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THE CURRENT STATE AND WAYS OF IMPROVING ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

This article provides an in-depth analysis of the Islamic education system in Kazakhstan, with special attention paid to its compliance with state educational standards. The study is aimed at introducing modern educational methods into curricula, its purpose is to study the processes of introducing modern education into Islamic curricula and to assess the impact of the introduction of modular, credit-modular systems on the training of religious specialists. During the study, an analytical systematic review of the literature was conducted using the PRISMA methodology based on publications in leading scientific databases (Google Scholar, Scopus, and Springer Link) for the period from 2009 to 2023. As part of the research methodology, a comparative comprehensive analysis of regulatory legal acts and statistical data related to the Islamic education system, as well as programs and methodological approaches of educational institutions training specialists in Islamic studies, was conducted. As a result of the study, 51 of the most relevant publications were selected, and based on them, the processes of adapting the Islamic education system to modern academic requirements were studied. The scientific and practical significance of this study is explained by its contribution to the development of educational methods in accordance with modern academic standards, while preserving religious values and traditions. In conclusion, the increase in the quality of training qualified specialists in Islamic studies in Kazakhstan is the result of effective integration into the secular educational environment. In addition, the need for further adaptation of educational programs to expand the network of Islamic educational institutions and the importance of continuing research aimed at training specialists in the field of religion were noted. This, in turn, will undoubtedly make a significant contribution to the social stability and cultural development of Kazakhstan.

Key words: Islamic education, madrasah colleges, educational standards, Islamic studies, religious and secular values.

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Қазақстан Республикасындағы ислам білімін жетілдірудің қазіргі жағдайы мен жолдары

Бұл мақалада Қазақстандағы исламтанулық білім беру жүйесінің э терең талдау жасалып, мемлекеттік білім беру стандарттарымен біріктіруге назар аударылды. Зерттеу оқу бағдарламаларына заманауи білім беру тәсілдерін енгізуге және оқу процесінде ханафи мәзһабының дәстүрлерін сақтауға бағытталады. Мақсат – дәстүрлі ислам білімдерін заманауи академиялық талаптарға бейімдеу процестерін зерделеу және модульдік және кредиттік-модульдік жүйені енгізудің дін мамандарын даярлауға әсерін бағалау. Зерттеу әдістемесі аясында исламдық білім беру жүйесі бойынша нормативтік-құқықтық актілерге, статистикалық мәліметтерге және Исламтану мамандарын дайындайтын мекемелердің бағдарламалары мен әдістемелік тәсілдеріне салыстырмалы жан-жақты талдау жүргізілді. Зерттеу барысында 2009 жылдан 2023 жылға дейін жетекші ғылыми дерекқорлардағы (Google Scholar, Scopus және Springer Link) жарияланымдарды қамтитын PRISMA әдістемесін пайдалана отырып, әдебиеттерге талдамалы жүйелі шолу жасалды. Сәйкестендіру, скрининг, талдау кезеңдерінен кейін исламдық білім беру жүйесін заманауи академиялық талаптарға бейімдеу процестерін зерделеудің ең өзекті 51 басылымы таңдалды. Бұл зерттеудің ғылыми-тәжірибелік маңыздылығы оның діни құндылықтар мен дәстүрлерді сақтай отырып, қазіргі заманғы академиялық стандарттарға сәйкес келетін білім беру тәсілдерін дамытуға қосқан үлесімен түсіндірілді. Қорыта айтқанда, зайырлы білім беру ортасына тиімді ықпалдасу Қазақстанда білікті Исламтану мамандарын даярлауды жақсартатынын көрсетеді. Сондай-ақ исламдық білім беру мекемелерінің желісін кеңейту үшін білім беру бағдарламаларын одан әрі бейімдеу қажеттілігін және дін саласындағы мамандарды

лім беру тәжірибесін, білім алушылардың әртүрлі қажеттіліктерін қанағаттандыру үшін бейімдеу қабілетіне бағытталған зерттеулерді жалғастырудың маңыздылығын айқындайды. Бұл өз кезегінде Қазақстанның әлеуметтік тұрақтылығы мен мәдени дамуына елеулі үлес қосады.

Түйін сөздер: Ислам білімі, медресе колледждері, білім стандарттары, исламтану, діни және зайырлы құндылықтар.

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Современное состояние и пути усовершенствования исламского образования в Республике Казахстан

В этой статье рассматриваются изменения исламского образования в Казахстане, с особым акцентом на том, как оно соотносится с государственными образовательными стандартами. Исследование направлено на внедрение современных методов обучения в программы обучения, при этом сохраняя ханафитские традиции. Цель исследования состоит в том, чтобы изучить способы, с помощью которых традиционные исламские знания адаптируются к современным академическим требованиям, а также оценить влияние кредитно-модульной и модульной системы на подготовку специалистов-религиоведов. Методология исследования включала сравнительный и полный анализ законов, регулирующих систему исламского образования, а также статистических данных, программ и методических подходов учреждений, обучающих специалистов в области исламоведения. Методология PRISMA была использована для проведения аналитического систематического обзора литературы, включающей публикации за период с 2009 по 2023 год из ведущих научных баз данных (Google Scholar, Scopus и Springer Link). После этапов идентификации, отбора и анализа были выбраны 51 наиболее актуальных работ, посвященных методам адаптации исламского образования к современным академическим стандартам. Исследование имеет научную и практическую ценность из-за того, что оно помогает создать методы обучения, которые соответствуют академическим стандартам при сохранении религиозных ценностей и традиций. Исследование показало, что эффективная интеграция в светскую образовательную среду способствует повышению качества образования исламских специалистов в Казахстане. Кроме того, подчеркнута необходимость дальнейшей адаптации учебных программ, чтобы расширить сеть исламских учебных заведений и подготовить более квалифицированных преподавателей, способных удовлетворять разнообразные потребности учащихся. Это, в свою очередь, способствует социальной стабильности и культурному развитию Казахстана.

Ключевые слова: исламское образование, медресе-колледжи, образовательные стандарты, исламоведение, религиозные и светские ценности.

Introduction

Islam is a religion that has had a significant impact on the culture and social development of Kazakhstan. Located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Kazakhstan is a strategic region that plays an important role in the cultural exchange between East and West. According to the National Bureau of Statistics of Kazakhstan in 2024, about 75% of the country's population is Muslim (Figure 1). This figure shows the deep roots of the history of Islam in the region, as well as the close connection of Kazakhstan's national identity and cultural values with Islam.

The process of adoption of Islam on the territory of modern Kazakhstan began in the southern and western regions of the Great Silk Road and developed over several centuries. The first spread of Islam was carried out through cultural and trade exchanges, which contributed to the penetration of new moral and spiritual values among the local pop-

ulation. Over time, Islam became an integral part of Kazakh society and had a great influence on the formation of its national culture. The influence of Islam spread to the main spheres of Kazakh society, such as art, education, law and moral norms, strengthened the cultural and spiritual heritage of the region, and ensured the stability of social structures.

Islam, which forms the backbone of Kazakh society, plays a particularly important role in preserving social cohesion and upholding traditional values. Its influence is not limited to the religious sphere, but covers wide geographical and cultural spaces. Islam strengthens ties between regional cultures, serves as a channel for the exchange of knowledge and experience, and supports the interaction of Muslim communities in Central Asia. Today, Islam is reflected not only as a religious system in Kazakhstan, but also as an important cultural and social factor deeply influencing the formation of national identity and social harmony.

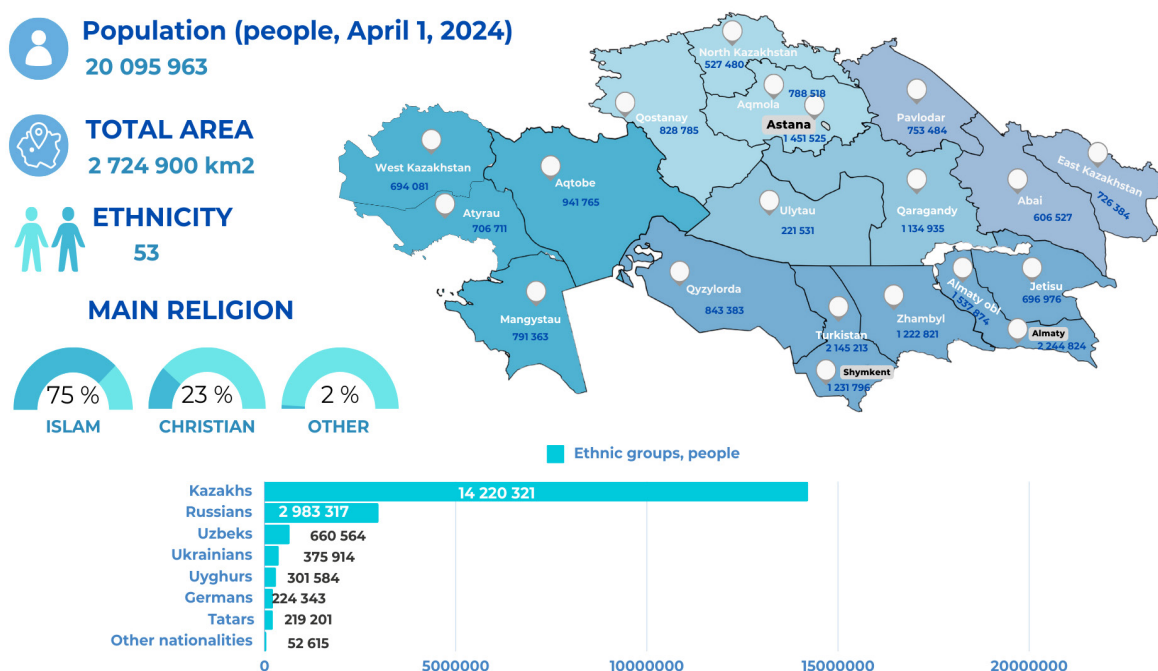


Figure 1 – Information about Kazakhstan (Bureau of National Statistics, 2024).
Source: completed by the author

Current spiritual, cultural, economic and socio-political changes indicate the beginning of a new era in the history of Kazakhstan. As noted by President Kasym-Jomart Tokayev, Kazakhstan, as part of the Muslim civilization, has felt the significant influence of Islam on the development of religion, culture, education and science for more than a thousand years. Islamic values have reached our days through the legacy of great Kazakh thinkers Abay, Shakarim, Mahmud Kashkari. In addition, immeasurable contribution to the tradition of virtue and wisdom was made by the outstanding scholars of the Eastern Renaissance era Abu Nasir al-Farabi, Yusup Balasagun and Mahmud Kashkari. This spiritual heritage proves the need for its study and preservation as an important element in the formation of the national identity of Kazakhstan.

President Kasym-Jomart Tokayev underlined in the VII Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions held in Astana on September 14, 2022, the need of religion in the educational system and the encouragement of love and tolerance (Tokayev, 2022). Emphasizing kindness and tolerance as fundamental human virtues, he noted the part religious leaders may play in fighting extremism and violence. In this regard, Islam is rather significant in preserving Kazakhstan’s cultural identity and sup-

porting societal norms as well as in advancing kindness and spirituality.

Long-standing social, historical, and cultural elements combine complexly to produce the present situation of the Islamic education system in Kazakhstan. Studies reveal that current technology allow one to change pedagogical approaches and raise the quality of Islamic education. Dodi I. (2020) underlines the need of reviewing and upgrading the Islamic education system in line with contemporary needs and social expectations. These suggestions identify significant directions to guarantee development in the field of Islamic education and its harmonic integration into the education system of Kazakhstan.

This integrative approach enhances the quality of the Islamic education system to meet modern standards while preserving national characteristics. These measures contribute to a strong and effective system that meets the cultural and educational needs of society.

Zholmukhan, Tansholpan and Kairbekov, Nurlan in their research (Zholmukhan and Kairbekov, 2024) emphasize the importance of integrating moral and ethical values into the system of Islamic education in Kazakhstan, which allows students to better adapt to life in a post-secular society. Similarly, A. Mustafayeva emphasize the relevance of spiri-

tual renewal and re-evaluation of cultural values that contribute to strengthening national identity in the context of growing religious diversity (Mustafayeva and others, 2023).

Thus, considering cultural and religious aspects, the development of the system of Islamic education in Kazakhstan calls for the enhancement of teaching strategies and synchronization of religious and scientific approaches. This kind of coordinated approach enhances national identity and provides conditions for the development of a stable and efficient educational system satisfying current needs.

Even although Islamic education in Kazakhstan has advanced, the primary challenges will still be the harmonizing of secular and religious values and the lowering of the influence of extreme ideologies. The responses to these issues will guarantee the ongoing expansion of Islamic knowledge and support the construction of a compassionate and inclusive society.

The subject of Islamic studies is especially important in our time. It is not limited to religious education; on the contrary, it aims to prevent young people from absorbing harmful ideas. Moreover, Islamic studies enhances the ability to counter radicalism and extremism by explaining traditional Islamic principles and ideas in a historical and cultural context. This method serves to enhance the spiritual resilience and national identity of a society.

This study aims to analyze the main trends and problems of development of the Islamic education system in the Republic of Kazakhstan. To achieve this goal and identify the main factors influencing the evolution of this field, historical, retrospective, and cultural methods are used. The results of the study show the importance of the impact of global changes on the education system and religious practice. In addition, the need for continuous academic research and scholarly engagement to better understand and improve the Islamic education system in Kazakhstan is emphasized. This study identifies important elements in the development of the Islamic education system and suggests promising ways to improve this field, taking into account global and national trends.

Research Questions:

1. What is the current situation with madrasah colleges in the system of Islamic education in Kazakhstan?
2. What teaching methods are mainly used in madrasah colleges in Kazakhstan?

Scientific contribution of the article:

Studying various aspects of Islamic educational practice in Kazakhstan, this article focuses on the

core values of madrasah colleges and their role in the national, cultural and spiritual heritage. The current status of madrasah colleges is critically analyzed, and their historical features and significance in the education system of Kazakhstan are comprehensively reviewed.

The article systematizes the fundamental concepts and methods of Islamic education and their compatibility with modern pedagogical strategies. The study comprehensively assesses the possibilities of combining traditional religious education and modern pedagogical methods, and presents methodological foundations for improving the learning experience. The national peculiarities of the model of Islamic education used in Kazakhstan are also analyzed and its relationship with global educational standards is determined. Special attention is paid to the role and influence of this model in the national education system. This study contributes to a deep understanding of the theoretical and practical aspects of the Islamic education system and makes an important contribution to determining the possibilities of its integration into the national and world educational space.

This study provides a deeper understanding of the Islamic education system in madrasahs in Kazakhstan and helps to identify ways to ensure their sustainable development and effective integration into the national education system.

As a result, it provides a comprehensive understanding of the role of madrasahs in education and serves as a basis for creating strategic plans aimed at increasing their relevance in society and ensuring their adaptation to modern requirements.

Scientific research methodology

The main purpose of the study is to assess the impact of modular and credit-modular systems on the professional training and educational level of religious studies specialists, and to explore ways of adapting traditional Islamic knowledge to modern academic criteria. The purpose of this study is to examine strategies for improving the effectiveness of Islamic educational institutions, as well as their prospects for integration into the modern educational system.

The literature review began with research questions aimed at identifying key studies on the topic. The research questions were formulated using keywords. After several search tests, some keywords were adjusted to get more accurate results. As a result, the most recent terms used in all scientific databases were used.

The keywords used in the search were “Islamic Education”, “Religious Education”, “Islamic Education” and “Kazakhstan”. The relevance of each identified article was assessed by analyzing titles, abstracts, keywords and conclusions. Logical operators “AND” and “OR” were used to add keywords to search queries. Articles published between 2009 and 2023 were included in the analysis. This method allowed to identify the most relevant and important literature on the research topic.

This analysis divides the articles into three groups: (1) those directly related to our topic; (2) indirectly related; (3) completely unrelated and excluded. The next step was to scrutinize the full texts of the selected articles and then consider them for acceptance or exclusion based on the criteria we defined.

The search was conducted using the scientific databases Google Scholar, Scopus and Springer Link. To efficiently organize this process, the PRISMA methodology (Moher et al., 2009) was used,

which includes identification, screening, and inclusion stages (Figure 2).

The PRISMA systematic approach allowed us to structure the search results and conduct a comprehensive literature review. This method became the basis for identifying the main directions, current problems and new opportunities for Islamic education in Kazakhstan. Thus, the results of the research were clear and systematized, creating conditions for a deep understanding of the topic.

The initial selection of materials was systematically collected and structured. A preliminary information map was developed for each article, showing key details of the study and indicators of compliance with the inclusion criteria. In the next step, each article was scrutinized again. At this stage, a data extraction template was prepared for each study, which included the main findings, the methodology used and aspects of practical application of the study results.

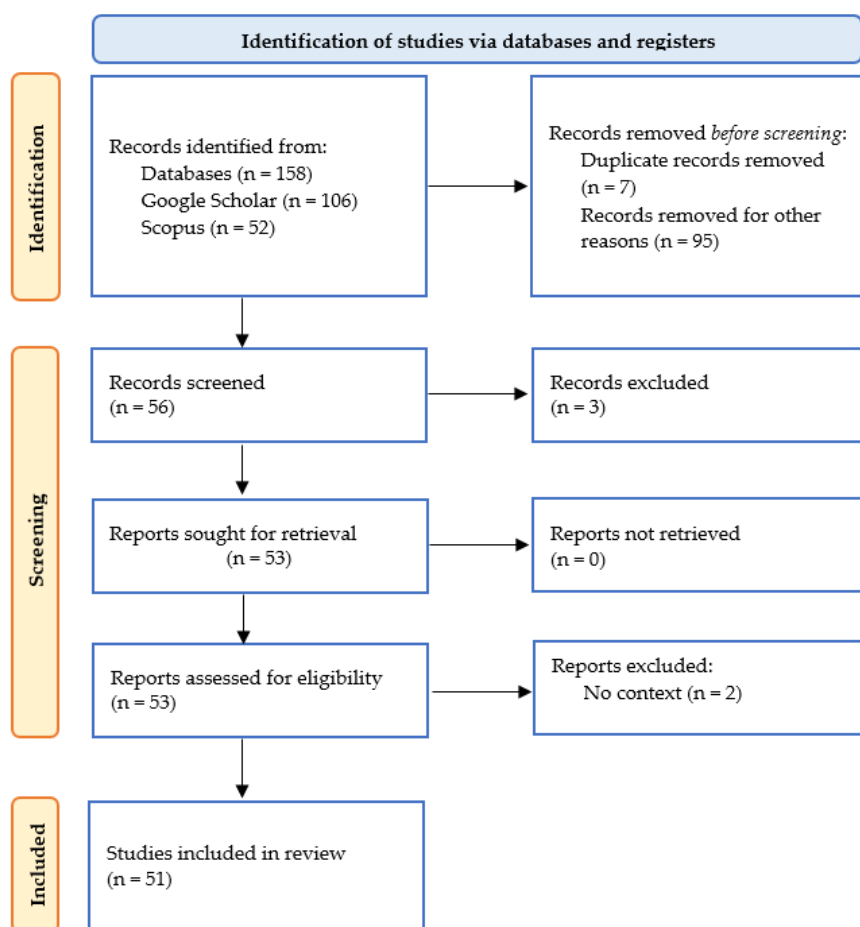


Figure 2 – PRISMA flow diagram of studies’ screening and selection.

Source: completed by the author

The table showing research on Islamic education in Kazakhstan shows that the interest of scholars in this field is growing and research is developing rapidly. The dynamics of publications is presented in Figure 3, which shows the change and growth of research results over time. The diagram allows us to assess the level of interest in Islamic education and understand the trend of expansion and deepening of research on this topic.

Methodological analysis requires a comprehensive and systematic study of the current state of Islamic education in Kazakhstan. This analysis is not

limited to the assessment of the current situation, but forms a solid basis for the development of strategic plans aimed at improving the quality of Islamic education and its development.

The most frequently cited articles in this study were analyzed to identify their strengths and weaknesses (Table 1). For a more structured and detailed analysis of the results, they were divided into appropriate categories. Research in recent years has revealed certain gaps in the field of Islamic education in Kazakhstan, which require further in-depth research in this area in the future.

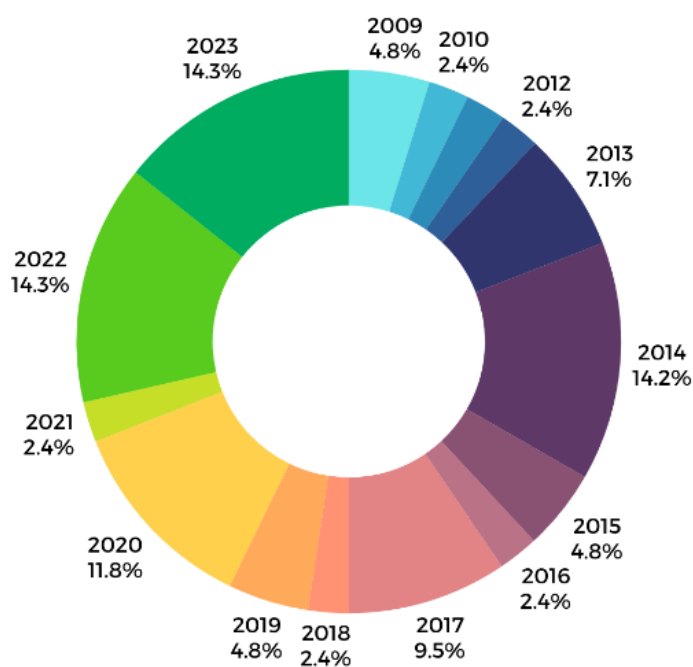


Figure 3 – Distribution of Papers per Year. Source: completed by the author

Table 1 – Strengths and Weaknesses of Key Research Works on Islamic Education in Kazakhstan.

Articles	Citation	Insights	Research Gap
Kemper, Michael, Raoul Motika, and Stefan Reichmuth. 2010.	53	Islamic education has played a significant role in preserving cultural identity and strengthening the social fabric of Muslim communities, even during periods of prolonged persecution. Republics such as Dagestan and Kazakhstan, drawing on their rich cultural and historical heritage, have developed their own distinctive approaches to Islamic education. These localized approaches allow Islamic educational practices to be adapted to the specific needs and contexts of local societies, thereby ensuring a deeper integration of religious education into the life of society.	The current state of Islamic education in post-Soviet countries, especially in the context of globalization and the growing threats posed by religious extremism, has not been sufficiently studied. There is a pressing need for an in-depth study of the impact of modern political restrictions and state support on the activities of Islamic educational institutions, including the content of their curricula and the professional development of teaching staff. Such studies will allow us to identify the main obstacles hindering the development of Islamic education, as well as opportunities for its advancement.

Articles	Citation	Insights	Research Gap
Achilov, Dilshod. 2012.	20	Islamic education in Kazakhstan plays an important role in strengthening social stability and integration, contributing to the formation of a moderate religious worldview. It emphasizes the importance of democratic values and the principles of freedom of choice, giving young people a basis for understanding their place in a pluralistic society, which in turn strengthens social harmony. In addition, Islamic education contributes to the formation of a united and stable society by spreading the principles of tolerance and mutual understanding. This harmony between religious views and the ideals of civil society ensures the harmonious coexistence of different religious beliefs with a wide range of social and civic values.	Despite the growing demand for qualified specialists and educators in the field of religion, the number of educational institutions that train religious specialists is still insufficient. This clearly demonstrates the significant imbalance between supply and demand, especially among young people interested in religious education. In addition, the shortage of educational resources emphasizes the need to open new educational institutions and improve the quality of training in order to improve the Islamic education system.
Kartabayeva, Yerke, Bakytkul Soltyeva, and Ainura Beisegulova. 2015.	17	In post-Soviet Kazakhstan, in the conditions of freedom of religious belief, religious education played a particularly important role in strengthening spiritual education and cultural identity. Teaching religious studies is based on a scientific and impartial approach, allowing for a deep and comprehensive analysis of various religious traditions. This approach contributes to the formation of tolerance and respect for other beliefs, and serves to strengthen intercultural understanding. In addition, religious education creates conditions for the formation of national identity based on respect for religious diversity and maintaining social harmony, thereby achieving cultural and spiritual harmony.	The lack of a unified methodology for teaching religious studies in higher education institutions in Kazakhstan leads to significant differences in the level of preparation of students. This problem is further complicated by the lack of modern textbooks and teaching aids, especially in Kazakh and Russian. In addition, this situation clearly demonstrates the need to develop and distribute educational materials that take into account the religious and cultural characteristics of Kazakhstan. Eliminating this gap will be an important step towards improving the quality of religious studies education and allowing young people to better understand the religious dynamics in the country.
Achilov, Dilshod. 2015.	14	In modern society, Islamic education is faced with the need to adapt to rapidly changing social, political and cultural realities. The quality of the Islamic education system must meet international standards, which requires the introduction of modern educational technologies, innovative and creative methods for effective communication with students. Such an approach allows educational institutions to train highly educated and adaptable specialists capable of integrating into a globalized world, while maintaining loyalty to the fundamental values and principles of Islamic education.	In the field of Islamic education, educational institutions are faced with the lack of a unified approach to ensuring the quality of education and adapting programs to modern conditions. This leads to a diversity of teaching content and methods, making it difficult for the sector to achieve agreed standards and goals. In order to increase the effectiveness of Islamic education and its relevance to modern times, it is necessary to develop harmonious and unified approaches that take into account modern educational requirements, while preserving cultural and religious characteristics. Such an approach will qualitatively develop the Islamic education system and ensure its compliance with the social and cultural environment.

Continuation of the table

Articles	Citation	Insights	Research Gap
Shaykhtudinov, R, and D Achilov. 2014	14	This study examines the interrelationships between Islam, political Islam, and collective action in post-Soviet Central Asia, examining the impact of economic challenges, educational attainment, and the status of ethnic and religious minorities on the development of emancipatory social capital. This approach provides a deeper understanding of civic engagement and the dynamics of civil society in the region. The study shows that these factors significantly influence the stability and diversity of civic engagement in Central Asia and play a significant role in shaping civic initiatives and interactions. This provides an important theoretical and practical basis for a deeper understanding of the specifics of the region's social and political landscape.	This article analyzes the limitations of systematic research on the impact of religious revival on collective protests. It identifies gaps in research on how Islam, and its various forms, influence the collective actions and strategic behavior of elites in predominantly Muslim post-Soviet Central Asia. This lack of knowledge on this topic limits the ability of researchers and policy analysts to understand the impact of religious processes on socio-political dynamics and the formation of protest sentiments in the region. Addressing these gaps will pave the way for a deeper analysis of the interaction of religious and political factors and the development of effective policies to ensure regional stability.
Podoprigora, Roman. 2018.	11	The Kazakh government and society are wary of the potential influence of religious institutions. These concerns stem largely from the legacy of repressive policies against religion during the Soviet era, and they continue to influence current policy. This stance is particularly evident in the field of education, where restrictions on religious views are imposed and religious citizens are limited in their ability to exercise their choice in educational institutions. While these restrictions are intended to preserve the secular nature of education, they also highlight the complex challenges of striking a delicate balance between freedom of religion and state policy.	The limited and underdeveloped nature of religious education institutions has led to a decline in scholarly interest in studying this field. The lack of support and resources, as well as the limited opportunities for in-depth academic analysis, make this area unattractive for scholarly research. As a result, it is difficult to understand and develop the field of religious education, which creates a vicious circle that hinders its growth and development. This situation clearly demonstrates the importance of conducting systematic research in the field and implementing stimulating measures that support its development.
Bektenova, Madina K. 2017.	10	Islamic education blends secular and religious principles, acts as a significant link in the development of spiritual and intellectual capacity, and helps to build a whole perspective and cultural unity in a post-secular society. Modern scientific approaches and creative technology that will let students fit the demands of modern society while maintaining their religious and cultural legacy help to modernize the system of Islamic education in Kazakhstan. Therefore, the stability and relevance of the system will be maintained, and its help to the intellectual and spiritual growth of the nation will rise.	The lack of a thorough national agenda for the advancement of Islamic education in Kazakhstan compromises the consistency and caliber of this field. The current educational facilities function at the regional level and fall short of international standards, so limiting the possibility for developing qualified professionals and drawing young people. A nationwide program is required to assist the general growth of instructors and students as well as to introduce contemporary standards and technologies, so improving the quality of Islamic education. Such changes will boost Islamic education's efficiency and competitiveness and fit it to the demands of modern society.

Articles	Citation	Insights	Research Gap
Nadirova, Gulnar, Shynar Kaliyeva, Anar Mustafayeva, Dariga Kokeyeva, Maiya Arzayeva, and Yktyiyar Paltore. 2016.	10	Since gaining independence, Kazakhstan has undergone a period of spiritual revival, which has contributed to an increase in interest in religious education. However, programs in the field of religious education are still at the stage of formation and state regulation, which distinguishes Kazakhstan from countries where the culture of religious education has long been developed. Religious education in the Kazakh education system is aimed at neutrally introducing different religious traditions rather than deepening faith. Such an approach contributes to the development of intercultural dialogue and reduces the risk of radicalization among young people. At the same time, religious education is monitored by state bodies, which consider it an effective tool for strengthening national identity and preventing extremism. This approach emphasizes the importance of religious education in modern Kazakh society, demonstrating its role in ensuring social stability.	The lack of a unified concept of religious education in Kazakhstan leads to a mismatch between the goals of education and the actual content of courses. Religious studies subjects are often taught by history teachers who do not have specialized religious studies education, which negatively affects the quality of teaching and limits a deep understanding of religious traditions. While the need to prioritize the prevention of extremism and radicalism is clear, this limits the opportunities for a broader study of religions from a cultural and educational perspective. Such a narrow-minded approach hinders the formation of a pluralistic and open educational environment, the main task of which is to develop intercultural dialogue and a deeper understanding of religious diversity. Therefore, it is important to develop a systematic concept of religious education and involve highly qualified specialists in teaching subjects.

Islamic education plays an important role in shaping Kazakhstan's cultural identity, revitalizing national culture and strengthening national consciousness by reconnecting people with their religious heritage. This process not only demonstrates the importance of Islamic education in the cultural and spiritual life of the country, but also contributes to the strengthening of Kazakhstan's ties with the Muslim world. Thus, there is a need to develop a system of religious education that meets modern requirements and demands of society, creating conditions for preserving national identity and strengthening ties with the global Muslim community.

After independence, the opening of new madrasahs and Islamic universities, intensive construction of mosques in Kazakhstan showed a high demand for Islamic education. In addition, Islamic education experienced a significant revival (Podoprighora, 2020), which led to the beginning of an "Islamic renaissance" in the country. This process was accompanied by a growing interest in Islam among the people and clearly indicated the revival of religious consciousness. The Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Law "On Religious Activity and Religious Associations" (Adilet.kz, 2011) proclaim the obligation of the state to guarantee freedom of religion and create conditions for peaceful coexistence of many religious confessions. This legislative framework is aimed at preserving religious and cul-

tural diversity in the country, and thus at strengthening social stability. In such a situation, the development of Islamic education is of great importance for increasing national unity and tolerance and deepening religious consciousness.

This revitalization not only enriches the spiritual and cultural fabric of the nation, but also contributes to the integration of Islamic education into a system that combines traditional religious values and modern social norms. This combination strengthens the spiritual and cultural foundation of the country and contributes to the formation of a sustainable educational model that balances the religious and secular needs of society.

The policy of religious education in Kazakhstan is aimed at maintaining social order and harmony in a multi-confessional society, which is achieved by ensuring a balance between secular education and traditional Islamic teachings. Modern Islamic educational institutions in Kazakhstan introduce modern teaching methods that allow combining religious education and secular subjects. This approach contributes to the spiritual and intellectual development of students that meets modern requirements (Kartbayeva, Soltyeva & Beisegulova, 2015).

However, the introduction of secular and Islamic education into the curricula of higher education institutions creates a number of difficulties. Studies have shown the need to develop effective models

that provide a synthesis of religious and secular disciplinary approaches in a secular society (Morrison, 2014; Khasanov, Kydyr & Tadzhiev, 2022). Such models are able to provide a complementary role of religious and secular elements, creating an educational environment that promotes the comprehensive development of students as well as enhancing social stability. The success of such an integrative approach depends on the development of an education system that provides a harmonious balance of religious and secular values in society.

Kazakhstan scientists A. Sagikyzy, N. Zh. Baitenova, A. Nurshanov and others. West's contribution to the study of history, culture and modern aspects of Islamic education. Their research work is aimed at an in-depth analysis of the activities of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan and other Islamic educational institutions. These studies determine the institutional foundations of these institutions, their influence on the system of religious education and their contribution to the development of Islamic education in Kazakhstan. The works of scientists have laid a whole theoretical basis for the discovery of Islamic knowledge, as well as for a deeper understanding of its role in national culture and society.

The contribution of the outstanding orientalist, Arabist, public figure Absattar Derbisali to the development of Islamic studies in Kazakhstan is enormous. More than 400 of his scientific researches are devoted to Arabic language and literature, historical roots of Kazakh literature and culture, spiritual ties between Muslim peoples of Kazakhstan and the Middle East. Derbisali's works are focused on the study of the Holy Quran, the history of Islam and the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad. After independence, he made a great contribution to the revival and institutionalization of Islamic studies in Kazakhstan. His hard work became the basis for the establishment of the Kazakh School of Arab Studies, aimed at developing Islamic knowledge at the academic and educational level. This school plays an important role in training specialists in the field of Islamic studies and Arabistics, and also contributes to raising the scientific and cultural level of religious and spiritual education in the country. Derbisali's works have paved the way for the development of Islamic studies at the national and international level, strengthening its role in intercultural and intercivizational dialogue (Oraz, 2018).

The collective research of these scholars has played an important role in deepening our understanding of the evolution and contemporary practice

of Islamic education in Kazakhstan. Their work has laid the foundation for ongoing efforts to integrate Islamic education into modern academic structures while preserving its cultural and spiritual significance. These studies have made a great contribution to the theoretical and practical development of Islamic studies, clarified the historical foundations of Islamic education, its place in modern society and the possibilities for further development. The results of the research are a valuable source of reforms aimed at improving the education system and ensuring effective integration of secular and religious education while preserving cultural and spiritual heritage.

The main goal of the research work is to analyze the relationship between Islamic education and the formation of national identity and to show the crucial role of Islam in this process within the framework of the policy of peaceful coexistence of Kazakhstan (Kaziev, 2015). The main direction of Kazakhstani studies is based on the optimization of Islamic education policy aimed at meeting the spiritual and cultural needs of the Muslim people. This approach not only strengthens the role of Islam in the education system, but also contributes to the development of intercultural understanding and preservation of the principles of peaceful coexistence. Moreover, this approach is an important step towards strengthening social stability and harmony by harmonizing religious diversity in society.

The study focuses on the role of Islamic education in ensuring social stability and strengthening national identity. The contribution of the Islamic education system to the spiritual and cultural development of society based on peace and harmony is comprehensively analyzed and its importance in the socio-cultural landscape of Kazakhstan is emphasized.

Results and discussion

The country is institutionalizing a system of Islamic education under the coordination of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan (SAMK), and systematic work is being done to improve religious literacy and develop educational structures. According to the Committee on Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Information and Public Development of Kazakhstan, 12 religious educational institutions will be operating in the country in the first quarter of 2024. Combining Islamic education with modern standards, these educational institutions are making a significant contribution.

Contribution to the cultural and spiritual development of Kazakhstan. Educational institutions play an important role in meeting the educational needs of the Muslim community by combining religious and secular education.

Islamic education is a complex system aimed at spiritual and moral development of a person. This system includes education, formation of skills and moral norms, observance of religious traditions and customs. Knowledge of Islamic studies is not limited to meeting the cognitive needs of the individual; it provides important values for the well-being of society, the state and the family. In addition, this field, which includes theoretical and practical knowledge, as a complex, multifaceted science requires deep and detailed research.

In Kazakhstan, the specialty “Islamic Studies” is included in the direction of “Humanities”. Training programs of the specialty “Islamic Studies” are officially approved at the levels of higher and vocational education. Madrasa colleges have state licenses for obtaining qualifications of “Islamic studies” and “Islamic theologian” in the specialty “Islamic studies”, “Theology”. Educational programs are aimed at acquiring knowledge and skills on Islamic and social topics.

Madrasa colleges play an important social role in strengthening the spiritual and cultural stability of society. They preserve regional languages and literature, transmit national traditions from generation to generation, and contribute to the cultural heritage of the country (Zengin, Badagulova, 2017). Today madrasas combine religious and secular education and offer educational programs that meet the requirements of modern society.

However, the growing interest in madrasahs exceeds the supply, indicating the need to open additional educational institutions, especially in the regions and large cities (Shapoval, Bekmaganbetova, 2021). The expansion of the madrasa network not only increases the availability of Islamic education based on the Hanafi tradition, but also contributes to strengthening the cultural and religious identity of Kazakh society (Van Bruynessen, 2012).

The development of the Islamic education system in Kazakhstan was carried out intensively, especially in 2007-2012, when new madrasas were opened and from the 2015-2016 academic year they were transferred to the status of colleges. These changes were an important step in the institutionalization of the Islamic education system. In addition,

the reform of madrasa education introduced online, modular and credit-modular teaching methodologies. Starting from 2020, the gradual introduction of credit-modular technologies in the system of technical and vocational education contributed to improving the quality of educational programs and ensuring the competitiveness of graduates.

Graduates of madrasah colleges successfully work in the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan, institutes of religious studies and other religious and social spheres. Reforms aimed at improving the quality of these educational institutions increase the efficiency of the Islamic education system and ensure that graduates receive education in accordance with modern requirements.

The development of Islamic education programs contributes to strengthening the cultural and religious identity of Kazakh society and allows training competitive specialists at the national and international level.

The new educational system introduced in madrasah colleges in Kazakhstan is aimed at training highly qualified specialists in accordance with modern requirements of religious and secular education. Starting from the 2024-2025 academic year, all madrasah colleges are included in a centralized register and educational programs are included in a unified system. This initiative is aimed at optimizing the management of educational processes and ensuring the unity of standards in all educational organizations (Figure 4). The standardized curricula include the following core modules: History of Islam; Kazakh tradition; Quran; Arabic language; Jurisprudence and methodology; Islamic teachings; Hadith terminology.

The introduction of a centralized register and unified educational programs will improve the efficiency of madrasah colleges in Kazakhstan and create high standards of Islamic education. This initiative is an important step in ensuring a balance between training specialists in accordance with modern requirements and preserving national traditions. In addition, this structure not only improves the organization of the educational process, but also allows students to acquire Islamic knowledge in a deep and systematic way. Each module is aimed at teaching Islamic studies at a modern level, taking into account the cultural and spiritual peculiarities of Kazakhstan. In addition, this approach creates conditions for combining theoretical knowledge with practical skills.

ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN MADRASA-COLLEGES

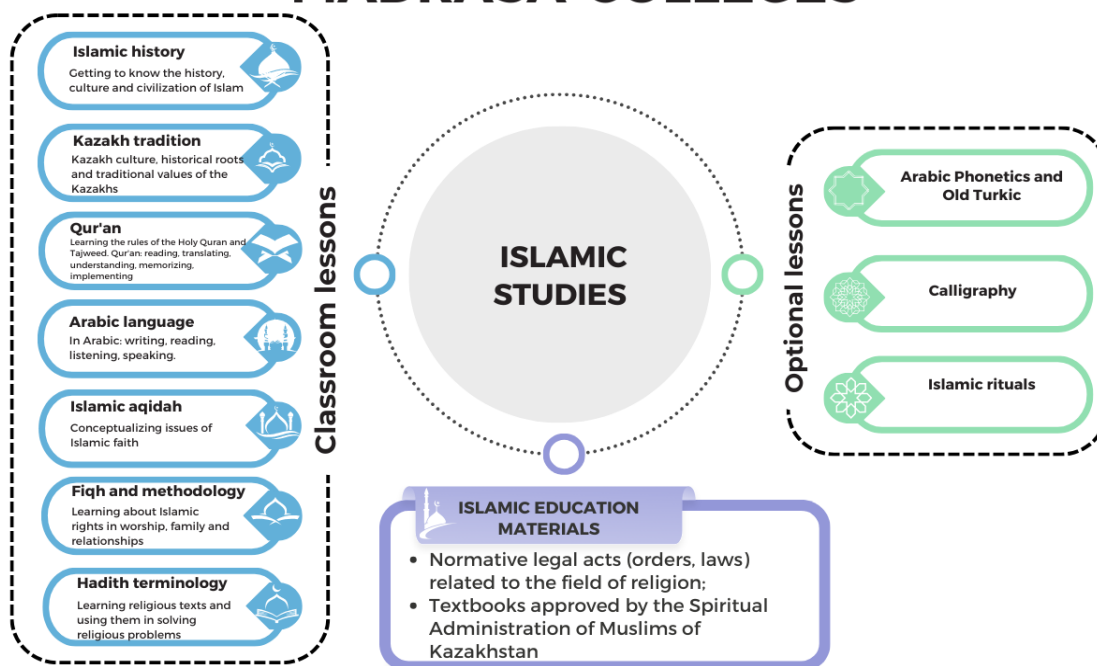


Figure 4 – Islamic Education and Madrasa-colleges in Kazakhstan.
Source: completed by the author

Although significant progress has been made in the system of Islamic education under the leadership of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan, it is necessary to develop a long-term and sustainable development strategy in this area. Such a strategy is becoming more and more urgent due to the increasing number of students, increasing the status of madrasah colleges, increasing the requirements for the quality of education. The long-term development plan should be aimed at improving the efficiency of the Islamic education system, ensuring its adaptation to the needs of modern society, supporting its harmonious integration into the national education system.

Based on the results of the study, we present an infographic model aimed at improving the quality, accessibility and relevance of religious education in Kazakhstan within the framework of modernization of the Islamic education system (Figure 5). The model comprehensively examines the compliance

of the curriculum with modern educational standards while preserving the traditional foundations of Islamic studies. This, in turn, allows students to improve their professional training, providing a balance between tradition and modern education.

The system of Islamic education in Kazakhstan is being improved in accordance with national educational standards and contributes to the improvement of academic and professional training of specialists-religious studies along with the preservation of religious traditions. This approach makes it possible to train qualified specialists who will ensure the social stability of society and give impetus to cultural development. In addition, given the changing needs of modern Kazakh society, the system of Islamic education supports the harmonious integration of religious and secular values. This is seen as an important step towards the formation of highly qualified specialists at the national and global level.

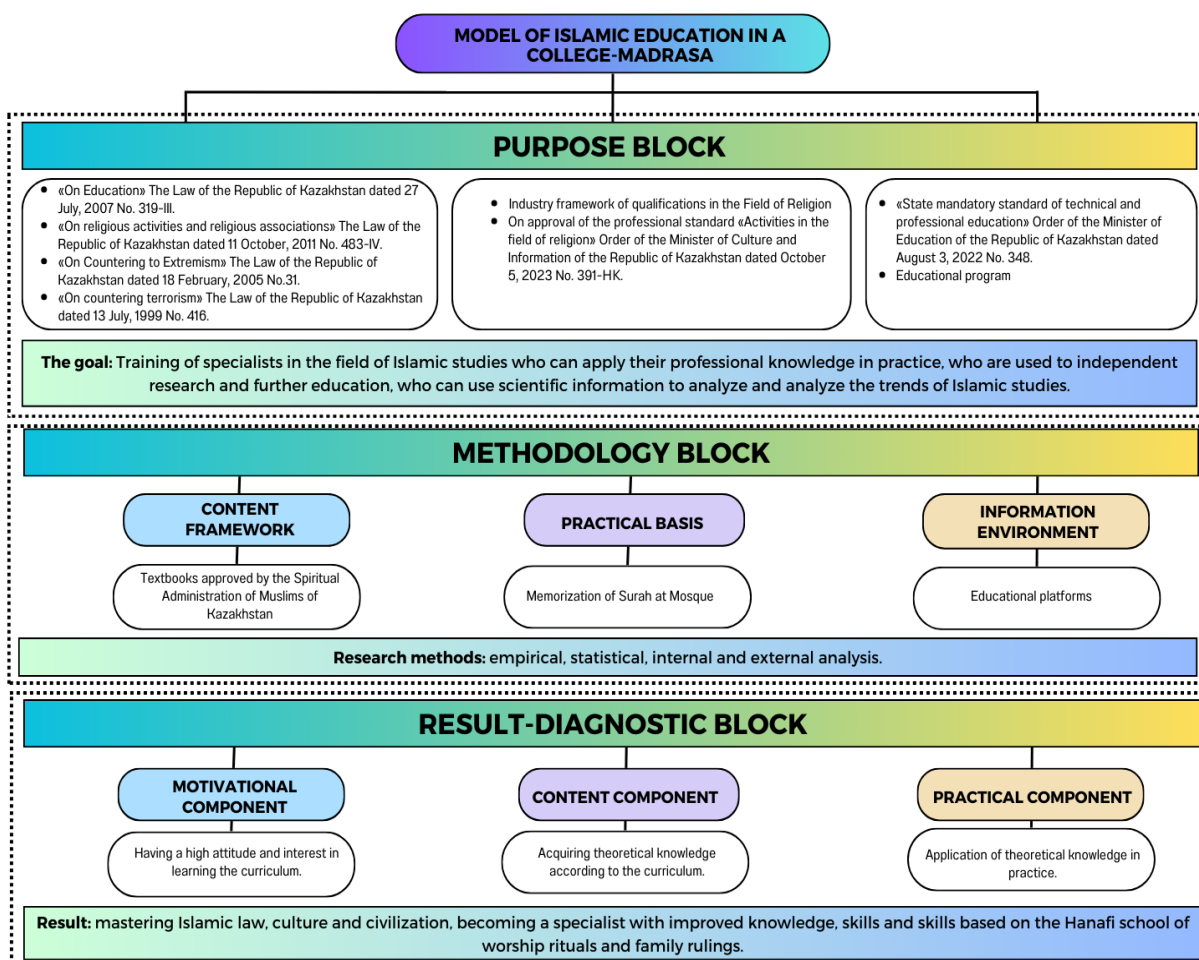


Figure 5 – The model of the educational program of Islamic education.
Source: completed by the author

Conclusion

While preserving religious traditions and improving the academic and professional training of religious studies specialists, the system of Islamic education in Kazakhstan is moving towards integration compatible with national educational criteria. This development reflects the desire to bring traditional Islamic education in line with modern educational practices, including the introduction of modular and credit systems, standardized curricula and greater flexibility in teaching.

These achievements are crucial to meeting the growing demand for qualified religious teachers who can make a significant contribution to social

stability and cultural cohesion in a diverse society. The focus on the Hanafi tradition, as well as the inclusion of courses covering Islamic and secular subjects, helps to create a balanced and integrated education system in theological colleges and madrasas in Kazakhstan.

However, serious problems remain, especially in adapting religious education to the secular education system and expanding access to Islamic education in underserved regions. Solving these problems requires coordinated efforts of religious, civil and state organizations, which will ensure the continuous development of the Islamic education system and further support its positive impact on the social and cultural structure of Kazakhstan.

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