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RELIGIOUS SOCIALIZATION OF MUSLIM CHILDREN IN THE CONTEXT OF HOMESCHOOLING IN RUSSIA

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Abstract

The paper focuses on religious socialization in Muslim families that have chosen the homeschooling format of secondary education for their children. The study revealed that these children undergo religious socialization more successfully and harmoniously than if they continued to attend school. In contrast to homeschooling, due to the workload of schoolchildren daily school attendance restricts the religious teaching and fosters the acquisition of secular, including marginal and deviant, values and norms that do not correspond to confessional attitudes. Besides, the attendance of school by Muslim children at its present form often makes them subjects to pressure and dislike, as well as causes difficulties in religion, which can lead to the effect of exclusion and the accumulation of discontent of the Muslim community. Homeschooling with its individual format frees up significant time for school-age children. This makes it possible to devote part of it to religious subjects, as well as to spend more time with parents and relatives and external religious environment. Through this communication, children are included in the religious community. This ensures smooth and natural acceptance of religious attitudes, learning of moral norms and practical implementation of religious precepts.

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1. Introduction

Homeschooling, as a common form of education in many countries of the world, gradually came to Russia. Over the past five years, it gained many supporters among various segments of the population. Homeschooling (HS) is a special form of general secondary education, which consists in self-mastering of the school curriculum and does not involve daily school attendance by students. Its supporters believe that the school does not provide a good level of education, it is dominated by orientation towards exams, lack of individual approach and monetary fees.

There is a different degree of prevalence of homeschooling in Russian regions. According to the latest numbers, at the beginning of 2020 about 12 thousand children are studying according to this form of education in Russia. Every year the number of “homeschoolers” increases by two thousand people (Vladimirova, 2020). As a regional example, let us give data on the Republic of Tatarstan: about 400,000 children receive secondary education. While in 2014 there were only a few dozen children studying through homeschooling in Tatarstan (Koriakin, 2017), then by January 1, 2019 the number had reached almost 900. This is one and a half times the figure a year ago: a year earlier, 606 children were studying through homeschooling (Turtseva, 2019).

This paper analyzes practices that are implemented in Muslim families on the organization of religious education in Tatarstan, as well as such aspects of homeschooling as the reasons for the transfer of children to homeschooling format of education (HS) by Muslim families, problems in public schools, difficulties in the transfer to HS, organization of the educational process

2. Problem Statement

Our focus is the children and families of believing Muslims. Homeschooling is particularly relevant for religious families since it allows freely addressing the ritual side of religion, preventing the negative attitude of teachers and classmates to atypical behavior of religious schoolchildren, removing the need for a special menu at school canteens, places for prayer, etc. The religious parents see the main advantage of this form of education in reducing the influence of a sectorial moral environment, often in conflict with religious norms of behavior and attitudes. The reasons why some families choose this form of education are different. For religious families, an additional reason is to create a more favorable environment for the religious socialization of their children, and to avoid pressure from the school community.

3. Research Questions

In the course of the study, the following research questions became the focus of attraction: how does homeschooling help parents more fully realize the religious socialization of school-age Muslim children?

1.1 What aspects of standard secondary education and the school environment prevent children from learning Islamic attitudes?

1.2 How do parents and children cope with the difficulties in administering the ritual side of Islam at school?

1.3 What learning and day-to-day practices are used by parents and the Muslim community for organic and effective religious education of children?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify the peculiarities of the educational environment and extracurricular activities that Muslim families create through homeschooling for the religious socialization of their children in the Republic of Tatarstan.

The study considers such issues as the reasons for transferring Muslim children to homeschooling, the demands of Muslims for an environment comfortable for their children, the organization of the educational process, as well as the content of educational and leisure practices ensuring religious socialization.

5. Research Methods

The sociological survey was carried out to study the reasons for homeschooling by Muslim families, the content of homeschooling practices as one of the agents of religious socialization, as well as the analysis of problems of Muslim families in Tatarstan. Its experimental part was performed in May-October 2019 on the territory of the Republic of Tatarstan, in cities and rural areas. The following methods were used to collect the necessary information:

1) in-depth interviews with Muslim parents on their attitude towards secondary school, the practices of homeschooling and religious socialization, as well as the interviews with experts – school teachers, HS teachers and school psychologists; 16 interviews with Muslim parents and 5 – with experts;

2) non-included observation in mini homeschooling classes in Kazan and classes at the educational center of Kazan, which are organized by Muslim parents, a private presentation of a popular online school from Tatarstan, as well as a master class of HS expert Diakova;

3) narrative inquiry of discussions in social networks; analysis of the group in the social network VKontakte (vk.com) – Homeschooling in Kazan; the group in Telegram.

A total of eight hours of observations and 21 in-depth interviews with parents and experts were conducted as part of this study. The respondents were people of different ages, sex and social status, living in Kazan, Naberezhnye Chelny, Yelabuga, Kukmorsk, Bavlinsky, Laishevsky and Leninogorsky regions. The homeschooling experience of families who took part in the survey was from one to three years. The paper is mainly based on the analysis of in-depth interviews and observations; data of online chats are indirectly used in conclusions.

6. Findings

There are different approaches in understanding the mechanisms of religious socialization and its impact on an individual. The common in the interpretation of this process is that as a result a person has a

religious commitment – a quality that is expressed in the combination of certain properties of consciousness and behavior, creating a certain background knowledge in which a person joins a religious group. Religious socialization is the process of learning religious values, perceptions and behaviors that are accepted in a given culture (Hood et al, 2009). This process is often described as the interaction of social agents, in which people acquire religious faith and religious perceptions (Sherkat, 2003). The main agents of religious socialization are family, relatives, groups of friends and peers, as well as religious organizations and Internet communities.

This paper considers the process of religious socialization among Muslim children that shifted to homeschooling. Various aspects of homeschooling are well studied in the USA, Great Britain, Israel, Canada, Czech Republic, and many articles and reports were written on the topic of unschooling and homeschooling. The results of numerous studies in various countries confirm the efficiency of homeschooling (Kostelecka, 2010; Ray, 2018; Van Pelt et al., 2009). The study of the process of socialization and inculturation among children studying via homeschooling presents a particular interest (Medlin, 2013; Neuman, 2019; Pearlman-Avni & Graevsky, 2019). In the United Kingdom and the United States, sociologists and educators explore the issues of the confessional features of homeschooling using the examples of Muslim families (Apple, 2013; Myers, 2018; Rudgard, 2018; Sarwar, 2013). In Russia, problems and prospects for the development of homeschooling have just begun to be studied in the recent years (Lialikova, 2018; Rimmer, 2014; Yashina, 2017). Confessional aspects of education in Muslim communities are covered through the issues of the state of Islamic educational institutions and Mosque courses (Almazova, 2017; 2019), comparison of religious and secular education (Suleymanova, 2015), issues of formation of Islamic identity of Muslim girls (Karimova, 2013; 2014; Sabirova, 2011). However, there are no studies on the targeted analysis of the confessional aspect of homeschooling and on the specifics of teaching practices among Muslim families.

There are reasons that motivated Russian parents to transfer their children to homeschooling. The unsatisfactory level of teaching some critical subjects, massive use of paid tutors and exam preparation centers, inability to influence the content of curricula and the teaching format (Imkaev, 2018), high workload of children, additional costs of learning materials and financial “aid to school” cause disagreement and indignation of parents.

For Muslims, an additional argument in favor of HS is that homeschooling contributes to more successful religious socialization of their children. This is particularly relevant for better learning of Islamic values, patterns of behavior and ritual practices, namely morality and morals, religious perceptions, family values and positive attitudes towards others.

We claim that the efficiency of religious socialization within the homeschooling of secondary education is ensured through three main aspects. First, through the fence against the undesirable influence of school, namely some elements of the educational program and extra-curricular activities contradicting religious precepts. Second, through more thorough teaching of the basics of Islam at home, at a mosque or in special courses. As the experience of many Russian families shows, HS with its individual format frees up considerable time (Rimmer, 2014) and allows devoting part of it to religious subjects. Third, through the inclusion of the Muslim community and the daily observance of Islamic norms of behavior and worship under the direct influence of the members of the Muslim community. Homeschooling allows

spending a lot of time with parents and relatives. As a result, children acquire more religious knowledge and are included into religious environment. This ensures smooth and natural acceptance of religious attitudes, learning of moral norms and practical implementation of religious precepts.

Let us consider the aspects that enable children in homeschooling to successfully inculcate religious values and patterns of behavior using the example of Muslim families of the Republic of Tatarstan. Let us illustrate our analysis with the quotes from in-depth interviews with parents, teachers and experts. The names of respondents have been changed, the names have been used without a middle name. Besides Muslims, there were several quotes from the interviews with non-Muslims from another project.

The school system is inconsistent with religious values of Muslim families. Let us talk more about what believers consider unacceptable in the school system. The Muslims that observe religious precepts say in the interviews that they cannot fully embrace the existing secular morality and value system. It is difficult for them to agree that their children should be raised in such an environment. Besides, this is observed in the interviews with both secular families and believers, and equally Orthodox and Muslim.

Many Muslim parents state that the most important thing in raising children is to shape their world view, i.e. to explain what is good and what is bad from the point of view of Islam, and to teach the child to act in real life in accordance with this understanding. Before entering school, the parents manage to do so more or less, Islamic attitudes are harmoniously absorbed by the child, his internal world correlates with external behavioral pattern. Crossing the threshold of a school, the child dips into a new moral environment that exists under other laws. The respondents speak of what they consider to be an unfavorable school environment, which is expressed in the deviant behavior of some students, the negative attitude of classmates towards a particular student, the general environment that does not contribute to calm learning, the secular view of the school curriculum on the phenomena of nature and the relationship between people.

Some schoolchildren use profanity. Most likely, there are few of them, but the obscene words sound in conversations between children in each school and outside. The range of interests and conversations between boys and girls to a certain extent is bound to conversations about intimate life. No doubt, the interest in this topic is natural for children and adolescents, and we should not expect neutral discussions devoid of triviality. However, believers who are immersed in religion have their own view of it. They try to protect their children from piqued topics, the interest in which is heated and intensified by cynical classmates.

The daughter [11 years old] was coming from school, and I couldn't recognize her, she had some daring manners. On vacation, she was becoming more calm and returned her sincerity. With the beginning of the school term everything was back again <...> The most terrible moment was that we found swear words towards us in her teenage diary <...> After that, we were confident to pull her out of this environment. (Nailia)

They bring everything from there [from school]. If we talk, we say one thing, and there they see another. And they repeat what they heard at school. Kids at such a young [age] discuss quite adult topics, and I don't mean politics here. And it warms up the interest in picky topics among school peers. (Nikolai, non-Muslim respondent)

Against a general school background, modesty and shame are considered more a manifestation of weakness and guilt, and avoiding some “valiant” teenage topics and rough slang expressions does not contribute to authority among teenagers.

[At school] some children use swear words in their conversations, and the more skillful you are in it, the more authoritative you are among your peers. Modesty is a sign of backwardness and intimidation, and ignorance of the names of youth groups and music genres makes you an outsider. (Kadria)

Believing parents say with regret that the school curriculum presents a secular view in biology, literature and social science, which contradicts the ideas of a believing Muslim. The homeschooling teachers explain a different, Islamic, interpretation of magic fairy tales, pantheon of gods of ancient Greece, the Darwinian theory, etc.

A Muslim teacher certainly goes through the school curriculum, but tries to do so with Islam in mind. When there are fairy tales about miracles in a textbook, the teacher explains that Islam extremely disapproves magic. [respondent on mini-class for homeschooling children] (Mariam)

When material appears, such as about the myths of ancient Greece, and children face ancient Greek gods, I want to be sure that the teacher will give the right [Islamic] comments. (Shamil)

The parents' failure to understand is met with coercion to participate in additional, optional music and dance-related classes. They draw attention to the fact that any student has the right to refuse optional classes, especially if this dissents with his religious beliefs. The respondents complain about collective visits to entertainment shows or discos, which contradict what they are taught at home and in a maktab. The fear of being rejected by the class or getting censured by teachers encourages children to stay with the collective, and they participate in musical events without the consent of their parents.

They ordered everyone to attend the dancing classes, it's an optional class. And our religion [Islam] does not welcome it. I immediately approached the teacher, I said: “We will not go to dancing, it contradicts us”. The teacher didn't understand me at first, but I insisted. (Amina)

Parents find it inappropriate to have holidays at school that have Christian connotations, such as Halloween, Saint Valentine's Day, etc. In some schools, these activities imply compulsory participation of all children and are tacitly included into the educational process.

There are so many additional events! This Halloween! The whole school is in those pumpkin. Saint Valentine's Day, the whole school is in hearts. In each Handcraft lesson they make these hearts, they force children to give them to each other. Both Grade 5 and Grade 2 talk about love. <...> It should be out of school at all. We can't even touch that in our religion at all. (Gulia)

On Sunday in March there is a message [from a teacher] in the general chat [parents]: tomorrow it is necessary to bring sweets, we begin to celebrate Maslenitsa, during the day we will decorate the school. I understand teachers want to involve children in a common event, but why don't they think it hurts Muslims? Everyone in the republic trumpets tolerance, and the teachers of our school don't care? (Shamil)

Celebrating the New Year – please do, we have nothing against it. <...> It's just we're not going. <...> We have the right not to go. But if my daughter's teacher immediately calm to it [understood], my son's teacher every time strongly resents and cannot understand: "well, let him at least just sit". I say, "well there are songs, music, it contradicts". She insists: "it's his development". The New Year is everywhere, why would he dive into it even further? (Amina)

At the same time, the parents emphasize that their children are not protected from class, they communicate well with classmates, attend other mass events not prohibited by the religion. They behave like regular schoolchildren. They have many friends, they are involved in the life of the school.

We do not ignore volunteer clean-up, open lessons, my daughter participates in all competitions. She makes creative handcrafted items for every school holiday and so on. She participated in the Olympiad. But why do we have to be forced to go to the New Year celebration? I don't understand that. (Railia)

Lack of conditions necessary to comply with religious precepts. The members of Muslim families claim that many schools are not adapted to teach their children. Most educational institutions do not have the conditions to comply with the mandatory requirements of Islam. First of all, it concerns Namaz, the need to avoid prohibited products and the need for girls to wear a hijab.

In recent years, the population of the Republic of Tatarstan, where more than a half of inhabitants are ethnic Muslims (Tatars, as well as Bashkirs, Azerbaijani), has become used to hijabs on the streets of cities and villages. Women and girls with their heads covered have become common. However, in organizations with formal regulations, such as state structures, municipalities and schools, there may be a biased attitude against women in headscarves. In schools, similar to other institutions, there is generally a loyal attitude, but there are examples of non-acceptance and prohibition.

Some educational institutions provide for a specific school uniform, and these rules cannot be formally violated. Other schools do not have clear prescriptions for appearance. Those rare examples of prohibition are sensitively perceived by Muslim families if they are expressed in a persistent form that

does not tolerate objections. Several parents describe that their daughters faced similar attitudes from teachers and school management, and this may be a psychological trauma of religious humiliation.

We moved, and my daughter went to another school in grade 10. I came to study in a hijab. Her class manager forbade her to wear a hijab, even to appear in school in a headscarf at all, yelled at her, scolded: “I don’t want to see a headscarf on your head anymore, don’t even dare to come to school in such clothes”. <...> She took off her hijab because there was no one to step in. She is constraining, very shy. (Camilla)

The girl from the second class <...> was surrounded by the principal, the deputy principal and required to take off the hijab. She refused. They said: “you will not go to school, we have a secular education and a secular school, so we will not allow you coming to school in such clothes”. The girl cried and came home. (Gulia)

When Fatima came to the 8th grade in a hijab, a teacher came to her and said: “why you are in a hijab, dressed out, you cannot come to school like that”. Fatima said: “it is my clothes, I will come like that”. The teacher told the principal. The principal found Fatima in the dining room as she stood in line for food, and yelled at her in public that she was not dressed in the uniform, that she was wearing a hijab, and that she had nothing to do here at all at school. Fatima cried all night, my husband and I tried to have fun with her, but she was very hurt by this public flogging. (Ainura)

It should be stressed that parents and experts are confident that the rejection of the hijab usually comes from the pedagogical staff, not from peers. Teachers make verbal comments, express dissatisfaction with girls and their parents, in private conversations and in the presence of other classmates.

I went to the teacher and asked that we want to wear a hijab next year. She told us there were no kids here who were wearing a hijab, and the principal wouldn’t let you... from the 7th-8th grade they wear a special uniform – a short skirt [a meaningful look of the respondent] and a jacket. (Alsu)

Sabirova gives an interesting explanation of the meaning of the hijab for Muslim women. The headscarf for a Muslim woman is a crucial sign that shows her commitment to Islam, the most visible element of religious self-presentation in public space. The cases of non-acceptance of the Muslim headscarf on the heads of schoolgirls confirm the idea of Sabirova that the headscarf turns out to be a sign of the struggle for recognition of its Islamic identity in a harmless or foreign religious space. Indeed, sometimes hijab becomes a special test for young Muslim women who are sensitive to the reaction of others towards themselves (Sabirova, 2011). Schoolgirls could remove their hijab at school while out of their parents’ sight. But their decision to leave their heads covered in a situation of pressure from teachers probably makes their religious choices more conscious.

The need to comply with religious precepts on the one hand and the lack of conditions to comply with them on the other may create conflict between parents and school staff. Various examples are found here that have the opposite results. School management and teachers can be flexible with parents: allow a headgear (or at least not ban them), create places for prayers, be loyal to the fact that a child skips some activities if they do not correspond to his religion. In other cases, schoolchildren and their parents face misunderstanding and rejection, which is manifested in the prohibition of publicly expressing their religious identity.

I spoke to the teacher and to the class manager in December. I told them that we don't listen to music. Is it possible that we are not engaged into additional music classes? We have our own clubs that we attend. She said: of course. The teacher was sympathetic to us. (Bulat)

I told the [class manager] that I was worried that [my daughter] cannot read namaz, maybe there would be some place, literally a meter, and she had to read mandatory farz namaz for 5 minutes. She said I'll ask the principal. I reminded her several times. Now <...> when she goes for lunch, she gives the key to her office, where three Muslim girls read namaz. She gave permission, and it didn't seem to reach the principal. (Gulia)

The schoolchildren face other ritual problems due to the lack of halal food, places for namaz, co-education of boys and girls. These aspects of school life are referred to rather as secondary, and are not perceived as the reasons for leaving school. They only add paints to the overall picture of the general condition of believers.

There are no cases of open conflict regarding those issues, parents prefer to limit themselves to requests to the school administration and usually leave the problem unresolved if they do not do a favor. In the absence of halal food, parents negotiate with children to refuse to eat meat at school.

Here is the time for lunch, they go to a canteen, and my heart is sinking: she is only seven years old, she wants to eat, suddenly together with everyone she will eat this haram chap [from Islamic-banned meat]. Of course I explain to her, she is responsible. She says she doesn't eat meat there. (Camilla)

Islamic injunctions to teach boys and girls separately is not a pressing issue for most ethnic Muslims who live in a splendid fashion. However, compliant Muslims, for whom Quran is the most important reference point in almost all situations, are sensitive to the joint education of children of different sexes. They seek to exploit the possibility of separate education offered by homeschooling.

There comes an age when attention is focused on the opposite sex. It's nature, hormones, it's difficult to deal with, especially for a teenager. It is difficult for them to combine this with the requirements of study, discipline. Teenagers will simply find it easier if there will be no girls around who, due to their hormones and young curiosity, try to flirt, wear short skirts, long hair, bright nails and

whatever else they have there. It is very simple – to teach boys and girls separately during this teenage period. (Nailia)

Referring to the experience of their children and the memories of their own childhood the respondents note that the teachers often serve a reference point for students in their relationship with each other. The attitude of teachers towards a particular child is a behavioral model that other students adopt. If the teacher shows respect, understanding, empathy for children who are different from others, similar attitude will be expressed by their classmates. Not only positive, but also negative attitude towards a schoolchild can be set through the attitude of the teacher. Teachers can be provocative of the biased attitude towards a classmate, which can even lead to bullying. This is confirmed by parents, who confirm that if they face rejection and discrimination, it comes primarily from the teaching staff, not children.

The daughter's teacher put it so that everyone is very respectfull to her, she read namaz there, and even the classmates reminded: "Did you read namaz or not?" <...> The place was organized for her, there is a locker room in the class <... > everyone went out and let her read namaz. She is wearing a hijab, if her hair got out, they would tell her: put it back. I see it is because the teacher put it that way. (Railia)

The teacher had no contact with my son, she could express her attitude to him in the lesson, smoothly so, but it was noticeable, it was the neighbor girl from his class that told me. The children correctly caught the teacher's attitude and realized who could be gnawed with impunity. So my son became a figure of open fun from most classmates. Prior to this behavior of the teacher, the attitude towards him was neutral, he has two friends in the class. (Alexander, non-Muslim respondent)

Teaching the basics of Islam and inclusion into the Muslim community. One of the advantages of homeschooling can be the reduced workload of children, the individualization of the curriculum, the possibility of applying various methods for better learning, the attendance of a large number of extra-curricular classes and clubs. All families studying through homeschooling claim that out-of-school education is built so that the children have a lot of free time. Parents and hired teachers fill this time with activities at their own discretion. There is an opportunity for additional educational and sports classes, informative excursions, walks, friendly communication, etc.

My girlfriends who have kids at school envy us because they sit with their kids doing homework until the evening and prepare for some unnecessary activities. And we and the others like us [who switched to homeschooling], it turns out that education is organized so that there is a lot of free time after lessons. (Karim)

Before school my daughter studied religion, went to madrasah. She learned a lot of Quran. And then when she went to school, she came to a standstill. We didn't have time to go further in her education.

And as soon as she switched to HS, she began to study the Quran again because she had more free time.
(Amina)

After classes we bring children to the mosque to study Quran, the parents do this in turns. We try to ensure that in addition to school the children go to visit each other, communicate, sometimes organize joint excursions. (Farida)

Homeschooling provides opportunities to create a religious micro-environment for a child, which is extremely important for religious socialization. This is achieved by the fact that while on HS and splitting the school day individually, the child is given time to study the foundations of Islam, and to some extent this prevents learning of secular norms and values condemned by Islam.

We have a small class, 12 girls, all from Muslim families. Classes in the school curriculum alternate with those in Arabic and Quran. We are done by 2 pm. (Mariam)

In addition to standard lessons on the standard school curriculum, the children get Islamic knowledge. These are classes where children study Quran and Tajwid (Quran reading rules), Din (general basics of Islam), Sira (life description of the Prophet Muhammad), Aqidah (basics of the creed), Akhlaq (Islamic ethics), etc. In secondary and high school, these subjects are studied more deeply.

It should be noted that many Muslim children who attend standard secondary school attend courses at the mosque about once a week. For many “families”, this is not so relevant, because they get the necessary knowledge while studying at school.

Auxiliary aids – online lessons with teachers, Muslim films, cartoons, as well as specialized Islamic literature for children – are actively used. In many Muslim families, besides school and madrasah lessons, parents additionally study with their children on their own.

Major cities, especially Kazan and Naberezhnye Chelny, organize many events, including one-off and regular events, at mosques, educational and leisure centers. The Muslim community organizes children’s camps, which operate not only in summer, but also throughout the year during school holidays. In Kazan there are several educational and development centers established by the Muslims. Not only Muslim families, but also people of other faiths and secular families visit them.

To illustrate, let us give a few examples from the variety of courses, lessons, rest days that took place on the first weekend of spring 2020.

1st example. On the first Sunday of March the family sports and health event *Safa Hava 2.0* (translated from Tatar as *Fresh Air*) took place. The program of the event included games, relays, competitions and outdoor quests for children and adults of all ages, laser fight and snowmobile riding. There were separate zones for men and women. Hot meals and hotel accommodation were provided. The event was organized by Muhtasibat¹ of Vakhitovsky and Volga regions of Kazan.

2nd example. The *Clever Family Development Center* established by Muslims constantly offers regular and one-off lessons, events and special courses on children’s creative development, mental

¹ Muhtasibat – Muslim Spiritual Directorate
374

arithmetic and speed-reading throughout the year. In addition to developing the interest and skills, the Clever Center aims to promote joint creativity between children and parents thus bringing them together and maintaining close contact.

3rd example. Halal Market-7 – an exhibition-sale of food and industrial goods for the family – was organized for parents and children. The event included master handcraft classes, reports of a pediatric physician, a dentist, a speech therapist, a psychologist, as well as a professional photographer. A drawing competition was also organized for children. This event was charitable in order to support children who had undergone severe medical procedures, as well as the construction of the madrasa at the Gail Mosque in Kazan.

4th example. A new enrollment for the courses was announced by an online school organized by an active Muslim woman with the support of her husband in the district center of Tatarstan (the name of the school is not mentioned in the paper at the request of the creator). This site is the most successful online school in the republic. It provides a wide variety of courses and lessons relating to both the standard school curriculum and additional classes. A special block of subjects is devoted to Islam. The school's target audience includes not only children on homeschooling and not only Muslims, though initially, in 2018, the idea was this. The courses are popular among people of different ages, especially English and Arabic lessons.

All these efforts of parents, teachers, Islamic organizations and training centers contribute to the fact that children spend a large part of their time in the Islamic environment, communicate not only within their family, but also in a wider social environment with Muslims of different age and social status. They are spending their time together with the carriers of Islamic culture and are naturally inculturated into it.

Thus, homeschooling allows strengthening interfamilial ties, raising a child according to family values. This is important, among other things, for religious parents: they not only seek to give religious education to a child, but also believe that it is necessary to instill proper qualities through a personal example. As Kuznetsova showed in her study, parents enjoy more authority among children in the families of believers than those of non-believers. As a result of close communication, children of believers have more psychological comfort in the family, they have lower level of anxiety, conflict and aggressiveness (Divisenko et al, 2018).

Parents see their task in multiplying the favorable aspects of a child's life and strengthening the positive qualities of religious communication, while necessarily minimizing the negative factors of the secular environment. They realize that the latter cannot be removed, but it is necessary to teach the child to treat them correctly, to understand them correctly and to be able to resist them by maintaining their Muslim identity.

7. Conclusion

The need to teach and educate the younger generation through Islam is recognized by all Muslim believers. This does not depend on the format of secondary education chosen by the family. The only difference is that schoolchildren who go to standard secondary school attend mosque courses once or

twice a week, on weekends or in the evenings after basic classes. They also attend leisure family events initiated by Islamic organizers. However, according to almost all our respondents, both parents and experts, homeschooling wins in several parameters. Children have more free time, they practice the ritual side of religion without obstacles in a calm environment, face less secular non-Islamic realities and spend more time in a comfortable Muslim environment. According to the results of annual school certification, which is held in May, children in homeschooling show positive results thus keeping pace with other peers.

Homeschooling shows its efficiency in the context of religious socialization of Muslim children. Parents manage to protect children to a certain extent from the negative impact of the secular environment, which is usually present in school and, according to our respondents, often adversely affects children. Besides, homeschooling provides an opportunity to create a religious micro-environment for a child, which is critical for religious socialization. This is achieved by the fact that while on HS and splitting the school day individually, the child is given time to study the foundations of Islam, and to some extent this prevents learning of secular norms and values condemned by Islam.

Thus, homeschooling ensures the acquisition of fundamentals of Islam and Muslim identity, i.e., religious socialization takes place more efficiently and more naturally.

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