

Pedagogical Empathy in The Heritage of Medieval Eastern Thinkers: Sources, Ideas and Modern Interpretation

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Abstract: This article analyzes the pedagogical views of medieval Eastern thinkers from the perspective of the concept of pedagogical empathy. The study examines the educational ideas reflected in the works of prominent representatives of Eastern intellectual tradition such as Abu Rayhon Beruniy, Abu Ali ibn Sino, Alisher Navoiy and Abu Nasr al-Farobiy. Their works addressing education, moral upbringing, and teacher–student relationships serve as the primary sources of analysis. The study reveals that these thinkers emphasized important components of pedagogical empathy, including understanding the learner's personality, recognizing the psychological state of students, applying an individual approach in the educational process, and fostering moral development.

The article also provides a comparative analysis of historical-philosophical pedagogical ideas and modern pedagogical theories, highlighting their relevance and potential application in contemporary educational practice. The findings demonstrate that the intellectual heritage of eastern scholars already contained humanistic educational principles in the medieval period, including empathy, respect for the student's individuality, and a learner-centered approach to teaching.

Keywords: Pedagogical empathy, eastern pedagogical thought, teacher–student relationships, individual approach, moral education.

Introduction: In modern pedagogy, empathy is recognized as an integral part of a teacher's professional competence. However, this concept is not solely a product of 20th-century psychology. The works of Eastern thinkers emphasize that the educational process should be carried out through understanding the human heart, comprehending the student's state, and applying an appropriate approach. These aspects constitute the historical roots of pedagogical empathy.

METHODOLOGY

The study interpreted the philosophical, ethical, and pedagogical works of the thinkers in relation to the concept of empathy. The following methods were employed:

- historical-source analysis;
- content analysis of texts;
- comparative-pedagogical approach;

- interpretive analysis.

The expression of pedagogical empathy in the heritage of eastern thinkers

Abu Rayhan Beruni: respect for knowledge and understanding the student's intellect

Abu Rayhan Beruni, one of the great thinkers in the history of eastern science, paid great attention to the development of knowledge, its transmission from generation to generation, and the improvement of the educational process. His works highlight ideas of pedagogical empathy, i.e., the teacher's understanding of the student's thoughts, conveying knowledge in an understandable way, and fostering a culture of scientific communication.

In Beruni's teachings, the relationship between teacher and student is interpreted as a decisive factor in the development of science. According to him, a true teacher should be not only a knowledge provider but also a guide directing the student towards scientific inquiry. These ideas are particularly evident in his work "The Book of Instruction in the Elements of the Art of Astrology" ("Kitab al-Tafhim li Awa'il Sina'at al-Tanjim"). This work is written in a question-and-answer style, where the process of teaching science is organized in the form of a dialogue. This demonstrates the importance of considering the student's thoughts, questions, and interests in the educational process.

According to Beruni, the teacher must convey knowledge to the student in a clear and simple language. Explaining complex scientific issues step by step, illustrating them with examples, and developing the student's thinking ability are considered the main principles of education. This aligns with the concepts of "learner-centered education" and "pedagogical empathy" in modern pedagogy. Pedagogical idea: knowledge develops through the teacher's explanatory skill and the student's interest.

Furthermore, in the encyclopedic work on astronomy and mathematics, "The Mas'udic Canon" ("Al-Qanun al-Mas'udi"), the scholar emphasizes the importance of the legacy of teachers and scholars in ensuring the continuity of knowledge. Beruni argues that every scholar should study the scientific results of their predecessors, develop them, and pass them on to the next generation. This process is the main form of scientific succession, realized through the teacher-

student tradition. Pedagogical Idea: Knowledge is transmitted as a heritage from teacher to student.

In his work "Indica" ("Tahqiq ma li-l-Hind"), Beruni analyzes the educational traditions of various peoples. It notes the importance of communication, questions and answers, and relationships based on mutual respect in teaching science. According to the scholar, a true teacher must understand the student's abilities and help develop their scientific potential.

In his works "Chronology of Ancient Nations" (or "The Remaining Signs of Past Centuries") and "India," Abu Rayhan Beruni criticizes haste and coercion in imparting knowledge. He puts forward the following idea: "The one who imparts knowledge must first know the level of intellect and the power of perception of the listener; otherwise, knowledge will not be beneficial but will become a burden." This thought represents the cognitive component of pedagogical empathy. For Beruni, the teacher is a person who senses the student's thinking capabilities and chooses a scientific method appropriate for them.

In conclusion, the teacher-student relationship in Abu Rayhan Beruni's works is based on the following main principles:

- conveying knowledge in an understandable and consistent manner;
- treating the student's thoughts and questions with respect;
- developing a culture of scientific communication and debate;
- the continuous transmission of knowledge from generation to generation.

These ideas align with the concept of pedagogical empathy in modern pedagogy and serve as an important theoretical foundation for the contemporary education system based on the heritage of eastern thinkers.

Abu Ali ibn Sina's teachings on empathetic relationship between teacher and student

In the history of eastern pedagogical thought, the issue of teacher-student relationships holds an important place. This issue is particularly illuminated with deep philosophical and pedagogical content in the legacy of the great thinker and encyclopedist Abu Ali ibn Sina. His works interpret the educational process not only as

imparting knowledge but also as a moral and spiritual process ensuring personal development. Viewed from the perspective of modern pedagogy, Ibn Sina's views are distinguished by their proximity to the principles of pedagogical empathy.

In the thinker's work "The Book of Healing" ("Kitab ash-Shifa"), he reflects on the stages of the cognitive process and the development of human thought. According to him, the teacher must consider the student's intellectual capabilities, knowledge level, and interests during the educational process. This approach requires the teacher to understand the student's psychology and individual characteristics. This situation is one of the important aspects of pedagogical empathy. According to Ibn Sina, the teacher is not only a person who imparts knowledge but also a spiritual and moral example for the student. This idea is also reflected in the thinker's work "The Book of Knowledge" ("Danishnama"). The work particularly emphasizes the teacher's gentleness, patience, and kindness towards the student.

Ibn Sina acknowledges that the teacher must deeply understand the student's nature and abilities and organize the educational process accordingly.

Additionally, the work "The Book of Salvation" ("Kitab al-najat") discusses issues of human perfection and moral education. Here, it is noted that the teacher's task is to develop not only the student's knowledge but also their spiritual world. This approach shows the necessity of understanding and supporting the student's psychological state during the educational process.

Important ideas concerning teacher-student traditions are also found in Ibn Sina's famous medical encyclopedia, "The Canon of Medicine" ("Al-qanun fi al-tibb"). The thinker emphasizes that in the process of training a physician, the teacher should impart knowledge through practical experience and educate the student in the spirit of humanity and compassion. Through this process, the student develops not only professional competence but also an empathetic attitude.

As noted above, issues of education and upbringing hold a special place in Abu Ali ibn Sina's "The Book of Knowledge" and "The Canon of Medicine." He writes: "A child's heart is like soft wax; whatever shape is given to it, it hardens in that shape." This sentence reveals the affective (emotional) aspect of pedagogical empathy.

Ibn Sina considers the child's psychological state, fatigue, interest, and age-appropriateness as essential conditions for imparting knowledge. The teacher's task is to understand the student and protect them from psychological stress.

Thus, in Abu Ali ibn Sina's views on education, he emphasizes that the relationship between teacher and student must be based on humanity, affection, and mutual understanding. These ideas align with the principles of pedagogical empathy in modern pedagogical theory. The thinker's legacy shows that an effective educational process must be organized based on the teacher's understanding of the student's psychology, consideration of their individual characteristics, and reliance on spiritual support.

Alisher Navoi: moral-spiritual empathy and education based on compassion

In the works of the great thinker and poet Alisher Navoi, spirituality, morality, and the education of the perfect human being hold a central place. Hazrat Navoi connects pedagogical empathy with moral perfection. In his work "Beloved of Hearts" ("Mahbub ul-qulub"), he writes about the teacher:

"If the teacher does not find a way to the student's heart, his words will not reach their soul." This thought expresses the communicative and ethical facets of empathy. Navoi considers education a process that affects not only the mind but also the heart. The teacher's compassionate attitude towards the student is interpreted as a primary factor in the effectiveness of knowledge.

Especially, Alisher Navoi's famous epic (one of the great epics of the 15th century) "Hayrat ul-abror" ("The Astonishment of the Righteous") is a beautiful example of didactic literature. This work, the first epic of the "Khamasa" ("Quintuple"), is of great importance not only as an artistic monument but also as a profound pedagogical and educational source. The work illuminates human spiritual perfection, moral maturity, the importance of knowledge and enlightenment, as well as the mentor-disciple relationship, both directly and indirectly, through symbolic images, maxims, and parables. The didactic nature of the work lies in its encouragement of the reader to think, draw conclusions, and work on oneself. In Navoi's view, true education is the process of purifying the human heart,

harmonizing knowledge with morality, and leading the individual towards perfection.

The image of the mentor and their role is manifested symbolically in the work. Figures such as a highly pious person, a just king, a spiritual guide (pir) and sheikh, or a wise father serve as mentors.

The main tasks of the mentor are defined by the following indicators: conveying knowledge and wisdom; leading the student towards moral perfection; instilling virtues such as patience, justice, and generosity; and assisting in correctly charting their life path.

The mentor is not only a provider of knowledge but also a spiritual guide. They protect the student from ego (nafs), pride, arrogance, and ignorance, and guide them towards enlightenment. Navoi considers boastful, ambitious, prone to violence, rude, and malicious individuals unworthy of the status of a teacher (mudarris or mu'allim). In the epic, the student is interpreted not merely as a listener but as an active participant in the process of spiritual growth.

The main goal of the mentor-disciple relationship in the work is to educate the perfect human being. A perfect person must be knowledgeable; moral; just; faithful; and a beneficial individual to society. The mentor educates the student based on these qualities. The unity of knowledge and morality is the central idea of the epic. Just as morality without knowledge is insufficient, knowledge without morality does not lead a person to heights.

The epic "Hayrat ul-abror" illuminates the mentor-disciple relationship on a deep philosophical and didactic basis. The mentor is a spiritual leader and guide, and the disciple is an individual striving towards perfection. The main goal of this relationship is to form a perfect human being and establish an enlightened society. In the epic, the image of the mentor is presented through various symbols: the wise person – the possessor of wisdom; the righteous person – the embodiment of spiritual purity; the just king – the mentor of society; the father – the source of family upbringing. Through these images, Navoi interprets mentorship in a broad sense: a mentor is a guide in any field.

Even in the 21st century, the work "Hayrat ul-abror" holds significant importance in the education and upbringing system. The mentor-disciple relationship

within it aligns with modern pedagogy, i.e., the teacher serving as a personal example; the student's active learning; and prioritizing spiritual values in education and upbringing. The work remains an invaluable educational resource for raising the young generation as well-rounded individuals.

Philosophical and theoretical foundations of pedagogical empathy ideas in Al-Farabi's legacy

Abu Nasr Al-Farabi holds a special place in the development of eastern pedagogical thought. In the scholar's scientific-philosophical heritage, issues of education and upbringing are interpreted in close connection with the spiritual perfection of society. Although the term "pedagogical empathy" does not appear as a modern scientific term in al-Farabi's works, his views on teacher-student relationships reveal the ethical, psychological, and didactic essence of this concept. Al-Farabi evaluates the educational process as the path for an individual to achieve intellectual and spiritual maturity, emphasizing the teacher's responsibility. Specifically, in his work "The Virtuous City" ("Fozil odamlar shahri"), the educator is depicted not only as a source of knowledge but also as a mentor capable of deeply understanding the student's psyche. According to the thinker, a teacher cannot implement effective education without considering the student's natural abilities, psychological state, and level of perception. This approach fully corresponds to the principle of individual psychological sensitivity, an important marker of pedagogical empathy.

In his work "On Attaining Happiness" ("Baxt-saodatga erishuv haqida"), al-Farabi substantiates that the main goal of education is to bring the student to perfection not through coercion, but through persuasion, explanation, and psychological support. Here, the necessity for the teacher to be patient, kind, and just towards the student is emphasized.

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Furthermore, in his work "The Classification of Sciences" ("Ilmlarning tasnifi"), it is noted that the process of teaching knowledge should be organized step by step, in accordance with the student's cognitive abilities. According to al-Farabi, presenting complex scientific concepts to a student who is not ready for them harms their intellectual development. This signifies the didactic aspect of empathy, i.e., the need to adapt the educational content to the student's level of receptivity.

In his "Treatise on the Intellect" ("Aql haqida risola"), the thinker emphasizes that the development of the intellect is directly related to external influences and personal experience. The teacher must choose appropriate methods and tools based on a deep understanding of the stages of the student's intellectual maturation. These views define the cognitive foundations of pedagogical empathy. Overall, in Abu Nasr al-Farabi's pedagogical views, teacher-student relationships are interpreted based on the principles of humanism, understanding, and responsibility. Today, these ideas can be scientifically reinterpreted as one of the theoretical sources of the concept of pedagogical empathy.

The harmony of eastern heritage and modern pedagogical empathy

Modern pedagogy evaluates empathy as a complex competence consisting of cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. The views of medieval eastern thinkers encompass all of these components. This allows for the reinterpretation of their legacy as a methodological resource for today's education system. The heritage of eastern thinkers, without losing its relevance, continues to serve as a solid foundation for spiritual upbringing and education.

CONCLUSION

Medieval eastern thinkers shaped the idea of pedagogical empathy not as a theoretical concept, but as a practical-moral principle. Beruni advanced respect for knowledge and an individual approach; Ibn Sina emphasized considering the psychological state; Navoi championed compassion and moral sensitivity; and al-Farabi advocated for understandable and logical education. These views constitute the historical-philosophical foundation of the modern concept of pedagogical empathy. These scholarly perspectives can serve as an important methodological basis for forming

effective pedagogical relationships between teacher and student in the contemporary education system.

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