

TEACHING METHODOLOGY AND CLASSIFICATION OF SCIENCES IN THE MADRASAHS OF THE BUKHARA EMIRATE**Sa'dullayev Umidjon****Mustaqimova Muqaddas Homid qizi**

Master's student of Asia International University

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20428768>**ABSTRACT**

This article examines the teaching methodology and classification of sciences in the madrasahs of the Bukhara Emirate, focusing on the educational traditions that developed in Bukhara as one of the major centers of Islamic civilization and intellectual culture in Central Asia. The study analyzes the historical foundations of the madrasa system, the pedagogical approaches employed by mudarris scholars, the structure of educational organization, and the categorization of religious and secular sciences taught in the madrasahs. The article also evaluates the relationship between educational methodology and the social, cultural, and political environment of the emirate. Particular attention is devoted to the methods of memorization, commentary, debate, repetition, and independent reading that formed the basis of the educational process. The study highlights the role of Arabic grammar, logic, jurisprudence, philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, literature, and ethics within the curriculum of Bukhara madrasahs and explains how these sciences were hierarchically classified according to Islamic scholarly traditions. The article further discusses the strengths and limitations of the traditional educational system and its influence on intellectual life in Central Asia. The research is based on Uzbek historical and pedagogical literature, archival materials, and scholarly studies dedicated to the educational history of the Bukhara Emirate.

KEYWORDS

Bukhara Emirate, madrasa, teaching methodology, classification of sciences, mudarris, Islamic education, traditional pedagogy, Central Asia, educational history, religious sciences, secular sciences, logic, jurisprudence, philosophy, Arabic grammar, astronomy, mathematics, educational culture, waqf, scholarly tradition.

INTRODUCTION

The Bukhara Emirate occupied a significant place in the cultural and intellectual history of Central Asia and the broader Islamic world. For centuries Bukhara was recognized as one of the principal centers of scholarship, religious learning, and scientific activity. Madrasahs functioning within the emirate played an important role not only in preserving Islamic traditions but also in transmitting scientific knowledge, moral values, literary culture, and administrative competencies to new generations. The educational system that emerged in Bukhara represented the continuation of medieval Islamic scholarly traditions while simultaneously reflecting local social and political realities. The prestige of Bukhara as a center of learning attracted students from different regions of Central Asia, Afghanistan, Persia, and other Muslim territories. Historical sources and scholarly studies describe Bukhara as a city of scholars, libraries, mosques, and madrasahs where education was considered one of the most respected social activities.

The educational system of the Bukhara Emirate developed under the influence of Islamic civilization, Hanafi jurisprudence, Persian-Turkic literary traditions, and the intellectual heritage of prominent scholars such as Abu Ali ibn Sina, Imam al-Bukhari, Abu Mansur al-Maturidi, Burhanuddin al-Marginani, and Mirzo Ulugbek. The madrasa

system represented the highest stage of traditional education and served as an institution for training judges, teachers, religious leaders, secretaries, and intellectuals. Education in the madrasahs was based on a combination of religious instruction and rational sciences. The curriculum reflected a classification of sciences inherited from classical Islamic scholarship in which knowledge was divided into transmitted sciences and rational sciences. This distinction shaped both the organization of education and the methods of teaching used in madrasahs.

The pedagogical methodology of Bukhara madrasahs was founded on oral instruction, textual analysis, memorization, commentary writing, debate, and teacher-student interaction. The authority of the mudarris occupied a central place within the educational process because the teacher was regarded not only as a transmitter of information but also as a moral guide and intellectual mentor. Educational traditions were closely connected with ethical norms, discipline, and spiritual upbringing. Students spent many years mastering grammatical rules, theological concepts, legal principles, and logical reasoning through intensive study of classical texts. The educational environment encouraged respect for scholarship and preservation of intellectual continuity.

The classification of sciences in the Bukhara Emirate reflected broader Islamic intellectual traditions established during the medieval period. Religious sciences such as tafsir, hadith, fiqh, aqidah, and tajwid occupied the highest position within the curriculum because they were directly related to Islamic law and spiritual guidance. Alongside these disciplines, rational sciences including logic, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, philosophy, rhetoric, literature, and geometry were also taught in varying degrees depending on the period and the orientation of individual madrasahs. The balance between religious and secular sciences changed over time, particularly during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when conservative tendencies reduced the attention devoted to natural sciences and practical disciplines. Nevertheless, the educational traditions of the Bukhara Emirate preserved important elements of scientific culture and intellectual heritage that influenced subsequent educational reforms in Central Asia.

MAIN PART

The madrasah system of the Bukhara Emirate represented a complex educational institution that combined religious, intellectual, and social functions. Madrasahs were usually established through waqf endowments which provided financial support for teachers, students, libraries, building maintenance, and daily operations. Wealthy rulers, officials, merchants, and religious figures financed the construction and maintenance of educational institutions because supporting knowledge and scholarship was regarded as a virtuous act within Islamic society. The architectural structure of madrasahs included classrooms, student rooms known as hujras, libraries, courtyards, and mosques. These institutions became important centers of urban culture and scholarly communication where students and scholars exchanged ideas and participated in intellectual discussions.

The organization of education in Bukhara madrasahs reflected hierarchical traditions inherited from earlier Islamic educational systems. Students generally progressed through different stages of learning beginning with elementary literacy and memorization of the Qur'an in maktabas before entering higher studies in madrasahs. Admission to advanced studies required knowledge of Arabic grammar and basic religious principles. The duration of education varied according to the intellectual abilities and social circumstances of students. Some students remained in madrasahs for more than ten years in order to complete advanced studies in jurisprudence, theology, and logic. Educational achievement was measured not through standardized examinations but through mastery of texts and recognition by respected teachers. A

student who completed his studies received permission or sanad from a mudarris confirming his scholarly competence and allowing him to teach or occupy religious positions within society¹.

Teaching methodology in the madrasahs of the Bukhara Emirate was primarily text-centered. Classical books written by authoritative scholars formed the basis of instruction, and students devoted considerable time to reading, memorizing, interpreting, and discussing these texts. The method of rote memorization occupied a central place within the educational process because accurate preservation of knowledge was considered essential for intellectual discipline. Students memorized grammatical rules, legal definitions, theological concepts, and poetic compositions in Arabic and Persian. Memorization was not viewed merely as mechanical repetition but as a necessary foundation for higher analytical thinking. Through memorization students developed linguistic competence and familiarity with scholarly terminology that later enabled them to participate in advanced discussions and debates.

Another important teaching methodology involved commentary and super-commentary traditions known as sharh and hashiya. Teachers explained complex texts line by line while students copied explanations and added annotations in margins. This method allowed scholars to preserve continuity with earlier intellectual traditions while adapting interpretations to contemporary needs. Educational activity therefore became cumulative because each generation built upon the scholarly work of previous scholars. Many lessons consisted of reading a primary text followed by oral commentary from the mudarris who clarified difficult concepts, provided examples, and answered questions from students. The authority of the teacher played a decisive role because understanding of texts depended largely on the explanatory skills and scholarly reputation of the mudarris.

Debate and discussion also occupied an important place in madrasa pedagogy. Students were encouraged to defend legal opinions, analyze logical arguments, and compare different interpretations within Islamic jurisprudence. The method of munozara or scholarly debate trained students in rhetorical ability, critical reasoning, and dialectical thinking. Such debates often occurred both formally during lessons and informally within student circles. Logic and rhetoric were therefore considered essential preparatory sciences because they equipped students with tools necessary for interpreting religious texts and engaging in intellectual argumentation. The study of logic was especially valued in advanced levels of education because it strengthened analytical skills and disciplined reasoning. Students learned Aristotelian logical categories, syllogistic reasoning, and principles of deduction through Arabic textbooks that had been widely used throughout the Islamic world for centuries².

The pedagogical relationship between teacher and student was based on ethical respect and spiritual discipline. The mudarris served not only as an instructor but also as a moral example whose personal conduct influenced students. Educational traditions emphasized humility, obedience, patience, and sincerity in the pursuit of knowledge. Students were expected to show respect toward teachers, maintain discipline during lessons, and devote themselves fully to study. The ethical dimensions of education reflected the broader Islamic understanding that knowledge should contribute to moral perfection and social responsibility. Instruction therefore included not only intellectual training but also moral education grounded in Islamic ethics and Sufi influences present within Central Asian culture.

¹ Bobojonova F. Kh., Elmurodova N. J. "Madrasahs and Taught Subjects in the Bukhara Emirate in the Late 19th – Early 20th Centuries." *Central Asian Journal of Social Sciences and History*, 2023, p. 54.

² Temirov F. *Madrasa Ta'limi va Islomiy Pedagogika*. Tashkent: Ma'naviyat Publishing House, p. 87.

The classification of sciences in the madrasahs of the Bukhara Emirate followed a system deeply rooted in classical Islamic philosophy of knowledge. Sciences were generally divided into religious sciences and rational sciences. Religious sciences were known as *ulum al-naqliyya* because they were based on revelation and transmitted traditions. These included Qur'anic exegesis, hadith studies, jurisprudence, theology, tajwid, and principles of Islamic law. Rational sciences known as *ulum al-'aqliyya* were based on reason and intellectual inquiry. These included logic, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, philosophy, geometry, rhetoric, and literature. Although religious sciences occupied the highest status within the curriculum, rational sciences were considered necessary for understanding religion and administering society effectively.

Among the religious sciences *fiqh* or Islamic jurisprudence held a central position because the Bukhara Emirate functioned according to Hanafi legal traditions. Students studied legal manuals, commentaries, and collections of fatwas that explained ritual obligations, commercial transactions, family law, criminal law, and judicial procedures. Jurisprudence education prepared graduates for positions as judges, muftis, teachers, and legal advisors. The study of *usul al-fiqh* or principles of jurisprudence developed analytical abilities because students learned methods of interpreting legal evidence from the Qur'an and hadith. Theology or *aqidah* also occupied an important place because it addressed questions of faith, divine attributes, prophecy, and eschatology. Theological instruction aimed to protect orthodox beliefs and strengthen religious identity within society³.

Arabic grammar constituted one of the foundational sciences within madrasa education because mastery of Arabic was essential for understanding Islamic texts. Students spent years studying morphology, syntax, rhetoric, and linguistic analysis through classical grammatical manuals. Persian and Turkic literature were also included within the curriculum because literary culture occupied an important place in Central Asian intellectual life. Poetry, prose, ethical literature, and historical chronicles enriched the cultural education of students and contributed to the development of eloquence and aesthetic appreciation. Literary education therefore complemented religious instruction by cultivating refined language skills and moral sensitivity.

Logic and philosophy represented important components of rational sciences taught in Bukhara madrasahs. Although philosophical studies declined during later periods due to conservative tendencies, earlier traditions of intellectual inquiry continued to influence educational practices. Logical reasoning was considered indispensable for theological debate and legal interpretation. Philosophy introduced students to questions concerning metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and cosmology. The works of Muslim philosophers such as Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Nasir al-Din Tusi shaped intellectual traditions in Central Asia and influenced scholarly discourse within madrasahs.

Mathematics and astronomy also formed part of the traditional classification of sciences. These disciplines were valued because they contributed to practical needs such as calculation of prayer times, determination of the qibla direction, inheritance distribution, and calendar preparation. Astronomical knowledge possessed both scientific and religious significance within Islamic civilization. Historical evidence demonstrates that Central Asian scholars achieved important contributions in astronomy and mathematics, and remnants of these traditions survived within the educational institutions of the Bukhara Emirate. However, during the nineteenth century the emphasis on these sciences gradually weakened as conservative religious studies became increasingly dominant⁴.

³ Rajabov Q. *Buxoro Amirligi Tarixi*. Tashkent: O'zbekiston Publishing House, p. 132.

⁴ Jumanazar A. *O'rta Osiyo Madaniyati va Ta'lim Tarixi*. Tashkent: Fan Publishing House, p. 156.

Medicine and natural sciences were also included in earlier classifications of knowledge. The medical traditions associated with Ibn Sina retained symbolic prestige in Central Asia, and some madrasahs introduced students to basic principles of medicine and pharmacology. Geometry and arithmetic were taught primarily as auxiliary sciences useful for administration, architecture, commerce, and inheritance law. Nevertheless, the overall emphasis of madrasa education increasingly shifted toward religious scholarship, especially during periods of political instability and external pressure.

The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries brought important challenges to the educational system of the Bukhara Emirate. Contacts with the Russian Empire and exposure to modern scientific developments revealed limitations within traditional educational methods. Reformist intellectuals known as Jadids criticized the excessive emphasis on memorization, commentary traditions, and outdated curricula. They argued that madrasahs neglected practical sciences and failed to prepare students for modern social and economic realities. Reformers advocated introduction of new teaching methods, simplified textbooks, secular subjects, geography, history, natural sciences, and foreign languages. Despite resistance from conservative scholars, Jadid movements initiated debates about educational modernization and the future of Islamic learning in Central Asia.

CONCLUSION

The madrasahs of the Bukhara Emirate played a fundamental role in the intellectual, cultural, and spiritual development of Central Asian society. Their educational system reflected centuries of Islamic scholarly tradition and functioned as the principal institution for preserving and transmitting religious and scientific knowledge. Teaching methodology in these madrasahs was based on memorization, commentary, repetition, debate, and close teacher-student interaction. These methods aimed not only to convey information but also to cultivate moral discipline, intellectual rigor, and respect for scholarship. The authority of the mudarris and the ethical dimensions of education formed essential components of the pedagogical process.

The classification of sciences within the Bukhara madrasa system demonstrated the influence of classical Islamic philosophy of knowledge in which sciences were divided into religious and rational categories. Religious sciences occupied the central position because they were connected with Islamic law and spiritual guidance, while rational sciences such as logic, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, and medicine complemented the educational structure and contributed to intellectual development. Although the balance between these sciences changed over time, the madrasa system preserved important elements of scientific and literary culture throughout the history of the emirate.

The educational traditions of the Bukhara Emirate possessed both strengths and limitations. Madrasahs successfully maintained literacy, scholarly continuity, manuscript preservation, and cultural identity across generations. At the same time excessive dependence on commentary traditions and insufficient attention to practical sciences gradually reduced the adaptability of the educational system in the modern period. Reformist critiques in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries revealed the necessity of educational modernization and stimulated intellectual debates concerning the future of Islamic education in Central Asia.

The study of teaching methodology and classification of sciences in the Bukhara Emirate remains highly important for understanding the educational heritage of Uzbekistan and the broader Islamic world. Historical analysis of madrasa traditions contributes to appreciation of Central Asia's intellectual legacy and provides valuable perspectives on the relationship between education, culture, religion, and society.

REFERENCES

1. Khalid, A. *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
2. Fitrat, A. *Munozara*. Tashkent: Yangi Asr Avlodi.
3. Ayni, S. *Esdaliklar*. Tashkent: Fan Publishing House.
4. Rajabov, Q. *Buxoro Amirligi Tarixi*. Tashkent: O‘zbekiston Publishing House.
5. Asrorova, L. *Markaziy Osiyoda An’anaviy Ta’lim Tarixi*. Bukhara: Bukhara State University Press.
6. Temirov, F. *Madrasa Ta’limi va Islomiy Pedagogika*. Tashkent: Ma’naviyat Publishing House.
7. Jumanazar, A. *O‘rta Osiyo Madaniyati va Ta’lim Tarixi*. Tashkent: Fan Publishing House.
8. Bobojonova, F. Kh., & Elmurodova, N. J. “Madrasahs and Taught Subjects in the Bukhara Emirate in the Late 19th – Early 20th Centuries.” *Central Asian Journal of Social Sciences and History*, 2023.
9. Gulamov, H. “Education System in Bukhara Emirate.” *International Journal on Integrated Education*, 2022.
10. Mamatkulova, F. O. “Activities of Teachers in the Madrasahs of the Bukhara Emirate in the 19th–20th Centuries.” *American Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2025.