




The Current State and Ways of Improving Islamic Education in the Republic of Kazakhstan

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Abstract

The active development of modern information and digital society activates the issues of prospects and the search for ways of high-quality training of applicants for higher education in the speciality “Islamic Studies” in Kazakhstan and the creation of a modern system of methodological tools for such training as a guarantee of success and competitiveness of specialists in the field of Islamic studies in modern conditions on the labour market. The purpose of the study is to substantiate the need to improve the system of methodological tools used in the process of preparing applicants for higher education in Kazakhstan. In the course of a study conducted at the Egyptian University of Islamic Culture Nur Mubarak (Almaty) and the College of the Astana Madrasa, a methodological system for training applicants for technical and professional, post-secondary, and higher education in the speciality “Islamic Studies” is developed. In the course of the study, a survey is conducted among students and teachers to examine the level of Islamic education in the Republic of Kazakhstan for the following components of the survey: motivation for learning, development of professional competencies, use of innovative technologies and techniques, ways to improve Islamic education, problems of Islamic education, social interest of the population regarding Islamic education. Recommendations for improving the quality of Islamic education are formulated. This research identifies potential advancements in the methodology for educating candidates at technical, vocational, post-secondary, and tertiary levels, with a focus on incorporating aspects of preparedness for Islamic education. The study's practical contribution lies in its development of an enhanced methodological framework. This framework aims to elevate the education of candidates pursuing technical and professional, post-secondary, and higher education, particularly in shaping future experts during their academic journey in Kazakhstan's specialized higher education institutions.

Keywords: religion, preparation of applicants for technical and professional, post-secondary, and higher education; Islamic Studies, readiness, model Islamic education.

Introduction

Given the numerous changes in the spiritual, cultural, socio-economic, and socio-political activities of the Republic of Kazakhstan, it can be argued that the country is entering a new historical period. With the assistance of the state and scientific research, the spiritual, cultural and literary legacy of the Kazakh people and the history of the country are comprehensively rethought based on various branches of science. Due to the active renewal of social trends in the Republic of Kazakhstan, the authority of the humanities is increasing, which solves problems related to humanity and determines specific tasks of the national education system (Achilov, 2012).



Today, the historical experience of Islamic studies in Kazakh society is of great interest to researchers of spiritual legacy. Since the beginning of the 19th-20th centuries, in the absence of state institutions, Islam was the only way to preserve spiritual culture and national revival. An education system was provided for Kazakhs through a network of Muslim schools and madrassas. The Muslim education system is part of the spiritual culture that influences the national identity of the Kazakh people (Malik, 2019).

To date, Islamic studies education in the Republic of Kazakhstan is a mechanism for preventing the spread of religious extremism and serves to educate young people interested in Islam to prevent their involvement in radical religious movements and sects. Thus, Islamic knowledge is formed as an integral part of socio-cultural development and changes. Seytakhmetova et al. (2015) tend to believe that Kazakhstan, in modern conditions, acts as a multi-confessional state in which appropriate conditions have been created for the favourable prosperity of religious associations and the realisation by every citizen of the right to freedom of religion, where there is a unified strategy aimed at the development of harmonious interreligious relations and effective cooperation between states and denominations.

Kartabaeva et al. (2015), conducting research in the field of development of Islamic education in Kazakhstan in modern conditions, concluded that it requires reform and institutionalisation. In numerous works, researchers have confirmed that the quality of Islamic education depends on spirituality, which is realised in Kazakh society with the progress of development and sustainable religious consciousness. The examination of the process of institutionalisation of Islamic education should be based on modern approaches and the search for a new methodology. There are numerous problems in the field of Islamic education related to the implementation of the idea of Islamic studies in the distribution of university educational programmes. However, research has proved that the improvement of the process of further development of Islamic education should be conducted based on the introduction of communicative practices of the Islamic model of education, its relevance, and adaptation in the general Kazakh integration educational process. Mustafayeva et al. (2023), investigating the diversity of education models in Islamic educational institutions of Kazakhstan, determined that they only partially preserved the foundations of classical educational practice and centuries-old traditions that are in relationship with spirituality and scientific knowledge. The study proves the need to integrate the educational paradigms of Islamic education into the modern socio-cultural reality. Today, the modelling of Islamic education to make professionally in demand among young people and meet their needs is necessary.

This research aims to provide both a theoretical foundation and practical enhancement for the educational methodologies used in training individuals in technical, professional, post-secondary, and higher education within the field of Islamic Studies in Kazakhstan. The study focuses on several key objectives: (1) Conducting an assessment of both domestic and international practices in delivering Islamic education at Kazakhstan's higher learning institutions and madrassa colleges, along with identifying potential improvements. (2) Evaluating the effects and characteristics of the proposed educational methodology on students pursuing technical, professional, post-secondary, and higher education in Islamic Studies. (3) Testing and validating the newly developed, author-specific methodology.

Given the current need for comprehensive Islamic studies education in the Republic of Kazakhstan, this study becomes particularly relevant. Such education is crucial for counteracting the rise of religious extremism and the recruitment of youth into radical religious groups and sects. Therefore, enhancing the educational strategies for students specializing in Islamic Studies is vital for the country's socio-cultural progression and structure.

Methodology

The study was conducted in two stages: (1) theoretical (analysis, comparison, systematisation, questioning, classification, and generalisation of theoretical data to assess the authors' opinions on



the level of research and determining the importance of the examined issues) and (2) practical (preparation of study materials and its conduct, evaluation of results).

The primary focus of this study was to examine the current challenges and identify effective strategies for enhancing the education of candidates specializing in "Islamic Studies" at technical, professional, post-secondary, and higher education levels in Kazakhstani universities and madrassa colleges. The initial stage involved a theoretical exploration of these issues. The methodologies employed included analysis, synthesis, analogy, comparison, systematization, surveys, and questionnaires. These approaches helped ascertain the educational standards for students in the "Islamic Studies" speciality at both university and madrassa levels in Kazakhstan.

The study outlines the principles of theological education, namely: orientation to the ideals of humanism, a differentiated approach to the cognitive needs of different categories of the population, scientific reliability of religious theories, accessibility of information to different categories of the population, close interaction with educational, scientific, and confessional structures and institutions, consideration of socio-cultural realities of ethnic and regional communities, consideration of national interests.

The empirical phase of the research was carried out at the Egyptian University of Islamic Culture Nur Mubarak in Almaty and the Astana Madrassa college. This segment involved 60 bachelor students and 20 faculty members from the Egyptian University of Islamic Culture Nur-Mubarak, along with 32 students and 16 educators from Astana Madrassa college. Surveys were conducted among these teachers and students to gauge the existing state and challenges of Islamic education in Kazakhstan. This survey aimed to understand the current dynamics and difficulties faced in the Islamic education system of the country, focusing on key elements that shape the modern developmental trajectory of Islamic education. The main factors influencing the types and content of training were highlighted. Among them: (1) the specific features of religious positions in society (monoconfessional or multi-confessional society); (2) the relationship of religious and secular components in the country; (3) the specific features of historical tradition in the country; (4) the purpose and features of the public education system in the field of religious studies.

According to the results of the survey, the ways of improving Islamic education are outlined: (1) the availability of specialists competent in the field of theology and religious studies; (2) accessibility of religious teachings to citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan; (3) compliance with the principles of dialogue for building interaction in conditions of multiculturalism and multi-confessional.

The study concretised the features and specific features of Islamic education; identified and classified the basic Islamic values; outlined the place of Islamic education in avoiding radicalisation of youth in Kazakh society, highlighted the conditions and principles for improving theological education in higher educational institutions and madrassa schools.

Results

Today, the system of Islamic religious education includes the following stages, among which: (1) religious literacy courses and memorisation of surahs of the Koran at mosques; (2) preparatory courses developed by those entering religious educational institutions; (3) charitable institutions that conduct the process of religious education; (4) training centres for Hafiz teaching professional recitation of surahs of the Koran from memory; (5) madrassa (colleges); (5) higher educational institutions; (6) institutes of knowledge improvement and qualifications of imams. Special attention should be paid to the Egyptian Nur Mubarak University of Islamic Culture, which was founded in 1993 but began its work in 2001 (Campbell, 2021; Turner, 2007; Erpay et al., 2014).

In 2015, to optimally solve problems in the field of religious education, create stability in the field of religion, consistency in the field of religious education, and develop Islamic education, the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan developed a concept for the development of religious education until 2020. Nevertheless, in Kazakhstan, there is no fully developed Islamic education



system with uniform educational standards, curricula, and work programmes. Therefore, the issues of creating an Islamic educational space that meets modern requirements and filling its content remain very relevant, but their solution depends on many factors, including the internal policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan regarding Islamic education and educational institutions (Miedema, 2014).

Based on the data of the Committee on Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Information and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan, in the first quarter of 2023 there are only 13 religious educational institutions operating in the country. The educational process is conducted both based on a grant and a paid basis. To date, in Kazakhstan, the terms of study, teaching methods, and the availability of textbooks related to Islamic education meet generally accepted requirements in the country (Bisht et al., 2022; Begalinova, 2022).

The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 483-IV “On Religious Activities and Religious Associations” (2011) based on the fundamental provisions of the Constitution. The Constitution guarantees every citizen the right to freedom of conscience, which means their ability to independently choose a system of spiritual values and the prohibition of discrimination on religious, ethnic, and other grounds.

According to the legislation, citizens have the right to freely conduct worship services, religious rites, ceremonies, and gatherings in mosques and other places of worship. Kazakhstan has a central border between the world’s greatest religions, namely Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism. After gaining independence, Kazakhstan has a unique model of a secular state, which is characterised by an active national policy for the formation and support of interreligious peace and harmony (Hjarvard, 2008).

According to the Address by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Leader of the Nation, N.A. Nazarbayev “Strategy Kazakhstan 2050: New Political Course of the Established State” (2012), the Kazakh people are proud to be part of the Muslim religion. Currently, the number of Muslim believers in Kazakhstan has increased substantially, as evidenced by the increase in the number of mosques and people in them. According to the results of an expert study, in 1979, there were only 25 mosques in Kazakhstan, and as of December 1, 2022, their number reached 2,695. There is an Islamic Republican religious association in Kazakhstan—the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan (SAMK). From the analysis of historical experience, it can be argued that the existing problems in the field of religious education hinder the development of appropriate models and ideological concepts that meet the modern development of Kazakh society.

In developing and implementing secondary vocational education programmes in madrassa colleges, the experience of foreign and internal theological education has been considered. The Al-Azhar University, the national Nur-Mubarak University, and Islamic educational practices in Uzbekistan are considered. The curricula of technical and vocational education and the educational plan are approved and put into effect by Protocol No. 3 of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, dated August 24, 2015. 011201 with 3 specialities “0112000—Islamic Studies”—an educational programme of technical and vocational education with the qualification of Imam Khatib.

Starting from the 2020-2021 academic year, colleges in the Republic of Kazakhstan began to develop curricula for a credit-modular system of education while applying the learning outcomes. Madrassa colleges use the programmes of leading Islamic universities, including Al-Azhar and Nur Mubarak, as a basis for developing their curricula. The study considers it necessary to strengthen both international ties and historical ties, namely with schools in Uzbekistan, Tatarstan, and Bashkortostan, where the tradition of Islamic education is deeply rooted (Moore, 2021; Sarsembayev et al., 2020).

According to the Committee on Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Information and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan, in the first quarter of 2023, only 13 private Islamic educational institutions operate in the country. It includes 12 religious educational organisations of



Islamic orientation, namely: Private institution College of madrassa “Aktobe”, College of madrassa “Abu Hanifa”, college of madrassa “Ushkonur”, college of madrassa “Saryagash”, college of madrassa “Shymkent”, college of madrassa “Astana”, college of madrassa “Abu Bakira As-Sydyk”, college of madrassa “Ural”, college of madrassa “Hibatullah Tarazi”, Egyptian University of Islamic Culture “Nur-Mubarak”, The Islamic Institute of Advanced Training of Imams at the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan, the Islamic Institute named after Husamuddin as-Syganaki at the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan.

The study highlights the following principles of theological education: (1) orientation to the ideals of humanism; (2) a differentiated approach to the cognitive needs of different categories of the population; (3) scientific validity of religious theories; (3) availability of information to different categories of the population; (4) close cooperation with educational, scientific, and confessional structures and institutions; (5) consideration of the socio-cultural realities of ethnic and regional communities; (6) consideration of national interests.

Based on the studies conducted by foreign researchers, it is noted that the content of any subject in the field of education, including the teaching of religion, reflects four discourses. These theoretical and methodological foundations require special attention since they allow typologising and classifying various paradigms of teaching religion in secondary and higher educational institutions. The four categories are based on the following characteristics: (1) educational programme based on academic tradition—a programme aimed at considering the object of research from an academic and scientific standpoint; (2) educational programme based on social efficiency—a programme aimed at providing knowledge that is considered important for a future member of society; (3) humanistic curriculum—a programme aimed at providing knowledge that is considered necessary for the individual development of each person; (4) socio-reconstructive educational programme—a programme in which priority is given to the glorification of social and political values.

Thus, the study was conducted. The sample size was 60 bachelors and 20 teachers of the Egyptian University of Islamic Culture Nur-Mubarak (Almaty), students in the speciality “Islamic Studies”, 32 students studying at the College of the Astana Madrassa, and 16 teachers of this college.

A survey was conducted among teachers and students to determine the current state and problems of the Islamic education system of the Republic of Kazakhstan. It is based on the method of a comprehensive examination of the issue of Islamic education in the Republic of Kazakhstan, which examines the main aspects of Islamic education that determine the conceptual vector of its development in modern times. The survey was based on the designated criteria by which teachers and students had to evaluate the system of Islamic education in the Republic of Kazakhstan and express their opinion on the improvement of Islamic education in madrassas and higher educational institutions. The following survey components were proposed for respondents: motivation for learning, development of professional competencies, use of innovative technologies and techniques, ways to improve Islamic education, problems of Islamic education, social interest of the population regarding Islamic education. The results of the survey data are presented in Figure 1.

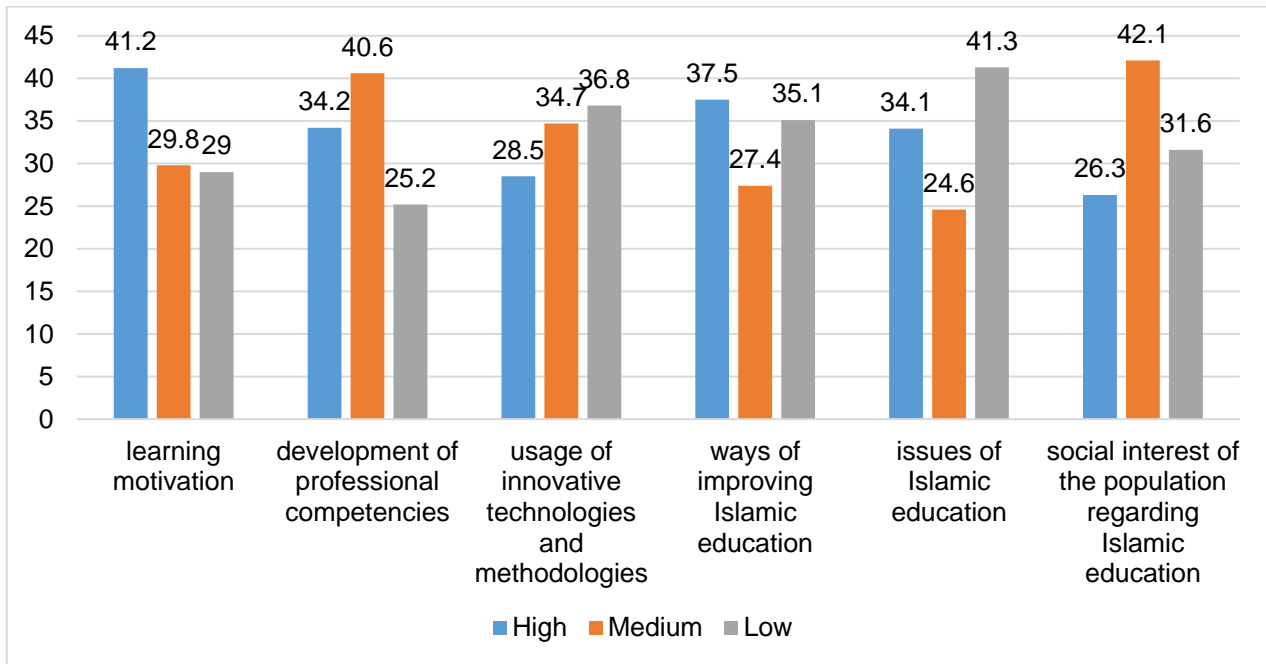


Figure 1. The results of a survey of teachers on the main trends and problems of the Islamic education system of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Following the results of the survey of teachers, Islamic education requires reorganisation and improvement by increasing motivation among applicants for education, the introduction of modern teaching methods and technologies. Based on the conducted survey among teachers, it is concluded that the choice of an effective method of teaching religion in educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan depends on many conditions, among which the following main factors affecting the types and content of education can be distinguished: (1) features of religious positions in society (monoconfessional or multi-confessional society); (2) interrelation of religious and secular components in the country; (3) features of the historical tradition in the country; (4) purpose and features of the public education system in the field of religious studies.

Based on the survey conducted, the following can be done to improve Islamic education: (1) the presence of specialists competent in the field of theology and religious studies, who have the competence to know about the specific features of life within confessions, possess a high-level methodology for implementing various religious practices and are able to promote interfaith dialogue of appropriate qualifications; (2) accessibility of religious teachings to citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan; (3) observance of the principles of dialogue for building interaction in conditions of multiculturalism and multi-confessionality as a guarantee of openness and accessibility of information, respect and tolerant attitude to the position of others.

In addition, in the course of the study, a survey was conducted among students, the results of which are presented in Figure 2.

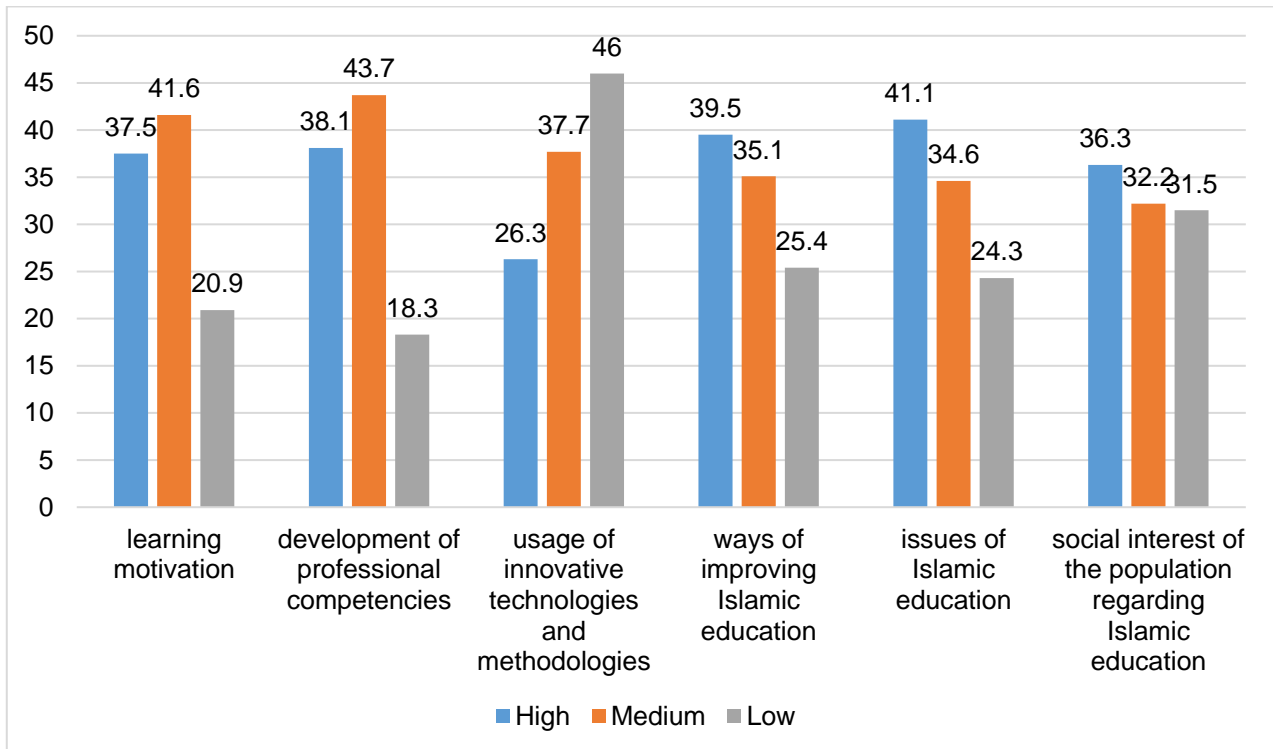


Figure 2. The results of a survey of students regarding the main trends and problems of the Islamic education system of the Republic of Kazakhstan

On the way to improving Islamic education in the Republic of Kazakhstan, according to students, it is proposed to use various media practices that should be implemented in the media space. The implementation of educational activities on the Internet is aimed at broad segments of the population. Media practices range from comments on events related to the church calendar to online communities and sites dedicated to getting to know the basics of the religious view of the world and research by religious scholars. Media activity is established in the following components: (1) the creation of own media projects: electronic newspapers, travel blogs, electronic resources dedicated to religious art (iconography, church architecture); (2) the creation of groups in social networks managed by priests; groups addressed to parents and related to the upbringing of children in the values of Islam.

During the examination of the system of Islamic education and its individual components, a number of studies were conducted to examine the history of the formation and development of the system of religious (spiritual) education of the Republican Islamic Religious Association “Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan”, as a result of which it was established out that currently the system of Islamic education consists of the following stages: (1) religious literacy courses and memorisation of surahs of the Koran at mosques; (2) preparatory courses developed by applicants to religious educational institutions; (3) charitable institutions that conduct the process of religious education; (4) training centres for Hafiz teaching professional recitation of the surahs of the Quran by memory; (5) madrassas (colleges); (6) higher education and educational institutions that provide religious education after higher education; (7) institute for the improvement of knowledge and qualifications of imams.

In the course of the study, it was established that qualitative knowledge and skills in the field of Islamic education allow performing professional tasks at a high level, which plays an important role for specialists in the field of Islamic studies in their future professional activities. Considering the requirements of today’s labour market in line with Islamic studies in Kazakhstan, the necessary specialists are capable of active thinking, self-criticism, and creativity. The use of modern methods in the field of Islamic education requires specialists not only to be active and able to find new



solutions but also to develop the skills to independently set and perform new professional and social tasks, the ability to quickly adapt and work in changing conditions, confidence, and responsibility.

Based on the conducted study, the following recommendations can be formulated to improve the quality of Islamic education, namely: auditing institutions where Islamic education is conducted to determine their importance in the higher education system for their quality licensing, conducting advanced training courses for imams and teachers involving of both secular teachers and civil servants, develop higher Islamic educational institutions, regulate the system of internships and training of Kazakh youth in Islamic educational institutions abroad, conduct cultural and educational events in madrassas and interreligious dialogues, and ensure joint cooperation.

Discussion

Currently, under the auspices of the Republic of Kazakhstan's Ministry of Education and Science, the field of "Islamic Studies" has been classified within the "Humanities" category. This classification follows the directives of the Minister of Education and Science: Order No. 17565, which approves the Classifier of Training Programs for Personnel with Higher and Post-Graduate Education (2018), and Order No. 17564, endorsing the Classifier of Specialties and Qualifications of Technical and Vocational, Post-Secondary Education (2018). Accordingly, "Islamic Studies" is categorized under "022 Humanities (except languages) 0221 Religious Studies and theology".

Many unresolved problems of Islamic education are related to the fact that curricula are implemented at different levels of the educational process, Islamic educational institutions themselves develop them, but implement them after approval by religious boards and leaders. One can observe the poor performance of the educational and methodological centre focused on the implementation of the concept of Islamic education and its educational and methodological support and monitoring of the quality of education (Zholalieva & Koylu, 2022; Sahu, 2020).

In the context of balancing secular and religious education in Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Education and Science, in 2014, mandated the introduction of the course 'Fundamentals of Secularism and Religious Studies' for ninth-grade students. This course, detailed in works by Nadirova et al. (2016) and Chandasiri (2020), allocates one hour per week, summing up to 34 hours annually. The course is designed with specific objectives: (1) To educate students on the value of secularism as a cornerstone of state stability and to understand religion within the bounds of secular knowledge. (2) To provide a comprehensive understanding of religious freedom, global and traditional religions, the history and current status of new religious movements, as well as negative and prohibited religious groups. (3) To instruct students in rejecting extremist, terrorist, and radical religious ideologies, fostering tolerance through spiritual and moral values, and shaping a humanistic worldview.

The new national course "Fundamentals of Secularism and Religious Studies" is based on the curriculum, which includes the basic principles of world religions, materials on the history of religion in the Republic of Kazakhstan, laws and principles of public administration. It should be considered that the state education system of the Republic of Kazakhstan is not religious but is based on intelligence and experience on an epistemological basis. The educational system of Kazakhstan is not far from the educational system of the Islamic world, however, unlike many Muslim countries, it is based on the legacy of enlightenment. Thus, the concept of "Islamic education" is understood as a single purposeful process of education and training, the spiritual and moral development of a person, the satisfaction of one's cognitive needs and interests, the socially important value that is of interest to a person, their family, society, or the state. That is why acquired competencies in Islamic studies are a complex, multifaceted phenomenon that includes the integration of aspects of theoretical and practical training and science, which requires in-depth and detailed research.

Sabki and Hardaker (2021), investigating the specific features of obtaining religious education for young generations, came to the conclusion that in modern conditions in Kazakhstan, all the necessary conditions have been created for unhindered access to higher religious education. It is proved that the religion of Islam is given an important place in the socio-cultural life of Kazakhstan



society. However, the results described above do not agree with this since higher religious education requires substantial updating and improvement through the use of the latest teaching methods and digital technologies. Moore (2021), examining the improvement of Islamic education, noted that institutions of higher education, where Islamic education is provided, require a substantial renewal of the teaching staff of all degrees of spiritual education, starting from schools and madrassas and ending with institutions of higher education. The obtained results allow agreeing with the opinion of the researchers since a qualitatively selected teaching staff will prepare a new generation of specialists in the field of Islamic education.

Khalid (2021) actively examined the issues of improving the quality of Islamic education in Kazakhstan, conducted by educational institutions based on a level structure. The organisation of the educational process of higher education institutions is conducted in accordance with the educational standards of the state, after which applicants for education are issued a corresponding document on the completion of the training session. However, the study considers it necessary to further develop the institutionalisation of this process, which should be in conjunction with the formation of communicative practical Islamic models of education, its restoration, and adaptation in the general integration educational process of Kazakhstan. The development of Islam in Kazakhstan was actively investigated by Sahin (2018) and Turner (2007). Numerous scientific achievements have determined that Islamic education in Kazakhstan, in comparison with other countries of the region, is an important part of conventional culture and is a reinforcing factor of social and political discourse. Considering the research conducted in this area, there is an opinion about the need to improve Islamic education in Kazakhstan based on active socio-economic progress both in the country and abroad.

Aristovnik et al. (2020), investigating the economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, came to the conclusion about the existing spiritual crisis and the active growth of social tension in the religious field of the country. Since gaining independence, the state power did not give proper control over the religious field in spiritual life, namely in the Islamic environment, there was a development of branches of Islam—radical and extremist. This trend has led to the active development of propaganda of Islamist extremist movements in Kazakhstan. Thus, numerous Islamic educational institutions were assigned a role to involve young people in radical movements. The results described above allow agreeing with this since, considering the factors described above, there is a need for legal regulation of the activities of Islamic religious organisations and educational institutions in the republic to resist the ideas of banned extremist organisations based on the values of traditional educated Islam.

Peyrouse (2007), Shaikhutdinov (2013) and Achilov (2012), investigating religious issues among the population in Kazakhstan, established that about 80% of the population in the country consider themselves Muslims, but there is a tendency in society to receive an Islamic education. Due to the active growth in the number of religious educational institutions on the part of the legislation, there are not enough laws and concepts regulating their activities that can bring the work to a single standard. However, one should disagree with the opinion of researchers because, despite the large number of institutions of Islamic education, there is a problem with the quality of teaching. Due to the monitoring conducted in Islamic educational institutions, the low level of qualification of the teaching staff was determined, the missing secular components in educational programmes were identified, a unified system of training religious specialists, the need to develop modern curricula from religious disciplines, the lack of a state license for the implementation of the educational process of both higher and secondary general education, proper educational methodological and material-technical component.

Based on the data obtained, conclusions are drawn about the presence of highly specialised religious knowledge among specialists who, as a result, are not able to compete in the labour market and the combination of new challenges of modernity in Islam and opposition to radical ideologies in their field of clerics. This tendency prevents the younger generation from finding a job, which pushes them to change their religious beliefs (Shaikhutdinov, 2013; Tazmini, 2001).



Thus, based on the analysis of Islamic education in the Republic of Kazakhstan, it can be concluded that it is at an unsatisfactory level and requires substantial updating and improvement by modernising the training of specialists in the field of Islamic studies, the introduction of secular subjects and the development of modern training programmes.

Conclusions

The study concluded that high-quality professional training of applicants for higher education in the speciality “Islamic Studies” in universities and colleges of madrassa of the Republic of Kazakhstan should be based on a system of methodological tools for the implementation of which it is necessary to predict the effective component of the content of education.

Teaching Islam requires careful preparation from a specialist in this field, which allows adapting to innovations in Islam studies. The analysis of scientific literature allowed systematising the idea of the current state of Islamic education in the Republic of Kazakhstan and identifying the main ways to improve it. The conditions and principles following which it is possible to improve theological education in higher educational institutions and colleges of madrassas in the Republic of Kazakhstan are highlighted.

Based on the survey conducted among teachers and students, which was based on the method of a comprehensive analysis of the issue of Islamic education in the Republic of Kazakhstan, the ways of improving Islamic education and problems regarding its improvement, determining the conceptual vector of its development in modern times, are considered. In the process of conducting the survey, the following components of the survey were used: (1) motivation for training, (2) development of professional competencies, and (3) use of innovative technologies and techniques. The results of the survey of students led to the conclusion that the existing system of Islamic education requires reorganisation and improvement.

In the course of the study, the history of the formation and development of the system of religious (spiritual) education of the Republican Islamic Religious Association “Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan” was examined. Based on the survey conducted among teachers, it is concluded that the choice of an effective method of teaching religion in educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan depends on many conditions, among which the main factors affecting the types and content of education are highlighted. Recommendations for improving the quality of Islamic education are formulated.

The results of the study indicate substantial positive changes in the training levels of applicants for higher education in the speciality “Islamic Studies” in universities and colleges of madrassas of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which proves the effectiveness of the developed system of methodological tools, which is defined as a professional necessity in the future activity of a specialist in the field of Islamic studies.

Prospects for further research are aimed at developing a wider range of methodological tools to form the process of training applicants for higher education in the speciality “Islamic Studies” in universities and colleges of madrassa of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The obtained primary results require the expansion and deepening of the problem being developed, therefore, the development of a broader set of scientific and methodological support will contribute to the formation of systemic knowledge about future activities and the development of skills and abilities to use them in practice.

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