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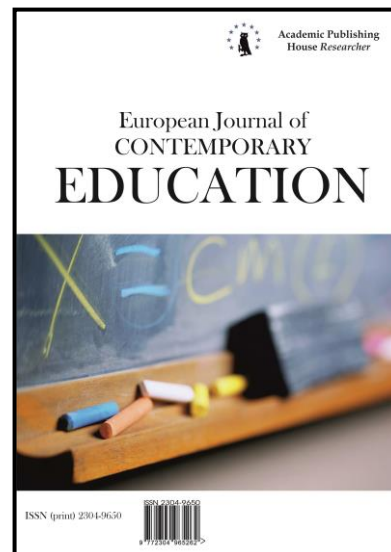
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Private Educational Institutions in the Caucasus in the Period 1846–1914: A Historical-Statistical Study

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Abstract

This work examines the private education sector in the Caucasus in the prerevolutionary period. Consideration is given to the distinctive characteristics of the development of secondary, lower, and primary private education in the region.

The key sources used in putting this work together are the annual Reports on Educational Institutions in the Caucasus Educational District, which provide data on the region's schools run by the Ministry of Public Education in the period 1884–1914, and the 1879 Memorandum Book for the Caucasus Educational District.

Given the study's nature, special use was made of the statistical method, with the diverse statistical material classified by level of private educational institutions and the raw data on both the number of educational institutions and the gender and religious composition of the student body summarized. This helped identify some of the key distinctive characteristics of the development of the private education system in the Caucasus in the period 1849–1914.

The authors' conclusions are as follows:

1. Private educational institutions in the Caucasus were divided into the following three categories: Category 1 – educational institutions with five grades and up (gymnasia and higher primary educational institutions); Category 2 – educational institutions with three-to-four grades (urban schools and four-grade progymnasia); Category 3 – educational institutions with one-to-two grades (primary schools).

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2. To be able to compete with ministerial (public) educational institutions, private educational institutions had to continuously keep track of the demand for education in society, take account of new trends, and vouch for the quality of the educational process. Consequently, the region's private education sector was characterized by impermanence. Essentially, it acted as a litmus paper for a reading on what was desired by society in the Caucasus. The sector was undergoing continuous change, with the number of school grades increasing. The number of primary private educational institutions continuously declined in the region over the prerevolutionary period. In 1879, primary schools accounted for 93 % of all private educational institutions in the region, in 1907 – for 78 %, and in 1914 – for just 61 %.

3. In religious composition, the student body across the region's private educational institutions was dominated throughout the period under review by Orthodox Christians (the figure ranging from 57 to 74 %), followed by Armenian Gregorian Christians (18 to 35 %), with members of other faiths accounting for an insignificant portion of the region's student body.

Keywords: private educational institutions, Caucasus, Russian Empire, Caucasus Educational District.

1. Introduction

Private education existed across the Caucasus long before its becoming part of the Russian Empire. As a rule, well-off parents would hire private tutors for their children in an effort to have them learn basic skills such as reading, writing, and math. This form of private education was incomplete, as tutors did not have proper study guides and subjected their teaching methods to analysis only superficially. Understandably, the level of such education was quite poor, even though no other form of education was available in the region at the time.

With the advent of Russia to the Caucasus, slowly yet systematically the region became home to its first public educational institutions*, and, where government efforts were insufficient to meet increased education demand in the region, private educational institutions began to emerge to fill this gap.

2. Materials and methods

The key sources used in putting this work together are the annual Reports on Educational Institutions in the Caucasus Educational District, which provide data on the region's schools run by the Ministry of Public Education in the period 1884–1914, and the 1879 Memorandum Book for the Caucasus Educational District ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1880](#)).

Given the study's nature, special use was made of the statistical method, with the diverse statistical material classified by level of private educational institutions and the raw data on both the number of educational institutions and the gender and religious composition of the student body summarized. This helped identify some of the key distinctive characteristics of the development of the private education system in the Caucasus in the period 1849–1914.

3. Discussion

The topic of private education in the Russian Empire is not new in Russian historiography. Researchers have explored both the history of private education in Russia and its regional characteristics.

Among the most prominent works on the subject are the following: a study by K.V. Romanenchuk exploring the history of the private education sector in Russia ([Romanenchuk, 2011](#)); a study by S.V. Sergeeva exploring the inspection of private educational institutions in Russia ([Sergeeva, 2009](#)); a study by O.K. Pavlova exploring the development of commercial education in Russia during the prerevolutionary period ([Pavlova, 2014](#)).

Worthy of mention are also the following works: a study by A.V. Belov exploring the process of creation of the nation's public education system through the example of the city of Moscow ([Belov, 2019](#)); a study by V.D. Kamynin and A.B. Khramtsov exploring reports by public school inspectors in prerevolutionary Siberia ([Kamynin, Khramtsov, 2019](#)); a study by L.M. Khutorova

* The first-ever public educational institution in the Caucasus was established in 1802 in the city of Tiflis ([Shevchenko et al., 2016: 364](#)).

and Yu.N. Ronzhina exploring the history of the private education system in the city of Kazan (Khutorova, Ronzhina, 2013).

When it comes to research on the specific subject matter covered by the present work, private education in the Caucasus has been researched by the following scholars: A.M. Mamadaliev, who has explored the system of public education in Tiflis Governorate (Mamadaliev et al., 2020; Mamadaliev et al., 2020a; Mamadaliev et al., 2020b; Mamadaliev et al., 2020c); V.S. Molchanova, who has explored the system of public education in Kuban Oblast (Molchanova et al., 2019; Molchanova et al., 2019a; Molchanova et al., 2020); O.V. Natolochnaya, who has explored the system of public education in Stavropol Governorate (Natolochnaya et al., 2020; Natolochnaya et al., 2020a; Natolochnaya et al., 2020b); A.A. Cherkasov, who has explored the system of public education in Black Sea Governorate (Cherkasov et al., 2020; Cherkasov et al., 2020a).

Given that only incidental research has been carried out on private education in the Caucasus, there appears to be a need for a targeted research study on the subject. The research reported in this work was conducted to serve this purpose.

4. Results

Private educational institutions in the Russian Empire were divided into the following three categories: Category 1 – educational institutions with five grades and up; Category 2 – educational institutions with three-to-four grades; Category 3 – educational institutions with one-to-two grades.

The private education sector in the Caucasus was characterized by impermanence, with educational institutions opening and closing down regularly in the region. The possible reasons were lack of students (due to a portion of the potential student body being provided with an education already) and lack of funding. To illustrate this statistically, in 1885 the Caucasus witnessed the opening of 24 and closure of 25 private educational institutions (Otchet, 1886: 293), with the figures for 1889 being 16 and 22, respectively (Otchet, 1890: table 288).

As of January 1, 1879, the Caucasus Educational District numbered 84 private educational institutions (Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1880: XIII), with the date of foundation and the location known for 54 of those (Table 1). The region's three oldest private educational institutions were based in the city of Tiflis: Belakhyants's School, a one-grade primary educational institution established in 1846; Marsova's Gymnasium, a four-grade female gymnasium established in 1854; Melikyants's School, a one-grade primary school established in 1864. The era of the hegemony of Tiflis-based educational institutions in the region ended in 1865, when it became home to three primary schools in Kuban Oblast (the Yekaterinodar, Poltava, and Uman schools). That same year, the region also became home to Grigoryeva's School, a one-grade primary school, in Tiflis.

In 1866, the region became home to its only secondary private educational institution – Monastyrtsev and Ter-Akopov's Gymnasium, a five-grade male gymnasium in Tiflis. Of note is the fact that S.I. Monastyrtsev combined his entrepreneurial activity with teaching Latin at the gymnasium, while his partner, N.Ya. Ter-Akopov, taught Armenian there. Overall, the gymnasium had 34 instructors. As of 1879, the gymnasium had 225 boys, with 128 of those being boarders. Monastyrtsev and Ter-Akopov would go on to open up a real school in Tiflis in 1877.

That same year, 1866, Kutais became home to a one-grade Armenian school, and in 1871 a one-grade Tatar school was established in Shamakhi, with both going on to be the oldest in operation as of 1879.

The region's private educational institutions varied in type, including gymnasia, progymnasia, real schools, primary schools, and grammar schools, with a few exotic types of school also present, including an elementary one-grade school, an Armenian female charity school, a free female school, and a Catholic school.

As evidenced in Table 1, the oldest of the region's private educational institutions that remained in operation in 1879 were those based in Tiflis, which is no wonder as Tiflis was the administrative center of the Caucasus Viceroyalty. As early as 1865, this group began to be joined by educational institutions from other areas, including Kuban Oblast and Kutais Governorate. Despite the fact that the oldest private educational institution was established back in 1846, the majority of the institutions were opened in the last five-year period (1875–1879) – 32 out of the region's 54 educational institutions.

Table 1. Dates of Foundation of Private Educational Institutions in the Caucasus as of 1879

Year founded	Number of educational institutions	Area
1846	1	Tiflis
1854	1	Tiflis
1864	1	Tiflis
1865	4	3 – Kuban Oblast, 1 – Tiflis
1866	2	1 – Tiflis, 1 – Kutais
1868	2	1 – Kutais, 1 – Tiflis
1869	1	Tiflis
1871	1	Shamakhi
1873	4	Kutais, Stavropol, Tiflis
1874	5	Baku, Kuban Oblast, Stavropol, Gori
1875	3	Tiflis, Shusha
1876	9	Kutais, Stavropol, Vladikavkaz, Tiflis
1877	5	Baku, Stavropol, Vladikavkaz, Tiflis
1878	13	Baku, Stavropol, Vladikavkaz, Tiflis
1879	2	Stavropol

Table 2 displays the number of private educational institutions in the Caucasus in the period 1879–1914.

Table 2. Private Educational Institutions within the Caucasus Educational District in the Period 1879–1914 (Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1879, 1880: 25; Otchet, 1885: 283-286; Otchet, 1886: 292-295; Otchet, 1887: 304-307; Otchet, 1890: table 288, 292; Otchet, 1891: table 307, 311; Otchet, 1892: table 309, 313; Otchet, 1893: table 310, 314; Otchet, 1894: table 310, 314; Otchet, 1895: table 310, 314; Otchet, 1896: table 310, 314; Otchet, 1897: table 310, 314; Otchet, 1899: table 294, 298; Otchet, 1900: table 294, 298; Otchet, 1901: table 294, 298; Otchet, 1905: table 294, 298; Otchet, 1908: table 264, 265; Otchet, 1909: table 270; Otchet, 1910: table 271; Otchet, 1911: table 269; Otchet, 1912: table 269; Otchet, 1913: table 236; Otchet, 1914: table 235; Otchet, 1915: table 234)

Year	Number of educational institutions							Total	Number of students		
	Category 1		Category 2		Category 3				Boys	Girls	Total
	m	f	m	f	m	f	mixed				
1879	1		5		78			84	2,133	1,077	3,210
1884	1	-	7	1	30	4	54	97	2,843	687	3,530
1885	1	1	7	-	34	5	48	96	3,035	750	3,785
1886	2	-	6	-	30	4	56	98	2,891	678	3,569
1888	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	104	2,995	818	3,813
1889	3	-	5	8	28	6	53	98	3,024	987	4,011
1890	2	-	4	3	33	4	57	103	2,980	998	3,978
1891	3	-	3	3	38	1	47	95	2,865	873	3,788
1892	3	-	3	3	30	3	47	89	2,828	979	3,807
1893	2	1	3	3	29	3	50	92	3,101	1,174	4,275
1894	3	1	3	2	31	2	52	94	3,303	1,202	4,505
1895	3	1	3	1	35	2	54	99	4,032	1,319	5,351
1896	1	1	6	2	44	12	58	124	4,750	2,104	6,854
1898	1	-	6	5	43	11	70	136	4,971	2,275	7,246
1899	1	-	5	5	43	16	77	147	5,175	2,586	7,761
1900	1	2	8	4	41	17	84	157	5,254	3,011	8,265
1904	1	1	4	7	43	22	63	141	4,975	2,889	7,864
1907	4	3	6	12	23	6	65	119	4,837	2,418	7,255
1908	9		27		106			142	5,894	3,541	9,435

1909	7	33	96	136	4,350	3,187	7,537
1910	8	34	103	145	6,030	3,647	9,677
1911	7	43	98	148	7,163	4,958	12,121
1912	6	40	104	145	5,723	4,090	9,813
1913	7	28	99	134	4,526	4,146	8,672
1914	32	20	83	135	3,560	4,935	8,495

As evidenced in [Table 2](#), the region witnessed an increase of 4.5 times in the number of Category 1 schools in 1914. This was associated with the introduction of six-grade higher primary educational institutions across the Russian Empire and the Caucasus in 1912. In 1914, a mass reaction to this came from private educational institutions, with it being done in part at the expense of Category 2 and Category 3 schools. For instance, Baku Governorate had in operation just one public higher primary institution in 1913, whereas in 1914 it now had as many as five – as a result of the opening of one new and reorganization of three existing public institutions. At the same time, in 1913 the governorate had no private higher primary institutions, whereas in 1914 it now had as many as six ([Otchet, 1915: table 234](#)).

In addition, throughout the lengthy period from 1879 to 1907 the basis of the private education sector in the region was formed by Category 3 primary schools. For instance, in 1879 they accounted for 93 % and in 1907 for 78 %. However, by 1914 the sector had undergone significant changes, with the share of primary schools dropping to 61 % and with priority given now to Category 1 educational institutions.

The private education sector in the Caucasus was characterized at the time by private schools tending to be opened where there was commercial promise in doing so. To be able to compete with ministerial (public) educational institutions, private educational institutions had, apart from watching for opportunities for commercial success, to continuously keep track of the demand for education in society, take account of new trends, and vouch for the quality of the educational process. Consequently, the region's private education sector was characterized by impermanence. Essentially, it acted as a litmus paper for a reading on what was desired by society in the Caucasus. As a consequence, the region witnessed significant fluctuations in terms of the gender composition of its student body. Specifically, whereas in 1884 girls accounted for 19.5 % of the student body, in 1914 the figure now was 58 %. The region's public and private education sectors competed fiercely throughout the prerevolutionary period. The Ministry of Public Education, especially in the early 20th century, was keenly engaged in opening new educational institutions, attracting large numbers of school-age children, with private educational institutions forced in that climate to retool in order to adapt to the realities of the rapidly changing situation in education. That was the only way for the private education sector to keep afloat.

A few words will now be said about the private sector's student body. [Table 3](#) illustrates the religious composition of the student body within the region's private education sector in the period 1884–1909. It is to be noted straightaway that in the period 1905–1914 information on the religious composition of the private sector's student body was published in the Reports on Educational Institutions in the Caucasus Educational District only in 1909. This must have been associated with the sharply increasing number of ministerial educational institutions and the declining role of private education in the region at the time. For instance, in 1884 private educational institutions in the Caucasus accounted for 9.7 % of the total number of educational institutions ([Otchet, 1885: 290](#)), and in 1914 – for just 2.6 % ([Otchet, 1915: 149](#)).

Table 3. Distribution of Students in Private Educational Institutions in the Caucasus by Faith in the Period 1884–1909 (Otchet, 1885: 286-287; Otchet, 1886: 296-297; Otchet, 1887: 310-311; Otchet, 1890: table 293; Otchet, 1891: table 312; Otchet, 1892: table 314; Otchet, 1893: table 315; Otchet, 1894: table 315; Otchet, 1895: table 315; Otchet, 1896: table 315; Otchet, 1897: table 315; Otchet, 1899: table 299; Otchet, 1899: table 299; Otchet, 1901: table 299; Otchet, 1905: table 299; Otchet, 1910: table 272)

Year	Orthodox Christians	Armenian Gregorian Christians	Catholics	Protestants	Jews	Muslims	Other faiths	Total
1884	1,992	1,226	37	132	89	107	47	3,530
1885	1,894	1,393	60	131	84	146	77	3,785
1886	1,811	1,199	63	91	120	151	134	3,569
1889	2,301	1,233	47	94	125	139	72	4,011
1890	2,251	1,087	89	104	148	178	121	3,978
1891	2,022	1,276	59	90	123	107	61	3,788
1892	2,075	1,306	57	50	177	81	52	3,807
1893	2,285	1,332	70	148	156	157	127	4,275
1894	2,471	1,204	72	189	165	176	168	4,505
1895	2,841	1,086	84	191	217	159	223	5,351
1896	3,348	2,514	94	285	216	166	281	6,854
1898	3,756	2,719	124	91	205	201	150	7,246
1899	4,232	2,877	128	67	186	231	40	7,761
1900	4,788	2,632	134	101	244	220	146	8,265
1904	5,269	1,949	200	80	139	148	79	7,864
1909	5,557	1,355	150	141	161	173	-	7,537

As evidenced in [Table 3](#), Orthodox Christians made up the bulk of the private sector’s student body in the region, accounting for 57 % in 1884 and for 74 % in 1909. In the period under review, the figure rose 2.8 times. Orthodox Christians were steadily followed by Armenian Gregorian Christians, who accounted for 35 % in 1884 and for just 18 % in 1909, despite an increase in their number. Armenian Gregorian Christians were followed by Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and Muslims, with only Catholic students posting a sharp increase in number – 4 times.

[Table 4](#) displays the numbers of private educational institutions across the regions of the Caucasus.

Table 4. Numbers of Private Educational Institutions across the Regions of the Caucasus in the Period 1883–1914 (Otchet, 1886: 282-283; Otchet, 1886: 292-293; Otchet, 1887: 304-305; Otchet, 1890: table 288; Otchet, 1891: table 307; Otchet, 1892: table 309; Otchet, 1893: table 310; Otchet, 1894: table 310; Otchet, 1895: table 310; Otchet, 1896: table 310; Otchet, 1897: table 310; Otchet, 1899: table 294; Otchet, 1900: table 294; Otchet, 1901: table 294; Otchet, 1905: table 294; Otchet, 1908: table 265; Otchet, 1909: table 270; Otchet, 1910: table 271; Otchet, 1912: table 269; Otchet, 1913: table 236; Otchet, 1914: table 235; Otchet, 1915: table 234)

Year	Kuban Oblast	Stavropol Governorate	Terek Oblast	Tiflis Governorate	Kutais Governorate	Elizavetpol Governorate	Erivan Governorate	Kars Oblast	Baku Governorate	Dagestan Oblast	Sukhum Sector	Black Sea Governorate	Total
1883	5	9	6	46	7	9	13	-	4	1	N/A	N/A	100
1884	9	11	7	35	9	8	13	-	4	1	N/A	N/A	97
1885	6	11	7	38	8	14	7	-	4	1	N/A	N/A	96
1886	7	15	7	35	7	12	6	-	8	1	N/A	N/A	98
1888	12	13	6	40	7	10	4	-	11	1	N/A	N/A	104
1889	15	6	6	35	7	13	4	1	10	1	N/A	N/A	98
1890	17	11	8	31	7	14	5	-	9	1	N/A	N/A	103
1891	18	7	5	28	9	12	5	-	10	1	N/A	N/A	95
1892	15	8	5	26	10	10	4	-	10	1	N/A	N/A	89
1893	12	7	5	31	10	10	5	-	12	-	N/A	N/A	92
1894	10	6	6	34	11	10	6	-	11	-	N/A	N/A	94
1895	9	7	5	33	14	9	6	-	16	-	N/A	N/A	99
1896	8	8	5	38	16	15	11	-	21	-	N/A	2	125
1897	11	8	6	44	15	15	13	-	25	-	N/A	1	138
1898	8	8	5	43	15	14	9	-	32	-	N/A	2	136
1899	10	7	4	50	16	10	8	1	37	2	N/A	2	147
1900	11	4	6	57	19	9	9	1	37	2	N/A	2	157
1903	10	4	5	54	28	5	12	2	22	1	N/A	2	145
1904	14	5	5	47	29	5	14	1	18	-	N/A	3	141
1906	12	3	7	19	37	2	10	-	8	1	N/A	3	102
1907	14	4	8	26	41	2	12	-	7	1	N/A	4	119
1908	15	5	10	44	36	3	11	-	7	-	N/A	9	142
1909	14	5	13	40	33	2	12	-	7	1	N/A	11	136
1910	12	9	12	41	32	2	11	-	8	-	N/A	8	145
1911	15	9	12	35	37	2	12	1	9	-	N/A	11	148
1912	20	8	12	35	31	2	10	1	8	-	5	18	145
1913	9	8	16	32	26	6	9	1	8	-	6	14	134
1914	15	9	15	37	20	5	6	-	13	-	3	12	135

As evidenced in Table 4, private educational institutions in the Caucasus were distributed unevenly at the time. Some of the areas (Tiflis Governorate, which had the maximum number of educational institutions, 57, in 1900) and Kutais Governorate (which had the maximum number of educational institutions, 41, in 1907), were clear leaders in private education in the region, and some were clear laggards (Kars Oblast and Dagestan Oblast) with an unstable private education sector.

5. Conclusion

The following conclusions were drawn from the insights gained from this study:

1. Private educational institutions in the Caucasus were divided into the following three categories: Category 1 – educational institutions with five grades and up (gymnasia and higher primary educational institutions); Category 2 – educational institutions with three-to-four grades (urban schools and four-grade progymnasia); Category 3 – educational institutions with one-to-two grades (primary schools).

2. To be able to compete with ministerial (public) educational institutions, private educational institutions had to continuously keep track of the demand for education in society, take account of new trends, and vouch for the quality of the educational process. Consequently, the region's private education sector was characterized by impermanence. Essentially, it acted as a litmus paper for a reading on what was desired by society in the Caucasus. The sector was undergoing continuous change, with the number of school grades increasing. The number of primary private educational institutions continuously declined in the region over the prerevolutionary period. In 1879, primary schools accounted for 93 % of all private educational institutions in the region, in 1907 – for 78 %, and in 1914 – for just 61 %.

3. In religious composition, the student body across the region's private educational institutions was dominated throughout the period under review by Orthodox Christians (the figure ranging from 57 to 74 %), followed by Armenian Gregorian Christians (18 to 35 %), with members of other faiths accounting for an insignificant portion of the region's student body.

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