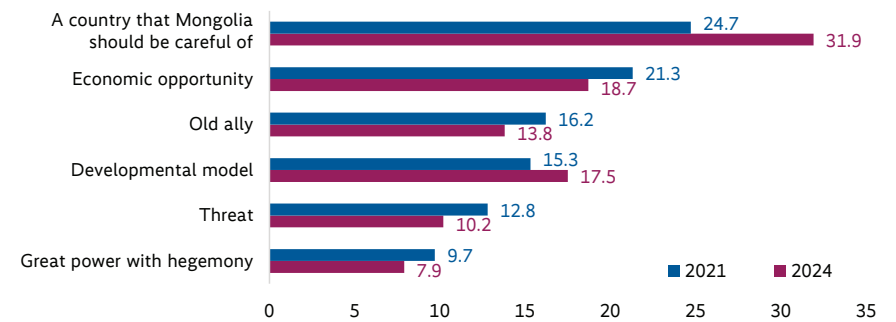
Table 3.

Countries	Very close		Close		Neutral		Less close		Don't know	
	2021	2024	2021	2024	2021	2024	2021	2024	2021	2024
Russia	66.1	66.5	27.6	27.9	3.5	2.9	0.7	0.3	2.1	2.5
China	60.9	61.9	30.1	28.9	5.5	5.5	0.9	0.5	2.6	3.2
Japan	8.4	9.6	43.2	53.2	34.0	27.5	7.3	1.6	7.1	8.1
USA	4.0	5.7	24.9	33.8	40.3	45.5	20.5	6.1	10.3	9.0
Germany	3.0	3.1	13.5	23.2	31.8	47.5	30.1	10.7	21.6	15.5
India	-	2.5	-	15.6	-	45.1	-	16.8	-	20.0
South Korea	-	12.6	-	42.8	-	29.4	-	5.2	-	10.1

We observed youths’ opinion towards the two neighbouring countries that have a significant influence on Mongolia’s foreign policy. For China, about 50 percent responses indicated a positive attitude, seeing China as an old partner, an economic opportunity, and a developmental model. The other half of respondents views China negatively as a hegemonic power, a threat, and a country to be cautious about. This year’s survey suggests that youths are less likely to perceive China as a hegemonic power and a threat but more likely to as a country to be cautious about, which has increased by 7.2 percent compared to the previous survey (Figure 13).

How do you view China?

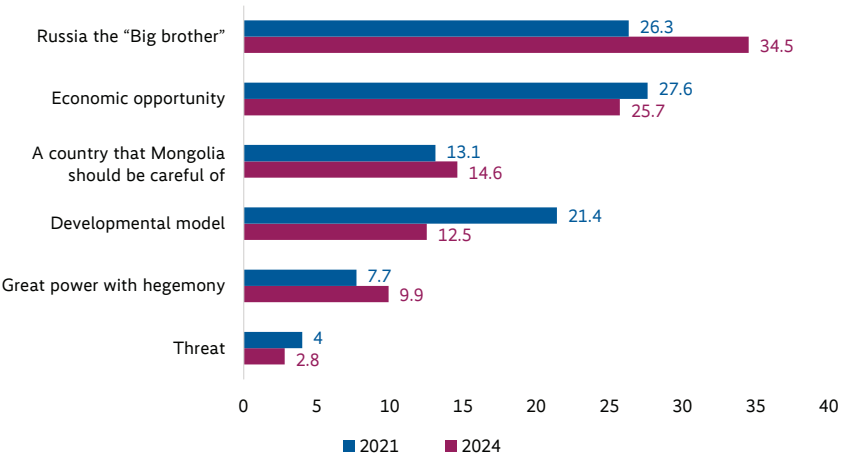
Figure 13.



Regarding Russia, 72.7 percent of youths responded positively and the rest, 27.3 percent, responded negatively. Comparing the findings of the previous survey, this survey shows the total positive responses have decreased by 2.6 percent while the total negative responses have increased by 2.5 percent. During the socialist era, it became customary for Mongolians to refer to the USSR as a “Big brother”. According to the question to find out if this perception still persists, 34.5 percent of them selected this response, which is 8.2 percent higher compared to the previous survey’s response of “old partner.” The number of young people seeing Russia positively as an economic opportunity and a developmental model has decreased, while the number of those seeing it negatively as a hegemonic power and a country to be cautious about has increased (Figure 14).

How do you view Russia?

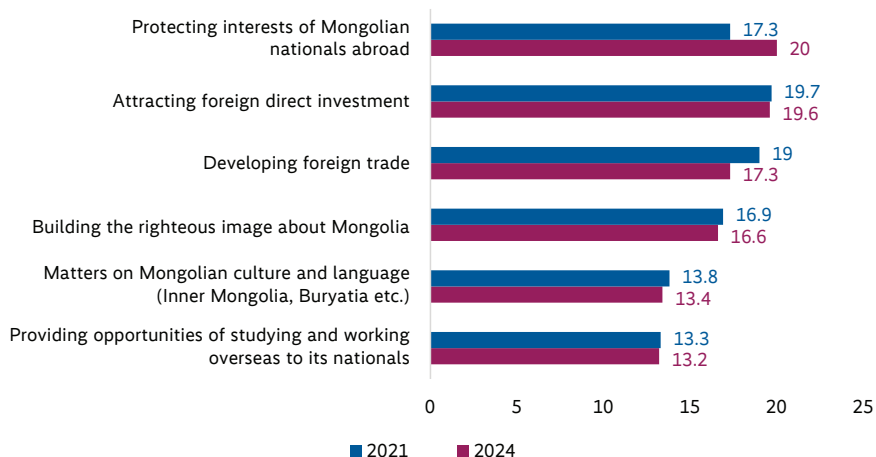
Figure 14.



Due to the increasing number of Mongolian nationals working and living abroad, youths consider protecting the interests and rights of these people as an important issue in foreign policy. In the 2021 survey, the issue of protecting the interests of Mongolian nationals abroad was ranked third, whereas in this year’s survey it is ranked first. Additionally, about 37 percent emphasize the importance of attracting foreign direct investment and diversification of the trade. There have not been significant changes in other responses (Figure 15).

In your opinion which direction should the Mongolian foreign policy prioritise?

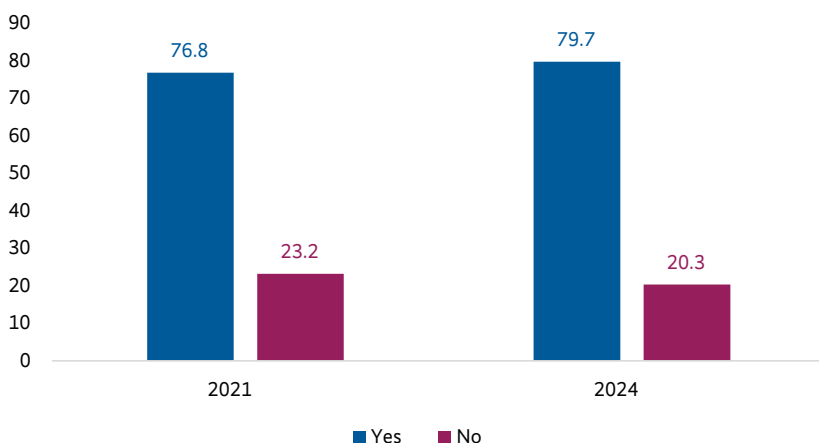
Figure 15.



However, 79.7 percent of the total respondents agreed that the participation of the Mongolian Armed Forces in peacekeeping operations should be increased, which is 3 percent more than the previous survey's responses (Figure 16).

In your opinion, does Mongolia need to expand its peacekeeping participation?

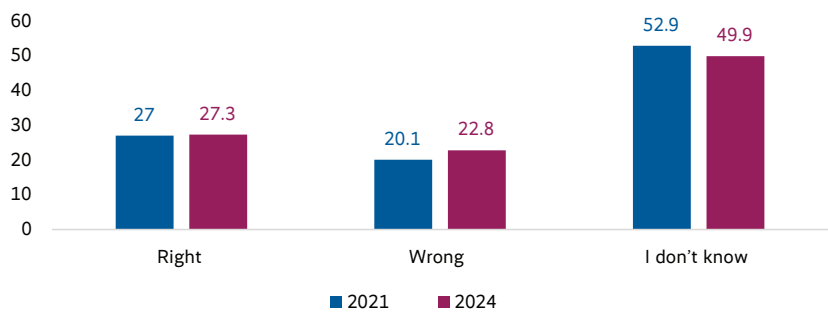
Figure 16.



Mongolia becoming a member in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has been quite debated among the public. Regarding this matter, there have not been significant changes in the youth's stance but the number of respondents who believe that membership is unnecessary has increased by 2.7 percent (Figure 17).

Is it right for Mongolia to become a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization?

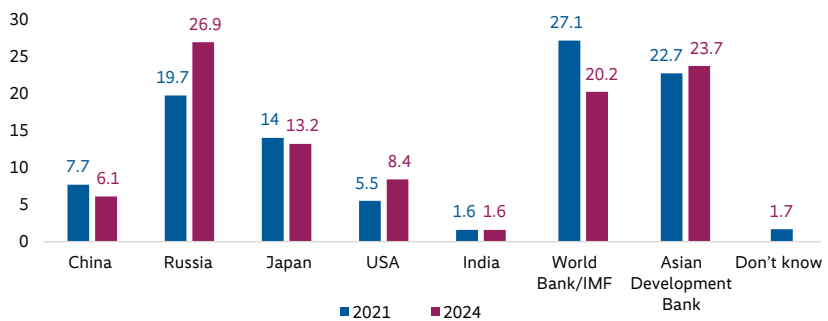
Figure 17.



Mongolia's economy is heavily dependent on foreign investment and assistance. Youths believe that loans and assistance from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank pose a lower risk in terms of security implications. Additionally, the number of youths who view loans and assistance from Russia as justified has relatively increased, while the number of those who consider loans and assistance from China as appropriate has decreased (Figure 18).

In your opinion, where should Mongolia receive most of its loans and assistance for the security implications?

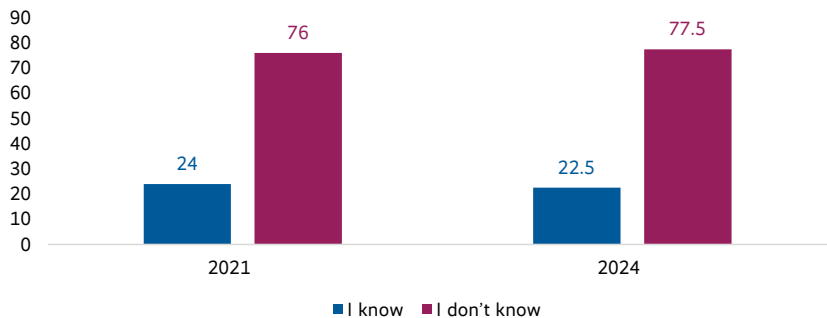
Figure 18.



For loans and assistance from foreign countries, some youths also believe that Japan is a good choice besides the two neighbouring countries. Furthermore, in recent years, there has been an increase in youth’s positive attitudes towards South Korea and Japan. In this regard, the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) established between Mongolia and Japan plays a crucial role in the bilateral relationship. However, the majority of 77.5 percent of youth does not know about the FTA (Figure 19).

Did you know Mongolia has ratified a free trade agreement with Japan?

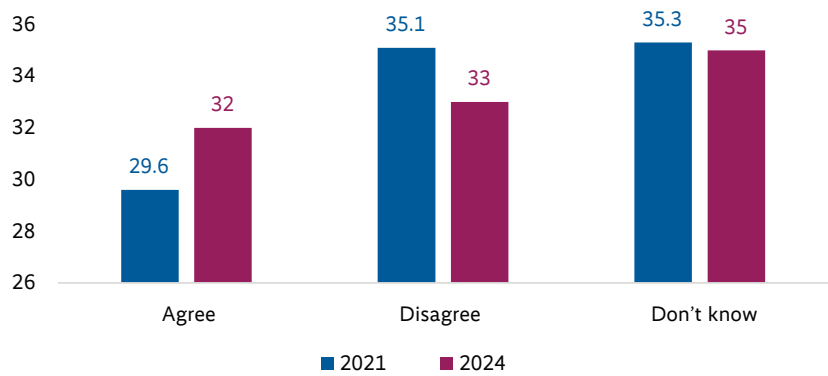
Figure 19.



There is considerable a debate among the public regarding the construction of the Eg River hydropower plant on the Selenge River tributary, and whether it will have a negative impact on the Lake Baikal ecosystem. In particular, the public raises the issue of Russia’s policy of deliberately not building the Eg River hydro-power plant. In the survey, 32 percent of youth believe that Russia opposes the construction of the hydroelectric power plant. Compared to the previous study results, youths who agreed with it have increased by 2.4 percent while those who disagreed have decreased by 2.1 percent. In other words, more youths tend to believe that Russia opposes the construction of the Egiin River hydroelectric power plant (Figure 20).

Russia opposes building a hydroelectric power plant on the Mongolian rivers that pour to Lake Baikal. Do you agree with this statement?

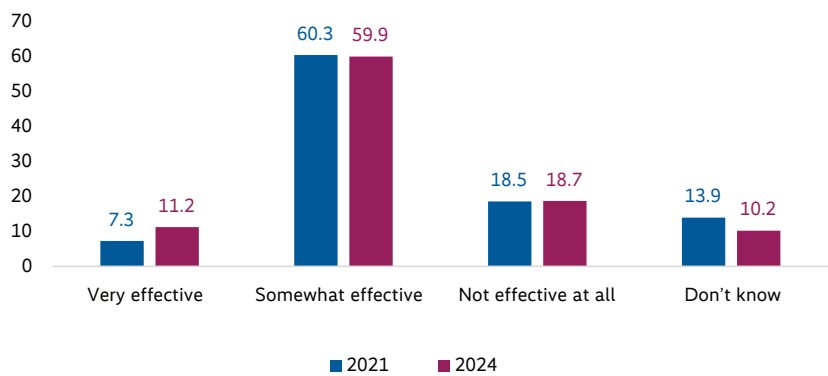
Figure 20.



Mongolian heads of state and government officials undertake official visits abroad in the context of Mongolia’s foreign policy. 60 percent of the respondents said that these official visits abroad were effective in some ways. Compared to the previous survey, “very effective” responses have increased by about 4 percent in this year’s survey (Figure 21).

How do you rate the Mongolian state leaders’ official visits abroad?

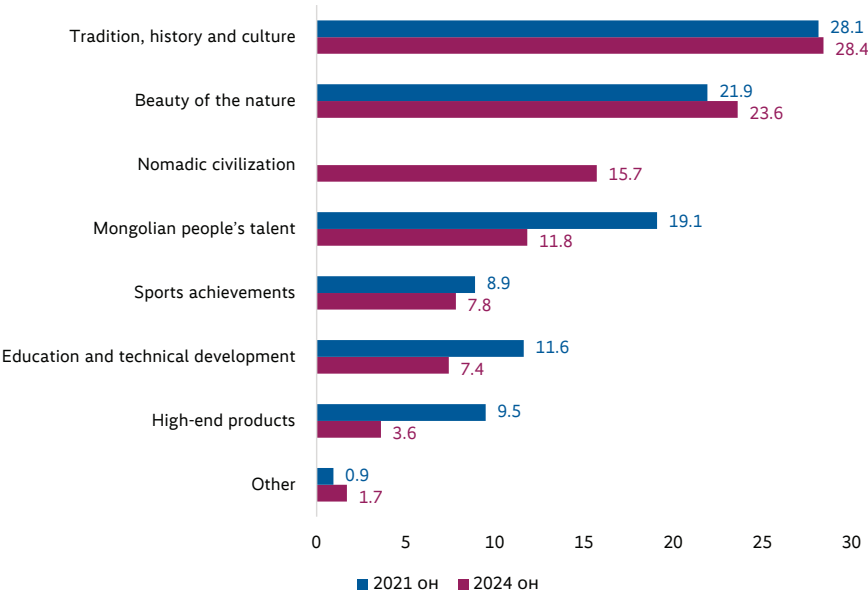
Figure 21.



The majority of respondents believe that the best way for Mongolia to present itself on the international stage is to promote its national traditions, history and culture, natural beauty, and its nomadic culture. An option of nomadic culture was added to this year’s survey and 15.7 percent of youth chose this response (Figure 22).

In your opinion, what is it for Mongolia demonstrate itself in the international arena?

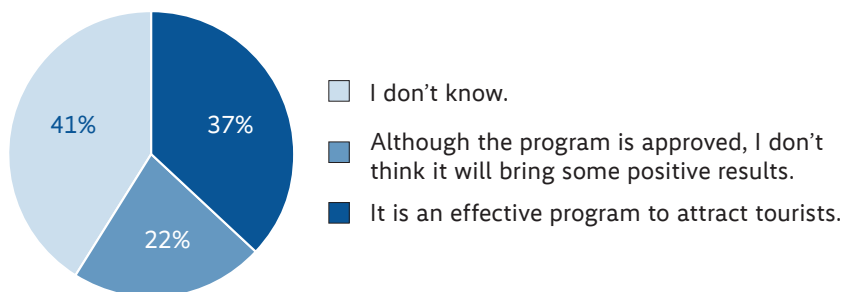
Figure 22.



The Government of Mongolia has declared 2023-2024 as the “Year to Visit Mongolia.” About 37 percent of the respondents see such an initiative as effective for attracting tourists, while 22 percent of them believe that there will not be significant outcomes regardless of the government’s initiative. However, over 40 percent of them were unaware of it (Figure 23).

What do you think about the Government's Go Mongolia program?

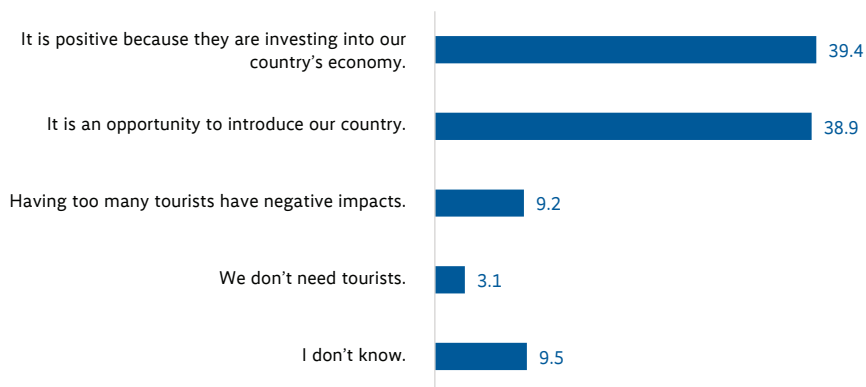
Figure 23.



In the future, Mongolia has the potential to develop tourism based on its nomadic culture and promote the country through tourists. Mongolian youths view foreign tourists positively as an opportunity for investment in the economy and for promoting the country. Although 78.3 percent sees foreign tourists positively, 12.3 percent sees them negatively (Figure 24).

What do you think about foreign tourists visiting Mongolia?

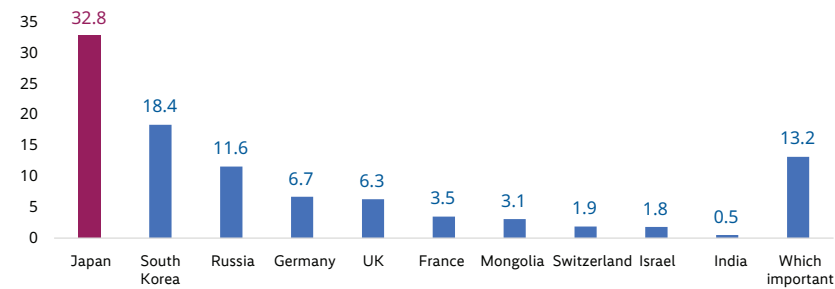
Figure 24.



It is a crucial matter which foreign company will build a metro for the strategic infrastructure project of Mongolia. 32.8 percent and 18.4 percent of youths chose Japan and South Korea for the project, respectively, which accounts for more than half of the total respondents. Additionally, 13.2 percent of them indicated that it does not matter which country is involved in the construction of the metro (Figure 25).

Which foreign company should construct the metro in Ulaanbaatar?

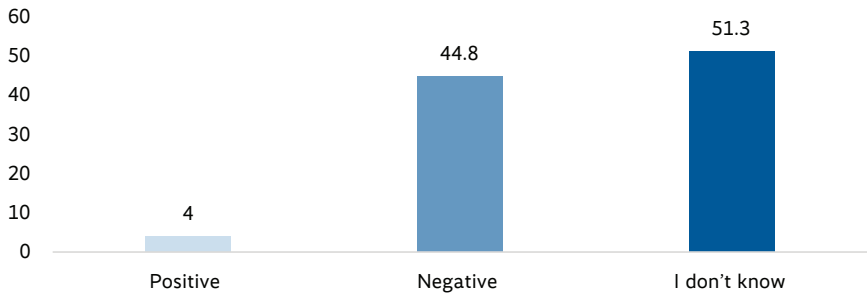
Figure 25.



In the survey, 44.8 percent of youths believe that the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine has a negative impact on Mongolia, while 4 percent think it has a positive effect. However, more than half of the respondents chose the answer “I don’t know” (Figure 26).

What type of impact does the Russia-Ukraine war demonstrate on Mongolia?

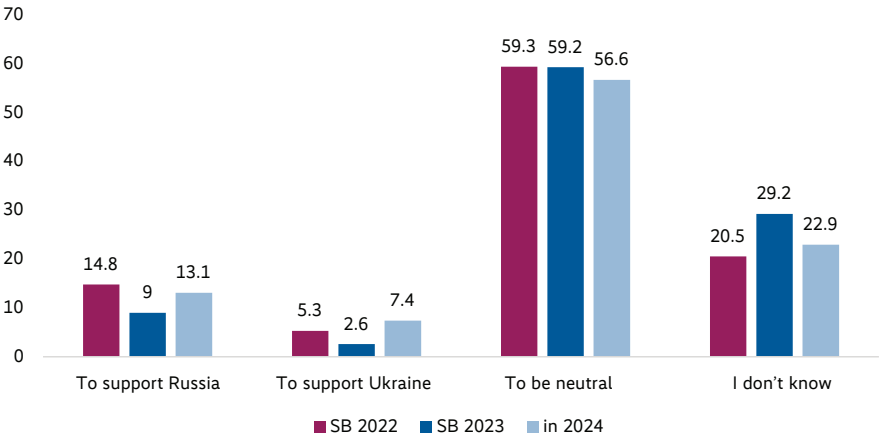
Figure 26.



Most youths express a view that Mongolia should remain neutral regarding the situation between Russia and Ukraine. The recent Social Barometer (SB) surveys asked respondents of all ages showed that 2.6 percent and 5.3 percent of them supported Ukraine in 2022 and 2023, respectively. Meanwhile, this youth survey shows only 7.4 percent of the total respondents support Ukraine (Figure 27).

In your opinion, what should be the Mongolia's stance regarding to the Russia-Ukraine situation?

Figure 27.

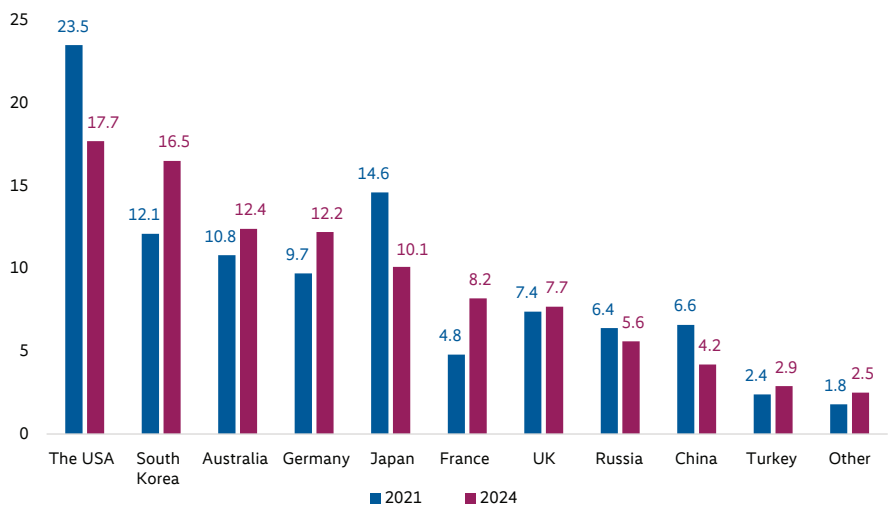


Youth Views on Soft Power

Mongolia has been influenced by the soft power policies of various countries around the world. While some countries have allocated specific resources within their foreign policies to implement targeted projects and programs, Mongolians have developed a tendency to travel and imitate the culture, values, and lifestyles of some countries. This is reflected in the youths' preferences for foreign music, films, and the desire to learn languages and cultures, as well as their aspirations to study, work, and live abroad. If given the opportunity, 17.7 percent of youths surveyed wanted to study in America, 16.5 percent in South Korea, 12.4 percent in Australia, and 12.2 percent in Germany. Compared to previous survey results, interest in studying in South Korea, Australia, Germany, and France has increased among youths (Figure 28).

If you have a chance to study abroad, which country would you choose?

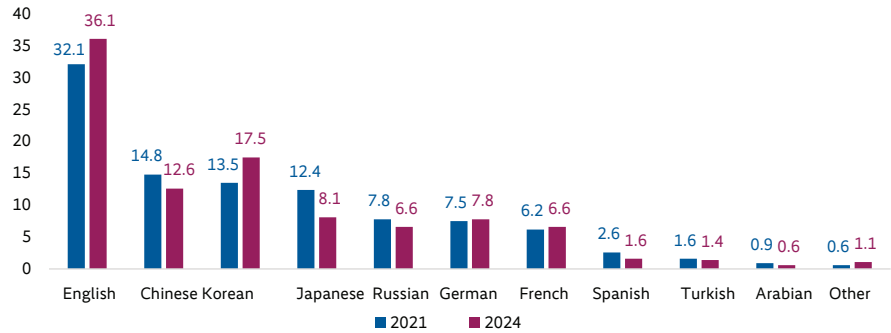
Figure 28.



In addition to English, Mongolian youths are interested in learning Korean and Chinese languages (Figure 29). Compared to previous survey results, there has been an increase in the number of youths interested in learning Korean and English.

If you have a chance to learn any foreign language, what language would you choose to learn?

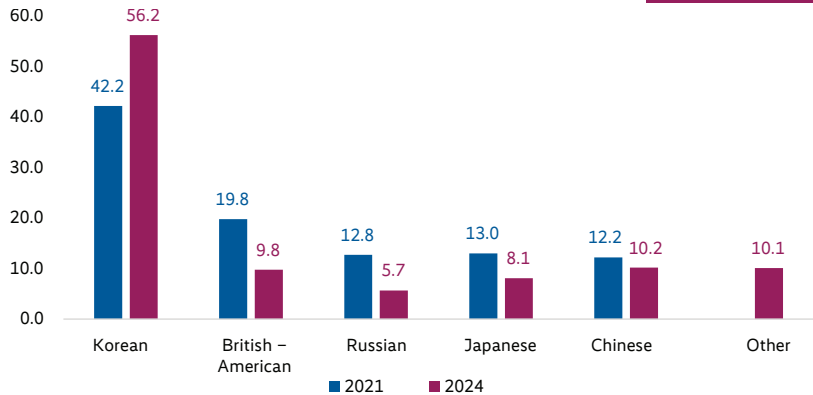
Figure 29.



Mongolian cuisine has a rich and unique history, shaped by nomadic lifestyles and the four seasons. In recent years, the trend of celebrating birthdays, work events, and various festivities at foreign restaurants has become normal among youth in urban areas. This has led to the introduction of certain culinary practices from other countries into Mongolia. According to the survey, 56.2 percent of the participants reported that they enjoy Korean food, while 10.2 percent of them stated that they like Chinese food. Compared to previous surveys, there has been a significant increase in the number of young people who enjoy Korean cuisine. Together, those who like Chinese and Korean food account for 66.4 percent (Figure 30).

What is your favorite cuisine?

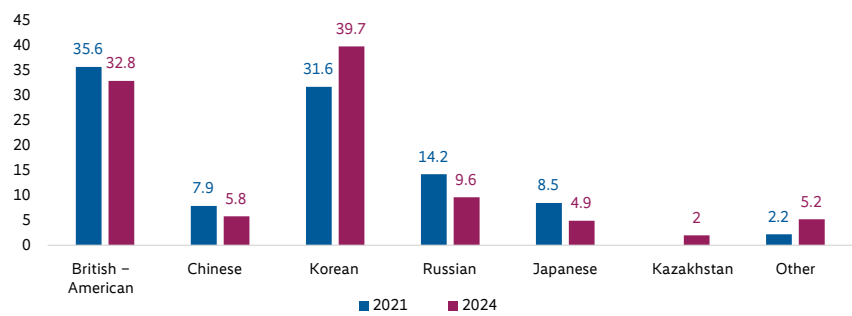
Figure 30.



Soft power policy is reflected in the interest and imitation of a country’s culture, arts, and film and television productions. The majority or 39.7 percent of youths responded that they enjoy watching Korean movies. Compared to previous survey results, there has been a decrease in the number of young people watching English-American films, while the number of those who watch Korean movies has increased (Figure 31).

Which country’s movies and TV contents do you like to watch?

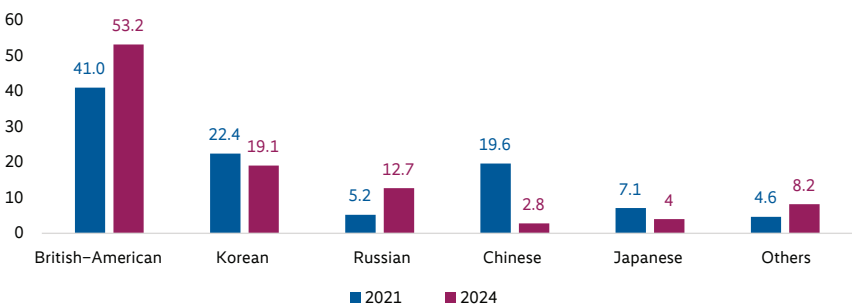
Figure 31.



Besides films and television productions, the type of music youths listen to reflects their mindset and aspirations. Among Mongolian youth, 53.2 percent enjoy listening to English-American music, while 19.1 percent prefer Korean music. Compared to previous survey results, there has been an increase in the number of youths who listen to English-American music (Figure 32).

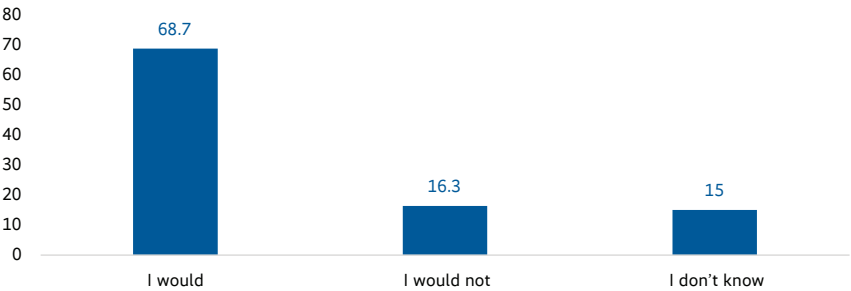
Which foreign music do you like to listen to?

Figure 32.



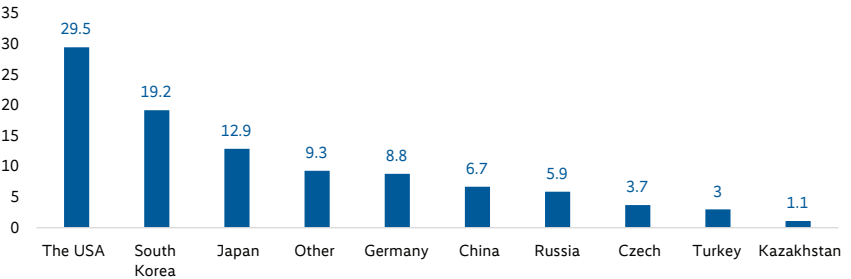
Due to the socioeconomic conditions and pressing social issues in the country, youths have developed a tendency to go abroad and not return. If given the opportunity to work and live in a foreign country, 68.7 percent of the total youths stated that they would take this opportunity. In contrast, 16.3 percent said they would not leave the country, and 15 percent chose not to answer (Figure 33). This indicates that the majority of youths plan to leave their motherland if they obtain a visa.

If you find an opportunity to work and live abroad, would you take it? **Figure 33.**



These youths primarily wish to go to the USA or South Korea and Japan. Additionally, there is a relatively high number of youths who wish to work and live in Germany, China, and Russia (Figure 34). Australia and Canada are included in “other”.

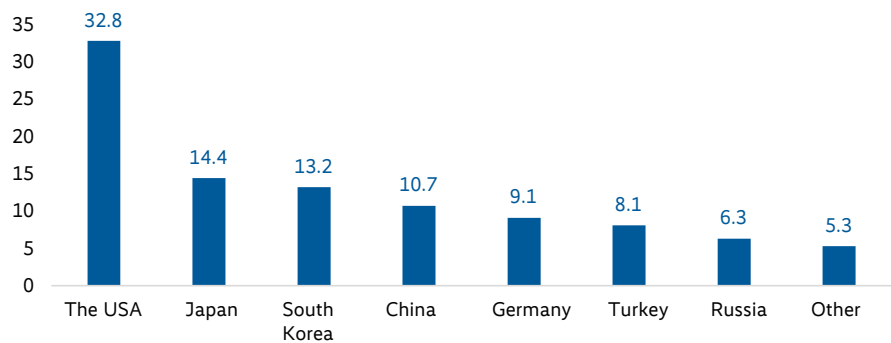
If there is an opportunity to work and live, which country would you like to go? **Figure 34.**



When examining the countries that are of more interest for traveling rather than living and working abroad, the USA, Japan, and South Korea ranked at top 3. China, Germany, and Turkey follow in the rankings. Russia is chosen by the least number of respondents, at only 6.3 percent (Figure 35).

If there is an opportunity to travel, which country would you like to visit?

Figure 35.



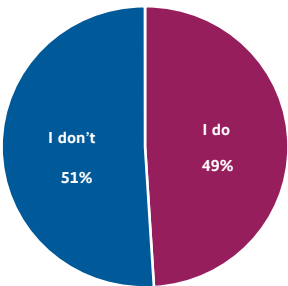
Religion

According to the statistics, 59.4 percent of the total population of Mongolia believe in a religion, while 40.6 percent do not. In the survey, 49 percent of the total respondents reported that they practice a religion, while 51 percent said they do not (Figure 36). Comparing these figures, it is evident that a relatively higher proportion of youth do not practice any religion.

Among the youth who believe in a religion, 58.8 percent identify as Buddhists, 19.5 percent as followers of Shamanism, 8.5 percent as Christians, 3.8 percent as Muslims, and 9.4 percent as adherents of other religions (Figure 37). There are many cases where those who practice shamanism also incorporate elements of Buddhism into their beliefs.

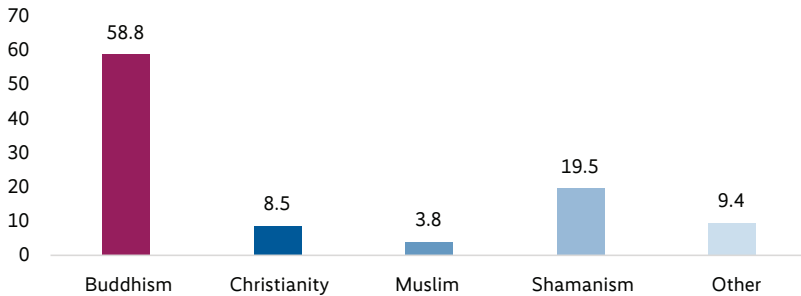
Do you worship or practice any religion?

Figure 36.



If you worship or practice, which religion do you worship or practice?

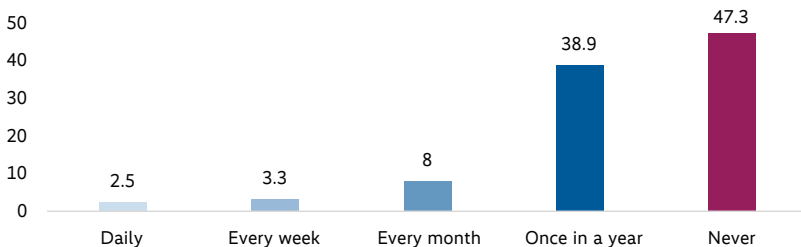
Figure 37.



Although 49 percent of the youth claim to believe in a religion, many do not have a deep understanding of their religious scriptures, doctrines, or teachings, and they rarely visit places of worship, which implies that their religious belief is rather symbolic. In the survey, 47.3 percent of the youths said that they never visit temples or churches, while 38.9 percent stated to make the visit once or twice a year. In other words, it can be concluded that 86.2 percent of them do not frequently visit places of worship and do not practice their religion deeply (Figure 38).

How often do you visit monastery, church, and mosque?

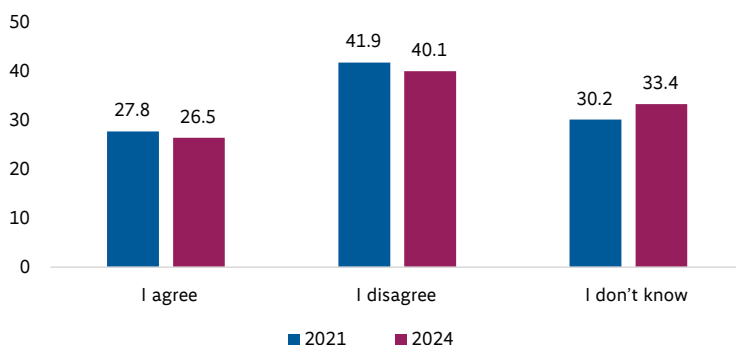
Figure 38.



Furthermore, to explore whether the youth believe that foreign religious organizations should not be strictly monitored due to the respect for religious freedom in Mongolia, the results indicate that 40.1 percent disagreed with this stance (Figure 39). This implies that there is a significant opinion advocating for some level of oversight on the activities of religious organizations.

As Mongolia respects freedom of religion, it is not necessary to monitor activities of foreign religious organizations in the country. Do you agree with the statement?

Figure 39.



Conclusion

Understanding and Attitudes towards International Relations and Global Events

- Youths continue to engage with and express their views on global events to a certain level. In particular, youths emphasize not only traditional issues of the world but also the negative consequences arising from wars. In this survey, 44.8 percent of respondents highlighted the adverse effects of the Russia-Ukraine war on Mongolia, with a significant majority expressing that Mongolia should remain neutral regarding this conflict. Compared to surveys involving individuals of all ages, youth demonstrate a slightly stronger inclination to support Ukraine.
- When exploring trends in youths' attitudes towards foreign countries, the two neighbouring countries, Russia and China, as well as South Korea and Japan differ from other countries. Given Mongolia's geographical location and geopolitical environment, youths underscore the importance of Russia and China for the country's future development and foreign policy. Among third neighbour countries, youths view South Korea and Japan relatively positively, while they do not consider other countries as close partners.

- There is a prevailing belief that in the future, China will emerge as a leading economic power in the world, while its influence in international relations will strengthen, resulting in increased competition and tensions with the USA. Regarding the USA, 31.5 percent believe it will maintain its current influence, while 36.4 percent expect its influence to strengthen more.

Mongolia's Security and Foreign Policy

- Majority of the youths emphasize the potential for Mongolia to become economically dependent. They perceive foreign cultural and religious influences as significant threats. Concerns are raised that this situation may persist over the next decade, with potential risks of cyberattacks and military invasion. There is a tendency among youth to view assistance from Russia as favorable for national security.
- Youths express a desire for Mongolia to diversify its economy, attract foreign investment, and protect the interests and the rights of Mongolians living abroad.
- About 41.5 percent of respondents are aware of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), while 58.5 percent are not. Half of the total respondents said "don't know" when asked about Mongolia's potential membership in the SCO; 27 percent believe Mongolia should join, while 23 percent do not see the need.
- Around 80% of youths believe Mongolia should increase its participation in peacekeeping operations, a 3 percent increase from previous surveys.
- On the topic of building a hydropower station on the Eg River, which flows into Lake Baikal, 32 percent agree that this would be opposed by Russia, reflecting a 2.4 percent increase from previous studies. Opinions on this matter are divided equally among those who agree, disagree, and those who are unsure.
- Youths assert that Mongolia should implement tourism policies rooted in traditional customs and pristine nature, as this could lead to significant economic investment and positively promote the country internationally. About 80 percent of the respondents view foreign tourists positively.

Impact of Soft Power Policy:

- The survey reflects a noticeable shift in national identity and mental resilience among youth. While many express a desire to leave Mongolia, they also show a keen interest in foreign music, films, and cultural products, adopting foreign daily habits such as cuisine and fashion.
- There is a significant influence from British-American, Chinese, and South Korean cultures. With the exception of the U.S., a majority of youths are learning the Korean language, watching Korean films, enjoying Korean cuisine, and aspiring to travel, work, and live in South Korea— the term “Korean Dream” could be coined.
- Regarding religious beliefs, while most youths identify as Buddhists, they only visit temples occasionally for traditional ceremonies such as Tsagaan Sar. They often lack deep knowledge of their faith’s core scriptures and teachings, and many confuse Buddhism with shamanism. However, youths who follow Christianity or Muslim have varying practices, including attending weekly church services or daily prayers, depending on their religious traditions.

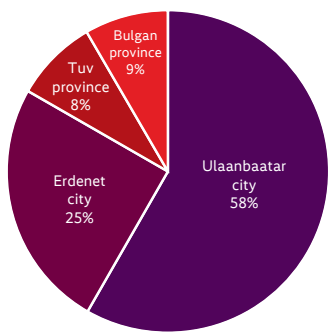
Appendix: Demographic indicators of the respondents

Fifty eight percent of respondents were from Ulaanbaatar city, 25 percent from Erdenet city, 8 percent from Tuv aimag, and

9 percent from Bulgan aimag, and 53 percent of respondents were women and 47 percent were men (Figure 42-43).

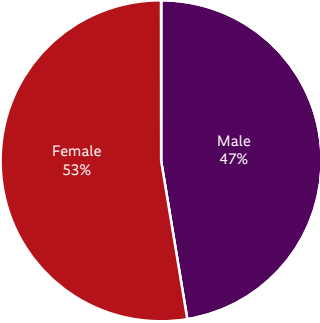
Location

Figure 42



Sex

Figure 43

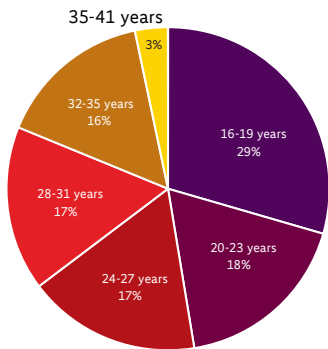


The age breakdown of the respondents was similar, with 96.7 percent aged 18-35 and 3 percent aged 36-41 (Figure 44).

In terms of employment, 15 percent and 26 percent worked in the private sector and the public sector, respectively. Eleven percent were self-employed, 36 percent were students, 8 percent were unemployed and 2 percent were herders (Figure 45).

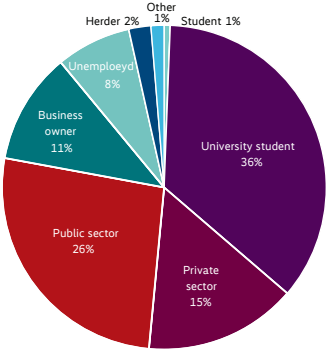
Age

Figure 44



Occupation

Figure 45



Young Mongolians and the World in 2024

This survey exploring views and perceptions of Mongolian youth between 18-35 years on international relations, Mongolian foreign policies and other countries was conducted in October 2024 by the Mongolian Institute for Innovative Policies with the support of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. It is therefore of special value for future research and policy makers by examining where and how Mongolian youth receive information about the outside world and how they value and rank foreign countries, languages and cultures.