


RESEARCH ARTICLE			Shaping Pedagogical Thought in Azerbaijan: The Influence of the Azerbaijan Journal of Educational Studies	
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Abstract				
<p>This study examines the historical development and intellectual contribution of the Azerbaijan Journal of Educational Studies (AJES), the oldest continuously published pedagogical periodical in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The analysis highlights the journal's predecessors—New School and Aid to Teacher—and substantiates, through documentary evidence, their role in shaping the foundation upon which AJES was established. Particular attention is given to the dissemination of pedagogical ideas in Azerbaijan inspired by classical European educators, including Jan Amos Comenius, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Locke, Adolf Diesterweg, Lev Tolstoy, and Konstantin Ushinsky, as well as prominent Azerbaijani intellectuals such as A.A. Bakikhanov, M.F. Akhundov, H.S. Zardabi, S.A. Shirvani, and M.A. Sabir. The study argues that AJES not only functioned as a platform for advancing national educational discourse but also facilitated the systematic promotion of enlightenment ideals by reflecting global pedagogical achievements. In doing so, the journal has become a valuable chronicle of the evolution of Azerbaijani pedagogical thought and the broader cultural history of education in the region.</p>				
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Introduction

This study addresses the history of education and pedagogical thought in Azerbaijan during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with a particular focus on the development of adult education. The central aim is to identify the socio-pedagogical and cultural factors that necessitated the expansion of general and vocational education for adults and to examine the institutions and initiatives that facilitated this process. Among these were Sunday and Friday schools, evening courses, vocational and technical schools, libraries, and reading rooms. The research also investigates the role of charitable organizations, literate societies, and national intellectuals in advancing adult education, thereby contributing to the broader socio-cultural modernization of Azerbaijan.

The study pursues several objectives: (1) to analyze the socio-pedagogical movement in Azerbaijan and its influence on raising the educational and cultural level of the population; (2) to examine historical sources that highlight the necessity of adult education in this period; (3) to investigate the activities of Sunday schools, Friday schools, evening courses, technical and vocational institutions, and public libraries that were established to serve adult learners; (4) to clarify the contribution of charitable and literate societies to adult education; and (5) to analyze the role of Azerbaijani intellectuals and the national bourgeoisie in supporting educational reforms for the elderly population.

Methodologically, the study applies historical-comparative analysis, induction and deduction, synthesis, theoretical interpretation, and the study of archival documents.

The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive examination of adult education in Azerbaijan during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For the first time, the collective contributions of educational societies, intellectuals, philanthropists, libraries, public houses, and technical societies—including the Baku branch of the Russian Technical Society—are systematically documented and analyzed. The research further identifies developmental trends, evaluates the role of pedagogical journals, and situates these findings within the broader history of Azerbaijani educational thought.

Theoretically, this study enriches the historiography of Azerbaijani pedagogy by providing a systematic analysis of institutions, initiatives, and intellectual contributions that shaped adult education during the period under study. It also serves as a foundation for future research on the evolution of pedagogical thought in Azerbaijan.

From a practical perspective, the findings may be utilized in the teaching of “History of Pedagogy” and “History of School and Pedagogical Thought in Azerbaijan,” as well as in the preparation of a “Pedagogical Anthology of Azerbaijan.”

The study also outlines several key propositions for defense:

- (1) adult education in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contributed to socio-economic and cultural development in Azerbaijan;
- (2) socio-pedagogical movements heightened the demand for adult education;
- (3) enlightenment initiatives stimulated the creation of schools, courses, and reading rooms for adults;
- (4) charitable and literate societies provided essential support for these activities;
- (5) intellectuals, philanthropists, and professional organizations played a decisive role in improving workers' education; and
- (6) subsequent socio-political and cultural reforms further institutionalized adult education in Azerbaijan.

The research places particular emphasis on the *Azerbaijan Journal of Educational Studies* (AJES), which has been continuously published since 1924 and remains the longest-standing pedagogical periodical in the country. As a central platform for pedagogical discourse, AJES brought together leading educators and teachers, reflecting both national and global pedagogical achievements. The choice of AJES as an object of study is justified by its comprehensive coverage of past pedagogical heritage, its role in shaping educational practice, and its nearly century-long continuity. The chronological framework of the research spans the years 1924–1991, encompassing both pre-Soviet and Soviet periods in the history of Azerbaijani education.

Sources and Research Rationale

The primary sources of this study are Azerbaijani pedagogical journals published during the 1920s and 1930s, including *People's Enlightenment* (1920), *Education and Culture* (1923–1927), *People's Teacher* (1924), *Educator* (1925–1929), and *On Communist Education* (1931–1934). In addition, *New School* (1924–1930) and *Aid to Teacher* were examined as key predecessors of the *Azerbaijan Journal of Educational Studies* (AJES), which has been published continuously since 1943. These journals are significant not only for documenting the

historical development of Azerbaijani pedagogy but also for addressing educational challenges that remain relevant today.

AJES occupies a central place in the history of Azerbaijani pedagogy. The journal has consistently reflected the evolution of national educational practices, values, and traditions, while serving as a platform for professional dialogue on pressing issues in the education system. Its publications document both the continuity of pedagogical traditions and the adaptation of Azerbaijani education to modern requirements, thereby making it an indispensable source for tracing the historical trajectory of pedagogical thought.

The pedagogical press, particularly AJES, has played a decisive role in sustaining the intellectual foundations of Azerbaijani education. During the Soviet period, however, the use of national pedagogical traditions was constrained by ideological pressures, and scholarly attention to the history of the pedagogical press was limited. Comprehensive research on AJES and related periodicals became possible only in the years of independence, when the historical and cultural significance of these journals could be studied objectively.

The overarching aim of this research is to reconstruct the historical development of Azerbaijani pedagogical thought through an analysis of the pedagogical press. To achieve this, journals such as *People's Enlightenment, Education and Culture, People's Teacher, Educator, New School, Aid to Teacher, On Communist Education*, and particularly AJES were examined. Their contents include theoretical discussions, practical insights, critical debates, and analyses of the structural and functional features of the education system (Ahmadov, 2019).

Although research into Azerbaijani pedagogical thought began as early as the 1920s, it gained momentum only in the late 1930s, reflecting a growing interest in both traditions and innovations within the educational process. The present study situates AJES within this broader historical context, demonstrating its role in documenting educational practices, shaping pedagogical discourse, and influencing the development of the Azerbaijani education system.

Emergence of the Pedagogical Press in Azerbaijan

The emergence of the pedagogical press in Azerbaijan at the turn of the twentieth century constituted a decisive factor in shaping pedagogical thought and influencing school practice. By publishing in the mother tongue, Azerbaijani educators and progressive intellectuals sought to promote national schooling and pedagogical discourse. Early attempts included short-lived journals and newspapers such as *Fikir* (edited by A.O. Chernyayevsky), *Jan Marifat* (S.M. Ganizadeh), *Taza Khabar* (N. Narimanov), *Novruz* (J. Mammadguluzadeh), *Sovgat* (S.M. Ganizadeh and N. Narimanov), *Nubar* (S.M. Ganizadeh), and *School* (N. Narimanov). Although applications were made to the Caucasus Press Committee to secure publication rights, many of these initiatives remained unrealized (Dadashzade, 1990).

The socio-political mobilization of the early twentieth century created favorable conditions for the press. Newspapers such as *East-Russian* (1903–1904), *Life* (1905–1906), *Molla Nasreddin* (1906–1931), *Evolution* (1906–1907), and *Irshad* (1906–1907) appeared in rapid succession. Against this backdrop, the first pedagogical journals emerged: *Debistan* (1906–1908), *Rahbar* (1906), and *Maktab* (1911–1918). These journals, despite occasional conservative content, were largely progressive in outlook and included contributions from leading educators such as H.S. Zardabi, F.A. Kocharli, R.I. Efendiyev, M.A. Sabir, A.Sh. Hagverdiyev, S.M. Ganizadeh, and F.R. Agazade (Ahmadov, 2022).

Rahbar, edited by M. Mahmudbeyov, published only four issues in 1906. Nevertheless, it played a pioneering role in educational discourse by including articles on schooling, social issues, Azerbaijani and Russian literature, and the psychological development of children. The journal provided guidance to teachers and educators, supported democratic ideals, and contributed significantly to the development of pedagogical and children's literature. Similarly, *Maktab*, initiated by N. Narimanov in 1911, represented a milestone in Azerbaijani pedagogical media. Published biweekly in Baku, it combined scientific-pedagogical, literary-artistic, and democratic content, while systematically criticizing outdated methods and promoting modern approaches to teaching.

The 1920s witnessed the establishment of more sustainable pedagogical journals. In October 1920, *People's Enlightenment*, the organ of the Azerbaijan IFC, was published with its inaugural article titled "Invitation to Enlightenment" by Dadash Bunyadzade, then chairman of the IFC (Davidov, 1938). Although short-lived, it marked the beginning of pedagogical periodicals in Soviet Azerbaijan and featured contributions from leading

intellectuals such as M.S. Ordubadi and H. Jamalov. Shortly thereafter, the bilingual journals *People's Enlightenment* (in Azerbaijani) and *Narodnoe Prosveshchenie* (in Russian) appeared, though both ceased publication after two issues.

Following this, in January 1923, *Education and Culture* was launched under the editorship of writer Tagi Shakhbazi. Established by a resolution of the IFC board, it served as an official organ from 1923 to 1927 and soon became a central chronicle of pedagogical thought. In 1925, it was renamed *Revolution and Culture* and later evolved into a broader literary, artistic, and socio-political publication.

Other short-lived but important initiatives included *People's Teacher*, first published in October 1924. Despite producing only one issue, it addressed pressing concerns of Azerbaijani schools, highlighted classical pedagogical heritage, and articulated the tasks facing the education system at that time. Although often overlooked in historiography, this publication contributed to the growing body of pedagogical discourse.

Collectively, these journals reflected the intellectual vitality of Azerbaijani society in the early twentieth century. They not only documented the debates surrounding educational reform but also provided guidance for teachers, preserved pedagogical traditions, and introduced innovative methods. As such, they represent a valuable foundation for understanding the origins of modern Azerbaijani pedagogical thought.

Predecessors and the Emergence of *AJES Journal*

The longest-running journal in the history of Azerbaijani pedagogical press, the *Azerbaijan Journal of Educational Studies* (AJES), traces its origins to two key predecessors: *New School* and *Aid to Teacher*. These periodicals laid the foundation for the establishment of AJES and played a decisive role in shaping early pedagogical discourse in Azerbaijan.

New School, first published in April 1924 as the organ of the Scientific-Methodical Council of the Azerbaijan IFC, functioned as a monthly scientific-pedagogical and methodological journal. Its declared mission was to provide systematic guidance for teachers by developing curricula, publishing textbooks and methodological resources, and disseminating best practices. The journal also sought to integrate pedagogical science with psychology, philosophy, history of education, and the arts, thereby enriching the professional development of educators (Muradkhanov, 1951).

In November 1930, *New School* was replaced by *Aid to Teacher*. The journal concentrated on the pedagogical and methodological problems of primary education and aimed to clarify the requirements of newly introduced curricula. It became a platform for debates linking pedagogy to politics, philosophy, and methodology, and quickly assumed a central role in the pedagogical press of the 1930s.

According to the *Azerbaijan Soviet Encyclopedia*, the journal underwent several transformations: published as *New School* until 1930, renamed *Aid to Teacher* from 1930 to 1941, and relaunched in 1943 as *AJES Journal*—an official body of the Ministry of Education of the Azerbaijan SSR (Muradkhanov, 1938).

Since its establishment, AJES has become a repository of Azerbaijani pedagogical thought. From the mid-twentieth century, it featured contributions from prominent scholars such as Ahmad Seyidov, Mehdi Mehdizade, and Mardan Muradkhanov, whose works provided theoretical depth and continuity to the field. The journal has consistently documented and promoted progressive educational ideas, including those rooted in Azerbaijani folk pedagogy and influenced by leading Russian and European pedagogues.

Through its coverage of pedagogical theories, the history of education, preschool and school practices, and subject-specific teaching methods, AJES has played an irreplaceable role in professionalizing Azerbaijani education (Rustamov, 2016). By bridging pedagogical theory and practice, it earned widespread recognition within the academic community. H. Ahmadov described it as the “mirror of our pedagogical heritage,” N. Kazimov as the “chronicle of our pedagogical thought,” Z. Garalov as a “treasure of pedagogical knowledge,” M. Ibrahimov as a “lamp of cognition and etiquette,” and A. Gurbanov as a “school of development.” Academician M.M. Mehdizadeh further emphasized its significance, noting that AJES “has played, and continues to play, a great and meaningful role in covering the development of school education in the republic” (Taghiyev, 1958).

Development of Pedagogical Thought in Azerbaijan and the Role of the Pedagogical Press

The development of pedagogical thought in Azerbaijan has been strongly influenced both by the world's classical pedagogues—such as Jan Amos Comenius, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Locke, Adolf Diesterweg, Lev Tolstoy, and Konstantin Ushinsky—and by prominent Azerbaijani educators including A.A. Bakikhanov, M.F. Akhundov, H.B. Zardabi, S.A. Shirvani, and M.A. Sabir. Their contributions to the dissemination of pedagogical ideas remain central to the study of school history and educational theory, which in turn form an integral component of Azerbaijan's broader cultural heritage.

Since the mid-1950s, alongside the *AJES Journal*, methodological collections on subject teaching began to emerge. These collections provided teachers with essential guidance for mastering curricula, programs, textbooks, and teaching aids, which were continuously updated in response to advances in science and technology. Within this framework, *AJES Journal* became one of the richest sources of material on education under the Soviet regime. It stimulated scholarly interest in pedagogy, encouraged the exploration of new teaching methods, and devoted substantial attention not only to the historical traditions of educational culture but also to contemporary pedagogical debates.

The journal regularly featured contributions from leading representatives of pedagogical thought, thereby consolidating scientific and pedagogical ideas. It played an important role in preparing educators to implement progressive concepts, strengthening pedagogical education, and advancing the psychological foundations of teaching. Importantly, from its first issues, the journal adopted a principled position in rejecting outdated schooling traditions and consistently supported the development of innovative pedagogical approaches.

Preliminary research on classical pedagogical thinkers published in *AJES Journal* and in the Azerbaijani pedagogical press more broadly carried significant methodological value for the comprehensive advancement of educational thought. These studies expanded the scope of Azerbaijani pedagogy and represented important scientific contributions of their time. Similarly, the *Aid to Teacher* journal functioned as a transmitter of progressive world pedagogical ideas. Publications such as “J.J. Rousseau's Pedagogical Meetings” (Najafov, 1938), “Froebel and His Preschool Education System,” “Pestalozzi and His Didactics,” “Herbart's Didactic Meetings,” “Diesterweg and His Didactics,” “Ushinsky's Pedagogical Meetings,” and “Makarenko's Creative Path” (Seyidov, 1956) introduced educators to advanced pedagogical perspectives, many of which remain relevant today.

The historical trajectory of the Azerbaijani pedagogical press extends back to the early twentieth century. Following 1920, socio-political transformations and structural changes within Azerbaijani society gave rise to new debates in educational theory and practice. This period revealed new dimensions in the formation of pedagogical thought, while the diversity of perspectives published in the pedagogical press created a valuable body of material for the consolidation of educational traditions. In the 1920s and 1930s, Azerbaijani pedagogy reinterpreted the works of classical educational thinkers in light of emerging local conditions.

The twentieth century demonstrated that the pedagogical press was not only a key factor in shaping pedagogical thought but also a decisive instrument in interpreting and guiding its development. Over the course of nearly a century, from the 1920s onwards, the pedagogical press shaped the socio-political and cultural dimensions of pedagogical science in Azerbaijan. Within this process, *AJES Journal* assumed a leading role by providing sustained scientific-pedagogical analysis and contextualizing the development of historical traditions.

The intellectual and spiritual potential of any nation is manifested in its integration with world civilization. In Azerbaijan, this process has involved both preserving and reinterpreting the legacy of past pedagogical achievements in order to modernize the national education system. However, during the Soviet era, ideological constraints limited the use of these traditions. Consequently, the history of the pedagogical press, and particularly the role of *AJES Journal* as the country's longest-standing pedagogical publication, has not been comprehensively studied as an independent object of research (Aliiev, 2022).

Contribution of *Azerbaijan Journal of Educational Studies* to the Development of Pedagogical Thought in Azerbaijan

Heydar Aliyev, the National Leader of Azerbaijan, emphasized the significance of education by stating: “*Azerbaijan's education and schools have achieved great success in the twentieth century. At the beginning of the century, Azerbaijani thinkers, enlighteners, intellectuals, and teachers did much to free our people from illiteracy and inertia, to educate and develop education. If the history of education of the Republic of Azerbaijan is written, no doubt, the work done at each stage will be reflected there and will receive its value.*”

The evolution of Azerbaijani pedagogical thought has been shaped by the dedicated efforts of prominent educators, scholars, and intellectuals. Within this historical trajectory, the *Azerbaijan Journal of Educational Studies* (AJES) has played a pivotal role. Despite facing censorship and being renamed several times to avoid political pressure, the journal successfully preserved and disseminated progressive pedagogical ideas. Its resilience illustrates the enduring strength of Azerbaijani pedagogical traditions.

Historical experience demonstrates that the trajectory followed by *AJES* was strategically sound. The journal created opportunities for scholars engaged in pedagogical research to grow in alignment with modern scientific standards, thereby clarifying the place of pedagogical thought within both the national and international systems of knowledge.

The practical significance of this research lies in its contribution to all domains of pedagogical history. The findings enrich the historiography of Azerbaijani education with new empirical evidence and exert a positive influence on teaching, methodology, and scientific inquiry in this field. Systematic and comprehensive analyses confirm the central role of *AJES* in shaping pedagogical discourse and documenting the historical stages of educational development in Azerbaijan (Ahmadov, 2022).

Conclusion

Over its long history, *Azerbaijan Journal of Educational Studies* has made unparalleled contributions to the development of Azerbaijani pedagogical thought and the progress of the national education system. The journal facilitated the dissemination of the preliminary results of scientific research to a wide readership, supported the professional development of Azerbaijani educators, and provided a platform for the exchange of pedagogical innovations.

For the first time, the Azerbaijani academic community became systematically acquainted with the works of Russian, Soviet, and classical European pedagogues through its pages. The articles published in *AJES* introduced valuable pedagogical insights and methodological recommendations, which significantly influenced the organization of educational practice in Azerbaijan.

Furthermore, Azerbaijani scholars and educators regarded the achievements documented in the journal as a repository of national educational heritage and pedagogical science. Beyond publishing new knowledge, *AJES* stimulated critical thinking, inspired creative activity, and guided the modernization of the educational system.

As a result, *Azerbaijan Journal of Educational Studies* has not only chronicled the evolution of pedagogical thought but has also actively shaped it, becoming an indispensable instrument in the formation and advancement of educational science in Azerbaijan.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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