



# Religious orientations on attitude toward a secular state: Case of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in north regions of Kazakhstan

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## Abstract

The main objective of this study was to explore the connections between orientations (Quest, Intrinsic, and Extrinsic) and peoples' attitudes towards a secular state among members of the Evangelical Lutheran Churches in the northern regions of Kazakhstan. To achieve this, established scales were used to assess participants' perspectives on secularism and their religious orientations. The article analyses the opinion on the separation of church and state using measures of tendency. There were also calculated Pearson correlation coefficients to understand how religious beliefs interacted with views on governance. The findings indicated that there was an inclination towards secularism among the participants. While some respondents valued the guidance provided by the Church in decisions, others preferred a separation between religious institutions and legislative affairs. However, when examining orientations, none showed a significant influence on attitudes towards a secular state. This highlights the relationship between religious beliefs and societal views on governance. Overall, this study emphasises that while religious orientation provides insights into beliefs, it does not solely determine attitudes towards secularism. It underscores that belief systems are multifaceted and interact intricately with governance perspectives. Future research should focus on uncovering factors that influence these perspectives within and beyond the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

**Keywords:** Church and State, Secularism, Government, Community, Confession.

## Introduction

The continuing influence of religion on both the social and political spheres is a subject of ongoing interest and debate, especially in light of the resurgence of religious fervour seen in the 21st century (Thomas, 2005; Kim et al., 2022). This phenomenon is particularly evident in Kazakhstan, a country where understanding the relationship between religious beliefs and the desire for a secular government is paramount. In this context, a study of the attitudes of people belonging to Evangelical Lutheran Churches in regions such as Astana, Kokshetau, and Pavlodar becomes crucial for unravelling the complex relationship between faith and preferences for governance systems.

The interaction between religion and politics is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, shaped by a multitude of factors, including historical context, cultural norms, and individual beliefs. In Kazakhstan, a country with a rich religious tapestry, the question of how religious orientations affect



attitudes towards a secular state takes on special significance. Although secularism is enshrined as a guiding principle of governance in Kazakhstan, religious beliefs continue to play a significant role in shaping the lives of many Kazakh citizens (Kadyraliyeva et al., 2019).

Evangelical Lutheranism, a branch of Protestantism, has a long and established presence in Kazakhstan, especially in the northern regions. Lutheran communities have historically contributed to the social and cultural fabric of these regions by fostering a sense of identity and belonging among their members. Therefore, understanding the attitude of evangelical Lutherans to the secular state is important for understanding the broader dynamics of religion and politics in Kazakhstan.

In scientific doctrine, there are different positions regarding the study of the nature of the influence of religious beliefs on the management prospects of the Evangelical Lutheran community of Kazakhstan. L. Young (2021) concluded that there is a close connection between religious orientations and attitudes towards secularism, particularly in the Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Kazakhstan. At the same time, he did not consider how Muslim minorities perceive the idea of a secular state and whether their religious beliefs influence their perception.

A. Kosichenko (2023) revealed a system of dependence between religious orientations, attitude to secularism, and perception of the management system of Lutheran evangelists in Kazakhstan. At the same time, he did not explore initiatives aimed at promoting religious tolerance and spreading constructive dialogue between different religious groups in the country.

G. Mambetova and A. Muminov (2023) explained this issue in a political context, based on which they concluded that the Constitution of Kazakhstan guarantees freedom of religion and prohibits the establishment of a state religion, and therefore the government has been criticised for its close ties with the Muslim community. They did not describe the growing trend of religious conservatism, which raises concerns about the potential for religious extremism in Kazakhstan.

M. Dzhumageldinov et al. (2023), in turn, investigated the essence of religious orientations and also classified them into introverted, extroverted, and searching types. The question of the impact of each of them on human consciousness and behaviour remained unexplored.

In turn, N. Seytakhmetova and Zh. Turganbaeva (2023) managed to come to the conclusion that introverted religious persons are more inclined to support the secular state than extroverted religious citizens because they value freedom of religion and believe that the government should be neutral in religious matters. In their work, the question of the tendency of seekers of religious experience to support the secular state remained unsolved.

Secularism refers to the separation of religious institutions from state governance and public affairs. It promotes religious freedom while maintaining the state's neutrality towards various belief systems (Feldman, 2005). The concept of secularism is significant in Kazakhstan's nation-building efforts as it grapples with religious diversity after gaining independence. Promoting secularism is viewed as a pathway for crafting national harmony and identity. However, there are still ambiguities regarding the role of religion in public life, which can cause tensions between upholding secular ideals and accommodating religious groups who desire greater involvement in governance matters. Therefore, this work emphasises secularism as a pivotal debate in Kazakhstan for negotiating the relationship between faith and state. Examining perspectives on secularism also provides insights into how different religious groups perceive this concept and their vision for Kazakhstan.

This study aims to explore the complex relationship between religious orientations and attitudes towards the secular state among members of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in northern Kazakhstan. By examining the prevalence of intrinsic, extrinsic, and quest orientations in these communities, the study seeks to identify correlations between these orientations and individuals' views on the role of religion in governance. Several tasks were formed in the study, namely:



1. To investigate religious orientations: To examine the prevalence and patterns of religious orientations, such as intrinsic, extrinsic, and quest orientation, among members of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in northern Kazakhstan.
2. To explore attitudes towards the secular state: to assess participants' attitudes towards the secular state and to gain insight into their views on the separation of beliefs from governmental institutions.
3. Determine correlations: using data analysis to identify any correlations between religious orientations (internal, external, searches) and attitudes towards the secular state among members of Evangelical Lutheran churches.

## Literature Review

G.W. Allport (1950) introduced the concept of immature religiosity to explore how individuals express their faith. According to researcher, there are two types of religiosities: immature and mature. In this form, people have a commitment to their religion, engage in critical thinking about spiritual matters, and embrace ethical responsibilities. Conversely, the immature form involves using religion for self-serving purposes, characterised by unquestioning beliefs and relying on religion for wish fulfilment.

On the other hand, G.W. Allport and J.M. Ross (1967) transformed these concepts into extrinsic orientations. The extrinsic orientation views religion as a means to an end; individuals with this perspective use religion for gain, seeking security, social interaction, and validation. Their religious beliefs are often flexible to cater to their needs. On the other hand, the intrinsic orientation sees religion as the motivation that guides all aspects of life. It entails adherence to doctrines with a focus on spiritual growth.

Subsequently, R.L. Gorsuch and S.E. McPherson (1989) aimed to refine and enhance the intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity scales proposed by G.W. Allport and J.M. Ross (1967). Their study successfully improved these scales by introducing subcategories of extrinsicness while providing a nuanced measurement of religiosity orientations. The findings of this study have implications for research on the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity and how these orientations are connected to various outcomes and criteria.

Additionally, C.D. Batson and P.A. Schoenrade (1991) introduced the concept of quest orientation as a nuanced perspective. Individuals with an orientation acknowledge the limitations of understanding and embrace doubt and complexity when it comes to religious matters. They critically evaluate their faith-seeking answers while acknowledging that uncertainty exists. This orientation is associated with mindedness, cognitive complexity, and compassion while opposing dogmatism and prejudice.

Regarding attitudes, having an orientation is linked to reduced open-mindedness and specific forms of prejudice. On the other hand, an extrinsic orientation correlates with attitudes such as prejudice and closed-mindedness. However, individuals with an orientation demonstrate attributes like open-mindedness, cognitive complexity, and compassion. Interestingly enough, having an orientation aligns with secularism, as it reflects a willingness to embrace perspectives as well as the separation of religious beliefs from matters pertaining to state affairs.

These orientations provide insights into how individuals interact with their faith, critically engage with their beliefs, and navigate their relationship with norms. It's important to note that people can embody elements of more than one orientation, which adds complexity to how religiosity is expressed.

The idea of secularism, in the context of a nation, refers to keeping institutions separate from governance. It aims to create a space that respects the beliefs of citizens with faiths (Feldman, 2005). As Kazakhstan underwent changes politically and socially after gaining independence in 1991, it faced the challenge of dealing with religious diversity and the role of religion in public life. In this context, it is worth exploring how religious groups like the Evangelical Lutheran Church view the concept of a state.



Previous studies have revealed that individuals' perspectives on matters are often influenced by their identity and orientations (Hichy et al., 2015; 2020). The literature suggests that specific religious orientations such as religiosity, extrinsic religiosity, and quest orientation can shape how people perceive religions' role in society and their support for governance. Intrinsic religiosity, which involves a commitment to beliefs and practices, may be linked to a preference for religion having influence in governance (Allport et al., 1954; Sliusarenko, 2023).

On the side, there is an approach to religiosity called extrinsic religiosity, where religion is seen as a means to an end. Additionally, there is orientation, which involves exploring religious beliefs. These approaches might be more aligned with perspectives (Batson et al., 1993).

Within the context of Kazakhstan, various studies have explored the correlation between identity orientations and political inclinations among religious communities. However, little attention has been given to Evangelical Lutheran Churches, which are a minority group in this predominantly Muslim nation. The Evangelical Lutheran Churches have a total of 14 communities, whereas there are more Muslim communities with a count of 2790. The purpose of this research is to contribute to existing literature by examining the orientations and attitudes towards the concept of a secular state among members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the northern regions of Kazakhstan.

## Materials and methods

The research involved 101 individuals who were members of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, forming the group for analysis. However, it should be noted that a subset of 6 participants had to be excluded from the dataset due to survey responses. Although this reduction in sample size could potentially affect the strength of the findings, the authors took measures to ensure the reliability of the data by excluding insufficient responses. With a resulting sample size of 95 participants, the authors still gained insights into these research objectives with fewer participants.

The survey was conducted on dates and in locations. Specifically, it took place on October 30 2022 in Astana and Kokshetau cities. Subsequently, the survey was administered on January 22 and 29, 2023, in Pavlodar (Table 1). The locations were selected to encompass a diverse geographic representation within northern Kazakhstan where these Lutheran communities exist. Conducting the survey during in-person services also helped maximize participation.

Table 1. Demographic description

	Items	Frequency	Valid percentage
Age	18-24	13	13.7
	25-34	17	17.9
	35-44	23	24.2
	45-54	22	23.2
	Above 54	20	21
	Total	95	100
Marital status	Married	43	45.3
	Divorced	8	8.4
	Widowed	14	14.7
	Never married	21	22.1
	Do not want to say	9	9.5
	Total	95	100



Gender	Male	47	49.5
	Female	48	50.5
	Total	95	100
Region	Pavlodar	45	47.4
	Kokshetau	29	30.5
	Astana	21	22.1
	Total	95	100

There are some limitations to this study that the authors need to consider. One limitation is that the number of members in the Evangelical Lutheran Church is relatively small. This limited membership size might affect the range and depth of the findings. It could impact how applicable the authors' conclusions are to religious communities. It's important to acknowledge this limitation because it could potentially affect the significance and strength of any comparisons authors make between Evangelical Lutheran Churches and other religious groups. However, despite this limitation, this research aims to derive insights within the data and resources with the goal of contributing to a broader understanding of the factors that shape dynamics within religious communities.

In order to understand participants' religious beliefs, the authors used a set of 14 questions. These questions were adapted from the Religious Orientation Scale developed by G.W. Allport and J.M. Ross (1967). Later refined by R.L. Gorsuch and S.E. McPherson (1989). Authors also included some questions, from the Religious Life Inventory by C.D. Batson et al. (1993). The scale covers three types of beliefs: extrinsic, intrinsic, and quest. Each question in the scale is based on Allport's 20-item scale.

Participants were asked to rate their agreement with each question using a 5-point Likert-type scale, where they could choose from responses ranging from 1 (completely untrue) to 5 (completely true). This scale aimed to capture a range of attitudes and behaviours, allowing individuals to express how closely they align with each type of belief.

To ensure that the measurements of orientation were reliable, authors calculated Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each subscale: extrinsic, intrinsic, and quest orientations. Cronbach's alpha helps to assess the consistency and reliability of the questions within each subscale, giving insights into how participants responded consistently. These calculations helped confirm whether the questions effectively measured what they were intended to measure within each type of belief.

The use of the R.L. Gorsuch and S.E. McPherson (1989) adapted Religious Orientation Scale, which builds upon Allport's research, combined with incorporating items from the C.D. Batson et al. (1993) Religious Life Inventory, not enabled to evaluate participants' religious orientations but also provided a deeper contextual understanding of their attitudes towards religion within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in northern Kazakhstan. This integration significantly enhanced the depth of the authors' investigation.

Participants' views on a state were evaluated by utilising the "Secularism of State Scale" (modified from Z. Hichy et al. (2012)). The scale comprised eight statements that gauged participants' perspectives regarding the involvement of religion in matters and the distinction between institutions and government. Participants expressed their opinions on a 5-point scale ranging from disagree (1) to agree (5), with a neutral midpoint at 3.

The analysis of the data involved two steps: descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The authors used statistics to give an overview of the characteristics of the sample and how they responded. Descriptive statistics including means, medians, standard deviations and frequencies provided an overview of responses. For each variable, including orientations and attitudes towards



a state, the authors calculated measures like the mean (central tendency) and standard deviation (dispersion). Authors also assessed the consistency of items within each orientation subscale using Cronbach's alpha coefficients.

To examine the relationships between orientations and attitudes toward a state authors employed inferential statistics. Authors used Pearson's correlation coefficient to determine the strength and direction of relationships between variables. Specifically, authors calculated correlations between each orientation (extrinsic, intrinsic, and quest). Attitude toward a secular state.

Throughout this study, the authors strictly followed guidelines and principles to ensure privacy, confidentiality, and informed consent. Prior to conducting this research, the authors obtained approval from the Ethics Committee of Nur Mubarak University. The methodology described above provides a thorough approach to examining the connections between beliefs and opinions on a secular government within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in northern Kazakhstan.

## Results

To assess the consistency of the measurement scales used in this study, the authors calculated Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. Cronbach's Alpha measures how well the items within a scale collectively measure a concept. Higher Alpha values indicate consistency. For the "Secularism of State Scale" authors obtained a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.704 with a sample size of 12 items. This suggests a level of consistency among the items, indicating that they reliably gauge participants' perspectives on the secular nature of the state. In terms of the "Extrinsic Orientation" scale, the authors derived a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.848 from a sample size of 6 items. This high coefficient reflects consistency among the items on this scale, indicating their effectiveness in capturing individuals extrinsically motivated religious orientation. The "Intrinsic Orientation" scale yielded a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.745 based on a sample size of 8 items. This indicates consistency among its items, suggesting that they consistently measure participants' intrinsically motivated religious orientation. Finally, for the "Quest Orientation" scale, the authors found a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.753, with an N value (sample size) of 8 items.

The results show that the items on the scale consistently measure participants' inclination to question and explore beliefs. It's worth noting that all the analyses were done using a sample size of 34 items. This ensures that the observed levels of consistency are representative of the group, making the findings more reliable. To sum up, with a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.834, authors can conclude that the measurement scales used to assess participants' perspectives on secularism and their religious orientations (intrinsic, extrinsic, and quest-oriented) demonstrate consistency. The stable sample size further strengthens the reliability of these analyses across scales (Table 2).

Table 2. Central tendency measure of the perceptions on the interplay between the state and the church

	Valid	Average	Median	Mode	SD
In my opinion, the State should be secular	95	4.0105	4	4	0.84419
The Church should intervene more often on State issues	95	3.1579	4	4	1.16067
The State should not let the Church influence it	95	3.0842	3	3	0.91864
I think it is appropriate that the Church gives its opinion on the State laws	95	2.7579	3	3	0.99697
The Church should remain in its place and avoid getting involved in political affairs	95	3.1579	3	4	0.87902
The Church should do more to influence the decisions taken by the State	95	3.1684	3	4	1.31806
I think it is appropriate that the State considers the opinion of the Church	95	2.5053	2	2	0.84895
The Church should not influence the State	95	3	3	3	0.9893



The way people perceive the relationship between the church and the state gives insights into how they think about governance, religion, and how these two intersect. The information provided above sheds light on these perceptions, revealing a range of opinions among the participants.

The statement that received the score of 4.0105 was “In my opinion the State should be secular”. It’s worth noting that both the mode and median also stood at 4 indicating a preference for a state. This sentiment aligns with a trend where many individuals advocate for a separation between religious institutions and government policies to ensure unbiased governance. Participants displayed feelings regarding the church’s involvement in state affairs. The statement “The Church should intervene often on State issues” received a score around the midpoint at 3.1579 accompanied by a relatively high standard deviation of 1.16067. This suggests opinions within the group, with some individuals supporting increased intervention while others may resist it. This division could stem from differing perspectives on the role of the church in society; some view it as a compass in political matters, while others emphasise maintaining its distinctiveness from political endeavours to preserve its sanctity.

The viewpoints “The government should not be influenced by the Church”. The church should not have an impact, on the government both had a rating of around 3. This suggests an inclination towards state independence, but not an overwhelming one. This balanced perspective could stem from recognising the church’s influence while also acknowledging the importance of government autonomy. Participants showed an inclination against the idea that “It’s appropriate for the church to express its opinion on governmental laws” with a score of 2.7579. This sentiment, combined with the statement “The Church should stay within its domain. Refrain from getting involved in matters” (averaging at 3.1579) highlights a preference for the church to maintain some distance from direct legislative issues. This may reflect concerns about biases influencing universal laws.

The neutral rating of 3.1684 for “The Church should play a significant role in shaping governmental decisions” further emphasises diverse opinions regarding the Church’s involvement in political choices. With a score of 2.5053 participants seem to lean against giving weight to the church’s opinions when making governmental decisions. This reflects the trend towards secularism, where countries are encouraged to prioritise the needs of society over specific religious beliefs. To summarise, the data presented here highlights the dynamics between the Evangelical Lutheran Churches and the State in Kazakhstan. There seems to be an inclination towards secularism and independence for the state while also acknowledging that the Church can play a role in political affairs. The diverse range of opinions indicates that it is important to engage in discussions to comprehend these perspectives and their impact on governance and societal harmony (Table 3).

Table 3. Correlation between Secular State and religious orientations (Quest, Intrinsic, and Extrinsic)

	Quest	Intrinsic	Extrinsic
Pears. Cor.	0.005	0.139	0.258
Sig. (2-tail)	0.375	0.293	0.128

Table 3 presents correlation coefficients that reveal the relationships between the concept of a secular state and various religious orientations, namely Quest, Intrinsic, and Extrinsic orientations. These correlations offer valuable insights into the complex interplay between individuals' religious beliefs and their attitudes toward the secular nature of the state within the context of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the northern regions of Kazakhstan.

Starting with the Quest Orientation, the correlation coefficient of 0.005 suggests an almost negligible positive relationship with attitudes toward a secular state. This result is accompanied by a two-tailed significance value of 0.375, indicating a lack of statistical significance. The Quest Orientation, characterised by a willingness to question and explore religious beliefs, does not appear to strongly influence individuals' perspectives on whether the state should adopt a secular approach to



governance. This suggests that those who engage in thoughtful religious exploration and doubt may not necessarily lean toward or against the concept of a secular state.

The Intrinsic Orientation exhibits a correlation coefficient of 0.139, suggesting a weak positive relationship with attitudes towards a secular state. However, similar to the Quest Orientation, this correlation is not statistically significant ( $p=0.293$ ). The Intrinsic Orientation, characterised by a deep commitment to religious doctrines and practices, does not consistently impact individuals' views on a secular government. This implies that the extent of dedication to religious beliefs does not appear to be a strong predictor of attitudes toward the separation of religion and governance.

On the other hand, the Extrinsic Orientation shows a correlation coefficient of 0.258, indicating a weak positive relationship with attitudes toward a secular state. While this correlation is slightly stronger compared to the other orientations, it also lacks statistical significance ( $p=0.128$ ). The Extrinsic Orientation, emphasising the utilitarian use of religion for personal gains, does not significantly sway individuals towards or against a secular state. This suggests that the pragmatic approach to religion does not consistently align with specific viewpoints on governance.

On a final note, the presented correlations highlight that religious orientations (Quest, Intrinsic, and Extrinsic) do not strongly predict individuals' attitudes towards a secular state among members of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in the northern regions of Kazakhstan. The lack of statistical significance for all correlations underscores the intricate nature of how personal beliefs interact with societal views on governance systems. These findings suggest that factors beyond religious orientations play a vital role in shaping individuals' attitudes towards secularism. It is essential to consider broader contextual and individual factors that contribute to these opinions. Moreover, the results indicate the complexity of the relationship between religious beliefs and attitudes toward governance systems, emphasising that no single orientation consistently dictates individuals' stances on secularism. Future research could delve deeper into the interplay between various personal, cultural, and social factors to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the nuanced dynamics influencing attitudes towards secular governance within the Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Kazakhstan (Table 4).

Table 4. Single-sample statistics for Religious Orientation among the Evangel Lutheran Church

	Average	Standard division	Standard error of the average
Quest religious orientation items			
I was not particularly interested in religion until I began to question the meaning of life	3.1158	1.13796	0.11675
My growing awareness of my internal struggles has led me to seek solace and guidance in religious exploration	2.9263	1.15999	0.11901
I have come to see my religious beliefs in a new light through my life experiences	3.2632	1.11289	0.11418
I didn't give much thought to God until I started pondering the purpose of my existence	2.9579	1.32019	0.13545
I find my religious doubts and uncertainties to be valuable	2.2	1.12609	0.11553
I believe that doubt can lead to deeper understanding and commitment to one's faith	2.5579	1.31857	0.13528
Religious doubts unsettle me	2.4211	1.2512	0.12837
Questioning is a more important part of my religious life than finding answers	2.5579	1.16433	0.11946
As I evolve and transform, I anticipate my religious beliefs to similarly evolve and adapt	3.1263	1.39331	0.14295
I am constantly engaging in an internal dialogue, examining and questioning my religious beliefs	2.1053	1.1154	0.11444





I am constantly engaging in an internal dialogue, examining and questioning my religious beliefs	3.0632	1.31125	0.13453
Numerous religious issues still elicit evolving viewpoints from me, indicating an ongoing process of exploration and refinement	3.0632	1.09942	0.1128
Intrinsic religious orientation items assess an individual's personal connection to their faith and the extent to which it shapes their identity			
I derive enjoyment from delving into the literature and teachings of my religion	4.2316	1.07637	0.11043
The essence of my beliefs is not paramount; rather, my actions and their impact on others hold greater significance	2.4316	1.26871	0.13017
The tenets of my faith serve as a guiding compass, directing my actions and shaping my interactions with the world around me	4.1789	0.86269	0.08851
I have experienced profound moments of connection with the divine, fostering a deep sense of God's presence in my life	3.6632	1.17247	0.12029
I strive to integrate my religious beliefs into every aspect of my existence, aligning my actions with the principles I hold dear	3.8632	0.90637	0.09299
While I embrace my faith, I maintain a separation between my religious beliefs and my daily life, allowing for personal autonomy and flexibility	2.6316	1.29691	0.13306
My religious convictions serve as the bedrock of my life, providing a framework for my decisions, actions, and overall approach to life's challenges and opportunities	3.7263	0.90439	0.09279
My primary motivation for attending religious services is the camaraderie and sense of community it fosters	3.0526	1.20609	0.12374
Quest religious orientation items measure an individual's openness to exploring new religious beliefs and perspectives			
The social aspect of religious gatherings plays a significant role in my decision to attend church, providing opportunities for connection and friendship	2.7368	1.19583	0.12269
My prayers are primarily motivated by a desire for comfort, protection, and guidance amidst life's uncertainties	3.6526	1.06958	0.10974
The most valuable aspect of my religion is the solace and support it offers during times of hardship and emotional distress	3.5895	1.08662	0.11148
I view prayer as a conduit for seeking peace, tranquillity, and happiness in the midst of life's inevitable challenges	3.4737	1.14708	0.11769
The social component of religious services is a primary motivator for my attendance, as it allows me to connect with friends and strengthen community bonds	2.4316	1.45611	0.14939
While I hold my faith dear, I acknowledge that other aspects of life, such as family, relationships, and personal fulfillment, also hold significant importance	2.2947	1.23662	0.12687

The provided single sample statistics (Table 4) about the orientation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church enhance understanding of how religious beliefs and attitudes towards a state are related. Quest Religious Orientation refers to people's desire for meaning in religion and their inclination to question and explore their convictions based on life experiences and introspection. The data indicates that participants actively seek meaning through religion. Notably, statements like "I became interested in religion when I started questioning the purpose of my life" and "My life experiences have caused me to reconsider my beliefs" have averages above 3 indicating a resonance with these sentiments. Additionally, there is an endorsement of the significance of doubts and questions in their journey, with average scores around 2.5 for statements such as "Doubting is an important aspect of my religious experience".

Intrinsic Religious Orientation reflects a dedication to beliefs and practices, focusing on how religion plays a vital role in individuals' lives. The data reveals an orientation, particularly highlighted by the



statement “I take pleasure in reading about my religion” which has an average score of 4.2316 indicating participants' genuine interest in comprehending their faith.

It's worth noting that certain aspects, such as “Taking time for reflection and prayer's important” and “I often feel a strong connection with God” received consistently high ratings (above 3). These findings demonstrate the deep personal commitment participants have to their beliefs. However, there were also some nuanced responses, like “While I'm religious it doesn't impact my daily life” which received an average rating of 2.6316. This indicates that participants differentiate between their beliefs and how they manifest in their activities.

Extrinsic Religious Orientation focuses on the benefits and social aspects of religion, emphasising the outcomes of religious engagement. The data reveals a range of beliefs in this area. Participants highly value the comfort that religion provides, as evidenced by the scores for statements like “I mainly pray to find solace and protection” and “What I find most valuable about religion is the comfort it offers during times”. The social aspect of gatherings, such as attending church to connect with others is also deemed significant based on responses, like “I go to church because I enjoy interacting with people there”.

It's interesting to note that the statement “I go to church mostly to spend time with my friends” had an average, suggesting that while the community is important, people may not attend services solely for social reasons. The wide range of scores across the three orientations reflects the nature of beliefs. It's important to remember that these orientations are not mutually exclusive, and individuals can resonate with aspects from each category. For example, someone may find comfort in their religion (extrinsic) while also questioning and exploring their beliefs (quest). The standard deviations and standard errors provide insights into the spread and reliability of the data, respectively. In some cases, these values indicate a spread of responses around the mean, indicating diverse opinions among participants.

In summary, the measurement scales demonstrated good internal consistency and reliability in assessing participants' perspectives on secularism and religious orientations. The descriptive statistics highlighted a range of viewpoints regarding state secularism, with an inclination towards separating church and state but also some recognition of the church's role. However, the correlation analysis revealed that religious orientations of quest, intrinsic and extrinsic did not exhibit statistically significant relationships with attitudes towards state secularism. This indicates that religious orientations alone do not strongly predict perspectives on secular governance. Rather, this relationship appears to be shaped by multiple interacting factors. Overall, these results underscore the complexity underpinning attitudes towards state secularism and provoke further interrogation of the dynamics at play within religious communities.

## **Discussion**

Various scientists are engaged in the study of the question of religious orientation, which allows to reveal it in different contexts. In particular, D. Arli et al. (2021) analysed the essence of the “religious orientation” category. They established that in most dictionaries, it is interpreted as a personalised attitude of an individual to religion and religious practice. In this study, this concept was also investigated, and its inadequacy was established from a psychological point of view. The researchers also noted this feature because, according to the psychological definition of value orientations, they have a need-motivational basis and a meaningful nature. This approach is common among the works, as they emphasise that a person's religious orientations are formed under the influence of their needs and motives and also have a personal meaning for them. According to the researchers, religious orientation is a component of a person's religious consciousness. This is because they are related to a person's religious experience, which includes religious ideas and experiences. Within the framework of this work, the psychological content of religious orientations was also revealed, which is manifested in the measure of human beliefs and true values that they have formed during life. At that time, a person's religious affiliation was only an external expression of their religious



orientation. The researchers argued that religious affiliation is the original translated into a foreign language, as different denominations may have different names for the same religious values (Kunanbayeva & Zhylytyrova, 2016). The common conclusion between the works is that they refer to the universal religious values of Truth, Goodness, Love, as well as Beauty. This is premised on the fact that these values are important to adherents of all faiths. Moreover, the works share an approach to delineating religious orientation as a multifaceted psychological phenomenon that is moulded under the influence of human necessities, incentives, experiences, and virtues. Based on this, these orientations can be diverse and individual for each person (Zhovtianska, 2023).

Religious orientations can be divided into two types, namely external and internal. This classification was carried out by X. Hu and S. Cheng (2021), who established that the first category is related to a person's desire to obtain certain external benefits from his religiosity, and the second assumes that a person perceives religion as an end in itself. Within this work, it was also emphasised that external religious orientations represent religion as a means to achieve other goals. In this regard, individuals who have developed internal religious orientations accept the relevant norms as real guidelines in their lives. For this category of subjects, religion is an important source of moral values, guidance, and support. The researchers found that people with external religious orientations are more prone to negative prejudices than non-religious people. This is explained by the fact that people's real religious orientations can be more complex and diverse. In addition to the specified classification, the researchers singled out such types of orientations as civilizational, symbolic, and philosophical. Common to both works is the conclusion that a person's religious orientations can change over time, that is, they are not permanent. It is worth noting that this phenomenon is complex and multifaceted, which should not be reduced to one simple classification.

In the modern world, religion cannot claim absolute power. J.S. Bentzen and G. Gokmen (2023) came to this conclusion in their research. They established that religion should recognise the right to the existence of other worldview concepts, including secular ones. Within the parameters of this piece, this attribute was also accentuated, specifically, it was denoted that there is no sole ideological formula that would gratify all individuals. Given this, to be effective, religion must cooperate with other worldview systems. The researchers believe that such cooperation should take place with the help of a combination of secular moral and legal mechanisms. In turn, the latter ensures equal communication of all interested subjects and religiously formulated value guidelines. Within the scope of this work, it was indicated that it is the latter that feeds a person with the need for moral self-improvement. J.S. Bentzen and G. Gokmen emphasised that such cooperation cannot be monologic because, in this way, it would limit the creative potential of a person and also not contribute to the development of his understanding. Thus, the real improvement of the worldview occurs only in the free dialogue of mutually recognised subjects. J.S. Bentzen and G. Gokmen cited the advantages of the interaction of religion with other worldview systems, in particular, the development of tolerance, mutual respect between people of different worldviews, the solution of social problems, and the development of culture and education. Common in both studies is the conclusion that the cooperation of religion with other worldview systems is a prerequisite for overcoming the modern worldview crisis, which can help create a more just and peaceful society.

When studying the connection between secular education and religious education, special attention should be paid to atheism. L.P. Barnes (2022) studied this issue and found that in the minds of many people abroad, especially young people, anti-church politics is quite common. The researcher claimed that post-Soviet countries have a distorted understanding of atheism. He established that the Soviet government revealed the main function of atheism as a criticism of religion. However, this is not true, since criticism of religion is essentially secondary to atheism. This was also stated in this work, namely, it was established that its characteristic feature is perception, as well as a scientific explanation of the reality surrounding people with the help of objective laws of nature. The researcher established that this process is closely related to the formation of the spiritual forces of a person who is constantly developing and also directs his efforts to improving the world. What the works have in common is that they reveal religious values, as such, which are not only inherent in materialistic philosophy but also have the most complete embodiment in reality. As for atheism itself, it should be



noted that the results of the study make it possible to emphasise its deep historical roots, as well as the specifics of the personal perception of religion by certain categories of subjects.

To better understand state-church relations, it is necessary to consider different approaches to their understanding that exist in world practice. K. Eom and S.T. Ng (2023) were involved in their research, according to which he ascertained that in most nations globally, the state does not have any authority regarding religion. Thereupon, every individual has the entitlement to freely opt for his faith or to not have any creed. This approach, which is widespread in international doctrine, was also indicated in this work. The researchers emphasised that religion plays an important role in a person's life, as it helps him find the spiritual meaning of life, form values, and determine his place in society. These findings are shared by both studies, as they establish that church-state relations are important for the development of society.

A. Steen et al. (2023) take a similar position, who argued that religion is an important factor that affects human behaviour, as it shapes people's worldview, that is, their attitude to the world and to themselves. The same results were obtained within this article, which indicated that religious values and norms become obligatory for people because they are considered sacred, that is, sacred. The s noted that religion is based on tradition, and therefore its norms and values are handed down from one generation to another generation. Pursuant to this, religious norms become even more authoritative and obligatory for individuals. What is common between the conclusions in both studies is the disclosure of the role of religious orientations and the nature of their influence on approaches to state management in modern conditions.

It can be stated that the positions of the researchers largely coincide with those that were revealed within the framework of this work. The results about the essence of religious orientation, its structure, and sources are common. Thus, religion, directly or indirectly, still exerts an influence on the administration of the secular state and the daily life of citizens.

## **Conclusions**

In this study, the authors aimed to explore the connections between beliefs, orientations, and perspectives on the role of religion in governing the Evangelical Lutheran Churches in the northern regions of Kazakhstan. This research revealed a finding; individual religious orientations, such as Quest, Intrinsic or Extrinsic do not have an impact on attitudes towards a secular state. Although some weak correlations were observed, they were not statistically significant. This suggests that these relationships are more intricate than a cause-and-effect connection.

Specifically, when examining opinions on the separation of church and state, the authors discovered a range of viewpoints. Interestingly, there is an inclination towards secularism among participants. They express a preference for the state to operate independently from institutions, aligning with trends that advocate for clear boundaries between governance and religion. This promotes a universally applicable framework. However, it's worth noting that responses also highlighted variations among individuals; some value the guidance provided by the Church in matters, while others prioritise its sanctity by keeping it separate from legislative affairs.

The scales used to measure these perspectives demonstrated consistency and reliability, ensuring the robustness of the findings. However, even though the tools used were valid, the outcomes they generated carry implications. When authors consider the measurements revealed by the secularism scale and the statistically non-significant correlations, between orientations and attitudes towards a secular state, it becomes clear that there are various factors at play beyond just religious orientation that contribute to these attitudes.

These complexities serve as a reminder of how belief systems are multifaceted and interact with societal and governance views. Religious beliefs do not exist in isolation; they are constantly influenced by experiences, societal norms, cultural contexts, and more. Therefore, while religious



orientation can provide insights into a person's beliefs, it does not solely determine their stance on secularism.

Thus, this study emphasises the need for dialogue and research into the influences that shape attitudes towards governance, church involvement, and secularism. By understanding these influences, societies can strive for coexistence while respecting individual beliefs and ensuring a fair and impartial system of governance. Future investigations should aim to shed light on factors. Whether personal, cultural or social. That further contribute to these perspectives within and beyond the Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Kazakhstan.

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