

## THE EDUCATIONAL ROLE OF THE *QAZAQ* NEWSPAPER (1913 – 1918)

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**ABSTRACT.** *The Qazaq* newspaper played a critical role in reviving the Kazakh national identity. It was the first socio-political media outlet produced in the Kazakh language, one of the deepest and strongest roots of contemporary Kazakh journalism. The Kazakh National Intelligentsia understood that, without education and language, protecting Kazakhs' interests was doomed to failure. Kazakh people's illiteracy was the main vulnerability of the. Therefore, new education was needed to relieve Kazakh people from illiteracy and direct them toward the perspective of Kazakh independence. This study aimed to explore the importance of education in *The Qazaq* during 1913-1918. To achieve this goal, the research focused on the quantity of coverage of issues such as education, language, religion, and tradition.

*The Qazaq's* primary function was to educate people via media by reporting on crucial problems in Kazakh education at the time. The newspaper covered issues such as education, religion, illiteracy among Kazakh people, scholarships for poor Kazakh children, schools and teaching problems; training of teachers; tuition for schools, exchanging programs abroad, modernization of school programs, publishing of textbooks for schools; funding of building new schools, religion, schools for Kazakh girls and training of female teachers, organized a boarding school for students, teaching methodologies and teaching in the Kazakh language, and syllabus for primary and high schools.

**KEYWORDS:** newspaper *Qazaq*, education, national identity, Kazakhstan National Intelligentsia, Kazakh journalism, Alash Orda, print media

### Introduction

National identity provides the fundamental anchor for society's existence. The sense of belonging to one's own country offers a patriotic feeling to citizens concerned with their national affairs and welfare. It causes people to contribute efforts and resources to help their distressed nation. The Kazakh National Intelligentsia needed to mobilize the people to resist the Russian occupation and fight for their liberation. They understood that, without education and national language, promoting national identity and protecting Kazakh's interests were doomed to failure. The Kazakh National Intelligentsia fully recognized the power of printed media as an effective vehicle to educate the Kazakh people and to rebuild the Kazakh national identity. They believed a reformed education system was the most sustainable and long-term strategy to liberate young people, develop skills, and ultimately allow Kazakh people to build an independent nation. Therefore, the Kazakh National Intelligentsia considered the newspaper the most effective tool to inform, educate, and lead people to rebuild the nation.

### *The education role of mass media*

Mass media is vital in expanding knowledge, economic growth, and social development. On a personal level, it helps people orient their decision-making and form their worldviews. The mass media is a factor in developing and reinventing national identity via one language, cultural identity, and traditions and rights (Hall, 1992). Anderson (1991) claimed that national identity emerged from print capitalism, where the ritual of newspaper reading was central. "Hence, newspapers play a key role in which the nation is understood in terms of time and space: newspaper reading constitutes the simultaneous consumption of the same newspaper by a group of individuals defined by finite boundaries" (Brookes, 1999, p. 249). Concerning it, Steinberg (1965) stated that print media, a newspaper in particular, became the mass educator that reached "simultaneously and over widely dispersed areas" (p. 339) people eager to learn about the surrounding world. Therefore, the print media was vital for people struggling with colonialism oppression and led an anti-colonial resistance to preserve their national identity and emancipate as independent countries (Frederiksen, 2011; Hunter & James, 2020).

Kazakhstan was a country whose National Intelligentsia resisted the Russian Empire's attempts to suppress the preservation and reinvention of the Kazakh national identity through *The Qazaq* as a mass educator. Therefore, it can be assumed that Kazakh journalism was a significant catalyst for "better understanding and comprehension by the Kazakh people of their national identity and their place in the world community" (Sadykov et al., 2019, p. 77).

### *Background*

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 1893, the Russian Empire declared that the Kazakh territory became part of it. The Kazakh khanates were eliminated, and all the governing bodies were assigned and dependent

on the Tsarist's administration. The nomadic lifestyle of Kazakh people was changed by settled manufacturing and mining. The Tsarist administration understood the power of education. Therefore, it targeted the Tatar's molda (clergy) to wedge in religion and madrasa (religious schools), destabilizing the Kazakhs' traditions, culture, and ethnic identity. Hence, it made them vulnerable to influence. Additionally, "that religious policy of Tsarist administration was implemented through Tatar moldas, who taught Kazakh children in the madrassa [...] in Arab or Norgay languages" (Atambaev, 1991, p. 34). However, the Tsarist administration benefited from the situation because it restricted Kazakhs from forming their distinctive national identity. A 1914 article in #47 of *The Qazaq* stated that the Russian Empire administration attempted to replace the various Turkic languages of the many ethnic groups with the Russian language. However, replacing the mother tongue threatened their national identity. Another attempt to change the national mindset and self-definition was naming the Kazakh people as *Kyrgyz-Kaisak* or *Kaisak*. As a result of the Tsarist colonial policy, which continued till 1925, the Kazakhs' lifestyle, ethnic name, language, religion, and culture almost disappeared (Sadykov & Serdali, 2017). This colonial policy resulted in disturbances and uprisings, particularly among Kazakh elites. However, the backward military and economic development prevented success. It motivated those elites to look for other, more subtle ways to preserve Kazakh identity and resist the Tsarist Russia's assimilation attempts.

#### ***Kazakh National Intelligentsia***

The Kazakh National Intelligentsia consisted of people of the Kazakh ruling class or their children who studied in Russia and Western Europe. The new ideas they returned with were the base for the *Alash* movement, which gained momentum between 1905 and 1907. It peaked in 1917 with the formation of the *Alash* political party, whose political program was presented at the All-Kazakh Congress held in Orenburg. It nurtured the idea of national liberation and unification based on national identity, not class principles (Koigeldiev, 2008). The Kazakh National Intelligentsia had two wings. The first was working on Kazakhstan's independence, forming an Alash Orda government. The second wing was pro-Tsarist. According to Mekebayev and Kumganbayev (2017), both wings "honestly served their ideas and plans for the sake of the foundation of [independent] Kazakh government" (p. 94). They were searching for an effective, life and health-sparing way to counter the weakening of Kazakh national identity. The major vulnerability the *Alash* government faced was the illiteracy of the general population of Kazakhstan, which made them assailable to the Tsarist administration's propaganda activities (Yorulmaz, 2016). Even those educated in the madrassa were prone to influence because their learning was conducted primarily in Arabic or other local languages (Tatar, Uzbek, or Norgay (Nogai)) but not in Kazakh. Therefore, the Kazakh National Intelligentsia recognized the vital role education could play in promoting the Kazakh national identity and Kazakh independence.

Therefore, the Kazakh National Intelligentsia aimed to reform Kazakh education and put it on the path of developed Western European education with the Kazakh language at the heart of it. A language of instruction is crucial for native culture, traditions, and beliefs to enter the learner's memory unhindered and build a meaningful understanding of the surrounding world. Thus, language "shapes thoughts and emotions and determines one's perception of reality. Language is the road map of a culture. [...] It is a means for intellectual development" (Sardeshpande, 2020, p. 3852). Unfortunately, later, the Communist regime used education as an indoctrination instrument, and anything that went against the ideology of the Communist Party was removed from the textbooks. As a result, books of Alash Orda and works of the enemies of the Party, such as Baitursynov, Asfendiarov, Seifullin, and Dosmukhamedov, were seized (Abikenova & Nogaibayeva, 2014).

#### ***The media landscape of Kazakhstan at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century***

The media landscape on the territory of Kazakhstan in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century underwent drastic development due to radical political changes. The Tsarist Russia's fall allowed new states to emerge from its vast territory, including Kazakhstan. Therefore, the "press played a particularly important role in the revival of national consciousness in Kazakhstan" (Sailaukyzy, Shakuova, Sak, & Lebedeva, 2018, p. 150). The press began its development with the founding of the newspaper *Turkestanskije Vedomosti* in 1869. It started as a monthly newspaper but gradually evolved into a daily one in 1907 (Toshboev & Muqimov, 2023). It was published till 1917 when the Bolsheviks closed it due to the Tsarist's Russian support. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, 42 newspapers and magazines were published in Kazakhstan (Sundetbayeva, 2018). Some of the most influential print outlets were

the newspapers “Turkestan,” “Dala ualayati,” “Qazaqstan”, “Ai Qap,” “Qazaq,” “Saryarqa,” “Akzhol” and the magazines “Sholpan,” “Sana,” “Tan,” “Zhas Turkestan” (Sailaukyzy et al., 2018).

### ***The Qazaq***

*The Qazaq* played a vital role in reviving the Kazakh national identity. It was the first socio-political print outlet, one of the deepest and strongest roots of contemporary Kazakh journalism (Sadykov & Serdali, 2017), written in the Kazakh language. Topics guided its mission to help the establishment of an autonomous and democratic state as 1) Kazakhs were the sole owners of the land, 2) the Kazakh state utilized all-natural renewable and non-renewable resources for the wellbeing of the Kazakh people, 3) the Kazakh production and service economy was an independent and self-sufficient, 4) promoting the Kazakh language and religion, and 5) reforming Kazakhstan’s educational system (The Qazaq, 1916).

It covered topics on education, history, science, literature, agriculture, economy, and the rich culture of the Kazakhs (Berdyguzhin et al., 2020). The newspaper became the Kazakh voice of independence and the window to the modernizing Western world. *The Qazaq* gathered Kazakh national intelligentsia to “wake up the fading spirit of the nation like an unceasingly ringing bell and put together thousands of educated young people under the flag of independence” (Shindaliyeva, 2014, p. 552).

*The Qazaq* also set the journalistic standards for other print editions in Kazakhstan to follow. It included subscription and advertising as funding sources and keeping its independence from the Tsarist administration. It circulated between 3000 to 8000 issues within Kazakhstan and beyond — Samarkand, Ufa, Kazan, Tomsk, Orenburg, Petersburg, Moscow, Istanbul, China, etc. (Campbell, 2011). The newspaper was strategically branded, first with its name *Qazaq* and second with its logo, the *yurt* (a skin-insulated dwelling), a symbol of the Kazakh people with the word Kazakh on the door. Despite its limited circulation, *The Qazaq* became a powerful tool in the hands of Kazakh National Intelligentsia. They aimed to eradicate widespread illiteracy, motivate national awakening, and develop a modern-minded society by educating the Kazakh population (Winner, 1980). *The Qazaq* even performed corporate social responsibility by financially supporting Kazakh students’ education. “The newspaper collected more than 10,000 roubles for the students at Muslim and Russian institutions” (Kendirbaeva, 1999, p. 18).

### **Problem statement**

The Kazakh National Intelligentsia understood that protecting national interests would fail without reformed education and the Kazakh language. Therefore, Kazakh people needed secular, reformed education that could pull Kazakh people out of illiteracy toward the perspective of Kazakh independence. The main vulnerability of the Kazakh people was illiteracy. Most of the educated Kazakhs studied in madrasas (religion schools) in Arab, Tatar, Persian, Norgay (Nogai), or Uzbek languages, which were not appropriate for building a national identity.

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore the importance of the topic of education in *The Qazaq* during 1913-1918. To achieve this goal, the research focused on the quantity of coverage of issues such as education, language, religion, and tradition. To achieve its research purpose, the study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. How important was education as a topic in the newspaper *Qazaq* during 1913-1918?
2. What were the main news categories in the newspaper *Qazaq*?

The research contributed to the underexplored niche of Kazakh Journalism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It provided new findings with new perspectives on the role of the press in Kazakhstan in preserving the national identity during the colonial period. In addition, this research contributed to the existing scholarship on media in emerging countries, mainly the functions and roles of newspapers under repressive, occupied periods.

### **Literature Review**

#### ***The history of The Qazaq***

Subkhanberdina, Dautov, and Sakhov (1998) translated the 265 issues of *The Qazaq*. All issues were chronologically and alphabetically organized. The newspaper was the foundation of Kazakh journalism. Nearly 200 journalists and correspondents covered regions of Kazakhstan territory for the newspaper. However, most of them used nicknames as a precaution against the Tsarist administration (Subkhanberdina, Dautov, & Sakhov, 1998).

**Table 1.** The general circulations of the newspaper *Qazaq* during 1913-1918.

Year	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918
Issues	1–44	45–100	101–163	166–211	212–245	258–265

*The Qazaq's* structure had eight columns: 1) economy, 2) books on religion, 3) external news and politics, 4) internal news (a) business (bazar), b) baige (a Kazakh sports game), c) internal politics, d) health behavior, e) literature), 5) history, 6) feedback, 7) azamat (lists of sponsors), and 8) advertising. Moreover, to attract its readers, it advertised its discounts on the subscription fee. For instance, the monthly subscription cost 1 som (tenge) 75 tiun (coins), while for six months or one year – 3 som. Thus, *The Qazaq* financially supported itself through advertising and sponsors. The history and function of *The Qazaq* were inextricably connected with the history and activity of the Kazakh National Intelligentsia (Campbell, 2011; Kendirbaeva, 1999; Rottier, 2004; Uyama, 2013; Zhandos & Nazgul, 2013). Other researchers focused on the development of Kazakh journalism and the role of *The Qazaq* in it. Shindaliyeva et al. (2014) explored the social and political potential of *The Qazaq* as the partisan tribune of the Alash Orda government (1917-1920). Through it, the Alash raised issues, interests, and rights of the Kazakh people. The researcher stated that the politics of Alash were highly mediatized and organized around the functioning of *The Qazaq*. The result was the “development of tactics and strategy of a struggle for independence” (Shindaliyeva et al., 2014, p. 551). Sailaukyzy et al. (2018) explored the history of Kazakhstan’s independent journalism and publicist model and its applicability in the country’s contemporary context. The researchers equated Kazakh journalism with *The Qazaq*, which stood out as the benchmark of an arena of clash of ideas, public issue spotlighting, and preserving national identity. It became the guiding light for modern Kazakh press and journalism. The main topics that were present in *The Qazaq* were “Kazakhstan in the era of Russian colonization; the Kazakh administrative and judicial system; the socio-economic development of Kazakhstan; literacy and education; the history of the nation; land issue” (Sailaukyzy et al. 2018, pp. 783-784). Berdyguzhin et al. (2020) studied the emergence of Kazakhstan’s elite, which started in the early 20th century and pointed to two factors that motivated the formation of the national elite. First, access to secular education was separated from the religious schools. Thus, more children had the opportunity to develop themselves and be better off than their parents. “The increase in the number of educated young people contributed to the formation of a new class in the state, which desired better living conditions for its people” (Berdyguzhin et al., 2020, p. 72). Second, the researchers identified the need for the printing press as the new medium for mass information. According to them, *The Qazaq* was the most significant vehicle to promote national liberation from Tsarist Russia’s political oppression and economic dependence ideas. Sadykov and Serdali (2017) studied the development of the print press in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Their findings show that the press in Kazakhstan during that period was under substantial censorship. Despite the imprisonment and threats of journalists and editors, notably of *The Qazaq*, the idea of social, political, and economic change grew deep roots in the Kazakh people. The “growth of revolutionary sentiments, which took place in 1905-1914, occurs the increased national self-identity of Kazakh people” (Sadykov & Serdali, 2017, p. 3).

#### ***National identity***

Many scholars studied the definition of national identity because national identity is an integral part and principle of any independent country. For instance, Smith (2002) defined a nation as “a named community possessing a historic territory, shared myths and memories, a common public culture and common laws and customs” (Smith. 2002, p.15). Three significant changes which Guibernau criticized the most recent one: (1) the ‘mass’ character of public culture has been eliminated; (2) reference to a ‘common economy’ has also been removed; and (3) ‘common legal rights and duties for all members’ have been replaced by ‘common laws and customs’ (Guibernau, 2004, p.127). Nevertheless, Smith eliminated not only culture but also language. Therefore, Guibernau (2004) noted that “national identity has five dimensions: 1) psychological, 2) cultural, 3) territorial, 4) historical, and 5) political (p.135). For Ben-Rafael and Sternberg (2001), national identity is the social, political, economic, and technological development in societies and the world. Nowadays, it creates significant challenges to establishing a national identity with its socio-psychological meaning. David and Bar-Tal reflected on the national identity as:

rooted in premodern ethnic identities, which are defined largely by their common name, ancestry myths, and historical memories, which furnish explanations regarding the group's origin, its uniqueness, its connection to a certain territorial location, its language, and more, and also by elements of common tangible and intangible culture and a measure of solidarity (David & Bar-Tal 2009, p. 356).

Thus, ethnic identities are again defined mainly by territorial connections, languages, and cultures. Therefore, we adopted Bar-Tal's definition in this research because national identities are defined mainly by territorial connections, languages and culture, and historical memories. Moreover, his theory enables the positioning of the national identity.

### Methodology

The research used a descriptive quantitative content analysis of *The Qazaq* to study the importance of the education topic in the newspaper from 1913-1918. Content analysis is a systematic, objective, quantitative research method used to analyze messages. Quantitative content analysis aims to count and measure variables (Fink, 2009). The descriptive content analysis does not pursue theory building, but it may be a valuable first phase of a larger research project (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2014).

Therefore, this research used quantitative content analysis to describe the volume of media coverage of the overarching category of education and subcategories related to that. The study was conducted in the background of other news categories covered in *The Qazaq*. The analysis included all issues published from 1913 to 1918 and translated into the Kazakh language in the *Qazaq Encyclopedia* (Subkhanberdina, Dautov, & Sakhov, 1998).

### Findings

To explore the importance of *The Qazaq* (1913-1918) assigned to the education topic, the research described the main news themes and the number of journalistic publications on each theme. Thus, the study established the benchmark of the maximum number of publications on a particular theme.

Table 2. Themes and number of publications in the newspaper <i>Qazaq</i> for 1913-1918		# materials
1.	Education	269
2.	October Revolution (1917)	219
3.	WW I	188
4.	Media	151
5.	Economy	137
6.	Land and Resettlement Policy of Tsarist Russia	101
7.	International relations	94
8.	Poems	91
9.	Culture	89
10.	Literature books	87
11.	Traditions & Religious	84
12.	Health	84
13.	Parliament (State's Duma)	78
14.	Judiciary system	71
15.	History	59
16.	Stories/Fairytales	47
17.	Translation of international literature	15
<b>Total</b>		<b>1904</b>

The results demonstrated that the education theme dominated *The Qazaq*. It was nearly one publication in every issue of the newspaper. However, if themes such as poems, culture, literature, translation, traditions and religion, and history were added to the materials exclusively devoted to education, it made slightly more than one-third of all published materials. Therefore, it seemed that *The Qazaq* functioned as a mass educator by publishing materials on history, literature (books and poems), traditions, and pedagogical and deductive teaching methods. Eradicating illiteracy in Kazakhstani children was critical in Alash Orda's political platform. Therefore, it was intensively present on the pages of *The Qazaq*. At the beginning of the 20th century, only a few secular schools were available

for Kazakh children in Kazakhstan. To educate more of them, *The Qazaq* financed the construction of more public Kazakh schools. The long-term goal was a progressive mass and secular educational system, divorced from the religious focus of the madrasah and free from the imposed limited quota and financial barriers of Tsarist Russia. This goal was coupled with Alash Orda's purpose to revive Kazakh national identity.

Four subcategories built up the educational theme in *The Qazaq*: 1) reformation of the educational system, 2) the Kazakh language in instruction, pedagogy, curriculum, and writing of textbooks, 3) learning through history, literature (books and poems) traditions, and 4) pedagogical and deductive teaching methods. Two significant reasons surfaced on the pages of the *newspaper*. First, it was the Arab language used for teaching at the madrasahs. Therefore, Baityrsunov adopted the Cyrillic alphabet to reflect better unique Kazakh language sounds such as (ә, ә, ұ, ұ, к, і, ғ, ң). On the pages of *The Qazaq*, he discussed topics such as the Kazakh alphabet, phonetics, syntax, the etymology of the Kazakh language, the theory of literature, and the Kazakh history of culture. Baityrsunov and other members of Alash Orda, working at *The Qazaq*, believed that the Cyrillic alphabet was more manageable to educate than the Arabic one and motivated children to learn new knowledge. They also believed that the adapted Cyrillic alphabet to the Kazakh language would protect the language from the influences of other languages, such as Bashkir, Tatar, Uzbek, and Arab, used in education on the territory of Kazakhstan languages. Preserving the Kazakh language was seen as protecting the national identity.

History was also a vital educational source for *The Qazaq*. For example, Akhmet Bokeikhanov was a crucial figure in the historic revival. He educated on the general meaning of history, explained the Kazakh genealogy of the Kazakh tribes, and the difference between Kazakh and Kyrgyz people. Bokeikhanov reflected on the importance of holding to the Kazakh ancient culture and the Kazakh national state (Khanate), which had a deep trace in human civilization. Bokeikhanov also wrote about the subordination of Bokei Kazakhs to Russia in "Grigory Nikolayevich Potanin" in #8, 1913, Kazakh people ethnography and folklore, and the 1731 Tsarist Russia Land Reform in the Kazakh territory, and Kazakhs khans' influence on Kazakh land were reported in #11. 1913. Other authors also provided information about significant events in Kazakhstan's history, such as the Kazakh-Kalmakh battle of "Aktabandy shybyryndy" (Kalmakh's conquest of Kazakhs lands), the 1st Kazakh Civil War (1522 – 1538), which raged between the descendants of Qasim Khan. There were also reports on the problems of historical antiques and archaeological artifacts taken to museums in Tsarist Russia #97, 1914. Thus, *The Qazaq* was a historical encyclopedia for the Kazakh people at the time. Religious studies and related courses dominated the madrasa educational program compared to those in secular schools. Alash Orda considered that the educational program of the madrasa limited students' preparedness for the changing socio-political and technological environment. As a result, students who graduated from public school were better prepared for the demands of the new political, economic, and social environments. Alash Orda was eager to bring the socio-political achievements of Western Europe via *The Qazaq* to build Kazakh autonomy and democracy – realities that required a progressive-oriented education. Therefore, the Kazakh National Intelligentsia saw the public schools unattached to religious missionaries and policies so that the Kazakh language, religion, and education could endure. Additionally, *The Qazaq* financed Kazakh university students who studied abroad, primarily in Russia, with its subscription revenue and advertising. It also supported financially-pressed Kazakh children who preferred pursuing a more religious education to study at the madrasa. The editorial board of *The Qazaq* knew how important religion was for the Kazakh people.

**Table 3** Foundation of Kazakh schools during 1913-1918.

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Year, # Issues</i>
Secular education vs. madrasa education	1913, # 1, 2, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 20, 28, 31, 34, 35, 40, 41; 1914, # 49, 50, 52, 55, 59, 61, 62, 63, 66, 72, 93, 97; 1915, # 105, 109, 114, 116, 117, 118, 119, 121, 125, 133, 138, 140, 153, 163, 165; 1916, # 169, 171, 179, 142, 147, 201, 1917, # 234, 232, 233, 237, 239, 246, 249, 251, 253
	<b>Total: 56</b>
Teaching methodology	1913, # 1, 2, 3, 7, 14, 17, 21, 27, 29, 38, 39 1914, # 66, 100

	1915, # 97, 102 1916, # 181, 184 1917, # 215, 219, 221, 251 1918, # 263	<b>Total: 22</b>
Textbooks for school and syllabus	1913, # 2, 16, 19, 21, 22, 26, 27, 34, 37, 44 1914, # 58, 66, 95 1915, # 118, 127, 131, 135, 141, 156 1916, # 176, 180, 186, 189, 191, 201 1917, # 228, 244, 246, 249, 250, 251, 257 1918, # 260, 264, 265	<b>Total: 35</b>

*The Qazaq* actively reported on Kazakh literature and culture; a total of 240 reports related to literature (91 poems, 47 short stories/fairy tales, 87 literature books, and 15 translations of international literature works) were published from 1913 to 1918. One of the most influential literary voices was Marsekov, who discussed the role and value of literature in society. For him, the Kazakh literature was the mirror of the people. It showed their true face, being, and rituals. As the emanation of the Kazakh language, Kazakh literature enabled Kazakh people to express their deep emotional inner world and the connection between people and nature (land). Marsekov claimed that Kazakh oral literature was vibrant and deep, which indicated Kazakh tradition, culture, and art. He divided Kazakh literature into three periods: 1) Kazakh ancient oral literature, 2) written literature, and 3) the new era (beginning with Abai's poems). Mostly translated into Kazakh were literary works of famous Russian writers such as Tolstoy, Pushkin, Lermontov, Dostoevsky, Potanin, Chernyshevsky, Gerzen, Dobroluebov, and Saltykov-Shedrin. Goethe's poems and reports on Chopin and Beethoven's music were also translated. Other authors also wrote on literary topics. For example, Ahmet Baitursynov cemented the role and meaning of Abai (Ibrahim Qunanbaiūly) for Kazakh literature and culture as Abai was a poet, theologian philosopher, and a cultural reformer oriented toward Europe and Russian cultures. Alikhan Bukeikhanov, a Kazakh politician and publisher, published under the pseudonym Abai (Ibrahim Abai), criticizing the desperate situation of the Kazakh people in Tsarist Russia. He also translated Russian scientific books, poems, and literature into Kazakh. *The Qazaq* discussed the equal political, civil, and religious rights of people inhabiting the Russian empire raised at the three Muslim congresses (1904 – 1907) in St. Petersburg. The newspaper's primary concern was the Tatarization of Kazakh national education, culture, traditions, and religion. Therefore, *The Qazaq* actively published Kazakh ancient customs and traditions, rituals (birth of a child, wedding, funeral, etc.), religious beliefs, holidays such as Nauryz (Kazakh New Year), etc. The newspaper was also the first media in Kazakhstan to educate Kazakhs on health behavior and report on Western medicine in Kazakhstan. Before that, Kazakh people treated diseases traditionally (healing and using herbs) or through therapeutic belief practices (shaman or mullah). Therefore, medical development lagged behind Western medicine. Additionally, *The Qazaq* raised people's awareness about hygiene, infections, medication, the usefulness of spring water, tuberculosis, treatment with kymus for tuberculosis, plague, chickenpox, trachoma, cataracts, treatment of patients, etc. As a result, 84 articles on medicine during 1913-1918. The most reported topics were sources of a science of the healthcare history, healthcare, first aid issues, shortage of Kazakh doctors needing translation medical books, etc.

#### **Discussion and conclusion**

Education was a vital topic in *The Qazaq*, which worked on preserving Kazakh national identity in extremely adverse times. The newspaper's primary strategy was to eradicate people's widespread illiteracy, change their mindset and way of thinking, and equip them with advanced knowledge of Europe. However, preserving national identity could happen only via language because language provides the bond for a unified society with its distinctive culture, traditions, and religious beliefs (Lowe, 2010; Romić, 2020). The newspaper reported on issues such as education, religion, illiteracy among Kazakh people; scholarships for poor Kazakh children, schools and teaching problems; training of teachers; tuition for schools; exchanging programs abroad; modernization of school programs; publishing of textbooks for schools; spending accumulated funds for building new schools; issues of religion; schools for Kazakh girls; training of female teachers; organized a boarding school for students; methodologies of teaching; issues of teaching in the Kazakh language; and syllabus for primary and

high schools. In addition, the newspaper “Kazakh” regularly reported all news about Kazakh students who studied in Moscow, Omby, Tomsk, Troisk, Petersburg, etc.

In summary, *The Qazaq* played a vital role as an educator and a window to the world. It helped the Kazakh people to accept a more progressive ideology of freedom and autonomy and to mobilize their energy toward national liberation. Therefore, public and secular mass education was required, which the Kazakh National Intelligentsia began to develop. Additionally, the newspaper kept the core of the Kazakh national identity (Galick & Nesterov, 2020): ancestry myths were their literature and beliefs, and historical memories were their background. Their uniqueness built their mentality and habits; their roots were in their land; their culture grew from their symbols (the yurt).

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