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Pragmalinguistic Features of Sacred Anthroponyms

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how contemporary Turkic society perceives sacred Muslim names, with particular emphasis on shifting attitudes toward their usage. The usage of sacred anthroponyms in these regions has evolved under the influence of various social, cultural, and historical factors. Muslim names have long been central to the religious and cultural identity of these societies. However, processes such as modernization, globalization, and urbanization have led to substantial changes in their usage. Despite these developments and the growing trend of secularization, the concept of 'sacred anthroponyms' remains an ongoing subject of debate. This paper deals with a significant aspect of Turkic anthroponyms: proper names derived from religious beliefs. A comprehensive methodological approach, integrating both linguistic and sociocultural analyses, facilitates a nuanced understanding of the role of Muslim names in preserving traditional cultural values. This paper aims to investigate the extent to which sacred anthroponyms are preserved across generations within the category of

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proper names. By analyzing the spiritual and pragmatic features of sacred anthroponyms, the study assesses the influence of socio-cultural transformations on their perception within modern Turkic societies. This study opens up avenues for comparative research in other linguistic or cultural groups undergoing similar socio-cultural transformations, particularly in post-Soviet or Muslim-majority contexts. The findings make a contribution to preserving cultural heritage and understanding naming practices in the context of globalization and provide a basis for future research on the intersection between name choices, self-perception, and social identity.

Keywords: Turkic Anthroponyms; Proper Names; Muslim Names; Sacred Anthroponyms; Turkic Culture; Ethnocultural Identity; Pragmalinguistics

1. Introduction

The spiritual values and religious beliefs of nations are expressed through their languages. Language acts as a mirror of culture, and anthroponyms serve as keys to understanding it. An anthroponym is not merely a word that is used to distinguish one person from another. The concepts embedded in anthroponyms reflect human qualities, characteristics, and aspects of their interaction with society. A name can even determine a person's destiny and place within the community. While a name is a source of individual pride, it also reflects the collective identity of a people. The history of names is inextricably linked to the history, culture, and ideology of the society in which they were formed. In this context, anthroponyms function as a medium for preserving and transmitting religious views, culture, and the historical memory of a nation. Proper names play a pivotal role in upholding traditional values and social norms, ensuring their transmission across generations.

In linguistics, proper names are critical for understanding a nation's history, daily life, cognition, religion, cultural values, and spiritual continuity. They form a lexical group that defines the semantic space of a language.

In Dictionary of the Social Sciences, anthroponymy is defined as "the study of the derivation of personal names". Reading states that linguistically, anthroponymy studies a person's name. The term anthroponymy is derived from two ancient Greek words: anthropos, "man", and onoma, "name"^[1].

The New Encyclopedia Britannica (1998) defines the proper names as follows: "personal names have followed the same sort of evolution and transmittal that other language components have, based as they usually are, on common, everyday words. They may be assimilated from one culture

to another"^[2].

According to Nazarov^[3], the study of proper names contributes to understanding national consciousness, and it is impossible to examine the formation of national consciousness without considering religious and cultural aspects. This assertion implies that the sacred lexicon not only preserves the genesis of the Turks, their language, and religion, as well as historical memory and holistic existence, but also serves as a linguistic artifacts that reflect the interactions of the Turkic states with Islamic civilization.

The concept of the "semantic space of language" introduced in the late 20th century, alongside the development of cognitive linguistics, clarifies the origin of terms like "sacred" and the cultural specificity of sacred linguistic units across different peoples. The term "sacred" derives from the Latin *sacer* (akin to the Semitic *kda-*), which originally connoted ritual prohibitions^[4]. According to the division of the universe into sacred (transcendent, magical) and profane (mundane) realms^[5], scholar A. Kerimbaev^[6] similarly categorizes Turkic lexicons into sacred and ordinary vocabulary. In his analysis, Kerimbaev emphasizes that names associated with sacredness are not merely linguistic phenomena but also vital elements for transmitting spiritual values and historical memory. He asserts that "sacred units in Turkic languages reflect mythological, religious, and cultural ideas tied to the beliefs, customs, and rituals of the ethnos".

Sacred anthroponyms, in terms of their function, fall under the category of "*hagionyms*" (from Greek *hágios* "holy" and *ónoma* "name")^[7]. Hagionyms denote names of saints or sacred entities. In the study of Muslim names, hagionyms refer to names derived from saints or religious figures. In English, the term "*hagionym*" is often used, transliterated from the Greek "*ἁγιονυμία*". In onomastics, *hagionyms* are studied as part of sacred anthroponyms, focusing on names

linked to religious beliefs. Thus, the study of Muslim names in the context of religious and cultural continuity, as well as the interplay between religion and tradition through the lens of national consciousness, remains highly relevant.

One of the key linguacultural factors shaping Muslim names encompasses both medieval and modern naming practices. Turkic anthroponymy encompasses a vast array of Muslim names, encompassing all semantic categories of proper names. These names serve as critical markers of cultural identity, carrying significant semantic and symbolic weight. They unite the spiritual, cultural, and social dimensions of the Turks, underscoring their role as values shaped by the adoption of Islam. Functionally, Muslim names act as a bridge between past and present, ensuring the continuity of cultural, religious, and social aspects of the Turkic worldview. However, significant shifts in the use of Muslim names are evident today.

Modernization and globalization have led to a decline in their prevalence, particularly among younger generations in urban areas who increasingly favor secular or Western names. Sociological studies reveal that name selection now seeks a balance between traditional religious names and modern secular ones, highlighting the need to analyze Muslim names from both linguistic and social perspectives.

In the context of rapidly evolving social landscapes, the study of personal names offers a unique lens through which to examine how cultural and religious identities are maintained, adapted, or challenged in modern Turkic societies. The following research questions were developed to address the aims of the study:

- 1) How does socio-cultural development influence the perception and use of Muslim names?
- 2) How do Muslim names function as carriers of cultural and religious identity in modern Turkic societies?

2. Statement of the Problem

In contemporary Turkic societies, names derived from religious traditions commonly known as sacred anthroponyms have long held significant cultural and religious value. Traditionally, they have functioned as key indicators of identity. However, with the growing influence of modernization, globalization, secularization, and urban development, the role, meaning, and public perception of these names have

undergone considerable change. Although Muslim names are still widely used, their cultural and symbolic relevance is now shaped by evolving socio-cultural conditions. These shifts raise important concerns about the preservation, adaptation, or possible erosion of long-standing naming traditions in the Turkic world. Despite the deep-rooted cultural and historical role of sacred anthroponyms, there remains a noticeable lack of in-depth, interdisciplinary research that combines linguistic analysis with socio-cultural context.

In particular, changing attitudes toward religiously meaningful names have not been thoroughly explored concerning modern identity formation, especially in post-Soviet and rapidly transforming Turkic societies. This gap in the scholarship underscores the need for further academic inquiry into whether and how sacred names continue to serve as cultural markers in an era of social and ideological transformation.

There are several national and international findings related to this issue. For instance, Kazakh researcher Moldabekov (2021), in his study titled “Changes in Naming Practices in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan: Between Tradition and Modernity” indicates significant shifts in naming practices in post-Soviet Kazakhstan and notes that these shifts reflect a growing tension between ethnic-national identity and religious identity, where Turkic and Kazakh elements are increasingly prioritized over Islamic ones in name selection. The study attributes this to the combined forces of Soviet secularization legacies, the modernization of national identity, and the desire for integration into global culture. However, in rural areas and among traditionally religious families, sacred names remain prominent^[8].

Another study by Kazakh scholars Aliakbarova et al. (2020) examines the changes in naming practices for new-borns in Kazakhstan from the pre-Soviet period to the present day, investigates current trends in Kazakh anthroponymy and presents the recent trend in name-giving: names adopted from Western European languages have recently become common among young citizens. The authors indicate that from pre-Soviet times, the changes in naming systems in Kazakhstan have been consistent with the socio-cultural and political events of each era, recognizing, appreciating, and accommodating Kazakh identities, histories, languages, and cultures^[9].

Turkish researcher Kızıloğlu, in his doctoral disserta-

tion titled “Proper Names in Turkish Culture”, examines how the names used by Turks from ancient sources to the present day have developed and changed in relation to historical, religious, political, geographical, or social circumstances, within the context of Turkish folklore^[10].

In her research paper, Al-Jarf investigates the interchange of personal names in nine Muslim communities to explore their linguistic, historical and cultural features. The study provides an ethnographically based account of the sociocultural significance of Arabic/Islamic personal names; how a single personal name can convey several aspects of cultural knowledge, such as information about ethnohistory, important events, spiritual beliefs, cultural norms and values, familial history, personal accomplishments, and experiences^[11].

These findings support the idea that while sacred anthroponyms have historically anchored religious and cultural identity in Turkic societies, their role is being reshaped, sometimes diminished by modern socio-cultural forces. The gap in interdisciplinary research on this topic is evident, especially in terms of how naming practices relate to identity formation in post-Soviet and contemporary Turkic contexts.

3. Literature Review

The 20th century is marked by the contributions of numerous historians of religion, philosophers, sociologists, and psychologists who produced a significant body of literature on the topic under consideration. The study of proper names within various scientific paradigms has become an essential part of academic research, yielding positive outcomes. Initial ideas about proper names and other types of names that can be used alongside or instead of them are found in historical written records common to the Turkic states. In these works (e.g., M. Kashgari^[12], K. Zhalaiyr^[13], L. Gumilev^[14], and others), both personal names and nicknames, as well as the reasons for their assignment, are examined. Questions of customs and beliefs in the naming process were addressed by Valikhanov^[15], while valuable insights into the role of epithets and titles accompanying proper names, as well as the pragmatic function of names, were provided by A. Baitursynov^[16].

In his extensive work *Kazakh Onomastics*, T. Zhanuzak explores the evolution of Kazakh anthroponyms, examining

their historical development, formation stages, and the associated naming traditions and cultural beliefs. This publication is recognized as one of the first comprehensive and systematic studies of anthroponyms in Kazakh linguistics^[17].

In European and post-Soviet scholarship, works on the phenomenon of the “sacred” began to emerge in the 20th century. Sacred lexicon became the subject of research by Turkologists and foreign linguists. For example, G. Nagy^[18] studied the meaning of the sacred terms related to fire in Indo-European languages, while A. Brand^[19] analyzed the power of language used in worship rituals and Catholic rites. Despite its archaic nature, the preservation of language over centuries and its use in the church is explained by its phenomenal nature. In the studies of B. Stross^[20], the name of a bone considered sacred among Mesoamerican Indians was examined based on ethnographic, linguistic, and iconographic data, through which the people’s worldview is traced.

In Russian linguistics, sacred lexicon has been studied within the frameworks of ethnolinguistics and linguistic-cultural studies (N. Kononova^[21], T. Burmistrova^[22], T. Kuzmina^[23], G. Kazakov^[24], O. Dobychna^[25], and others), theolinguistics (I. Babenko^[26], I. Koroleva^[27], A. Rachinsky^[28], and others), textual studies (I. Kirilova^[29], T. Astafurova and V. Olyanich^[30], N. Mikhnovets^[31], and others), as well as comparative analysis (R. Ivanova^[32], E. Rakhimova and A. Sagitova^[33], and others). The sacred lexicon of the Tatar language was studied based on materials from explanatory dictionaries, revealing its close connection with religion (M. Sattarova^[34] and others). The sacred lexicon of the ancient Yakuts was analyzed in the context of their customs and culture (A. Gogolev^[35] and others). In these works, the sacred lexicon is recognized as an important linguistic element that plays a key role in the cognitive and hereditary functions of language, as well as in shaping knowledge and beliefs about the world.

In Kazakh scholarship, ethnolinguistics and linguistic-cultural studies, shaped by scholars such as A. Kaidarov^[36], M. Kopylenko^[37], and E. Zhanpeisov^[38], laid the foundation for a new stage in the development of Kazakh science, demonstrating the inseparable connection between language and nation. These academic schools elevated Kazakh scholarship to a new level, reinforcing ideas about the unity of language and national identity. Manifestations of mythological consciousness in language and the connection of sacred

linguistic units with various levels of worldview perception (B. Akberdieva^[39], K. Gabitkhanuly^[40], R. Uskenbaeva^[41], and others) have been explored. These studies pay special attention to the sacred lexicon. Furthermore, researchers such as K. Rysbergenova^[42] and R. Mustafina^[43] have shown interest in the sacred lexicon, dividing it into key lexico-semantic groups:

- 1) Sacred anthroponymy (names associated with early Islamic history, Sufis, and saints).
- 2) Names of saints (names of tribal and clan leaders).

In her research, R. Mustafina offers a comprehensive analysis of the semantic and morphological changes in Muslim names, illustrating how these changes mirror broader social transformations^[43]. Meanwhile, K. Rysbergenova interprets Muslim names in terms of their spiritual content and their deep connection with linguistic and cultural traditions^[42].

Despite extensive prior research, gaps remain in understanding how sacred anthroponyms manifest in public consciousness and adapt to contemporary contexts. This study addresses these gaps by exploring the pragmatic characteristics of Muslim names through scientific methods, anchored in traditional foundations. Considering how modern trends affect the perception of sacred anthroponyms allows us to encompass the goals and objectives of new directions in linguistics. Following the goals and objectives of this study, the system of Muslim names formed under the influence of Islam is examined within the context of the worldview, existence, and culture of the ethnos, with an emphasis on their semantic, social, and applied significance.

4. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, interdisciplinary approach combined with a questionnaire-based method to examine the pragmalinguistic, cultural, and social dimensions of sacred anthroponyms in contemporary Turkic societies. This approach encompasses both diachronic and synchronic aspects of name usage, providing insight into the influence of linguistic, religious, and cultural factors on naming traditions amid socio-cultural changes.

Investigating naming practices requires conducting socio-cultural research to identify comparative models, common trends, and specific adaptations. The research is based

on a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative analyses. A structured survey was administered to a diverse group of respondents across five Turkic-speaking countries: Turkey, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan. The practice of assigning Muslim names remains widespread and deeply ingrained in daily life in these countries. The survey aimed to analyze the perception, usage, and cultural significance of sacred anthroponyms in these regions.

The research included participants from multiple Turkic states, across different age groups, professions, and religious backgrounds. This diversity ensured a wide perspective on contemporary naming practices and their implications for cultural identity. Informed consent was obtained from all participants involved in interviews and surveys. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the research process. Cultural and religious sensitivities were respected, particularly in discussions involving personal or sacred naming traditions. This methodological framework allowed for a comprehensive exploration of sacred anthroponyms as dynamic elements of linguistic heritage and cultural identity in a rapidly changing socio-political environment.

The theoretical framework of the study seeks to explore the historical context of naming practices during the spread of Islam in Central Asia, where the adoption of Islamic principles led to the incorporation of divine names into personal naming conventions. This process not only reflected religious devotion but also played a significant role in shaping the cultural and social identity of Muslim communities in the region.

4.1. Design of the Study

This study adopts a qualitative, exploratory research design to investigate the evolving role of Muslim (sacred) names in contemporary Turkic societies. The research is interdisciplinary in nature, combining methods and perspectives from linguistics, sociology, cultural studies, and anthropology. The design is structured to capture both the linguistic features of anthroponyms and their socio-cultural significance within different Turkic contexts.

The study employs a descriptive and interpretive approach. It does not seek to test a hypothesis, but rather to explore how Muslim names function as carriers of religious, cultural, and social identity, and how their usage is changing

in response to modern influences such as secularization, globalization, and urbanization. The research focuses on several modern Turkic states, including Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan. The analysis includes both urban and rural settings to account for geographical and generational differences in naming practices. Participation in surveys and interviews was voluntary, and data were anonymized to ensure privacy. Sensitivity to religious and cultural identity was maintained throughout the research process. This study design allows a rich, contextually grounded exploration of sacred anthroponyms, providing insights into how naming practices continue to evolve and reflect the changing cultural landscape of the Turkic world.

4.2. Instruments of the Study

To investigate the linguistic, cultural, and social dynamics surrounding Muslim names in contemporary Turkic societies, this study employed a combination of qualitative research instruments that support both linguistic analysis and socio-cultural interpretation. The following instruments were used:

- 1) **Linguistic Analysis:** Comparative analysis was used to identify changes in naming patterns over time and across regions.
- 2) **Surveys and Questionnaires:** Structured and semi-structured questionnaires were distributed to individuals from different Turkic countries (e.g., Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan). Respondents were asked about their attitudes toward religious names, the reasons behind name choices, and their perceptions of traditional versus modern naming practices.

These instruments collectively enabled a multidimensional understanding of sacred anthroponyms as both linguistic forms and socio-cultural artifacts. They also provided the empirical foundation for analyzing how contemporary Turkic societies negotiate identity, tradition, and modernity through the lens of personal naming.

4.3. Data Collection

To explore the evolving usage, perception, and cultural significance of sacred names in contemporary Turkic societies, the study employed a variety of qualitative data

collection methods. These methods were designed to capture both the linguistic features of sacred anthroponyms and their sociocultural context, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of how naming practices reflect and respond to broader societal transformations. Structured questionnaires were distributed to individuals in various age groups, professions, and geographic settings. Survey items focused on personal or family naming preferences, attitudes toward religious versus secular names, perceptions of cultural significance and identity are linked to names. This diverse data collection strategy ensured a rich, multi-perspective understanding of how Muslim names are used, interpreted, and valued in the evolving cultural landscape of the Turkic world.

4.4. Respondent Selection Criteria

Participants of the Survey: The participants of this study were both adults and young people. 2981 respondents took part in the survey. The selection of respondents was conducted based on several criteria to ensure a representative sample reflecting the diversity of the population. The key criteria included:

Age Range: The participants of the survey were people aged between 15 and 70 years, ensuring a broad generational perspective on naming traditions.

Gender Distribution: The survey included a nearly equal representation of genders (49% male, 51% female) to avoid bias in responses.

Educational Background: Respondents were categorized into four education levels: Secondary education (high school or equivalent), incomplete higher education (some college/university), higher education (bachelor's degree or equivalent), and postgraduate education (master's or PhD holders).

Geographical Distribution: The study distinguished between urban and rural respondents to account for differences in naming traditions between city dwellers and those from countryside areas.

Ethno-Linguistic Affiliation: Only native speakers of Turkic languages were included in the sample to maintain linguistic and cultural homogeneity.

Religious Affiliation: Respondents self-identified as Muslim or having a Muslim cultural background, reflecting the study's focus on sacred anthroponyms.

4.5. Survey Design and Implementation

To more fully reveal the role and significance of Muslim names, it is necessary to analyze the problem of their perception. For this purpose, a survey was conducted as part of the study, the results of which provided a clear understanding of how Muslim names are perceived today. The questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended and open-ended questions, allowing respondents to provide detailed explanations of their naming preferences and perceptions.

The survey was based on the following five key aspects:

Conceptual Aspect: Personal attachment to religious names.

Applied Aspect: Influence of globalization and modernization on naming traditions.

Social Attitudes: Societal attitudes toward Muslim names.

Value Orientations: Determining value orientations regarding Muslim names.

Imagery Aspect: The perceived sacredness of anthroponyms.

Based on the survey, analyzing the pragmatic characteristics of these names and their usage in the Turkic states was necessary, which helps to understand how naming practices have adapted. To analyze the dynamics of naming traditions and the overall use of Muslim names, the survey relies on a complex, interdisciplinary approach that draws not only on linguistic sciences but also on sociology, theology, and other related fields, as well as culture. To ensure reliability, the survey was conducted anonymously, and participation was voluntary. The collected data were subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS software, ensuring accurate interpretation of trends and correlations.

The survey results revealed diverse opinions about Muslim names. The findings not only highlight current trends in the perception of these names but also reflect changes in public consciousness related to the preservation of national values amid the influence of globalization and modernization. On the one hand, the data indicate the importance of these names as a means of transmitting spiritual values. On the other hand, in a pragmatic sense, they reflect changing attitudes toward the tradition of assigning Muslim names. As a result, opinions were divided into two opposing approaches. In the final stage of the study, the survey results were thoroughly analyzed, and appropriate conclusions were

drawn based on the findings.

The respondent criteria in this study align with previous research on naming conventions and cultural identity. Studies such as those of N. Shaimerdenova and R. Avakova^[44] have demonstrated the impact of socio-demographic factors, such as education and urbanization, on naming traditions. Additionally, research by Akhmetzhanova and Baimusaeva^[45] highlights the role of religious background in name selection, particularly in Turkic societies undergoing cultural transformation. These works provided a foundational framework for structuring the survey and analyzing the responses in this study. By integrating an interdisciplinary approach that combines linguistic, sociological, and cultural perspectives, this study offers a comprehensive understanding of how sacred anthroponyms function in contemporary Turkic societies.

4.6. Limitations of the Study

While this study offers valuable insights into the religious and cultural significance of Muslim names in contemporary Turkic societies, several limitations should be acknowledged:

The research primarily focuses on contemporary Turkic states as a broad, unified entity. However, significant regional and national variations within these states due to differing historical trajectories, political regimes, and degrees of religious influence may limit the generalizability of the findings.

Another limitation lies in the study's focus on present-day attitudes and usage patterns. That is, the study analyzes present-day attitudes and usage patterns but does not deeply explore diachronic changes over longer historical periods. The findings represent a snapshot in time and may not fully capture ongoing or future shifts in naming practices and cultural identity.

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1. The Influence of Islam on the Development of Muslim Names

When analyzing the structure, lexical, and phonetic features of Turkic anthroponyms, it becomes evident that they contain lexemes characteristic of all historical periods. Muslim names reflect the culture, views, and social life of

the Turks and form the common naming fund of Turkic languages. This section examines the naming fund, naming practices, and the use of Muslim names. Names associated with revered saints and prophets have always held special significance in the Turks. Muslim names include the names of prophets, saints, and Sufis – names of holy figures. During the spread of Islam, many names of Islamic scholars, spiritual leaders, saints, and prophets became widely known and gained massive popularity among the Turks. The influence of Islam and its integration with Turkic culture gave rise to new socio-cultural processes that significantly impacted naming traditions. Today, many of these names are so deeply rooted in linguistic consciousness that they are no longer perceived as borrowed. Names that were once borrowed are now seen as an integral part of cultural and linguistic heritage, having been fully integrated into societal usage.

During the medieval period, the formation of Turkic anthroponymy was influenced by both local and Islamic traditions. During this time, names associated with religious figures or concepts gained importance in the spiritual life of society. The active use of sacred names based on Islamic values reflects the Turks' aspiration for spiritual revival. In the early stages, names of prominent Islamic figures – prophets, saints, Sufis, and pilgrims were predominantly used. Later, traditional Turkic names began to incorporate religious names mentioned in the Quran and Hadith. In Turkic culture, there is a belief that “those who choose the name of a saint, prophet, or righteous person become part of their blessed life”. In the context of religious names, epithets frequently used in prayers, such as *Allah* and *Rahman*, which represent aspects of divine essence according to the concept of *Asma al-Husna*, hold a special place. In this regard, names referred to as “taken from the book” or “based on the book” became widespread among the people. These names carry sacred meanings and reflect divine attributes. Most Arabic names derived from *Asma al-Husna* (the 99 beautiful names of Allah) form sacred anthroponyms and their numerous phonetic variations. In Arabic tradition, the term *Asma al-Husna* denotes “the best names” highlighting their sacredness and high status^[46]. Additionally, an important element of the lexico-semantic group of sacred anthroponyms includes the names of prophets mentioned in the Quran, as well as the names of holy figures who significantly influenced the development of early Islam.

T. Zhanuzakov^[47] emphasizes in his research that Arabic and Persian languages significantly impacted Turkic languages during the Middle Ages. Among anthroponyms borrowed from Arabic and Persian, Arabic names predominate and firmly establish themselves in Turkic culture. In contrast, names borrowed from Persian are less common, with their origins tracing back to earlier periods, making them more archaic compared to Arabic names. Historically, it is known that Persian loanwords entered Turkic languages during the early period. Names borrowed from Arabic and Persian often underwent significant phonetic changes in vernacular usage, taking on new forms. For example, the name *Ali* appears in Azerbaijani as *Ali*, in Kyrgyz as *Aly*, in Kazakh as *Āli*, *Āli*, or *Ġali*; in Uzbek and Azerbaijani as *Osman* or *Usman*, in Kazakh as *Ospan* or *Quspan*; in Tatar and Caucasian languages as *Fatima*, in Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Karakalpak as *Batima*, *Bătima*, *Patyma*, *Fatima*, and others. The influence of Arabic on Turkic languages was not uniform: in Azerbaijani, Uzbek, Tatar, and Turkish, Arabic loanwords are more prevalent than in Kazakh and Kyrgyz, where Arabic loanwords appeared later, primarily through borrowings from Azerbaijani, Uzbek, and Tatar. In these languages, Arabic and Persian words were borrowed while retaining their form and semantic integrity, whereas in Kazakh and Kyrgyz, this trend developed in the opposite direction. The primary reason for this phenomenon is that Islam penetrated Azerbaijani, Uzbek, Tatar, and Turkish (including Crimea and the Volga region) earlier and developed more rapidly.

In the process of forming anthroponyms, a synthesis of Arabic and Turkic linguistic elements occurred, leading to the creation of new names that carry significant meaning and reflect cultural unity. Analyzing the morphemic structure of religious names reveals elements of Turkic languages, such as *khan*, *bai*, *bek*, *bi*, *qul*, *tarhan*, *bahadur* (*batyr*), *khanyim*, *khansha*, as well as elements of Arabic – *sultan*, *malik*, *abd*, *amir*, *qajy*, *shaykhy*, *sopy*, *molda* – and Persian – *shah*, and *qoja*. These elements gradually became an integral part of naming traditions, particularly among children of the upper classes. In some cases, titles such as *sultan*, *malik*, *amir*, *qajy*, *sopy*, *bek*, and *qoja* began to be used as personal names. Personal names became not only social and cultural markers but also national identifiers. The greatest reflection of this is found in the names of elite members of society – nobility, aristocracy, and influential individuals. The nicknames of *el-*

ders, leaders, batyrs (heroes), and khans played an important role in the social identification of these individuals.

For example, if we take the name Muhammed Qojabek whose nickname means “true hero, brave,” which enters the semantic field of “heart-strength,” the “primitive” linguistic consciousness of this nickname is a powerful force that can lead to unseen heroism. It also serves as protection from external influences. The meaning of the name of the ruler who ruled in the 14th century comes from the pure religious worldview. The meaning of his name is “a brave, courageous and strong” ruler. This value is especially acute when taken in conjunction with the name “Lion.” For the lion is the king of the beasts. At the same time, the image of the ruling hero in the medieval linguistic consciousness of Khorezm is fully combined with the image of the Kazakh national linguistic consciousness and cognitive consciousness as a “brave commander and khan.”^[48]

A notable feature of the names of saints and Sufis is that many of them were nicknames. Nicknames and pseudonyms carried strong national and cultural significance. For example, names like *Qajy* and *Qoja* indicate religious education or high social status. The art of naming in the Turks is a complex and multifaceted creative process.

Modern names, distinguished not only by aesthetic beauty but also by deep spiritual value, are the result of this cultural exploration. Muslim names continue to enjoy popularity and are characterized by common forms and variations shared across all Turkic languages.

In Turkey, processes of secularization and globalization have led to the replacement of Muslim names with modern ones, while in countries like Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan, religious names were replaced by secular ones during the Soviet era. However, after gaining independence, the trend of using sacred names has strengthened once again. In recent years, names borrowed from Arabic have become increasingly popular due to the development of Islam and the spread of religious worldviews. Names such as *Aisha* (Ar. *Aiše*), *Muhammad* (Ar. *Muhammed*), *Āli* (Ar. *Ali*), *Āmina* (Ar. *Amina*), *Fatima* (Ar. *Fadime*), *Rukhiya* (Ar. *Rukiyye*), *Sara* (Ar. *Sare*), *Zura*, *Zuhra* (Ar. *Zehra*), *Ālima* (Ar. *Halime*), *Ajar* (Ar. *Hacer*), *Abdolla* (Ar. *Abdullah*), *Qadisha* (Ar. *Hatice*), *Nurulla* (Ar. *Nurullah*), *Abbas* (Ar. *Abbās*), *Ahmet* (Ar. *Ahmad*), *Ansar* (Ar. *Ansār*), *Āsia* (Ar. *Āsiya*), *Azat* (Pers. *Āzād*), *Bahadur*

(Pers. *Bahādur*), *Bakhtiyar* (Pers. *Baxt-yār*), *Bahram* (Pers. *Behram*), *Bilal* (Ar. *Bilāl*), *Jihangir*, *Jāngir* (Pers. *Cihāngīr*), *Cheshminaz* (Pers. *Çeşm-i naz*), *Dilara* (Pers. *Dil-ārā*), *Āmina* (Ar. *Amin*, *Āmine*), *Ferman* (Pers. *Fermān*), *Habibullah* (Ar. *Ḥabību-lāh*), *Islam* (Ar. *Islām*), *Kahraman* (Pers. *Kahramān*), *Meiirban* (Pers. *Mihr-bān*), *Mādina* (Ar. *Madīna*), *Māvlūt* (Ar. *Mevlūd*), *Mina* (Pers. *Mīnā*), *Murtaza* (Ar. *Murtazā*), *Mustafa* (Ar. *Muṣṭafā*), *Nargis* (Pers. *Nargīs*), *Nigar* (Pers. *Nīgār*), *Nizameddin* (Ar. *Nizāmü'd-dīn*), *Nurkhat* (Ar. *Nūr+ḥayyat*), *Bolat* (Pers. *Pūlād*), *Rasul* (Ar. *Rasūl*), *Rustem* (Pers. *Rūstem*), *Zakir* (Ar. *Zākīr*), *Zeyneb* (Ar. *Zaynab*), and others are chosen not only for their aesthetic value but also for their spiritual significance. All these names possess unique features, reflecting the diverse cultural influences absorbed by the Turks. Additionally, it is noteworthy that children born on days of special religious significance are often given names such as *Qadir* (Ar. *Qādir*), *Ramazan* (Ar. *Ramāzān*), *Rejep* (Ar. *Rajab*), and *Shaban* (Ar. *Sha'bān*). Among the sacred names mentioned in the Quran and significant in Judaism and Christianity are *Yhyraim* (Ar. *Ibrahim*), *Musa* (Ar. *Mūsā*), *Māryam* (Ar. *Maryam*), *Yusuf*, *Jūsip* (Hebr. *Yūsuf*), and others.

5.2. The Influence of Socio-Cultural Development on the Perception and Use of Muslim Names

In **Figure 1**, you can see the percentage distribution and indicators of the perception of the conceptual load of names. As can be seen from the diagram, many respondents (55%) confirmed the religious significance of their names, while a significant portion (36%) stated that their names had no such connection. The remaining 9% of respondents were unsure. The high percentage (55%) of participants who recognize the connection between their names and spiritual-cultural traditions indicates that more than half of modern society is aware of the religious and spiritual significance of their names. This confirms the preservation of cultural continuity and memory within traditional onomastic practices.

However, the significant portion of respondents (36%) who do not see a connection between their names and religious concepts likely reflects the influence of globalization and modernization. The predominance of secular trends has led to a decline in the prevalence of Muslim names. The

responses demonstrate the complex interplay between traditional cultural attitudes and modern social challenges. One of the key issues arising from the assignment of Muslim

names is the threat of losing cultural heritage, underscoring the need to maintain a balance between reviving and preserving ethno-cultural values.

Does your name have religious significance?

Number of responses: 2981

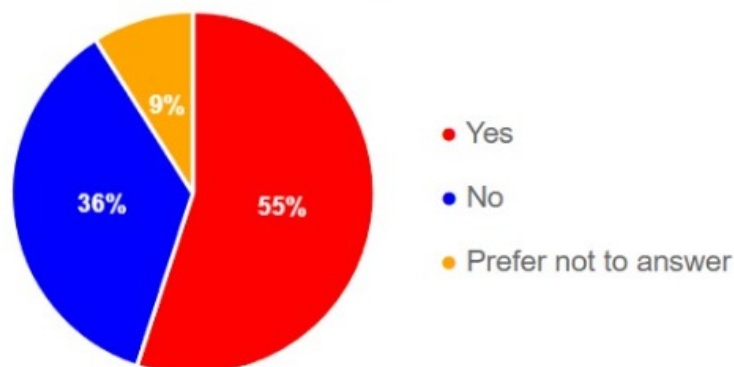


Figure 1. Percentage distribution and indicators of the perception of the conceptual load of names.

Particular attention should be paid to the 9% of respondents who were unsure, as this may indicate a trend toward using meaningless names. This highlights the need for deep reflection on cultural and religious roots in the context of Turkic anthroponyms.

In **Figure 2**, you can see the percentage distribution and indicators of the impact of globalization and modernization on the use of Muslim names. As can be seen from the diagram, 38% of respondents believe that Muslim names

can be burdensome, while the majority (47%) do not share this view. The remaining 15% were unsure. Since ancient times, the Turks have believed that Muslim names carry a certain responsibility for the individual. They believed that such names positively influence personal qualities and destiny, shaping character and life following the name. The results showing that most respondents do not consider Muslim names burdensome confirm the importance of these names and traditional beliefs.

Are Muslim names burdensome?

Number of responses: 2981

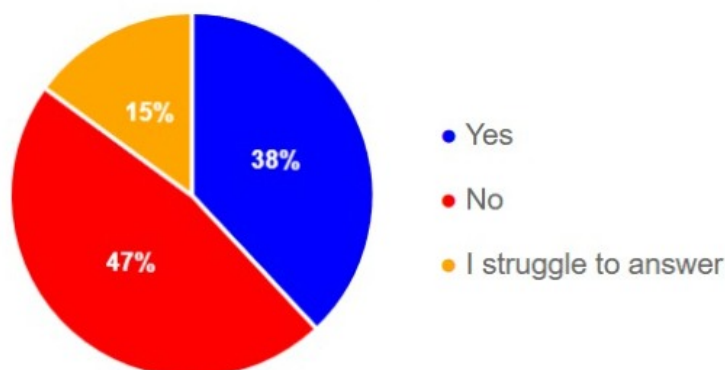


Figure 2. Percentage distribution and indicators of the impact of globalization and modernization on the use of Muslim names.

However, the 38% who find Muslim names burdensome reflect changing perceptions of religion and tradition in society. This may be due to several factors: younger generations may not understand the meaning or religious significance of their names, leading to difficulties in their perception. Additionally, families with differing religious beliefs may face challenges in choosing names.

The 15% who were unsure likely indicated a neutral attitude or lack of knowledge about names. These respondents may view names purely from a practical perspective, disregarding their spiritual significance. As shown in the study by N. Shaimerdenova, traditional name selection was closely

tied to customs and beliefs, but in modern society, this process is increasingly pragmatic, highlighting the importance of balancing tradition and transformation.

In **Figure 3**, you can see the percentage distribution and indicators of attitudes toward the assignment of Muslim names. As can be seen from the diagram, 59% of respondents support the tradition of assigning names associated with religious beliefs, 12% express negative opinions, and 29% remain neutral. The positive attitude toward Muslim names reflects a desire to preserve the spiritual heritage of ancestors. These names remain an important tool for transmitting spiritual values from one generation to the next.

How do you feel about names associated with religious beliefs?

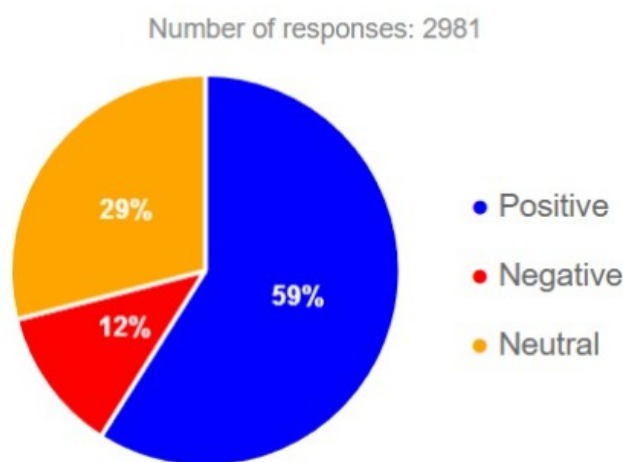


Figure 3. Percentage distribution and indicators of attitudes toward the assignment of Muslim names.

However, the relatively high percentage of neutral (29%) and negative (12%) responses indicates diverse perspectives. Although negative attitudes are in the minority, their presence underscores the importance of discussing the role of religious values today. The impact of urbanization and globalization has led younger generations to increasingly prefer names unrelated to religious themes, potentially resulting in the loss of some Muslim names.

Notably, the significant proportion of neutral responses demonstrates the complexity of the dynamics surrounding the assignment of Muslim names. These responses may reflect growing tolerance in society. Individuals who do not identify with traditional religious values nevertheless do not deny their significance, contributing to a pluralistic social environment. In this context of pluralism, traditional values may change or be lost.

In **Figure 4**, you can see the percentage distribution and

indicators of value orientations regarding Muslim names. As can be seen from the diagram, many respondents (51%) reject the traditional concept that a name influences a person's destiny. This indicates that more than half of the respondents disagree with the idea that choosing the name of a saint can ensure a happy life. This disagreement may be linked to the general trend of declining religious influence in modern society. Society is becoming increasingly pragmatic and critical. A growing number of respondents view names not as factors influencing destiny but as social attributes. In this context, Western values emphasizing secularism and individualism significantly impact the transformation of societal perceptions. These results confirm the changing status of traditional values, reflecting the complex interplay between religious and social aspects. They also indicate a weakening of traditional beliefs linking names to destiny.

Do you believe that the names of revered saints guarantee a happy life?

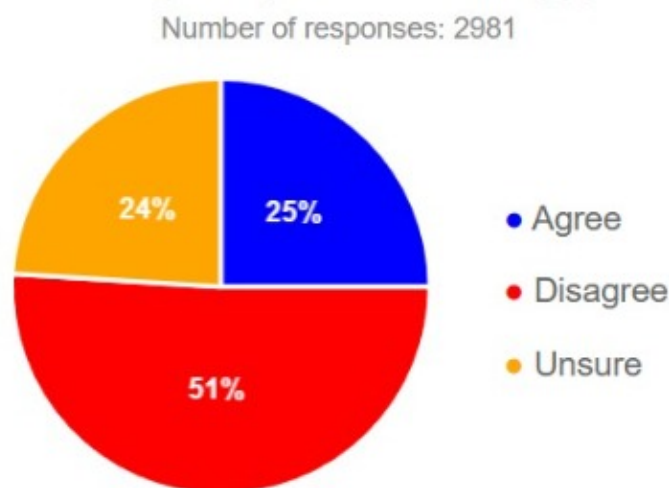


Figure 4. Percentage distribution and indicators of value orientations regarding Muslim names.

However, a significant portion of respondents (25%), particularly in rural areas, continue to uphold religious traditions. These participants believe that the names of saints and revered figures can positively influence the fate of their bearers. This response confirms the strong connection to the traditional beliefs of the Turks for whom names have always been important symbolic elements. However, with the development of secular education and modernization, these traditions are gradually losing their influence. This also demonstrates a gradual departure from traditional views, as evidenced by many respondents.

Additionally, 24% of respondents were unsure, which may indicate existing contradictions between traditional and modern views, as well as the transitional nature of public consciousness. This also reflects the process of cultural and spiritual revival occurring in society, as well as the re-thinking of traditional values in search of new meanings and forms. In the context of globalization and modernization, there is a desire to preserve and develop national culture and traditions, adapting them to new conditions. This underscores the need for educational initiatives aimed at spreading knowledge about Muslim names and their significance in Turkic culture. Muslim names, as an important link between the past and present, can play a key role in strengthening these traditions.

In **Figure 5**, you can see the percentage distribution

and indicators of imagery representations reflecting the perception and interpretation of Muslim names. The fifth question reveals conflicting views on the assignment of Muslim names. 31% of respondents continue to believe in the sacred significance of names, while 23% reject this view. The largest portion of respondents (46%) were unsure, indicating uncertainty in public perception of this practice. These data demonstrate the complex dynamics of the intersection between traditional views of rationalism and secularization.

Approximately one-third of respondents (31%) assert that a name associated with a prophet or saint influences the destiny of its bearer. Since ancient times, the names of saints and prophets in Turkic culture have been associated with moral and spiritual values. Such names were deeply connected to religious practices and were used for protection against misfortunes.

About a quarter of respondents (23%) do not believe in the influence of names on destiny, viewing names solely as social attributes. Names are perceived primarily through social and cultural lenses. Some respondents may associate their answers with the belief that a person's destiny is determined not by their name but by their personal efforts and moral choices. This position implies that if everyone adhered to positive moral norms, modern society would have long been free from phenomena such as terrorism, corruption, and exploitation.

Do you believe that a person who chooses the name of a saint or prophet will lead a pious and happy life?

Number of responses: 2981

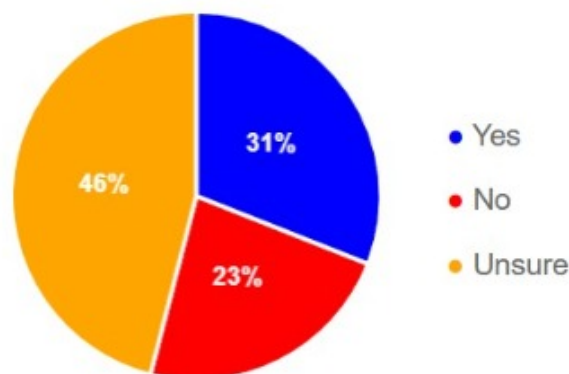


Figure 5. Percentage distribution and indicators of imagery representations reflecting the perception and interpretation of Muslim names.

The largest proportion of respondents (46%) were unsure, indicating the complexity of perceiving the connection between names and destiny. Some respondents may have avoided a definitive answer due to religious or social factors. Belief in the sacred significance of names remains an important and multifaceted topic, and those who are uncertain may have chosen a neutral response, expressing doubt about the issue.

5.3. Survey Results

The analysis of the survey results revealed significant differences among respondents based on age, gender, and geographic location. Older participants emphasized that assigning Muslim names to children is an important element of preserving cultural and spiritual heritage, while younger generations focused on the aesthetic and pragmatic value of names. This generational divide reflects broader social changes, such as urbanization, globalization, and the secularization of society.

In rural areas, Muslim names are perceived as a crucial element of culture and spirituality, while their significance is noticeably reduced in urban areas. According to researchers G. Akhmetzhanova and B. Baimusaeva, name selection is also closely tied to the religious and educational level of the family^[45]. The high proportion of neutral and negative responses to questions about Muslim names indicates a weakening of religious values among urban populations. This may be due to several factors:

1) **Secularization of Society:** Globalization and modern-

ization have led to a decline in the influence of religion in the lives of many, particularly urban residents.

- 2) **Search for Individuality:** Modern families increasingly prefer names without religious connotations, chosen based on aesthetic preferences and personal desires, reflecting a shift from Muslim names to an individualistic approach.
- 3) **Lack of Awareness:** Younger generations often lack an understanding of the deep symbolic meaning of Muslim names, which also affects name selection and the perception of traditions.

In summary, the negative perception of Muslim names can be explained by several key aspects:

- 1) **Influence of Globalization:** Modern society is multicultural, and Western cultural values significantly impact the perception of traditional values. Younger generations, influenced by these values, tend to view Muslim names as outdated or overly formal.
- 2) **Association with Conservatism:** For some, Muslim names are associated with traditional values perceived as limiting personal freedom, making them symbols of conservative views.
- 3) **Distrust of Religion:** There is a notable skepticism toward religious institutions and their influence on daily life, particularly among urban populations.

Analyzing the impact of socio-cultural development on the perception and use of Muslim names, two main points emerge. First, religious affiliation is a significant factor in the choice of names. Second, the names of saints and significant religious figures influence people's faith and worldview in a

positive way. The survey results on the pragmatic aspects of Muslim names lead to the following conclusions:

Historical Context: With the adoption of Islam, Muslim names became widespread and a key element in shaping social identity. These names perform a range of social, ritual, and charismatic functions, rooted in social, cultural, political, and religious factors with deep historical and ethnic origins.

Modern Changes: The study also shows that the significance of Muslim names is gradually declining among younger and urban populations.

This reflects a trend toward viewing names not as sacred symbols but as social and cultural phenomena. This, in turn, may lead to the loss of part of the cultural heritage, highlighting the importance of educational and awareness-raising initiatives to preserve and transmit these traditions. Despite changes in naming practices, Muslim names continue to play a role in transmitting cultural and spiritual values, remaining a significant element of Turkic anthroponymy. Sacred Muslim names are supported by a great number of people in modern Turkic states, confirming their role as a means of transmitting spiritual heritage.

6. Conclusions

The proper names reflect epochal social and cultural transformations and serve as codes of identity. Through names, the historical periods of a people, their religious beliefs, political and social conditions, as well as their worldview and attitude toward nature, are clearly reflected. Studying the sacred naming traditions of the Turkic peoples contributes to a deeper understanding of national culture and helps pass on spiritual values to future generations. Turkic naming systems feature a wide array of sacred Muslim names that cover every semantic category of proper nouns. These names are vital expressions of cultural identity, carrying deep meaning and rich symbolism. They connect the spiritual, cultural, and social aspects of Turkic heritage, reflecting values shaped by the embrace of Islam.

This study identified the main aspects of the perception of sacred Muslim names in contemporary society and traced their dynamics under the influence of globalization and mod-

ernization. The findings underscore the need for widespread dissemination of knowledge about the meaning and origin of sacred Muslim names as an integral part of cultural heritage. Educational programs and cultural initiatives aimed at studying the history of Turkic anthroponymy and Muslim names can help strengthen their value among younger generations. Furthermore, such initiatives can serve as important tools in countering the influence of globalization and modernization on naming practices.

The empirical method of research was applied to identify the pragmatic characteristics of Muslim names within the context of Turkic ethno-culture. Sacred Muslim names possess not only historical but also philosophical significance, helping to understand the worldview of a people. The use of an empirical approach allowed for a deeper characterization of ethno-cultural linguistic competence through Muslim names, which play an important role in transmitting cultural and cognitive information.

In the modern Turkic states, the use of sacred Muslim names varies depending on regional, cultural, and socio-political changes. The results of the study show that Muslim names hold a significant place in Turkic culture, but their perception is changing under the influence of global and local factors. Shifting attitudes toward Muslim names present new challenges in their preservation and transmission to future generations. This study demonstrates that sacred Muslim names are not only elements of spiritual perception but also important indicators of cultural changes. The analysis confirms that sacred Muslim names are not merely linguistic elements but also serve as a significant link between historical heritage and contemporary values, acting as a vital tool for preserving and transmitting spiritual values to future generations.

The study contributes to pragmalinguistic research by highlighting how sacred anthroponyms (i.e., religiously significant personal names) function not only as identifiers but also as conveyors of socio-religious meaning in Turkic societies. It adds a new dimension to onomastic studies (the study of names) by integrating sociocultural and spiritual elements into linguistic analysis. The research challenges static or essentialist views of religious naming by showing how meanings evolve in response to modernization, globalization, and secularization. It proposes a dynamic model of anthroponymic change, linking language use to cultural and ideological shifts in society. By analyzing naming practices,

the article theoretically reinforces the idea that language (specifically personal names) plays a crucial role in constructing and preserving cultural and religious identities. It supports theories of language as a marker of ethnocultural continuity in a rapidly transforming social landscape.

The findings can inform educational and cultural policy initiatives aimed at preserving traditional Turkic naming practices, especially in contexts where they may be under threat from globalization or cultural homogenization. The findings could serve as a basis for awareness campaigns that highlight the cultural richness of traditional names. This study opens up avenues for comparative research in other linguistic or cultural groups undergoing similar socio-cultural transformations, particularly in post-Soviet or Muslim-majority contexts.

Author Contributions

All authors contributed equally to the conception, design, data collection, analysis, and writing of this study. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are derived from publicly available sources, including linguistic and historical texts referenced in the article. Specific data sets, such as survey results, are described in the “Findings and Discussion” section and are available upon the corresponding author’s reasonable request. Additionally, all references cited are available in the public domain or academic repositories.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors stated that there are no conflicts of interest.

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