



## Section 4. Specialized branches of pedagogy

DOI:10.29013/EJEAP-26-1-64-68



### THE CONCEPT OF TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONS IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY BUKHARA: A PEDAGOGICAL READING OF MUZAKKIRI AHBAB AND BADOE' UL-VAQOE'

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**Cite:** Nusratov A.N. (2026). *The Concept of Teacher–Student Relations in Sixteenth-Century Bukhara: A Pedagogical Reading of Muzakkiri Ahbab and Badoe' ul-Vaqoe'*. *European Journal of Education and Applied Psychology* 2026, No 1. <https://doi.org/10.29013/EJEAP-26-1-64-68>

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#### Abstract

This article examines the nature of **teacher–student (ustoz–shogird) relationships** and their **pedagogical interpretation** as reflected in two important sixteenth-century sources from the Bukhara Khanate: *Muzakkiri ahbab* by Hasanxoja Nisoriy and *Badoe' ul-vaqoe'* by Zayniddin Mahmud Vosify. Both works provide rich narrative and descriptive material concerning scholars, teachers, students, and intellectual circles of the period, allowing for an in-depth analysis of educational practices and moral guidance within the traditional Islamic learning environment.

The study focuses on how the role of the teacher is portrayed not only as a transmitter of knowledge but also as a moral guide, mentor, and spiritual authority responsible for shaping the intellectual and ethical character of students. Particular attention is given to pedagogical methods such as advice, encouragement, admonition, public correction, and personal example, which are illustrated through real-life events and biographical accounts in the texts. While *Muzakkiri ahbab* emphasizes the continuity of scholarly transmission and the formative influence of teachers on their disciples, *Badoe' ul-vaqoe'* presents concrete pedagogical situations that reveal the dynamics of guidance, discipline, and moral instruction.

The findings suggest that teacher–student relationships in these works represent a well-structured pedagogical model rooted in ethical responsibility, intellectual discipline, and social accountability. The article argues that the educational principles embedded in these sources remain relevant for contemporary pedagogical discourse, particularly in understanding mentorship-based education and value-oriented teaching traditions.

**Keywords:** *Pir–Murshid relations; pedagogical interpretation; educational guidance; moral and ethical education; intellectual transmission; sixteenth-century Bukhara; Muzakkiri Ahbab; Badoe' ul-Vaqoe'*

## Introduction

The study of educational relationships in premodern Central Asia has received increasing scholarly attention, particularly regarding the ethical and spiritual foundations of knowledge transmission. Research on Islamic education emphasizes that learning was not confined to formal instruction but was deeply embedded in moral authority, mentorship, and personal guidance (Makdisi, 1981; Berkey, 1992). Within this framework, the **pir–murshid** relationship emerged as a central model for transmitting intellectual, ethical, and spiritual values.

Scholars note that the sixteenth century, especially under the Bukhara Khanate, marked a formative period in which madrasas, Sufi institutions, and scholarly networks operated as interconnected educational spaces (DeWeese, 2016; Gross & Urunbaev, 2002). Educational practices of this period cannot be adequately understood through modern teacher–student categories alone; instead, they must be examined through indigenous relational models that combined instruction with moral supervision and spiritual mentorship. The **pir–murshid** paradigm represents one such model, integrating guidance, discipline, and ethical cultivation.

Studies of premodern Islamic societies highlight that educational authority was grounded not only in scholarly expertise but also in personal conduct and moral credibility (Berkey, 1992). This principle is particularly relevant for understanding educational dynamics in sixteenth-century Bukhara, where intellectual legitimacy was inseparable from ethical responsibility. Recent historiography further demonstrates that **pir–murshid** relations extended beyond purely mystical instruction and functioned as a broader pedagogical framework shaping intellectual discipline and social behavior (De Weese, 2016).

From a pedagogical perspective, this model aligns with contemporary theories that emphasize the importance of formative relationships in learning processes, including mentorship, learning through example, and moral reinforcement (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Historical evidence from Central Asia suggests that these principles were already firmly established by the sixteenth century, embedded in cultural and religious norms

that prioritized ethical self-cultivation alongside intellectual achievement.

Scholars analyzing classical Persian and Turkic narrative sources have shown that educational ideals were often conveyed through biographical anecdotes and moralized events rather than abstract theory, allowing values such as humility, perseverance, and respect for authority to be internalized through concrete examples (Subtelny, 2007). Within this context, the present article examines *Muzakkiri Ahbob* and *Badoe’ul-Vaqoe’* as representative texts reflecting broader educational practices in sixteenth-century Bukhara.

Accordingly, this study explores how **pir–murshid** relations functioned as a pedagogical model by focusing on relational dynamics such as guidance, moral correction, encouragement, and exemplary behavior. By situating these historical practices within contemporary pedagogical discourse, the article seeks to demonstrate the continuing relevance of mentorship-based and value-oriented education.

### **Pir–Murshid Relations in *Muzakkiri Ahbob*: A Pedagogical Interpretation**

*Muzakkiri Ahbob* by Hasanxoja Nisoriy offers rich empirical material for examining **pir–murshid** relations through concrete examples drawn from the intellectual life of sixteenth-century Bukhara. The work catalogues scholars from diverse fields – education, medicine, rhetoric, music, and calligraphy – whose authority is consistently framed through professional mastery and moral credibility rather than literary fame alone (Nisoriy, 1993).

A recurring pattern in the text is that individuals mentioned, despite their interest in poetry, are primarily recognized for excellence in their respective disciplines. This emphasis suggests a pedagogical hierarchy in which knowledge, skill, and ethical standing formed the basis of scholarly authority. Within such a framework, the **murshid** emerges as a figure whose legitimacy rests on competence and exemplary conduct.

The figure of the physician Mavlon Abul Hakim illustrates this model clearly. He is described as having mastered medical sciences and achieved recognition for his diagnostic abilities, while also possessing knowledge

in multiple fields. His affiliation with a lineage of shaykhs further reinforces his moral authority, indicating that pedagogical leadership combined intellectual expertise with ethical guidance (Nisoriy, 1993, p. 231).

Pir–murshid relations are particularly evident in the portrayal of Kamoliddin Ibrohim Shirvoni, presented as an authoritative mudarris whose long teaching career in Bukhara madrasas resulted in the formation of students who attained the rank of *mavlon*. This outcome reflects a pedagogical process aimed not merely at instruction but at shaping scholarly identity and professional continuity (Nisoriy, 1993, p. 74).

The pedagogical role of rhetorical skill is demonstrated through the example of Mavlon Qobuliy Bukhari. His reputation as an eloquent speaker and his influence across regions highlight public discourse as a means of moral and educational transmission. Such accounts show that persuasion and speech functioned as integral tools within the pir–murshid pedagogical repertoire (Nisoriy, 1993, p. 82).

Artistic disciplines are similarly framed within this pedagogical model. Shaykh Bayazid Puroini's mastery of calligraphy, particularly his ability to write in seven scripts and his contribution to the Jome' Mosque of Bukhara, exemplifies how professional excellence in the arts constituted pedagogical authority and served as a model for disciples (Nisoriy, 1993, p. 92).

The case of Mirzo Sabriy further extends the pir–murshid framework into the realm of music. Described as a musician, theorist, and inventor, he is portrayed as transmitting both technical knowledge and aesthetic sensibility to students. Music is thus presented as a discipline with pedagogical and ethical dimensions, capable of contributing to spiritual refinement and emotional balance (Nisoriy, 1993, p. 247).

Taken together, these examples demonstrate that *Muzakkiri Ahbob* conceptualizes pir–murshid relations as a multifaceted pedagogical system grounded in discipline-specific mastery, ethical authority, and personal example. Education is depicted as inseparable from moral cultivation and professional responsibility, reflecting the advanced level of pedagogical thought present

in the Bukhara Khanate during the sixteenth century.

### **Pir–Murshid Relations in *Badoe' ul-Vaqoe'*: A Pedagogical Interpretation**

*Badoe' ul-Vaqoe'* by Zayniddin Vosify provides a practice-oriented perspective on pir–murshid relations by embedding pedagogical ideas within concrete social and historical events. Unlike biographical tazkiras, the work conveys educational principles through lived experiences, allowing insight into how moral guidance and disciplinary authority were exercised in everyday contexts (Vosify, 1979).

Vosify's accounts of literary gatherings and scholarly assemblies in Samarkand reveal these spaces as informal pedagogical environments where ethical norms were transmitted through dialogue, poetry, and public interaction. In such settings, the pir–murshid relationship was enacted through speech, example, and moral judgment rather than formal instruction (Vosify, 1979, P. 19–20).

A notable episode concerns the improper conduct of certain students motivated by arrogance and envy during a poetry gathering. Vosify responds not with direct reprimand but with refined language, poetic allusion, and an instructive anecdote. The students' resulting public embarrassment serves as moral correction without coercion, illustrating a pedagogical strategy based on persuasion and intellectual authority (Vosify, 1979, P. 19–20).

The pedagogical role of the murshid is further exemplified in the relationship between Mir Arab and Ubaydullaxon. Faced with political and emotional uncertainty, the disciple is reassured through Qur'anic references and historical precedent, emphasizing perseverance and confidence despite adversity. Here, the murshid functions as a source of strategic counsel and moral reinforcement, guiding the disciple toward resilience and decisive action (Vosify, 1979, p. 39).

Another significant episode highlights the ethical responsibilities of pedagogical authority. During an exceptionally harsh winter, impoverished students in Samarkand face severe hardship. Vosify intervenes by appealing to the ruler on their behalf, securing material assistance and ensuring their

survival. This act underscores compassion, social responsibility, and active care as integral components of pir–murshid relations (Vosify, 1979, p. 28).

Throughout *Badoe' ul-Vaqoe'*, educational values such as the primacy of knowledge over wealth, the destructive effects of envy, and the necessity of diligence and moral discipline are consistently conveyed through narrative episodes rather than abstract exposition. This narrative mode reinforces the effectiveness of experiential learning and moral internalization (Vosify, 1979, P. 22–23).

Taken together, *Badoe' ul-Vaqoe'* portrays pir–murshid relations as a dynamic and situational pedagogical model grounded in ethical guidance, social engagement, and personal responsibility. Education is presented as a relational process that integrates intellectual formation with moral discipline and communal care, reflecting the practical dimensions of mentorship-based pedagogy in sixteenth-century Bukhara.

### Conclusion

This study has explored pir–murshid relations as a pedagogical model in sixteenth-century Bukhara through an analysis of *Muzakkiri Ahbob* by Hasanxoja Nisoriy and *Badoe' ul-Vaqoe'* by Zayniddin Vosify. Despite differences in genre and narrative form, both works present education as a relational process in which intellectual development is inseparably linked to moral formation.

A comparative reading shows that *Muzakkiri Ahbob* foregrounds pedagogical continuity and stability through biographi-

cal portrayals of scholars whose authority is reflected in the intellectual and ethical success of their disciples. By contrast, *Badoe' ul-Vaqoe'* conveys the same principles through lived experiences, emphasizing moral testing, guidance, and social responsibility. Together, the texts reveal pir–murshid relations as both a normative educational ideal and a practical means of addressing real social and personal challenges.

The analysis confirms that pir–murshid relations functioned as a comprehensive pedagogical framework extending beyond spiritual mentorship to include knowledge transmission, ethical discipline, and concern for students' material and emotional well-being. The murshid appears as a multidimensional figure – teacher, moral exemplar, advisor, and protector – whose authority derived from personal conduct and responsibility rather than formal institutional power. These findings challenge modern educational paradigms that separate cognitive learning from moral education. The integration of intellectual training with ethical guidance evident in sixteenth-century Bukhara reflects a holistic understanding of education that remains relevant to contemporary discussions of mentorship-based and value-oriented pedagogy.

Overall, *Muzakkiri Ahbob* and *Badoe' ul-Vaqoe'* testify to the sophistication of pedagogical thought in the Bukhara Khanate and underscore education as a fundamentally human, moral, and relational endeavor – an insight that continues to inform modern educational theory and practice.

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submitted 29.01.2026;  
accepted for publication 11.02.2026;  
published 31.03.2026  
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