



The phenomenon of religious conversion in Kazakhstan and its influence on personality formation

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Abstract

This study investigates the phenomenon of religious conversion among non-Muslim nationalities in Kazakhstan following the collapse of the Soviet government and the resurgence of interest in Islam. Through sociologically in-depth interviews, the research reveals that low religious awareness, marriage to a Muslim, social influence, and the presence of a local Muslim community are pivotal factors driving this conversion process. Moreover, the study highlights the broader societal context, including post-Soviet spiritual quests and the quest for meaning, as contributing to the growing interest in religion. As a result of religious conversion, individuals from various backgrounds experience a profound transformation of their personal identity, transitioning from a Christian to a Muslim identity. This transformation fosters closer relations with the Muslim majority in Kazakhstan, promoting social cohesion and unity in a society where Islam has a significant presence.

Keywords: Islam, Social Environment, Religiosity, Identity, becoming Muslim.

Introduction

Kazakhstan is a secular state with freedom of religion. As a result of the colonization of the Soviet government, religious pluralism flourished in Kazakh society. Representatives of other religions, such as Russians, Ukrainians, Germans, and Koreans, further increased religious diversity in the country. The growth of other religions in Kazakhstan can be attributed to several factors, including the country's diverse ethnic and confessional makeup, the revival of interest in religion after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the relatively liberal and secular governance model adopted by the country (Ganje, 2020). The revival of interest in religion after the collapse of the Soviet Union exposed the population to a myriad of novel, foreign religious influences, leading to the growth of various religious communities. Additionally, Kazakhstan's relatively liberal and secular governance model, which provides for freedom of religion, has created an environment where different religious



groups can thrive (Dzhansarayeva et al., 2014). These factors have collectively contributed to the growth of other religions, such as Christianity, Buddhism, and others, in Kazakhstan.

In Kazakh society, it is possible to see that the religion of Islam is developing rapidly, despite the fact that representatives of different religions are given all the conditions to follow their own religion. During the years of independence, there were only 68 mosques in Kazakhstan, but now there are about 2700 mosques. 70% of people preach Islam (Burova et al., 2023). As a result, there are Muslims who have converted to that religion among the peoples of the aforementioned countries. Recently, this phenomenon has started to be noticed among the famous athletes and journalists of Kazakh society. Such celebrity conversions have promoted this phenomenon. After world stars such as Muhammad Ali and Michael Jackson converted to Islam, interest in Islam has increased worldwide, and interest in Islam in Kazakh society is also increasing (Iyadurai, 2020).

E. Burova et al. (2023) discussed the evolving nature of religiosity in Kazakhstan, emphasizing the impact of traditional and new forms of religiosity on sociocultural self-identification. It emphasizes the need for strategies to maintain social cohesion in a multicultural, multi-confessional society and the shifting paradigm in relation to religion under the influence of the state's secularism and ideological pluralism. Kazakhstan's diverse ethnic and confessional landscape, as well as a society that places a strong emphasis on religious coexistence, have an impact on the dynamics of religiosity in the nation (Buribayev et al., 2015). The government's approach to religious affairs is based on the regulation of religion to ensure the revival of traditional values and stability in society (Voyvoda, 2022).

In turn, Zh.D. Kabidenova et al. (2020) explore the peculiarities of religious conversion and changes in religious consciousness among women in Kazakhstan. The increase in religiosity and religious identification was found to be associated with ethnic origin, with Kazakhs tending to be Muslim and Russians tending to be Christian-Orthodox. The participants also demonstrated intolerance towards religious conversion, which was attributed to the fear of losing cultural identity and values. The research provides valuable insights into the dynamics of religious conversion and its impact on cultural identity and societal stability in Kazakhstan, particularly from the perspective of women.

The significant focus of interest pertains to the contrast in psychological changes occurring before and after religious conversion and deconversion. In a comprehensive longitudinal study conducted by W. Bleidorn et al. (2023), an examination was carried out on the psychological transformations experienced by a nationally representative sample of Dutch adults during the stages leading up to, during, and following institutional conversion and deconversion. The study's findings revealed that individuals who underwent conversion exhibited an increase in their engagement with religious activities such as attending services and praying, although their belief in God remained largely unchanged as they approached conversion. On the other hand, those who experienced deconversion witnessed a decline in their religious beliefs and practices both before, during, and after the deconversion process. In terms of personality traits, converts surprisingly demonstrated slight decreases in emotional stability, extraversion, and agreeableness at the moment of conversion. In contrast, deconverts experienced declines in agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness at the point of their deconversion.

In a study conducted by M.R. Lenhausen et al. (2023), they investigated the connections between the Big Five personality traits and religiosity within a sample comprising over 12,000 Dutch individuals who participated in 11 annual assessments. The findings revealed that there are associations between the Big Five personality traits and religiosity when comparing different individuals, but when looking at the same individual over time, only certain associations were observed between agreeableness, extraversion, and belief in God. Specifically, individuals who experienced increases in their levels of agreeableness or extraversion reported subsequent increases in their belief in God, and those who saw an increase in their belief in God also showed subsequent increases in agreeableness.



The aim of this study is to investigate the phenomenon of religious conversion among non-Muslim ethnic groups in Kazakhstan in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's dissolution and the resurgence of interest in Islam. The main tasks of the study were to identify and analyse the key factors motivating this conversion, including factors such as low religious awareness, marriage to a Muslim spouse, social influence, and the presence of local Muslim communities. The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive examination of religious conversion among non-Muslim nationalities in post-Soviet Kazakhstan, revealing pivotal factors such as low religious awareness, interfaith marriages, social influence, and the presence of a local Muslim community that drive this conversion process.

Materials and Methods

This article defines the concept of "religious conversion," presents theories and research on these topics, and conducts an analysis from the point of view of religious studies and the sociology of religion. Observational methods were used during the research. The results of a sociological study conducted using the qualitative method were also given. In particular, in-depth interviews were conducted with respondents who converted to Islam, and external observation was conducted. The use of empirical methods is very important on the topic of religious conversion. This is because real information can only be gathered through in-depth interviews and several days of observation of the respondents to find out their life, fate, and the main factors that influenced their change of religion. In a study with 26 participants, 50% of the respondents are male, while the remaining 50% are female. The age range of the participants in this study spans from 18 years old as the youngest to 47 years old as the oldest. In total, 69.23% of those who accept the religion of Islam are citizens who have left their youth and reached the stage of maturity, and 19.23% are young people. The number of people older than middle age is 11.54%. The average age of those who converted to Islam is 29.9 years. Therefore, it is difficult to say that they accepted Islam hastily. Among those who entered old age, there are no converts. Of course, this is a sign that older people are not very close to religion. This may be related to their youth in the Soviet atheist system. In general, the conversion of older people to religion is a rare phenomenon.

Using the method of analysis, the essence of religion and the main differences between its various types were defined. This technique was necessary in the process of expressing the main categories of representatives of various faiths living on the territory of Kazakhstan. The analysis was used to study the main stages of religious revival in Kazakhstan as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The synthesis method was necessary to express the influence of different religions on the consciousness of citizens living within the same state, including after conversion. This method provided for the unification of the results obtained in the process of analysis and the expression of the general system of division in Kazakh society by religion. The comparative method in the study was used to determine the level of influence of conversion on the consciousness and change of worldview of individuals.

Results

Reflections of religious conversion

Religious conversion is when a person abandons their ancestral religion and converts to another faith or religion. Conversion of a person's religion is when a person realizes that they are on the wrong path and adjusts themselves to that path, believing that they have found the right path (Köse & Ayten, 2012). The concept of religious conversion, used in studies in Western countries, is divided into "ihtida" and "irtidad" (Ridda) in Muslim culture. The concept of "ihtida" is used for those who have accepted the religion of Islam. The word "ihtida" in Arabic means finding the right path (religion). In a conceptual sense, it means the conversion of a non-religious or non-Muslim person to Islam, devoting their life to the path of Islam. The second meaning of this term is that according to the understanding of the Islamic religion, every person is born a Muslim but can be raised in other religions depending on the environment. Therefore, the concept of ihtida also means return



(Hökelekli, 1993). In Islamic literature, the term "Irtidād" or "Ridda" is used for apostates. This concept means that a Muslim leaves Islam and becomes an atheist or converts to another religion. The dictionary meaning corresponds to the meaning of rejecting something or turning negative (İbn Manzûr, 1955).

When converting to Islam, big rituals are not performed like in other religions. It is obligatory to testify in front of only two witnesses. That is, the first and foremost condition for becoming a Muslim is to take ablution, confess that God is one, and say that Muhammad is his messenger. Then, if possible, men should be circumcised and change their names if they have names that are against Islamic culture. According to Islamic teachings, a name should be changed if it has a meaning that conflicts with Islamic beliefs or has an evil or bad meaning. For example, if someone has a name that is associated with polytheistic beliefs or has a foul meaning, it should be changed. Additionally, if a name has an attribute that belongs only to Allah, such as "Allah" or "Rahman," it should be changed (Burhani, 2020). The Prophet Muhammad also changed the names of some of his companions to ones with more positive meanings, such as changing "war" to "peace" and "sadness" to "happiness." However, if a name does not contradict Islamic teachings or have a negative meaning, there is no requirement to change it.

In the world of globalization, the phenomenon of religious conversion is becoming more relevant day by day. In particular, researchers prove that poverty, social influence, socialization, religious socialization, rational choice, religious search, and psychoanalytical theories have an effect on the religious conversion of a person. While the phenomenon of conversion to Islam is beginning to be seen in countries with a large concentration of Christians, such as Europe and America, and in some Central Asian countries with a large concentration of Muslims, there are also people who join Christian or new religious trends (Yeboah et al., 2022). Therefore, it can be said that this phenomenon is not only relevant for a few countries but is a global trend. For example, the work of A. Köse and K.M. Loewenthal (2000), who studied Muslims in England, should be reviewed. 60% of those who suffered life traumas changed their religion. In some regions of the Korean nation, it is noticed that there are also Koreans who embrace Islam. Also, those who are tired of the processes of globalization and urbanization want spiritual search and peace of mind (Doszhan, 2023).

Religious status and conversion to Islam in the Republic of Kazakhstan

The phenomenon of religious conversion in Kazakhstan should also be considered. In the research of Kazakh scientist K. Kaliev (2023), who is studying this topic, several factors that caused the religious conversion of Kazakhs can be noted. One of them is the lack of knowledge about the religion of their ancestors. In response to the question of how much knowledge the Kazakhs who converted had about Islam, 76% said that they had no knowledge at all, while 24% said that they knew very little. 92% say that during their childhood, their parents did not teach them anything about Islam, and other religious holidays were not celebrated at home. This means that one of the reasons for changing religions is a lack of knowledge about one's own religion. According to the study of C. Celal (2008), who studied the Turks who became Christians in Turkey, 74% of Turks had knowledge about Islam, and some of them attended Quranic courses. In the research in Turkey, it is said that most of the children were forced to teach Islam, so they developed hatred towards Islam and eventually converted to another religion.

It can be observed that there are citizens of Korean and Russian nationalities who preach Islam in mosques in Kazakhstan. An example of this is the experience of Kazakh boxer Vasily Zhyrov, who preached Christianity. But in 2017, it became known that the athlete had converted to Islam in Astana, which was met with a strong response from the Kazakh public (Bayketaev, 2017). Russian researchers also say that the missionary work of the Russian Orthodox Church is decreasing around the world and that their activity with technology and social networks is much lower than that of Muslims and Protestants (Fedorova, 2020). In order to study those who have gone through the process of religious conversion, it is very important to get to know the details about those people; their gender, background, age, and education will help to study this topic in depth. Most of those who



converted to Islam – 76.92% – are citizens who have started a family. Some of them are people who started a family after converting or got married before religious conversion. But the spouses of all those who are married or getting married are Muslims. Some of them changed religions with their spouses, and some of them started a family with a Muslim. The number of singles is 11.54%. Perhaps because the religion of Islam preaches “marry and reproduce,” there are few single people among followers of Islam, and they are ready to start a family. In studies on the subject of religious conversion, scientists say that the factor of divorce or failed marriage causes people to get into trouble and trauma, and as a way out of this trouble, it leads to changes such as changing religion, adapting to a new environment, and starting a new life. Only 11.54% of the participants in this study were divorced. Conversion to Islam was the reason for the divorce of one of the respondents. His wife, who was against his conversion to Islam, demanded a divorce.

Out of all those who took part in this study, 65.38% of those who converted to Islam are citizens of Russian nationality. It should also be taken into account that the Russian nation was one of the dominant nations in Kazakhstan after the Kazakhs. Most of the representatives of the Russian nation who have changed their religion are women. In second place, there are 30.77% of Korean citizens. The religious practices of the Korean nation as a whole are very interesting to research. The works of Koreans in the Christian missionary field in Kazakh society are enormous. Several Christian religious associations in Kazakhstan are headed by citizens of Korean nationality (Kim and Chung, 2023). The founder of the Moon sect, or “Unification Church,” which is recognized as one of the world’s most famous religious sects, is a Korean citizen named San Meng Moon. The religious conversion of the Korean nation as a whole is a huge topic. It was South Korea, where most of the people adopted the Christian religion. It is recognized as a nation that not only accepts but also prepares strong missionaries and spreads Christianity to the far corners of the world (Jeong et al., 2023). The minimum figure in this study is 3.85% of German nationality.

Some Korean citizens who converted to Islam in the mosques of Almaty were noticed during the research. In general, compared to other regions of Kazakhstan, the largest concentration of Koreans is in Almaty City and Almaty Region (Seo et al., 2022). According to the information provided by the Statistics Agency, about 60% of all Koreans in Kazakhstan are concentrated in the Almaty region (Population Census, 2021). Pre-Islamic religious literacy and connection with the previous religion are also very important topics in religious conversion. Before converting to Islam, 84.62% of the respondents answered that their level of knowledge of their religion, that is, their religious literacy, was low.

Kyrgyzstan's state policy regarding religion aims to preserve traditional faiths, which include the traditional Hanafi madhhab of Islam, as long as they align with national customs. The government mandates that all religious groups must register, prohibiting the activities of unregistered groups (Bazilova et al., 2016). Additionally, the law prohibits religious groups from pursuing political objectives and establishes a clear separation between religion and the state. The government has also maintained bans on 21 groups with "religiously oriented" affiliations, which they consider to be extremist (Blum, 2023). The scope for religious freedom in Kyrgyzstan is quite restricted, as the government imposes various laws, policies, and actions that violate international human rights standards, excessively limiting religious activities.

Representation of the survey results on the experience of respondents who have converted to Islam

One of the most important questions in the topic of conversion is person’s relationship with their former religion. That is, to find out information about the extent to which they were in contact with their old religion, how much they followed that religion, and their religiosity. All 300 respondents were born in a Christian family. Most of them are citizens of Russian nationality, and most of them are Orthodox Christians. Looking at the responses of those who participated in this research, it can be seen that they had very little contact with their former religion. Only one person said that they were very religious as a Christian. The interest rate is only 3.85%. 53.85% of respondents said that “I was



a Christian in name only, otherwise I was not very religious at all.” Moreover, more than half of respondents (14 people) answered in this direction. A similar phenomenon of religiosity can now be seen in many countries that experienced Soviet rule. In studies of religious conversion, it has been observed that individuals with minimal engagement in their current religious beliefs are more susceptible to converting to another faith, as their limited attachment and curiosity about alternative worldviews make them more open to exploring different religious paths and affiliations (Kaliyev et al., 2023).

7.69% answered “yes” to the question “Have you had any traumatic problems in your life?” 80.77% answered “no,” and 11.54% had difficulty answering. Many do not want to talk openly about the topic of traumatic problems. Listing those difficulties, there are various trauma-giving difficulties that affect human life, such as poverty, quarrels and divorces of parents or one’s own family, health issues, suffering from incurable diseases, and addiction to alcohol. For some people, traumatic problems that affect human life are also one of the factors that lead to religious conversion.

To the question of whether they were on a religious or spiritual quest, the majority of those who participated in this study, 69.23% (18 people), responded positively. In research on the topics of religious quests, they are divided into two parts: emotional religious quests and intellectual religious quests. Religious theories of emotion give priority to the various emotions found in humans. The word emotion is translated from Latin and means “to move, act” (Downton Jr., 1980). The following emotional states in a person can be mentioned as a source of emotional religious searches: fear, submission, devotion, love, admiration, gratitude, and curiosity. In the process of religious conversion, the emotional religious quest of a person is seen. In this study, it can be seen that intellectual religious pursuits prevail over emotional religious pursuits. Intellectual religious research is the research done to improve knowledge about religion by reading various books about it. According to G. Makhmudova et al. (2023), emotional quests are frequently associated with conversion to religion through various dreams and visions, threats from others, or listening to a sermon. The majority of religious seekers say that they have at least read the Qur’an, hadiths, and a few books. This means that religious pursuits are close to intellectual pursuits.

One of the most important reasons for conversion is marriage or religious conversion through the influence of friends. The influence of people living in the same community, such as relatives, friends, and neighbours, can speed up the process of religious conversion and play a key role in decision-making. Therefore, it is quite possible that close contact with Muslims is the main factor in conversion. Respondents answered “marriage and the influence of my friends” as the main reasons for embracing Islam. During the marriage or after starting a family, after the conversion of the husband to Islam, these people also declared that they changed their religion. Young people often develop or emulate others. Among some converts, there are also young people who changed their religion following the example of their Muslim friends.

Conversion is directly related to the marriage factor (Malony, 1992). This situation is especially common among those who have adopted the Islamic religion. For example, most European girls who went to Europe to marry Muslims converted to Islam. Muslim girls are less likely to marry representatives of other religions than Christian girls. This is because according to the Sharia of Islam, a Muslim girl is not allowed to marry representatives of other religions (Omarova et al., 2017). In the French state, there are also factors in which some French people are forced to convert to Islam and learn Islam in order to marry Arab girls. Of course, some of them learn Islam with sincere intentions, while others accept false Islam, which refers to interpretations or practices of Islam that deviate from the true teachings of the religion. It can be seen from the participants of this study that the issue of marriage plays a major role in accepting Islam. About 80% of the women who participated in this study converted to Islam through the influence of their husbands or future spouses.

It is worth mentioning that the social environment is also important in the topic of religious conversion. Cases of conversion of religion are more common in areas where the majority of Muslims are



concentrated. Considering that almost 70% of Kazakhstan is a Muslim society, there must be people who convert to Islam in this society. Religious conversion is a phenomenon that strongly affects the uniqueness of a person. If paying attention to the changes that occurred in their identities after accepting the religion of Islam, it was found that 92.31% of those who converted to Islam changed their names according to Islam. 73.08% of those who converted to Islam answered “yes” to the question “Any changes to your clothes?”. It was also noticed from other research that there were changes related to clothing, especially for women who converted to Islam. The main differences in the clothing of those who became Muslims were changes such as the wearing of headscarves and long dresses by women.

One of the most important questions about Muslim identity is, “Does it matter if your future spouse is Muslim?” According to Islam, the husband of a Muslim woman must be a Muslim. 92.31% of respondents said that it was important for their life partner to be a Muslim. Only two people (7.69%) said that it did not matter to them whether their partner was a Muslim or not. However, it is important to note that the majority of those who say that it is important for their life partner to be Muslim are women. For example, one of the respondents answered, “My husband is a Muslim. I cannot be married to a non-Muslim. Sharia does not allow it, and I don’t want that either.” Another respondent who has not started a family yet answered, “I want my future husband to be a Muslim.” Other participants gave similar answers. It shows once again that it is a condition that their spouses should be Muslims. Of course, this shows the formation of Muslim identity. In some countries, religious identity may prevail over national identity. National and religious identities change depending on the government and political system of the state (Bilali et al., 2018). Therefore, the system of political administration in the country has an impact on religion and religiosity.

Discussion

The sociology of conversion as a separate research direction has emerged in the American and Western European traditions since the 1960s. Thus, there are a number of empirical and theoretical studies in foreign scientific doctrine that break down different concepts of religious conversion. For this, it is appropriate to pay attention to the works of S. Stronge (2021) and A.N. Burhani (2020), who considered the tools necessary for the implementation of a constructivist approach to the study of religious conversion. In her research, S. Stronge (2021) offered a phenomenological view of conversion; thus, she was able to approach the essence and role of this phenomenon for society and the consciousness of citizens. In turn, A.N. Burhani (2020) considered the doctrinal and intellectual provisions of conversion, which, in his opinion, do not fully reflect the experience and purpose of the new convert. Religious experiences, in contrast to religious attitudes and beliefs, make it possible to describe the essence of religion. This tool contributes to a qualitative description of the religious lives of individuals. In her article, S. Stronge (2021) offers such a definition of religion as the feelings, actions, and skills of people that reveal the level of their worldview and themselves as such persons who are related to anything, and therefore they can be classified as divine. In the article, A.N. Burhani (2020) paid the main attention not to those subjects whose religion was created for them by others, as well as acquired by them traditionally and implemented in limited solid forms, but to those who profess the original sources of the world. It is the latter that is the prototype and example for the formation of all other imposed feelings and imitative actions that spread in society. Therefore, in their writings, the researchers note that religious experience can be characteristic only of those persons for whom religion is not only a daily habit and being but also a special state of mind. Such a conclusion has common features with the results obtained in the course of this study, since in these works the idea of “personal religion” arises, which, in turn, is the primary source of the formation of other institutional and stable organizational forms of society (Mykhailovych, 2022).

In their works, F. Rigoli (2023) and O.T. Spinney (2023) analysed the disagreements that exist in scientific doctrine regarding explanatory approaches and forms of the phenomenon of religious conversion. They both noted that the view of conversion as a radical change of personality is common among scholars. F. Rigoli (2023) believes that the origin of the theory of accentuation, which involves the implementation of fundamental personal transformations, is the result of religious



conversion, which affects the formation of methodological difficulties. First of all, it indicates the existence of religious practices that are secondary to the internal aspect of conversion. He also notes that the process of conversion should be studied indirectly, taking into account the testimony and arguments of those who have such experience. O.T. Spinney (2023) attempted to describe and reveal the signs of conversion using verbal conversion narratives. The latter are an important source for a qualitative understanding of the prerequisites for conversion. He established that in scientific doctrine, stories about conversion were considered mostly implicitly, namely in the context of reference to the process of conversion. According to O.T. Spinney (2023), the main methodological difficulties that complicate the process of analysing religious conversion are that a significant number of researchers have considered it a "problem of observation." The latter consists of the impossibility of observing and studying the personal transformation of a new convert. Accordingly, he criticises this approach, believing that it significantly limits the researcher's access to their religious experience through narrativization. F. Rigoli (2023) also drew attention to the nature of changes that occur in the consciousness of a person who has adopted a new religion. He notes that it is important to study the extent and depth of changes necessary for conversion. Accordingly, F. Rigoli (2023) tried to express the main empirical indicators, the presence of which would indicate the conversion. According to him, they include an understanding of the phenomenon of conversion as well as a full awareness of what exactly undergoes change, such as beliefs and values, activities, individual relationships, or other elements. The article's conclusions and results all agree on one thing: that the conversion process can be analyzed in a way that predicts changes in the person's mental world.

Unlike previous researchers, L. Taylor (2021) and R. Le Poidevin (2021) paid attention to changes in the self-perception of an individual after conversion. In her research, L. Taylor (2021) used a special term, namely "self-transformation," which, in her opinion, consists in creating a "true self." In this case, it is appropriate to consider the conversion in the context of a constructive activity that reveals a new vision of who a person is, getting rid of all their social roles. This process emphasizes language and rhetorical devices. In turn, R. Le Poidevin (2021) noted that changes in rhetoric and other forms of speech are important indicators of changes in the consciousness of a new convert. Considering this, the researcher proposes to use language and rhetoric as means of identifying and fixing the conversion on the basis of which self-conversion takes place. L. Taylor (2021) proposes to return to scientific studies of conversion such an important component as the subjective one, which reveals the self-identification of a person, in the process of which the individual gives an answer about their belonging to the category of converts. The researcher notes that such people are more qualified to identify converts. Taking this into account, L. Taylor (2021) believes that the use of various considered rhetorical indicators of conversion allows distinguishing individuals by the presence of conversion experience. R. Le Poidevin (2021) emphasizes that "conversion" should be clearly distinguished from "initiation" because they are two fundamentally different forms of religious participation. The first consists in the formation of the "true self," and the second consists in the preservation of the already existing state of the individual. Such a feature affects the biographical reconstruction of a person as a result of conversion, which involves the formation of a new role for their personality (Spytska, 2023). Comparing the conclusions obtained in the study and the results of the scientific works of the above-mentioned authors, it should be noted that biographical reconstruction is a unique property of people who have experienced conversion.

Based on the above, the research on conversion is a complex process that involves the study of a number of religious instruments and methods. Common in the cited works of the researchers is the expression of the influence of conversion on the personal, internal changes of a person, which are fundamental.

Conclusion

In short, several main factors that influenced the adoption of Islam by Russian and Korean nationalities in Kazakhstan can be mentioned. The first is low religious awareness. 84.62% of those who changed religion had a very low level thereof. It is not very difficult to teach a new religion to a person who does not know anything about their own religion. One of the two most important factors



is creating a family. 80% of women who converted to Islam did so after marrying a Muslim. Of course, social influence can also be attributed to this. Because there are people who converted to religion through friends and acquaintances. It is difficult to convert to Islam in a society where there are no Muslims. And it is also important to consider that there is a high possibility of conversion to Islam in a society where the majority of Muslims are concentrated. Given that a person is a social being, it is clear that they are influenced by the people living in society and try to be like them. That is why the social impact is also important. 69.23% of those who are on a religious or spiritual quest. After the Soviet Union, there are people who are searching for religion in a society eager for religion. In addition, the problems of a globalised society, such as the growth of cities and financial difficulties, force us to search for the meaning of life. It leads to a religious quest. Religious research can also give importance to the main religion of the society in which one lives. There may be other small influencing factors. But these are the main factors that this study's findings have identified.

The identities of the people who are religious converts in Kazakhstan, i.e., the representatives of other nationalities who embrace Islam, are changing and re-forming. Their acquisition of Muslim identity is also beneficial for these nations. Because in a country where 70% of Muslims live, their good relations with these Muslims will develop further.

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