

Article

## Educational Programs of Madrasahs in the Aqmola Region in the 19th–20th Centuries

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### Abstract

This article examines the educational programs of madrasahs in the Aqmola region during the 19th–20th centuries, highlighting their role as important centers of religious and cultural enlightenment in northern Kazakhstan. The study analyzes the historical, social, and cultural context of the formation and development of madrasahs, influenced by major Islamic educational centers such as Bukhara, Samarkand, Kazan, Ufa, and Istanbul. It outlines the structure of traditional *usul-i qadim* madrasahs and the emergence of *usul-i jadid* schools that introduced secular subjects alongside religious studies. Particular attention is paid to the contribution of prominent figures such as Nauan Hazret, Saduakas Gylmani, and Zeynulla Ishan, who combined religious tradition with reformist approaches. The article argues that Aqmola madrasahs played a key role not only in preserving Islamic scholarship and national identity but also in shaping a generation of intellectuals who later influenced Kazakh literature, public life, and education. Despite the closure of madrasahs and repression of teachers during the Soviet period, their legacy remains an important part of Kazakhstan's spiritual heritage and serves as a foundation for understanding the continuity between past and present in the development of religious education.

**Keywords:** madrasah; *usul-i qadim*; *usul-i jadid*; religious education; jadidism; Aqmola.

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## XIX-XX ғасырлардағы Ақмола облысы медреселерінің оқу бағдарламалары

### Аңдатпа

Бұл мақалада XIX–XX ғ. Ақмола облысындағы медреселердің оқу бағдарламалары және олардың Солтүстік Қазақстандағы діни және мәдени білім беру орталықтары ретіндегі рөлі қарастырылады. Онда Бұхара, Самарқанд, Қазан, Уфа және Стамбул сияқты ірі ислам білім беру орталықтарының ықпалымен медреселердің қалыптасуы мен дамуының тарихи, әлеуметтік және мәдени контексті зерттеледі. Онда дәстүрлі усул-и қадим медреселерінің құрылымы және діни пәндермен қатар зайырлы пәндерді оқыта бастаған усул-и жәдид мектептерінің пайда болуы талданады. Діни дәстүрлерді реформаторлық тәсілдермен үйлестірген Науан Хазірет, Сәдуақас Ғылмани және Зейнолла Ишан сияқты көрнекті тұлғалардың үлестеріне ерекше назар аударылады. Зерттеу Ақмола медреселерінің тек ислам ғылымы мен ұлттық бірегейлікті сақтауда ғана емес, сонымен қатар қазақ әдебиетіне, қоғамдық өміріне және біліміне әсер еткен зиялылар буынын қалыптастыруда да маңызды рөл атқарғаны туралы қорытынды жасалады. Медреселердің жабылуына және кеңес үкіметінің кезеңдегі құғын-сүргінге қарамастан, олардың мұрасы Қазақстанның рухани байлығының маңызды бөлігі болып қала береді және діни білім беруді дамытуда өткен мен қазіргінің сабақтастығын түсінуге негіз болып табылады.

**Түйін сөздер:** медресе; усул-и қадим; усул-и жәдид; діни білім; жәдидшілік; Ақмола.

## Учебные программы медресе акмолинского региона XIX–XX веков

### Аннотация

В статье рассматриваются учебные программы медресе Акмолинского региона XIX–XX вв., их роль как центров религиозного и культурного просвещения на севере Казахстана. Исследуется исторический, социальный и культурный контекст формирования и развития медресе, находившихся под влиянием крупнейших исламских образовательных центров Бухары, Самарканда, Казани, Уфы и Стамбула. Анализируется структура традиционных медресе усул-и кадим и появление школ усул-и джадид, в которых наряду с религиозными дисциплинами стали преподаваться светские предметы. Особое внимание уделено вкладу таких выдающихся деятелей, как Науан хазрет, Садуакас Ғылмани, Зейнолла ишан, которые сочетали религиозные традиции с реформаторскими подходами. Делается вывод о том, что акмолинские медресе сыграли ключевую роль не только в сохранении исламской учености и национальной идентичности, но и в формировании поколения интеллигенции, оказавшей влияние на казахскую литературу, общественную жизнь и образование. Несмотря на закрытие медресе и репрессии в советский период, их наследие остается важной частью духовного богатства Казахстана и служит основой для понимания преемственности прошлого и настоящего в развитии религиозного образования.

**Ключевые слова:** медресе; усул-и кадим; усул-и джадид; религиозное образование; джадидизм; Ақмола.

## Introduction

The Aqmola region, located in northern Kazakhstan, emerged as a major center of religious education in the second half of the 19th and first quarter of the 20th centuries. This period was marked by the simultaneous development of Islam and the national education system in the Kazakh steppe, which had entered a period of renewal. Along with mosques, the number of madrassas in the regions also increased, playing a significant role in spreading religious literacy and preserving the nation's spirituality. The formation and development of madrassas in the Aqmola region is directly linked to the educational traditions of Islamic civilization, which arrived in the Kazakh steppe via Central Asia. Educational institutions in this region were particularly influenced by major spiritual centers such as Bukhara, Samarkand, Kazan, Troitsk, Tomsk, Istanbul, and Ufa. This is specifically mentioned in Saduakas Gylmani's biographical dictionary, "Biographies of the Scientists of Our Time". It describes the lives and work of 39 scholars who served in Northern Kazakhstan, including the Aqmola and Kokshetau regions, and provides information on more than 50 madrassas. Furthermore, researchers divide the educational system of the second half of the 19th century into three types: traditional (Qadimist) schools; Russian-Kazakh schools; and Jadidist schools (Nurasyl, 2020).

According to sources, most madrassas in the Aqmola region were small rural educational institutions attached to mosques. Their teachers were individuals educated in cities such as Bukhara, Kazan, and Ufa, and possessing an ijaza (license to teach religious knowledge). The educational program of these madrassas was based on the traditional *usul-i qadim* ("old method") system. The main subjects included Arabic grammar, *fiqh* (Islamic law), *tafsir* (Qur'anic exegesis), *hadith*, and *kalam* (Islamic dogma). Students prepared for religious professions such as imam, *molda*, and *qazi*. However, in the early 20th century, under the influence of Tatar educators, *jadidist* (reformist) madrassas began to emerge in the Aqmola region. These educational institutions included the teaching of secular subjects (arithmetic, geography, history), native language, Russian, and calligraphy, shaping a modern educational structure. These mixed-method educational institutions contributed to the formation of a generation of intellectuals who combined religion and science. Students of these madrassas subsequently opened their own educational institutions in villages and engaged in teaching. Among the graduates were those who continued religious service during the Soviet period. For example, religious figures Nauan Khazret and Saduakas Gylmani were recognized as direct heirs of the traditional system of religious education.

Currently, research into the educational content of madrassas in the Aqmola region from a historical and pedagogical perspective is of great importance for understanding the religious and spiritual foundations of Kazakh society. This article examines the main educational programs of the region's madrassas and analyzes the historical, social, political, and cultural factors that influenced their development. It also determines the place and role of these educational institutions in the history of Kazakh education.

## Materials and Methods

The methodological basis of this article is based on the principles of historicism, objectivity, and systems analysis. The primary approach utilized is desk research, analyzing existing sources, and scholarly literature. The study focuses on comparing the curricula of madrassas in the Aqmola region. The article employs a historical approach, allowing the two schools to be examined within the context of specific socio-political conditions. This allowed for the identification of causal relationships between reformist and traditionalist tendencies.

The article's empirical basis is archival materials collected in the Aqmola region of Kazakhstan. These materials reflect the activities of educational institutions and religious figures. An analysis of archival sources allowed for the reconstruction of the characteristics of dissemination and training. The study also reviewed relevant scholarly articles. Furthermore, a typology method was used to classify forms of educational practices. This allowed for the systematization of the obtained data and the identification of key characteristics.

Overall, the combination of methods and sources used ensures the comprehensive nature of the study.

### **Results and Discussion**

The jadidist and qadimist movements in Central Asia are examined in Kazakh and international scholarly literature. They are considered within the framework of history, religious studies, social anthropology, and other fields. Jadidism is viewed as a reformist movement aimed at modernizing Muslim society, while qadimism is viewed as a traditionalist movement focused on preserving classical forms of Islamic education.

Researcher Adeeb Khalid made a significant contribution to the study of jadidism. He examines jadidism as a political and cultural phenomenon of Muslim reformism. He also notes that jadidism is part of a broader process of Islamic modernization. He also emphasizes the role of the Jadids in the formation of a new educational system, the development of the press, and national identity.

Regional scholarly literature also includes works devoted to various aspects of jadidism and qadimism. For example, scholars Dudoignon (1996), Khalid (2006), Maraş (2008), Kemper, Shikhaliev (2015), Zhussipbek, Achilov, Nagayeva (2020), Muhametshin (2007), Temirbayev (2014), Kulshanova (2022), Nurmatov, Abdrasilov, Soon (2022) and others examine these movements as educational and cultural processes, as well as their reformist ideas. Particular attention is also paid to the regional specificities of each Central Asian country.

In the mid-19th century, the technological and scientific development of Western civilization and the significant lag of Eastern countries in this area greatly concerned Muslim thinkers. While the Industrial Revolution, science, and technology were rapidly advancing in Europe, in Muslim countries these processes were slow or even neglected. This situation prompted many intellectuals to advocate for the revival of society and a shift toward science and education.

This wave of renewal did not bypass the Turkic-Muslim peoples who were part of the Russian Empire, including the Kazakhs. Among the Muslim communities under Russian rule, reform-minded figures who were in tune with the times began to emerge. In his work “Russian Islam: Thoughts, Notes, and Observations of a Muslim”, Ismail Gasprinskiy pointed to the lag in education and enlightenment as the main reason for the weakness of Muslim peoples, thereby laying the ideological foundation for jadidism (Gasprinskiy, 1881, p. 12).

They believed it was necessary, alongside religious knowledge, to teach secular disciplines and master modern sciences. Thus, the Jadidist movement arose, and a new type of madrasah school began to open. Let's briefly examine the traditional (qadimist) and jadidist madrasahs of the Aqmola region. Each madrasah that emerged in the vast steppe had its own unique characteristics. Some employed traditional (qadimist) methods, while others began to introduce new teaching methods thanks to the jadidist reforms.

Until the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the main types of religious educational institutions in the Aqmola region were traditional (qadimist) madrassas. The word “Qadim” means “old” or “traditional” in Arabic. This term denoted an educational system based on the methods of the ancient madrassas of Bukhara, Khiva, and Samarkand. Qadimist madrassas focused primarily on religious subjects and Shariah sciences.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the jadidist movement, aimed at modernizing the educational system, became widespread among the Muslims of the Russian Empire. Siberia became one of the regions actively influenced by jadidist ideas. These ideas were spread through Tatar teachers and educators arriving from the Volga region. This process was not limited to this region and encompassed much of Siberia, including northern and central Kazakhstan. This is explained by the fact that religious

leaders in this region were in contact with the Jadid schools of Kazan, Ufa, Troitsk, and Tomsk and trained teachers in these fields. Thus, Tatar and Bashkir intellectuals became the initiators of a movement that sought to update the methodology and content of traditional religious schools.

The main principle of the jadidists was to teach secular subjects alongside religious ones, systematize the curriculum, and introduce modern teaching aids. The influence of Jadid education also spread to the Kazakh steppe, including the Aqmola region. Here, with the participation of Tatar teachers and local religious figures who had graduated from their educational institutions, new madrassas began to emerge. These schools were called *usul-i jadid* (“new method”). They served as an alternative to the traditional *usul-i qadim* (“old method”) madrassas.

The Rasuliya madrassah in Troitsk, founded by Zeynollah Ishan Rasulov, played a special role in the formation of the Kazakh intelligentsia. Although Zeynollah Ishan was a representative of the Sufi path, he organized the madrassah in the spirit of jadidism. Here, along with traditional religious disciplines, secular sciences were taught, and a new educational system was introduced.

The educational program and outreach activities of the Rasuliya Madrasah were also influenced by the processes of religious and scientific renewal in the Ottoman Empire. This connection was established during Zeynollah Ishan’s hajj in 1869. In Istanbul, he met with the renowned Ottoman scholar and representative of Sufi scholarship, Ahmad Ziyauddin al-Kumushkhanawi, from whom he received *ijaza* (permission, caliphate status) for the Sufi path.

Thereafter, Zeynollah Ishan became known not only as a teacher but also as a spiritual mentor, that is, a teacher and a sheikh. Sufis and spiritual seekers from the Aqmola region came to Zeynollah Ishan and became his murids, embarking on the path of the *tariqa*.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Galiya Madrasah in Ufa became one of the major educational institutions that gave impetus to the spiritual revival of the Turkic-Muslim peoples. It was founded by the renowned Tatar educator Ziya Kamali (Ziya Kamaletdinov) in 1906. He combined traditional religious education with the Jadid model, incorporating secular subjects into the curriculum.

The Galiya Madrasah became an important center of education and spiritual exploration for Kazakh youth. Outstanding figures of Kazakh spiritual culture and literature studied here in the early 20th century – Magzhan Zhumabayev, Beyimbet Mailin, and many others. They received not only religious knowledge but also studied literature, history, geography, and pedagogy, shaping their Enlightenment views.

Their studies at “Galiya” greatly influenced their subsequent social activities and creative work. Magzhan Zhumabayev began writing his first poems while studying there, and Beyimbet Mailin addressed themes of national identity and social justice.

At the beginning of the 20th century, one of those who brought us reliable and valuable information about the state of madrassas and religious educational institutions was Saduakas Gylmani (1890–1972), a religious figure and author of numerous works. From 1952 to 1972, he headed the Kazakhstan department (*qazi*) within the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan (SADUM, 1943–1992). He received his early education from his grandfather, Salmen-haji, and local mullahs (Muminov, 2018, p. 178). Saduakas Gylmani himself wrote about this: “My nickname is Saken, my name given to me during the *adhan* is Saduakas, my father’s name is Gylman, he is the son of Salmen, the son of Muhammadiyar, the son of Mukhtar, and their family name was Gazin. Our mother died in 1901, when I was 11 years old. Our grandfather remarried. Since I was left an orphan, my brother Mukan and sister Mapen were very sorry for me, fearing that my stepmother would oppress me. From a young age, my grandfather gave me a lot of advice and guidance. Our grandfather, Salmen-haji, taught the children of the village. He put me to study, and with him I started with *alifba*, then I learned “*Aptiek*”, the Koran, after that the Turkic books “*Korik kadyr*”, “*Baqyrqan*”, “*Sabat al-azhizin*”,

and later “Shurut as-sala”, “Fiqq-i Kaidani”, “Kyryk hadith” and other books” (Gylmani, 2013, pp. 333–335).

In 1906, he entered the faculty of Akhmet Khalpa Osmanuly (1879–1918), where he studied for six and a half years, completing the course at the end of 1912. As a result, he received the right to teach traditional Islamic disciplines (fatiha, khatym). Gylmani placed particular importance on compiling the “Biographical Dictionary of Kazakh Scholars” (“Life Stories of Scholars of Our Time”). While preparing the book, he corresponded with religious figures from all corners of Kazakhstan and compiled a 120-page file of letters in his personal archive. The collection includes biographies of 39 religious figures who lived in northern Kazakhstan in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Naturally, the lives of the religious figures described in the dictionary were closely linked to major centers of knowledge – madrassas. It was there that they received their education, advanced their studies, and later served as teachers themselves. Most scholars became renowned primarily for their teaching activities. Therefore, the work contains information on more than 50 madrassas, describing in detail the educational process and principles of their operation. Of these, 21 are Kazakh madrassas, 17 are northern (Tatar), and more than 10 are southern (Bukharan, Arabic, and Turkish).

### ***Kazakh Madrassas***

The study provides information on 21 madrassas operating among the Kazakhs. Most of them were in the winter and summer quarters of nomadic Kazakhs, so they can be roughly described as “rural”. However, one madrassah was opened in Kokshetau between 1884 and 1923 by Nauan-khazret Talasuly. His students (Nurtoza ibn Shakhmurat, Makysh Seitaliuly, and Mukish-mullah Abdolkadyruly) subsequently also opened their own madrassas in the city and taught children. After Nauan-khazret’s death between 1917 and 1923, his student Aliaskar Aitkozhakuly took over. And in the 1920s, three of his students – Kenzhebai Toksaruly, Abutalip Päkizeuly and Momakan Abdoljabbaruly (1897–1969) – received mudarris (teacher) certificates and the right to teach in the city.

### ***Tatar (Northern) Madrassas***

The study contains information on 17 Tatar madrassas where Kazakh scholars studied. They were in major cities: Petropavlovsk, Aqmola, Semey, Tomsk, Baraba, Kazan, and Ufa. Aqmola was one of the significant centers. Four scholars taught there: 1) Abdullah Damullah ibn Fakhr ad-Din, 2) Husn ad-Din Hazret, 3) Najm ad-Din Hazret, and 4) Molla Gayaz ibn Husn ad-Din. Furthermore, the renowned Naqshbandi Sufi Ishan Zainullah Hazret ibn Khabibullah Rasulev (1833–1917) opened a madrassah in the city of Troitsk. After the death of his mentor, Kozhakhmet Alimbayuly continued his studies with his son, Gabdrakhman Rasulev (the future mufti and head of the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Russia from 1936 to 1959). Sufis such as Hamza Piradar, murid Abduni Zhanibekuly, Baigozha Shokayev, Zhanteli (d. 1937), and others also studied at this madrasah.

### ***Southern madrassas***

These included educational institutions opened in such regions as Bukhara, Egypt, and Istanbul. Bukhara attracted four major Kazakh figures: Mashkhur Zhusup, Nauan-khazret, Galiaskar-khazret, and Khoja Akhmet-khazret Agytaevuly. For example, Mashkhur-Zhusup Kopeyev (1858–1931) studied at the Kukaltash Madrassah; in the same madrassah, together with Kojakhmet Ishanuly, he received his education from 1869–1884 under ‘Ubaydallah-khazret and Nauan-khazret. Aliaskar Aitkozhakuly studied for five years from 1911–1916 under Damolla Khalmurat at the Ernazar Madrassah. After completing his studies in Bukhara, Gaiyaz Husn ad-Dinuli traveled to Medina and Egypt. His mentor, Kozhakhmet Alimbayuli (Abdrakhman Mursafauli), lived in Egypt for 16 years. Seitakhmet-khazret Abd ar-Rahmanuli, Gabbasa Eleusizova’s teacher, studied in Istanbul for nine years. Graduates of southern madrassas typically possessed several advantages: the ability to beautifully recite the Quran with Tajwid, a thorough knowledge of Arabic, and the ability to teach in Persian.

In his works, A. Abuev characterizes Nauan-khazret as a supporter of jadidism. However, S. Gylmani's biographical dictionary provides specific evidence that Nauan-khazret held the opposite position and even wrote poems criticizing the Jadids. Despite a certain contradiction between these two points of view, there is reason to believe that A. Abuev's position also contains a grain of truth (Abuev, 2014). In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Kazakh society was particularly in need of literate, modernly educated people. Nauan-khazret, deeply aware of this historical necessity, did not completely reject the traditional religious education system; on the contrary, he took steps to rethink it. He shortened the 23-year curriculum he himself had endured and developed a new program that met the needs of the people. It partially incorporated secular subjects, demonstrating his reformist aspirations, but he never departed from religious principles and the traditional Islamic worldview. Thus, Nawan Khazret's work, on the one hand, appeared distant from jadidism, but on the other, it was reformist in nature. This demonstrates that he was a far-sighted religious figure who understood the demands of the times while remaining true to his spiritual foundations.

Kazakh madrassas had a relatively stable educational process. Some teachers were widely known, and each taught between 20 and 200 students. Since teaching in public schools (of the Soviet type) was more attractive, after a teacher's death, their position was often filled by one of their students. The traditional path of education (*usul-i qadim*) remained the basis of education. From 1923, state control over the work of *mudarrises* increased, and from 1928, a mass closure of madrassas began. In some places, madrassas were used as mosques until 1931.

An iconic figure in the Aqmola region, Zeynilgabiden al-Zhauari is considered one of the first Abai scholars in the Kazakh steppe. He was an educator who deeply understood the work of the great thinker Abai Qunanbayuly and actively promoted it among the people. The research of the renowned Abai scholar Mekemtas Myrzakhmetuly particularly highlights Zeynilgabiden's work in this field and his attitude toward Abai's legacy (Myrzakhmetuly, 1994, p. 85). One of Zeynilgabiden's most notable works was the publication of the book "Nasikhath Kazakhiya" in Kazan in 1907, which brought new impetus to the spiritual life of Kazakhs in the early 20th century. In this work, he raised pressing social, religious, and cultural issues of his time, calling on the Kazakh people to strive for knowledge and civilization.

Furthermore, Zeynilgabiden al-Zhauari, together with the renowned public and government figure Smagul Saduakasov, opened a new type of madrassa school (in the spirit of Jadidism) in the village of Siyrshy in the Kokshetau region, where he taught. Zeynilgabiden taught classes in the Turkic-Arabic script (the so-called *töte-jazu*), while Smagul Saduakasov taught in the Cyrillic alphabet. This educational institution aimed to modernize education in line with the demands of the times, drawing on the ideas of the Turkic-Muslim revival.

However, such innovative initiatives met with resistance from some religiously conservative groups of the time. This is evidenced by the memoirs of Zeynilgabiden's students and contemporaries, as well as special collections (Askarova & Dosanova, 2021, p. 58).

According to Saduakas Gylmani, Allahbergen-khazret was one of four well-known khazrets. He served as a *mudarris* (religious teacher) in the village of Alibay-haji for a quarter of a century. His son, Zeynilgabiden (Ziyash) Aldabergenov, a graduate of the Galiya Madrasah, also continued his father's work and became renowned for his religious education.

Zeynilgabiden opened a new-style madrasah in his village, as well as on the Sileti River, based on a modernized educational system, striving to give traditional religious education a contemporary twist. However, his innovative efforts met with criticism from the Soviet authorities and mixed reactions from the local population.

During the mass political repressions of the 1930s, Zeynilgabiden was forced to conceal his knowledge and move first to Karaganda, then to the Shymkent region. After the repressive pressure

eased, he was invited to join the editorial staff of the newspaper “Egemen Kazakstan”, where he served as editor until his retirement. After retiring, at the invitation of his fellow countrymen, he returned to religious work, continuing the work of his ancestors and serving as imam until the end of his life. Serving his people, he was buried in his native land (Tashmetov, 2003, p. 32).

In the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries, historical circumstances led to profound changes in the religious and educational life of the Kazakh people. The industrial and scientific revolutions taking place in Europe did not leave Muslim countries indifferent. These processes also impacted Kazakh society, placing a renewed emphasis on science and education. Consequently, adapting the religious education system to the demands of the times and developing new types of educational institutions became a pressing need.

The Jadid movement emerged as an ideological and educational wave driven by this need. It sought to combine traditional religious education with a modern worldview and aimed to renew the educational system. The emergence of jadid madrassas in the Kazakh steppe, particularly in the Aqmola region, became a concrete manifestation of this revival. These educational institutions differed from previous ones in both their teaching methods and content and were built in accordance with the demands of the times.

Individuals such as Zeynollah Ishan, Saduakas Gylmani, and Zaki Kamali stood out in this process. Through their work, they made a significant contribution to the preservation and development of national spirituality. Their key characteristic was that, without breaking away from religious tradition, they opened the way to new knowledge, methods, and approaches. Furthermore, their connections with international religious centers (Bukhara, Kazan, Istanbul, Egypt) testified to the breadth of the spiritual space of the Kazakh steppe.

The Jadid educational movement was not only a renewal in education but also a comprehensive cultural movement aimed at awakening national consciousness. The madrasah served not only as a spiritual support for its time but also as a guardian of culture and national identity. Graduates of these madrasahs later became active in literature and the press, in politics and public life, becoming individuals who defended the interests of the nation. Although these initiatives were curtailed during the Soviet era – madrasahs were closed, teachers were repressed – the mark they left behind has not been erased from the people’s historical memory. Today, this experience is re-evaluated as a shining example of spiritual revival, a harmonious blend of tradition and the demands of the times. Ultimately, studying the history of Kazakh madrasahs allows us not only to understand the development of the religious education system but also to recognize the continuity between the past and the present, serving as an important foundation for the revival of national spirituality.

### **Conclusion**

In the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries, historical circumstances led to profound changes in the religious and educational life of the Kazakh people. The industrial and scientific revolutions taking place in Europe did not leave Muslim countries indifferent. These processes also impacted Kazakh society, placing the need for science and education on the agenda. Consequently, adapting the religious education system to the demands of the times and developing new types of educational institutions became a pressing need. The Jadid movement emerged as an ideological and educational wave driven by this need. It sought to combine traditional religious education with a modern worldview and aimed to renew the educational system. The emergence of jadid madrassas in the Kazakh steppe, particularly in the Aqmola region, became a concrete manifestation of this revival. These educational institutions differed from previous ones in both their teaching methods and content and were built in accordance with the demands of the times. Individuals such as Zeinollah Ishan, Saduakas Gylmani, and Zaki Kamali were particularly prominent in this process. Through their work,

they made a significant contribution to the preservation and development of national spirituality. Their key characteristic was that, without breaking away from religious tradition, they paved the way for new knowledge, methods, and approaches. Furthermore, their connections with international religious centers (Bukhara, Kazan, Istanbul, Egypt) testified to the breadth of the spiritual space of the Kazakh steppe.

The Jadid educational movement was not only a renewal in education but also a comprehensive cultural movement aimed at awakening national consciousness. The madrasah served not only as a spiritual pillar of its time but also as a guardian of culture and national identity. Graduates of these madrasahs later became active in literature and the press, in politics and public life, becoming individuals who defended the interests of the nation. Although these initiatives were curtailed during the Soviet era – madrasahs were closed, teachers were repressed – the mark they left behind has not been erased from the people’s historical memory.

As this study has shown, Jadidism is a cultural and intellectual movement aimed at reforming Muslim society in the context of modernity. Through educational reform, the Jadidis sought to cultivate generation oriented toward critical inquiry and systematic engagement with modern scientific knowledge. Jadidism did not reject or oppose Islam, but rather sought rationalization and modernization. The qadimites perceived them as a threat to Islamic tradition and religious identity. Within the colonial context of the period, they sought to preserve cultural identity. An analysis of scholarly sources has shown that Jadidism is viewed as a key mechanism for the social and intellectual transformation of Central Asia. Researchers agree that Jadidism played a significant role in the formation of national consciousness. Moreover, the interaction of Jadidism and Qadimism contributed to the formation of the intellectual field of Central Asia. Thus, Jadidism should be viewed as a comprehensive modernization project that combines educational reforms, cultural renewal, and the emergence of new forms of identity.

### Authors’ contributions

First author – writing the article text, literature review, and analysis of survey results.

Second author – defining the research framework and sample, text editing.

### Conflict of interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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