

# Evaluation of the role of Islamic lifestyle in communication skills of Muslim couples



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Lifestyle refers to a set of personal and group behaviours related to normative and semantic aspects of social life. Any coherent set of behavioural patterns derived from religious teachings that exist in life can be considered a religious lifestyle. Considering that the dominant religion in Jordan is Islam, the present study focused on the Islamic lifestyle. In addition, given that the correct relationship between couples has been compared to life-giving blood in marriage, and since the quality of marital role plays a determining role, the existence of communication skills in any of the couples can generate satisfaction and compatibility, whereas lack of awareness of these skills could cause misunderstandings and tension. Therefore, the current study aims to study the role of the Islamic lifestyle in communication skills of 250 Muslim couples of Jordan (Amman, Zarqa and Irbid) in 2022. Data were collected using questionnaires during four months, and the validity and reliability was confirmed. In addition, data analysis was performed in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Linear Structural Relations (LISREL) using mean tests and structural equation modelling. According to the results, Islamic lifestyle had a positive, significant effect on the improvement of communication skills in Muslim couples in Jordan ( $P$ -value: 0.76;  $T$ -value: 7.92). Therefore, it is recommended that more attention should be paid to this issue by families, researchers and cultural authorities in the country.

**Contribution:** Our findings revealed that Islamic lifestyle improved communication skills in Muslim couples, which demands special attention. By adhering to the Islamic lifestyle, couples can influence each other's knowledge, emotions, education and growth, and try to have a realistic understanding of each other's desires, needs, living environment and perceptions that each has in life issues. Furthermore, they can organise their role in the common life in appropriate ways to prevent problems and solve them in the event of problems.

**Keywords:** religion; Islam; Islamic lifestyle; Muslim couples; religious culture; communication skills.

## Introduction

Although everyone is talking about lifestyle these days, there is still no consensus on the definition of lifestyle. Of course, we should not expect that psychologists, sociologists, marketers, economists, politicians and other professionals use this term for different needs, and it is natural for each of them to consider their own definition and conceptualise it in a different style. Ethics and psychology focus on both the mental and physical aspects of lifestyle, but medical science only emphasises the physical aspect of this issue. Lifestyle includes all aspects of a person's life, such as physical activities, leisure activities, sleeping and waking hours, social relationships, family relationships, spirituality, security and peace, and nutrition (Rohrer, Pierce & Blackburn 2005). A favourable life emerges with an Islamic lifestyle, and the main source of the Islamic lifestyle is the holy book. Moreover, the Islamic lifestyle finds meaning in a Quranic theme. With rich Islamic knowledge and cultural reserves, it is not appropriate for the Islamic community to imitate the foreign culture. In fact, these reserves can be used to make advancements in various areas. Style is a particular manner or technique by which something is done. Meanwhile, the Islamic lifestyle determines the roles played by other people, family and community, as well as Islamic rules, patterns and standards in a person's life. In other words, it shows how methods are used based on what has been said and requested by Islam. Lifestyle is various living methods of people or

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groups and includes patterns, beliefs, tastes, values and norms that are used in everyday life (Fathi Ashtiani & Jafari Kandovan 2010). Each religious school offers a certain lifestyle and claims that a healthy life and favourable community can be achieved by following this particular way of life. Islam is one of the constructive foundations of human lifestyle. On the other hand, the Islam-approved lifestyle has been mentioned in some Quranic verses so that people would know what a favourable Islamic lifestyle is, what the features and impacts are, and how one can achieve it (Salmabadi et al. 2015).

### Islamic lifestyle in the Holy Quran

Various verses in the Quran have mentioned the factors of the Islamic lifestyle. In different places, Quran reminds us that human beings are responsible for each other. For instance, in a verse, we read: 'And if they seek the help of you for the religion, then you must help' (Surah Al-Anfal, Ayat 72). Another verse says: 'The believers are but brothers' (Surah Al-Hujurat, Ayat 10). Based on these verses, it seems that human beings have social responsibilities in life, such that community is considered a larger family for the person. Saying prayers positively affects life in this world and the hereafter. In a Quranic verse, we read: 'Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah' (Surah Ar-Ra'd, Ayat 28). This shows that people can experience peace by remembering God, which can help them make better decisions. Another verse states:

And We have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference. (Surah Al-Isra, Ayat 70)

In other words, self-knowledge and ontology can be used to identify one's abilities and skills, and achieve success in life. In another verse, we read: 'And do not walk on the earth arrogantly' (Surah Al-Isra, Ayat 37). This means that man should be moral in life. The modern world has created bottlenecks for human beings despite releasing them from the restrictions of tradition. In order to have an identity among their fellowmen, human beings turn to phenomena such as fashion, style and lifestyles that would distinguish them from others (Malek Makan & Ali Akbari 2013). Lifestyle is one of the concepts that is used aplenty in today's world. With a simple search, it is possible to show how general this concept is and in what wide context it is used. This wideness of concept and wide field of use has caused its real content to remain imprecise and unclear. Lifestyle is the part of life that is actually realised. It applies to the full range of activities that people do in their daily lives and features such as having a role model in their relationship (Estagi et al. 2006). In Islamic societies, since all sociological components are influenced by Islamic teachings, we see a lifestyle that is mixed with Islamic teachings. Taking into account this important issue, this study aims to evaluate the role of Islamic lifestyle in communication skills of Muslim couples in 2022.

### Lifestyle

Lifestyle means the specific way of life of an individual, group, or society; lifestyles include a set of values, ways of behaving, moods and tastes in anything, and can refer to the interests, opinions, behaviours and behavioural orientation of an individual, group or culture. People's lifestyle and the path they choose for themselves has a deep connection with their success in life (Fazeli 2003). In fact, lifestyles are patterns of action that distinguish people from each other. Lifestyles help us understand what people do, why they do it, and what it means to them and others. In other words, lifestyle refers to people's way of life and is a complete reflection of social values, attitudes and activities (Bani Amerian et al. 2015). In the sciences of psychology, sociology and medicine, which study lifestyle, rather than considering a person's cognitions and emotions as mental constructs, they study a person's behaviour objectively and visibly, but the Islamic lifestyle is somewhat different; because it is light, it deals with behaviour and is not directly related to cognitions and emotions, and because it is Islamic, it cannot be indifferent to intentions (Berzano 2011). With complete frankness, Quran introduces the lifestyle of the Prophet of Islam, as follows: 'Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example for whoever has hope in Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah often' (Surah Al-Ahzab, Ayat 21). Therefore, it could be expressed that Islam and Islamic teachings have been mentioned in the form of Quranic verses and words and the behaviour of the beloved Prophet of Islam and the infallible leaders to guide people towards the desired perfection. It is clear that if a person does not choose their leader correctly in life, they will suffer deviation or wandering.

### Religious lifestyle

Religious life is under a grand plan of worshipful behaviour, based on which all life is a movement to get closer to God. Of course, this is a dynamic programme and therefore it needs to be constantly adjusted. For that reason, thinking about how and why this programme and adjusting its general form needs to be addressed directly. Therefore, we note that despite the fact that in the categories of common lifestyle, there is no topic about the whole life and its movement. Here, the whole movement towards the destination and setting its dynamic programme requires time and attention, and it is necessary to open a chapter in life for it. In the ideal religious life, all actions and situations can be called worship, but there is a more basic and fundamental part that is known as specific worship rituals. If the whole life of a believer is worship, these components form the pillars of this devotional life; therefore, it can be mentioned as an independent pillar in life, which is in the ranks of the most important and important things in life (Fazel Ghaneh 2013). Prayer, fasting, Hajj, pilgrimage, prayer, going to the mosque and participating in the ritual are examples of religious rituals that form an important chapter of life. A very important part of the religious life that is addressed in the worshipful behaviour programme is paying attention to one's moral qualities. Its

primary level is the ability to control behaviours based on rules, and its other level is dedicated to evaluating and changing moral, psychological or spiritual characteristics. In fact, one of the pillars of religious life is that a person constantly tries to destroy certain characteristics and create certain characteristics in himself by spending a lot of time, attention and energy (Tabibi & Afshari 2017).

Over the course of history, all humans have been trying to answer the question of what the purpose of life is and what must we do in life. It is also a mystery why this world and human beings have been created. These questions are asked to determine human beings' goals and perfection. In other words, human nature must be determined so that we could choose a suitable lifestyle for human beings in this world. In fact, the lifestyle introduced by Islam to the people is based on monotheism, which is associated with safety and peace (Pour Amini 2013).

Although thinking should flow throughout life, it is necessary to open a specific chapter in life for it and dedicate a specific time to it. Thinking about creation, divine blessings, divine attributes, resurrection, death, etc., requires opening a chapter in life called thinking as a voluntary act. Time should be allocated to it and a plan should be made for it. In religious life, practice is obviously important for certain 'rememberings'. There are teachings in religion that thinking and meditation on them are an important part of human life (Noor Mohammadi 2019). Lifestyle from the perspective of Islam refers to a set of issues accepted by Islam in the field of life, based on which, the standard of our behaviour should be based on Islam and Islamic teachings. God-centredness and the rule of Islamic values in life are among the most important lifestyle criteria approved by Islam. In fact, in this lifestyle, individual and social life of people should be based on Islam and Quranic guidelines. With its eternal rules, Islam has proposed an idealistic and at the same time realistic style, which is based on a transcendental attitude towards existence and man, and considers man as a responsible and independent being whose destiny is determined by his own hands. In this lifestyle, the goal of the religious teachings is to get rid of the non-Islamic lifestyle and achieve a good life, which is faith and righteous action, the basic criteria of the Islamic lifestyle and achieving a good life (Tabibi & Afshari 2017).

## Communication skills

In this respect, an important issue mentioned in the family environment is couples' communication skills. Effective communication with others is one of the most important skills in social life. This ability helps a person to be able to express himself verbally and non-verbally, and appropriate to the culture, society and situation. This means that a person can express his opinions, ideas, desires, needs and emotions, and can ask for help and guidance from others when needed. The skill of asking for help and guidance from others, when necessary, is one of the important factors of a healthy relationship. Despite the increased importance of attaining

proper communication skills in today's world, there are still many people who have failed to understand these skills and show no interest in learning them (Sillars et al. 2014). This has prevented these individuals from transferring their thoughts and ideas, and establishing proper communication with others, which ultimately results in the permanent closing of the door to their professional development. In order to create positive communication, it is crucial to receive others' messages clearly, accurately and successfully (Shearman & Dumlao 2008). Communication skills are processes in which both the sender and receiver play a role in the transfer of a message and the proper establishment of communication. The process might be associated with several problems, one of the most prevalent of which is an inaccurate interpretation of the sender's message by the receiver (Schrodt & Phillips 2016). In this situation, the receiver becomes confused, and the sender's opportunity for communication is lost. In general, communication between two people is successful when the senders are able to get their message across and the receiver is able to receive a favourable result from the sent message by having sufficient knowledge of the sender. More simply put, communication skill is a process in which information is transferred from the sender to the receiver in such a way that the message is clear and understandable for both people (Schrodt, Ledbetter & Ohrt 2007). Furthermore, a lack of adequate ability to get a message across will result in communication failure and will negatively affect the personal and professional life of the person. In fact, communication skills are used by an individual to communicate in a way that positive behaviours could be generated in the receiver and negative reactions could be prevented (Parker, Haytko & Hermans 2009). The message must be properly selected and recognised in order to achieve communication skills. Moreover, it must be reviewed and the reaction of the audience must be assessed before sending the message. In addition, the audience must be recognised, based on which one must decide how to mention the message so that it could be understood by the audience accurately. To establish proper communication, the situation, cultural conditions, and environmental conditions that cover the conversation space must be assessed properly before sending the message (Schrodt, Witt & Messersmith 2008).

The growing increase in marital disputes and conflicts and the risk of separation of couples has caused family researchers to provide solutions in this area. These solutions can help couples strengthen their bond. In this regard, an important solution mentioned in scientific resources is equipping couples with communication skills. In fact, interpersonal communications are the primary basis for bonding with others (Orrego & Rodriguez 2001). While effective communications could lead to prosperity and improvement of the quality of life, ineffective communications prevent prosperity and peace of mind. It could be explicitly stated that interpersonal relationships are one of the basic aspects of human happiness. Meanwhile, communication made to increase peace in a marriage will be turned into an integral part of life, and will play a determining role in the marital life quality (Koerner & Fitzpatrick 2006). Concurrently, being

equipped with communication skills will increase satisfaction and compatibility, whereas a lack of knowledge of these skills will result in misunderstandings, conflicts and tension in couples. An assessment of successful and failed marriages shows that communication is an important factor in distinguishing these two groups from each other (Horstman et al. 2018). A marriage is affected by multiple factors, some of which may lead to conflicts, emotional separation and even divorce. Therefore, couples can provide the highest levels of each other's needs, such as the need for a sense of belonging, the need for respect and self-actualisation in the shadow of respect, and providing comfort to each other if they are equipped with communication skills and can utilise them in their marriage (Hesse et al. 2017). This can be justified with the help of the Islamic lifestyle. With this background in mind, the following research hypothesis was made:

**H1:** Islamic lifestyle significantly affects couples' communication skills in Jordan in 2022.

## Methodology

This study aims to identify the role of the Islamic lifestyle in the communication skills of 250 couples in Jordan (Amman, Zarqa, and Irbid) in 2022. Data were collected using 20-items Islamic Lifestyle Questionnaire (Kaviani 2011) and 34-items Communication Skills Questionnaire (Queendom, 2004). The reliability of the instruments was approved by Cronbach's alpha method, the results of which are shown in Table 1. The values obtained were indicative of the appropriate reliability of the tools. Following the distribution of questionnaires through convenience sampling, the tools returned by 486 out of 500 individuals (250 couples) were considered appropriate for assessment. It is worth noting that 25% of couples lived together for less than 5 years, whereas 46% and 29% of them lived together for 5–10 years, and more than 10 years, respectively. Moreover, the educational level of 178 individuals was below Bachelor of Science (BSc) but 254 individuals had a BSc. Furthermore, the rest of the participants had complementary education. In terms of age, 28% of couples were below the age of 35, while 44% were in the age range of 35–45 years and the rest were above the age of 45.

Furthermore, the validity of the questionnaires was confirmed by providing the questionnaires to five experts in the fields of theology, psychology, management and social sciences. In addition, data analysis was performed in LISREL using structural equation modelling (SEM).

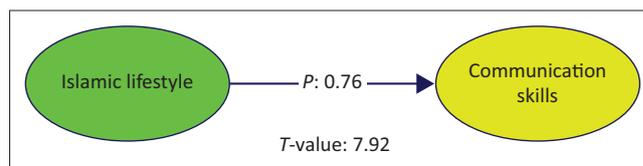
## Results

In this study, the SEM method was used to assess the relationship between the Islamic lifestyle and the communication skills of individuals. In this respect, the Islamic lifestyle was considered

**TABLE 1:** Descriptive statistics.

Variable	Number of respondents†	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha	Mean	Standard deviation
Islamic lifestyle	500	20	0.844	4.0457	0.46654
Communication skills	500	34	0.882	4.2460	0.44237

†, 250 couples.



**FIGURE 1:** Structural equation model analysis.

**TABLE 2:** Fit indices of the research model.

Fit indexes	Obtained values	Acceptable range
Chi-square/degree of freedom ( <i>df</i> )	2.1452	Below 3
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.074	Below 0.1
Goodness-of-Fit (GFI)	0.90	Above 0.90
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit (AGFI)	0.90	Above 0.90

According to Jöreskog and Sörbom (1993), the acceptable range is included in Table 2.

**TABLE 3:** Testing results of the research hypothesis.

Hypothesis	Path coefficient	T-value	Result
Islamic lifestyle has a positive and significant effect on the communication skills of couples in Jordan	0.76	7.92	Confirmed

the independent variable while communication skills were regarded as the dependent variable (Figure 1).

Further, Table 2 indicates the Fit indices in Linear Structural Relations (LISREL).

Table 3 indicates the results of the research hypothesis test. As the path coefficient is positive (0.76) and the *T*-value is greater than 1.96 (7.92), Islamic lifestyle has a positive and significant effect on communication skills.

## Discussion

Despite the advancement of technology and science in the modern era, human beings deal with cultural and religious invasions that have resulted in identity crises and confusion in life. Therefore, it is imperative in the current era to understand what real life is. The life recommended by God for human beings is a good life that is a manifestation of the actual existence of God. In this life, human needs are met in order to get closer to God, and human beings' goal is not just achieving welfare in life; rather, it is organising the material life to get close to God. Not only this type of thinking does not distance human beings from the world stage, but also it drives communities to evolution and prosperity of life in the shadow of faith, righteous deeds and approach to God. The way of life has been a question to human beings since ancient times, and various styles have been generated with the improvement of public knowledge and scientific technologies, especially in the communication area, which has further distanced individuals from their family and community, and resulted in lack of identity, nihilism and self-interest.

Lifestyle refers to a way of life at individual and social levels. In addition, lifestyle is a regular and interconnected set of people's behaviours in their personal and social life, which is based on a series of insights and values derived from said

behaviours. Nevertheless, lifestyle includes affairs related to human beings' life, including their individual, social, material and spiritual dimensions. Among these affairs, we can refer to insights, attitudes, actions and behaviours related to various political, economic, cultural, legal, religious and educational areas. In general, lifestyle refers to behavioural patterns of members of society in different spheres of life, including political, economic and cultural areas that emerged from certain insights and attitudes. Islamic lifestyle is a practical example and roadmap drawn by Islam for humans. It shows the vision of the individual, group and society towards the system, existence, self, God and other people. It also mentions all aspects of life in line with the goal of creation and connects life in this world with eternal life in the afterlife. Accordingly, in an Islamic lifestyle, couples are urged to know each other very well, establish a complete and peaceful, affectionate relationship with one another, protect each other's formative and optional dignity, consider each other's existence a blessing from God, carry out their responsibilities in marriage, make themselves attractive for each other, practise self-control in order to prevent irritating behaviours, forgive each other's mistakes, help each other in the process of mental and ethical growth and religious improvement, and lay the foundation for each other's happiness in this life and the afterlife. Each of the couples can reduce the other person's anxiety with good behaviour. This can help to earn their trust and start a helpful conversation. In fact, couples must protect each other's human dignity and piety. Moreover, respect should exist in them based on inherent and voluntary dignity without the involvement of factors such as the need to avoid evil. Acknowledging the existence of a blessing such as a wife/husband is one of the most important encounters between couples, which plays an effective role in lifestyle and improving their morals and spirituality. Islamic teachings encourage the expression of gratitude by couples. Each spouse should acknowledge the blessing of having each other and must thank God for being blessed with such a blessing. This behaviour helps couples care about each other's dignity, respect each other, not be impious towards each other, not verbally abuse each other, and establish an ethical human relationship with each other. Couples should try to maintain and deepen each other's religious health and thereby protect themselves from misfortune. The love and affection of husband and wife for each other is one of the divine and holy signs, and is connected with the increase of a person's faith. Therefore, one should seek help from any legitimate matter that helps to deepen this feeling and avoid things that create turbidity and coldness between couples. Of course, this requires the acquisition of various skills, some of which are internal (reason) and some external [*Sharia*].

Given the significance of the Islamic lifestyle subject, the current study was conducted to evaluate the Islamic lifestyle and communication skills of 250 couples in Jordan in 2022. Islamic lifestyle is a source of inner peace and security because it is related to people's emotions and feelings. In fact, religious beliefs have a positive impact on making life meaningful. Behaviours such as trust in God, saying prayers

and pilgrimage can generate inner peace through motivation towards positive attitudes. Having a purpose in life, a feeling of belonging to a greater source, hope in the help of God in difficult situations and access to social and spiritual support are methods used by religious people when faced with life incidents and pressure, which can reduce their damage. As observed in the current study's results, these factors affected the communication skills of couples in Jordan ( $P$ -value: 0.76;  $T$ -value: 7.92). According to the results of the present research, attention should be paid to couples' lifestyles in order to establish communication skills in these individuals. As observed, following Islamic teachings in lifestyle was an effective factor in good communication skills. Nevertheless, achieving an Islamic lifestyle should be emphasised by families at first, and then the government should expand Islamic ethics and tradition. Islamic culture, and beliefs in the society by considering incentives for families and by strengthening customs in order to benefit from its long-term advantages.

## Conclusion

Lifestyle includes all behaviours and speech of human beings that are considered uniformly and create the person's personal and social identity. As the most complete religion and the best gift of God to mankind, Islam includes all aspects of human life, both personal and social, worldly and hereafter, and can be chosen as the best living technique. The Quran recommends a relationship based on peace between couples which reduces intentions and conflicts between them. Quran also orders good behaviour towards the couples even when it is not favourable mainly because it generates a lot of goodness. In fact, goodness caused by being a compatible partner lays the foundation for self-actualisation. In addition, paying attention to the family centre and to the communication skills of couples by social institutions provides the foundations for the sustainable development of the country. This helps humans think about their internal evolution with peace of mind, and such a dynamic person is able to flourish. This is one of the factors that lays the foundation for the economic, cultural, social and political development of the country.

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### Competing interests

The authors have declared that no competing interest exists.

### Authors' contributions

A.Z. wrote the original draft, A.A. R-C was responsible for the project administration, S.I.S.A-H. did the investigation, N.K.A.D. and H.P. the methodology, I.M. the conceptualisation, and M.A. acted as supervisor.

### Ethical considerations

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

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## Data availability

Data are available from the corresponding author.

## Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the authors, and the publisher.

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