



FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PEDAGOGICAL VIEWS IN UZBEK FOLK EPICS

Boboqulova Aziza Adizovna

Doctoral student at Bukhara State Pedagogical institute, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the formation and development of pedagogical views in Uzbek folk epics. Uzbek dastans occupy a significant place in the national oral heritage and have long served not only as artistic narratives, but also as a powerful medium for transmitting social norms, ethical ideals, and educational values from one generation to another. Official cultural sources in Uzbekistan describe dastans as orally transmitted heritage, while the archive of the Institute of Uzbek Language, Literature and Folklore notes the central place of monumental epics such as Alpomish, Go'ro'g'li, Rustamkhan, and Kuntugmish in the artistic memory of the people. The purpose of this study is to reveal how pedagogical ideas were formed and developed in Uzbek folk epics and to explain their educational significance in the context of national culture. The study is based on theoretical analysis, comparative interpretation, and synthesis of folklore, pedagogical, and cultural materials. The findings show that Uzbek folk epics preserve a consistent system of pedagogical views centered on bravery, loyalty, respect for elders, justice, family responsibility, moral endurance, and devotion to the homeland. The article argues that these views evolved together with the social experience of the people and gradually formed a folk pedagogical model embodied in heroic images, family relations, and moral trials. It is concluded that Uzbek folk epics should be regarded as an important source for understanding the historical development of national pedagogical thought.

KEYWORDS: Uzbek folk epics, pedagogical views, folk pedagogy, national values, moral education, Alpomish, oral heritage, upbringing, folklore, spiritual culture.

INTRODUCTION

Uzbek folk epics constitute one of the richest layers of the nation's oral heritage. They preserve historical memory, heroic ideals, social values, and collective moral experience. According to the official national heritage portal of Uzbekistan, dastans are among the brightest examples of intangible cultural heritage and are traditionally mastered, performed, and transmitted orally. The Institute of Uzbek Language, Literature and Folklore of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan also emphasizes that the Uzbek folk archive contains rare epic monuments, including Alpamish, Gorogly, Rustamkhan, and Kuntugmysh, which embody the centuries-old artistic thinking of the people.

Such texts are important not only for folklore studies, but also for the history of pedagogy. Folk epics served for centuries as an informal school of moral formation. Through heroic plots, family relations, conflict, duty, and sacrifice, they taught listeners how to understand courage, justice, faithfulness, and honor. In this sense, epics fulfilled an educational function long before modern pedagogical theory appeared in written form. The relevance of the topic is therefore

connected with the need to interpret Uzbek epics as a historical source of pedagogical consciousness and not merely as literary or performative heritage.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the formation and development of pedagogical views in Uzbek folk epics and to show how these views were embodied in epic imagery, moral ideals, and models of upbringing.

The study is based on qualitative theoretical methodology. It employs analysis, synthesis, interpretation, and comparison. Materials on Uzbek intangible cultural heritage, folklore studies, and folk pedagogy were examined together with scholarly observations on the educational significance of epic tradition. The methodological approach combines folklore studies with pedagogical interpretation. This makes it possible to view the epic not only as a verbal artifact, but also as a carrier of educational meaning.

The analysis focused on three dimensions. The first was the value content of epics, especially their moral and educational messages. The second was the representation of pedagogical relations, such as family upbringing, social responsibility, and the transmission of collective norms. The third was the historical development of these views, that is, how pedagogical meanings became stable within epic tradition as part of national cultural memory.

The analysis shows that pedagogical views in Uzbek folk epics were formed on the basis of collective life experience and gradually developed into a stable system of folk educational ideals. These ideals are not presented in abstract theoretical form. They are embodied in the conduct of heroes, in the words of elders, in family expectations, and in the moral consequences of human actions.

One of the earliest and most stable pedagogical layers in Uzbek epics is the idea of forming a courageous and morally steadfast person. In heroic epics, bravery is never presented as physical strength alone. It is linked with loyalty, endurance, responsibility, and devotion to one's people. This gives epic heroism a clearly pedagogical character. The young listener is taught not simply to admire the hero, but to recognize which qualities make heroism socially valuable.

A particularly important role belongs to family-based education. In Uzbek epic tradition, the family is not merely a domestic space; it is the first environment of moral formation. Respect for parents, obedience to elders, fidelity between spouses, and care for kin are presented as necessary conditions of social harmony. This indicates that the pedagogical views reflected in the epics developed through the everyday ethical culture of the people. The moral authority of the family appears as one of the foundations of folk pedagogy.

Another significant result is that Uzbek epics express a strong pedagogical connection between personal conduct and collective responsibility. The hero is usually judged not only by private feelings, but by service to the community, protection of honor, and loyalty to the homeland. This aspect is especially visible in the cultural treatment of Alpomish, which continues to be recognized in Uzbekistan as a major epic of national memory and spiritual heritage. UNESCO's materials on Uzbekistan list Alpamys Batyr / Alpamysh / Alpomish among the recognized elements associated with the region's intangible heritage framework, while Uzbek cultural institutions continue to present monumental epics as pearls of collective heritage. This cultural status confirms that the epic tradition has long been valued not only for artistic reasons, but also for its role in preserving ideals of courage, dignity, and social continuity.

The results further show that pedagogical views in Uzbek epics developed from simple ethical prescriptions into broader educational models. At first glance, many epic situations seem to revolve around conflict and adventure. Yet beneath this narrative surface lies a consistent pedagogical structure: the young person is tested, instructed by experience, confronted with moral choice, and finally judged according to justice and honor. This means that the epic hero's path also functions as a model of upbringing. The listener follows not just an external plot, but an inner moral progression.

The development of pedagogical views in the epics is also connected with the institution of oral transmission itself. Since dastans were performed and inherited orally, each generation received them not as dead texts, but as living moral narratives. The national heritage portal notes precisely this oral mastery and inheritance as a defining feature of dastans. Because of that, pedagogical meanings remained active and socially adaptable. The epic tradition was able to preserve old values while reinterpreting them for new listeners.

The findings confirm that Uzbek folk epics should be studied as an important source of folk pedagogy. Their educational content is not accidental. It reflects a historically formed worldview in which moral upbringing, social responsibility, and personal honor are inseparable. The pedagogical significance of epics lies in the fact that they unite emotional impact with normative meaning. A child or young listener does not receive instruction in dry formulae, but through memorable characters, dramatic situations, and vivid moral contrasts.

This helps explain why epics retained educational authority for centuries. In traditional society, they fulfilled the function of spiritual and ethical orientation. Through them, the people preserved ideals of bravery, justice, respect, endurance, and love for the homeland. From a pedagogical point of view, this means that the epic tradition was one of the main informal mechanisms of value transmission.

At the same time, the development of pedagogical views in Uzbek epics was not static. As social life changed, the same epic plots could be heard with new emphases. Heroism could be interpreted more strongly through patriotism, family loyalty through social stability, and justice through collective identity. This dynamic character shows that folk pedagogy in the epic tradition was historically evolving rather than fixed once and for all.

The study demonstrates that the formation and development of pedagogical views in Uzbek folk epics was a long historical process rooted in collective moral experience and oral cultural transmission. Uzbek dastans emerged not only as works of verbal art, but also as a living pedagogical system that taught bravery, justice, loyalty, family responsibility, and devotion to the homeland.

The analysis has shown that these pedagogical views were embodied in heroic images, family relations, moral trials, and oral performance traditions. For this reason, Uzbek folk epics should be regarded as an important source for understanding the historical development of national pedagogical thought. Their study remains relevant today because they preserve educational values that continue to shape cultural identity and moral upbringing in modern society.

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