

Studying the Islamic lifestyle and academic success of Russian Muslim students



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The notion of lifestyle has recently attracted the attention of various scholars as a social science concept. For thousands of years, human beings attempted to realise and manage their lifestyles, and governments have tried to influence the lifestyles of their people. Nevertheless, the definition of lifestyle and its conceptualisation is relatively new. Lifestyle means the specific method of living of an individual, group or community. Lifestyles include a set of values, behaviours, moods and tastes that can refer to the interests, opinions, behaviours and behavioural orientations of an individual, group or culture. The Islamic way of life follows a grand plan of behaviour according to which all life is a movement to get closer to God. This plan, however, is dynamic and always demands adjustment. In a desirable religious life, all actions and situations can be called worship. People's lifestyles and the path they choose for themselves are deeply related to their success in life. Therefore, the present study aimed to evaluate the effect of the Islamic lifestyle on the academic success of Russian Muslim students in 2021. In total, 2000 graduate students of Kazan, Russia were studied in this research. According to the results of mean analysis in SPSS, the academic success of the students who followed the Islamic lifestyle was reported to be higher than the mean level (more than 3 out of 5). Furthermore, according to the Structural Equation Modeling in LESREL, the Islamic lifestyle has a positive significant effect on the students' academic success (p -value: 0.83; t -value: 7.92).

Contribution: Amongst the various factors that can influence students' academic success, the current research focused on the Islamic lifestyle. The findings of the present study offered a new insight into the relationship between the Islamic lifestyle and academic success in Russia.

Keywords: Islam; Islamic lifestyle; academic success; Muslim students; Islamic society.

Introduction

Lifestyle is an interdisciplinary subject in theology, psychology, sociology and management studies. Ethics and psychology focus on both physical and psychological aspects of lifestyle, whereas medical science only deals with the physical aspect of it. In general, lifestyle includes all dimensions of people's lives, such as physical activities, leisure time, sleep and wakefulness, social relationships, family relationships, spirituality, safety and comfort and nutrition (Rohrer, Pierce & Blackburn 2005). A desirable life can be made possible if one adopts an Islamic way of life, the main source of which is the Qur'an. In addition, Islamic life makes sense in the Qur'anic theme. Given the huge epistemological and cultural resources of the Islamic community, it is not appropriate to follow the example of a foreign culture. In fact, progress can be made in various areas by relying on our own rich culture and tradition.

Style is defined as a way or manner of doing something. Therefore, the Islamic lifestyle refers to the Islamic regulations, models, formats and criteria that play a significant role in the life of any person, whether personal, family or social life. It means that methods are used based on what is demanded by Islam. Moreover, lifestyle comprises the different ways of life of people and groups and involves models, beliefs, tastes, values and norms used in daily life (Fathi Ashtiani & Jafari Kandovan 2010). Each religious school offers a special way of life for humanity, claiming that their way of life will create an optimal society and healthy living. Islam is one of the building blocks of the human lifestyle. On the other hand, the Islam-approved lifestyle has been mentioned in some of the Qur'an's ayats so that people could understand the optimal Islamic lifestyle, its features and how to achieve it. The purpose of religious teachings is to be liberated from a non-Islamic lifestyle and adopt the Islamic lifestyle in life (Salmabadi et al. 2015).

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God points out different factors of Islamic lifestyle in various Qur'an ayats. In addition, the Qur'an frequently mentions that humans are responsible for each other; for instance, God says: 'and if they seek aid from you in the matter of religion, aid is incumbent on you' (Surah Al-Anfal, Ayat 72) and 'the believers are but brethren' (Surah Al-Hujurat, Ayat 10). These ayats show that humans have social responsibilities in life, in that society is like people's larger family. Worship has positive effects on both life and the hereafter. In this regard, God states: 'those who believe and whose hearts are set at rest by the remembrance of Allah' (Surah Ar-Ra'd, Ayat 28), which shows that people make better decisions in life owing to their ease of mind created by remembering God. Moreover, God says:

[A]nd surely we have honored the children of Adam, and we carry them in the land and the sea, and we have given them of the good things, and we have made them excel by an appropriate excellence over most of those whom we have created. (Surah Al-Isra, Ayat 70)

This means that humans can realise their abilities and talents and be successful in life through self-knowledge and ontology. In another ayat, God says: 'nor walk on the earth with insolence' (Surah Al-Isra, Ayat 37). Despite the fact that the modern world has freed man from the limitations of traditions, it has created many bottlenecks in life. People take refuge in phenomena such as fashion, style and lifestyle to have an identity amongst their peers and be distinguished from them.

Lifestyle in a particular area is defined as a set of behaviours chosen by people or groups that manifest their views and tendencies and their distinguishing features from others (Malek Makan & Ali Akbari 2013). Lifestyle is a method adopted by a person in life, the foundation of which is laid by the family and is affected by culture, race, religion, social and economic status and beliefs. Therefore, as the culture of the Islamic society is a combination of Islamic and national criteria, Islamic lifestyle refers to a part of the culture that originates from ideas and attitudes and shows a part of human appearance and behaviour that can be managed (Estagi et al. 2006).

Lifestyle is one of the concepts of sociology, and cultural studies areas used to express a part of the cultural realities of these fields. Nowadays, there has been an increase in the use of this concept in the media. Even though it is not clear exactly when the word lifestyle originated in various literary texts, it was first defined by Max Weber, a sociologist, and a little later by Alfred Adler, a psychologist, in the 1920s. Lifestyle has changed over time after these definitions (Fazeli 2003).

Western lifestyle has its own characteristics and manifestations. This lifestyle is often associated with apostasy, eradication of religion, spiritualism and seeking instant pleasure, and it is manifested by sexual relations, sports and the media. In the Western system, the economy

is based on individuals irrespective of God, despite the fact that all aspects of Islamic life are affected by God and depend on his will and manifestation (Bani Amerian et al. 2015).

According to Abrahamic religions, religion is the way of life. In other words, lifestyle is a religion, based on this perspective. In addition, the religious life is a part of a macro-behavioural programme, according to which all life is to get closer to God. However, given the dynamic nature of the plan, it requires frequent adjustments. Accordingly, attention is required to adjust the overall format of the programme (Berzano 2011). The holy Qur'an explicitly explains how to model one's lifestyle on that of the Prophet of Islam: 'certainly you have in the messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah in the latter day and remembers Allah much' (Surah Al-Ahzab, Ayat 25). Therefore, it could be expressed that the Islamic teachings have been manifested to guide people toward optimal excellence in the forms of the holy Qur'an; and in the form of behaviour of the prophet of Islam. Evidently, deviation or confusion occurs if humans fail to accurately choose their leader in life.

In the field of research, special attention has been paid to the Islamic lifestyle and its characteristics from the perspective of the Qur'an. From the perspective of the Islamic lifestyle, a good life is one that includes a set of moral noble acts (Tabibi & Afshari 2017). A monotheistic lifestyle, which includes worldly, heavenly, human and divine pleasure, is the most complete type of growth and transcendence.

The term 'lifestyle' is used to describe humans' life conditions and involves a set of perceptions, values, behaviours, moods and tastes. In most cases, all lifestyle elements accumulate in one place, and people have a common lifestyle. In fact, lifestyle shapes human life. In addition, lifestyle is important, necessary, and extremely extensive and has various dimensions that include different topics of economics, social behaviours, health, and family. A good life can be achieved by using rich Islamic sources, especially the Qur'an, which is available to us. Given the lack of proper attention to the Islamic lifestyle and its practice in the life of human beings, it is important to study the Islamic lifestyle and related living features, which can help achieve an acceptable lifestyle based on Islam (Fazel Ghaneh 2013).

Throughout the course of history, the purpose of life and how to live in this world have always been the questions of human beings. In fact, people ask why God has created this world and human beings. They also ask what is the purpose of the creation of this world. However, this question is asked to evaluate humans' purpose and excellence. In other words, we want to know the nature of human beings in order to determine the proper lifestyle for this world. In fact, Islam has introduced a style and manner based on monotheism, which brings security and peace (Pour Amini 2013).

In the present age, despite the advancement of technology, human beings have faced all kinds of invasions and finally, human life has been associated with adversity and depression and has moved away from real life. Knowing the lifestyle of God and moving on its path is one of the human needs. Therefore, the Islamic lifestyle has been introduced as the good life, and gaining human ethics means achieving a good life. The Qur'an explicitly refers to this type of life only once and describes it as good, which is indicative of its purity from any impurity and its ability to guarantee a good life both in this world and the hereafter. This clarifies the importance of lifestyle and urges human beings to seek it. The Islamic lifestyle will be useful in all aspects of human life, such as adaptation, psychological well-being, social and personal development and life satisfaction. The Islamic lifestyle can act as a suitable framework for human growth and excellence and guide people to lead a healthy life.

In addition, the worship element refers to responsibilities involved in the relationship between humans and God. Some of the forms of worship in Islam include saying prayers, fasting during Ramadan, reading the Qur'an, the pilgrimage of the Hajj, and other customs that are not officially known as worship but are done with the intention of obeying God (Noor Mohammadi 2019). Therefore, people who are efficient in terms of this component of Islamic lifestyle are expected to act better in individual and social dimensions, and thus they will become more successful in their secular work and family life.

Given the important role of the youth in the community, it is important to study the factors that can improve students' academic success. As producers of science and culture and training centres for experts, universities are certainly the source of many innovations and creativity to solve the current problems of society. In sum, the main objective of this research is to find out how lifestyle affects the academic success of Russian Muslim students in 2021. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis: Islamic lifestyle has a significant impact on the academic success of Russian Muslim students.

Islamic lifestyle

Lifestyle is an integrated set of etiquettes, etiquette meaning delicacy in behaviour. The Islamic lifestyle can be described in three sections, including a person's relationship with himself or herself, a person's relationship with God and a person's relationship with other people. This goal has led to the generation of a general view of humans and their way of life, which is a lifestyle.

Two issues must be considered when we talk about the Islamic lifestyle: the current state of human societies suffering from the damage of non-Islamic lifestyles, and hows and whys of the Islamic lifestyle and how to achieve it (Mahdavi Kani 2008). The normal life of human beings has always been accompanied by pressures caused by human beings themselves. People demand a normal and stress-free life

under any circumstances. Nonetheless, anxiety, depression and heartbreak have distanced humans from their life purpose. Life is like a complex puzzle, and nothing of it will be left if humans make it more complicated. Normally, humans frequently think about tomorrow or mistakes made in the past and do not try to live in the present moment. This has generated concerns and depression in life.

In this regard, the prophet of Islam says: when your life is affected by distress, it is best to seek refuge in the Holy Qur'an. This narration guides humans to turn to the Qur'an in hardships (Kolini 2009). From the perspective of the Qur'an, lifestyle means methods related to the limits of human personal life. In fact, it is a set of etiquettes adhered to by the person in their relationships with others, personal behaviour and relationship with God. 'I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship me' (Surah Adh-Dhariyat, Ayat 56).

Overall, the Islamic lifestyle is servitude. From the perspective of the Qur'an, lifestyle is defined by descriptions such as good life, necessary lifestyle, extremely valuable lifestyle, a lifestyle based on righteousness, a lifestyle that mostly includes obedience to God and a certain lifestyle that is associated with Islam or submission. In Surah An-Nahl, we read:

[W]hoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has faith, verily, to him will we give a new life, a life that is good and pure, and we will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions. (Ayat 97)

In Surah At-Tawbah, we read:

[F]ight those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the latter day, nor do they prohibit what Allah and his messenger have prohibited, nor follow the religion of truth, out of those who have been given the book, until they pay the tax in acknowledgment of superiority, and they are in a state of subjection. (Ayat 11)

In Surah Al-Bayyina, we read:

[A] messenger from Allah, reciting pure pages, wherein are all the right ordinances, and those who were given the book did not become divided except after clear evidence had come to them. (Ayat 2-4)

In Surah Al-Kahf, we read:

[S]ay: I am only a mortal like you; it is revealed to me that your god is one Allah, therefore whoever hopes to meet his Lord, he should do good deeds, and not join anyone in the service of his Lord. (Ayat 110)

The very valuable way of life that God teaches humankind through revelation to his prophet has the characteristics that all thoughts, arguments, judgments, emotions and practical actions of him are worthy and pleasing. God is the only one who creates and nurtures the world and man, and rules, possesses, governs and manages the three stages of worldly life, purgatory and resurrection. There is a connection between a pure attitude and an instinctive tendency towards

the Creator of the universe. One of the features of this way of life is that it is instinctively motivated by righteousness. 'Then set your face upright for religion in the right state – the nature made by Allah in which he has made men' (Surah Ar-Rum, Ayat 30). God helps those who obey his commands and meditate on his revelations. In Surah An-Nisa, we read:

[A]nd who has a better religion than he who submits himself entirely to Allah? And he is the doer of good (to others) and follows the faith of Ibrahim, the upright one, and Allah took Ibrahim as a friend. (Ayat 125)

Whoever entrusts their existence to God and the Prophet is on the path of growth. In Surah Al-Baqarah, we read: 'Whoever submits himself entirely to Allah and he is the doer of good (to others) he has his reward from his Lord' (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 112). Therefore, people who accept and submit to God's legislative guardianship and apply his commands and prohibitions throughout their existence achieve the same effect and result that the Prophet achieved through these deeds. Finally, a particular lifestyle, which is associated with Islam or submission, lays the foundation for the idea of human guardianship in Islamic society. The beginning of this life with Islam means surrendering our whole being to the legislative guardianship of God and to the teachings of the Prophet and his guardianship, which will bring valuable results according to the promises of the Qur'an.

Methodology

This was a descriptive study in terms of its data collection; and it was a correlative and applied study regarding the objective. The study aimed to determine the effect of Islamic lifestyle on the academic success of 2000 students from Kazan, Russia in 2021 by simple random sampling method. Data were collected using a 20-item Islamic lifestyle questionnaire by Kaviani (2011) and a 15-item academic success inventory by Welles (2010). Reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha; the results of the analysis are presented in Table 1. In total, 1963 questionnaires were completed and returned. In terms of gender, 54% of the subjects were male and the rest (46%) were female. In addition, 31% of the respondents were studying in the field of medicine, whereas 43% and 26% were studying in humanities and basic sciences, respectively. The mean age of the respondents was 24 years, and the lowest and highest ages were reported to be 21 and 35 years, respectively. It is worth mentioning that all respondents were Muslim students in Russia.

In addition, the translated version of the standardised instruments were provided to three teachers in the fields of theology, psychology and social sciences to confirm their validity. In the end, the validity of the questionnaires was

TABLE 1: Research statistics.

Variable	Number of questions	Cronbach's alpha	Mean	Standard deviation
Islamic lifestyle	20	0.854	4.1243	0.49657
Academic achievement	15	0.812	4.3852	0.54236

approved, and data analysis was performed in LISREL using structural equation modeling (SEM).

Findings

In this study, SEM was used to evaluate the relationship between Islamic lifestyle and students' academic achievement. In this regard, Islamic lifestyle was considered as an independent variable and academic achievement as a dependent variable. In addition, SEM showed the relationship between the research variables in the form of *p*-value and *t*-value, as shown in Figure 1.

In addition, Table 2 shows the results of the research model fitness indices, and the results indicated the appropriateness of the tools used to measure the research variables, which also confirmed the validity of the research (Joreskog & Sorbom 1995). The results of testing the research hypothesis can also be observed in Table 3. Given that the *p*-value was greater than 1, the Islamic lifestyle had a positive effect on academic achievement. In addition, because the *t*-value was greater than 1.96, the Islamic lifestyle had a positive and significant effect on academic achievement.

Discussion

In the present age, human beings are facing all kinds of religious and cultural invasions despite the advancement of science and technology, which have led to an identity crisis and ultimately confronted them with confusion in life. Therefore, it is important to know real life. The world of creation is the manifestation of God's mercy and is the path through which every creature reaches its perfection, which is to reach the position of God's caliph and nearness to God. The life that God guides humans towards is the good life, which is the manifestation of the true life of God. In the good life, the provision of human desires is in the direction of nearness to God, and the goal of human beings is not only to achieve the well-being of life; rather, organising worldly life is for the nearness of God. Not only does this idea remove human beings from the world stage, but it also leads society

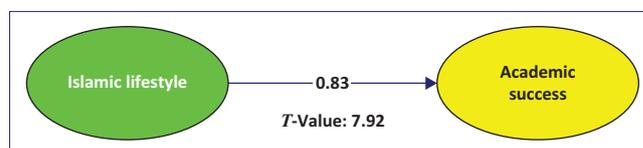


FIGURE 1: Structural equation modeling results.

TABLE 2: Research model fit assessment.

Acceptable range	Obtained value	Fitness indices
Less than 3	2.1243	Chi-square/df
Less than 0.1	0.078	Root mean square error of approximation
More than 0.90	0.91	Goodness-of-fit Index
More than 0.90	0.91	Adjusted goodness-of-fit index

TABLE 3: Evaluation of the main research hypothesis.

Research hypothesis	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>	Result
Islamic lifestyle has a significant impact on academic success	0.83	7.92	Confirmed

to develop and prosper life in the shadow of faith, righteous deeds and closeness to God.

How to live has long occupied the human mind, and different lifestyles have emerged with the advancement of public awareness, knowledge and scientific technologies, especially in the fields of information and communication, which often lead to isolation from society, anonymity, absurdity and greed of individuals. Because of the importance of the subject, the author of the current study focused on the Islamic lifestyle and academic achievement of students. The Islamic way of life is a source of inner peace and security, mainly because of the fact that it is not unrelated to emotions and feelings. Religious behaviours and beliefs have a positive effect on making life meaningful. Behaviours such as trusting in God, worship and pilgrimage can bring inner peace by creating hope and encouraging positive attitudes. Having a meaning and purpose in life, feeling a sense of belonging to a higher source, hoping for God's help in difficult life situations and benefiting from social and spiritual support are all amongst the ways that can help reduce damage in dealing with life accidents and stresses.

According to the results of the present study, they also affected students' academic achievement (p -value: 0.83; t -value: 7.92). Therefore, we can focus on students' lifestyles in order to have a generation of individuals who are successful in their education. Based on our findings, following Islamic teachings in lifestyle was an effective factor in this regard. Achieving an Islamic lifestyle should first be emphasised by families. In the next stage, government officials can develop Islamic culture and beliefs in society by providing incentives for families, as well as by strengthening Islamic customs, ethics and traditions, in order to enjoy its long-term benefits.

The Islamic way of life is based on moral values and religious beliefs, and its ultimate goal is the happiness and salvation of human beings. This kind of lifestyle is not only the result of human rationality and experience but also values human intellect and experience. In fact, explaining the lifestyle depends on a realistic understanding of the requirements of this type of lifestyle; otherwise, if the understanding of this type of lifestyle becomes extreme and prejudiced, not only will it not be realised in the new era, but also the religion itself will be impacted as a result of an incorrect understanding of it. This factor can lead to misunderstandings about the field of religion. Lifestyle includes all the thoughts and behaviours of a human being that are considered in an integrated way and reveal his individual and social identity. The religion of Islam, as the most complete religion and the best gift of God to humanity, includes all aspects of human life, including individual and social life in this world and the hereafter, and by using it, the best lifestyle can be chosen. This is a lifestyle that is introduced as the good life by the Qur'an.

Lifestyles are a set of attitudes, values, behaviours, moods and tastes in everything. The findings indicated that faith

and righteous deeds are the basic property and criteria of the Islamic lifestyle. The good life and meeting the Lord are both obtained through faith and righteous deeds. Life is the cause of feeling and movement in all beings, and good life causes the intuition of the Almighty and the journey in the manifestations of divine light and a new enlightened lifestyle for human beings. The divine ayats have introduced this lifestyle in the best way possible, the adoption of which will guarantee our success both in this world and in the hereafter.

In the Islamic lifestyle, the material and spiritual aspects of life are deeply interrelated, and human salvation depends on the health and relationship of these two aspects. The individual and the community have their own rights and originality, and every individual is required to respect the rights of other individuals and society. A sense of responsibility, sacrifice, discipline and conscientiousness, work and effort, charity, a sense of brotherhood and respect for equality and tolerance, the spirit of tolerating others and respecting their rights, the spirit of participation and consultation in affairs, preference of public interest over private interest and legal criteria over private relations, as well as freedom are amongst common values of the vast majority of people.

Conclusion

Analysing what was said about the Islamic lifestyle, lifestyle will be described in the Holy Qur'an with attributes such as good life, the necessary lifestyle, the extremely valuable lifestyle, the lifestyle based on righteousness, the lifestyle that is entirely about obeying God and the lifestyle that is associated with Islam. There are many ayats in this regard which show the comprehensive view of the Qur'an towards the general lifestyle. According to the ayats of the Qur'an, a comprehensive plan has been written for humans from the beginning of human life to even the afterlife of humans, which is acceptable in terms of human nature and intellect. In this regard, there are many considerable ayats. Results such as humans' activities throughout life, humans' attitudes toward material and spiritual affairs and human relations between people were achieved based on the content of prayers in *Al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya*, which properly depicted the lifestyle of Muslims.

Today, societies compete with each other in various areas. Therefore, Islamic societies must use Islam as a rich source of comprehensive development in order to progress faster. These societies should try to apply Islamic principles in their lives. Every successful person must have the mental and physical health to be able to go through the stages of progress and success.

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The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Authors' contributions

All authors contributed to the design and implementation of the research, to the analysis of the results and to the writing of the manuscript.

Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

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Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, Z.A., upon reasonable request.

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