

# Problems and Strategies in the Study of Educational Psychology Localization

Yue Shi<sup>1</sup> & Xigui Wang<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Chemistry and Environmental Science, Inner Mongolia Normal University, Hohhot, China

Correspondence: Xigui Wang, Department of Chemistry and Environmental Science, Inner Mongolia Normal University, Hohhot 010022, China.

doi: 10.56397/RAE.2022.07.11

## Abstract

Nowadays, educational psychology has obtained an increasing number of focuses in all kinds of groups in China. Although it has been developed to a certain extent, some problems still need to be solved. Firstly, the research has demonstrated the necessity of the localization study of educational psychology. On this basis, the difficulties existing in the localization study are presented, eventually, the strategies are proposed according to the national conditions. This will help to solve the specific problems encountered in China's educational practice, and then play the practical guiding role of educational psychology.

**Keywords:** educational psychology, localization, problem, strategy

## 1. Introduction

Educational psychology mainly takes school education as the background, and studies various psychological problems in the field of educational practice, therefore, educational practice is a powerful driving force to promote the research of educational psychology. As is well-known, all ethnic groups have their values and cultural traditions, so how to make education psychology research rooted in the national education, psychological and cultural traditions, then to understand, explain and intervene in our school education is a major problem that education psychology to be faced in the future. This involves the issue of the localization of educational psychology (Dajun Zhang & Xingchun Xu, 2005).

The localization study of psychology is one of the trends of world psychology development. Localization study was first put forward by anthropologists to solve the shortcomings of previous anthropological studies, which advocated that native people should be studied from the perspective of native people in terms of their cultural value system and social structure system, rather than with researchers' own national culture. In view of this, psychologists put forward the concept of "localization of psychology", whose purpose is to enable researchers to accurately discover psychological and behavioral norms in different cultural backgrounds and reveal the influence of culture on individuals and groups (Lujia Ge, 1994).

At present, the study of Chinese psychology, whether from the macro theoretical framework or concrete research methods, mostly absorbs the results of foreign research, and has not yet formed a unique theoretical system of its own. Although the research on psychology in other countries is relatively mature, different backgrounds result in significant ethnic differences, which makes the research results abroad not universal. Therefore, to meet the requirements of Chinese students' development, psychology must be combined with the actual situation in our country, and we should find a way to localize it with Chinese characteristics. Educational psychology, as an important branch of psychology, the road of its localization is particularly important but arduous.

## 2. The Necessity of the Localization Research of Educational Psychology

### 2.1 Natural Environment Affects the Level of Cognitive and Psychological Development of Individuals

Natural environment refers to the region, climate and natural resources. The differences in the natural environment of different nationalities will greatly affect the consciousness and behavior of individuals. For example, high mountains and oceans can block culture transmission, so relatively isolated cultures have higher homogeneity (Dengfeng Wang, 2012). Individuals living in remote geographical environments such as far-off mountains or islands have fewer opportunities to contact the outside world and rarely communicate with foreign cultures. Their consciousness is correspondingly solidified and their behavior is relatively homogenous, which is not conducive to the development of their cognitive thinking and psychological maturity. For another example, psychologists have shown that picking out all the personality traits of adjectives from the dictionary used to be treated as one of the methods to study personality. In this process, the researchers found in the dictionary of living in the Arctic Eskimos have many words to describe snow, including snow thickness, snow hardness, snow grains, snow size, length, etc., and the cognition of the snow is rich. While some tribes live in Africa, the word “snow” is basically absent in the language, and the difference in their cognition of snow is mainly due to the different natural environment (Dengfeng Wang, 2012). The Eskimos live in the Arctic, which often has snowing days, while the African tribes mostly live in the tropics, where does not snow, so their perceptions of snow vary greatly. Therefore, the different natural environment affects individual cognitive and psychological maturity to a certain extent. Surely, different nations’ natural environment is different, if direct the application of the research achievements of western psychology education to our country, there may be some rejection. So we ought to continuously explore the localization of the road in education psychology, and construct an educational psychology system suitable for the development of our nation, to better meet the requirements of our students.

### *2.2 Social and Cultural Environment Affects Individual Value Judgment and Psychological Identity*

The social and cultural environment has a very crucial concept called “social support system”, it includes the life and living patterns, social structure, mode of production, food industry, agriculture, manufacturing industry and all social services and so on. The system has a close relationship with culture syndrome, which express the standard of shared value judgment and attitude towards values, etc. (Dengfeng Wang, 2012). The whole social support system shaped by history, culture and social environment will influence individual values imperceptibly. For example, Western countries, represented by the United States, have been promoting individualism and focusing on individual interests for a long history, while eastern countries, represented by China, put collectivism in the highest position and believe that collective interests are higher than individual interests. Of course, this difference will also be clearly reflected in students. A survey shows that 80% of the content of Kenyans’ self-description involves their social life, but only 17% of Kenyan college students studying in the United States, while the proportion of American college students is only 12% (Dengfeng Wang, 2012). It can be seen from above that even if people of similar ethnicity are placed in different social and cultural backgrounds, their values have a distinctive gap. However, western educational psychology generally focuses on western research subjects throughout the whole process. Their social and cultural background is quite different from China. If the research results are directly copied to Chinese students, they may not fit, and there may be a lot of discomforts. Therefore, it should be noted that we need to based on foreign research develop a unique educational psychology system with Chinese characteristics according to the characteristics of domestic students, to achieve better application effects.

## **3. Problems Existing in the Localization Research of Educational Psychology**

### *3.1 Lack of Complete Educational Psychology System*

Although the current educational psychology in China has a profound ideological foundation, it has not formed a complete and systematic theoretical system and empirical research achievement system. The contents are complicated and scattered, and the phenomenon of educational psychology is divided into several small parts, lacking relative stability (Liangbao Ren, 2008). Nowadays, some important theories and concepts are mostly derived from the west, not forming a localization system of research. Even in the definition of an important concept, psychologists also give priority to following western standards. If we still develop like this, undesired results will appear when it is applied in practice, and the demand of the present Chinese students can’t meet very well.

### *3.2 The Combination Level of Theory and Practice Is Not Ideal*

At present, most of the research on educational psychology in our domain is in the phase of basic theory, and its practice is relatively weak. The research results of educational psychology should serve for school education and every student, so that they can establish the consciousness of mental health since childhood, take the initiative to pay attention to their mental health, adjust their mentality reasonably, and make them grow healthily and delightfully. In this process, teachers should apply the theoretical knowledge of educational psychology to practical teaching reasonably, keep a watchful eye on the psychological development of students and choose appropriate strategies for teaching, to improve classroom efficiency. However, at present, there are frequent incidents of different school age groups of students committing suicide, the reasons are as follows: there is no

correct understanding of life; the ability to withstand the psychological pressure is weak; there is serious distortion in psychology and not timely acceptance of psychological counseling and so on. This proves that in solving some special problems, the combination of theory and practice of educational psychology is not cohesive and needs to be further developed.

### *3.3 Research Results Are Difficult to Be Sinicized*

The thought of educational psychology in China had already appeared in the period of Confucius, but the complete system of educational psychology was first formed in the West. When we introduce Western and Soviet pedagogical and psychological ideas, it is difficult to achieve the sinicization of western ideas. Because the western object and our object are individuals living in different environments, there will be great differences in their cognitive and psychological development status. In western countries, the theory of excellent practice effect may have little effect on our country. In addition, when many domestic researchers selected topics, the source of the topic is only to learn from foreign research, but neither according to the current situation of China's education comprehensive analysis, nor looking for the urgent problems that we need to solve immediately. The result of this continuous study is that western psychology is more consummate, but has not brought positive promotion to our education.

## **4. Strategies for the Localization of Educational Psychology Research**

### *4.1 Excavate and Sort out the Educational Psychology Thought Contained in Chinese Traditional Culture*

Although the system of educational psychology was first established in the west, there is no impenetrable ideology of educational psychology in the ancient traditional culture of China. Among them, Confucianism, Taoism, Mohism and numerous ancient Chinese school leaders and followers with unique perspectives and thought connotations, have been strongly infiltrated into people all aspects of the psychological and shaped the Chinese characteristic state of life. Also, these valuable ideas point the direction for the localization of education psychology research (Liangbao Ren, 2008). Now some researchers, however, did not recognize the unique value of Chinese traditional thought, without consciously reflecting on the relationship between traditional culture and education psychology, no more systematically sum up remarkable civilization achievements. If we just grab the foreign research output and forget to inherit and develop the outstanding civilization of our own, there would be plenty of limitations for localization research. Therefore, it is more practical and effective to excavate and sort out the psychological thoughts of many educators in Chinese history, study the problems in Chinese education with Chinese ideas, and apply them to Chinese students than western theories.

### *4.2 Learn from the Excellent Achievements of Foreign Countries*

The localization research of educational psychology is inseparable from both the reference to the excellent achievements of foreign countries and the practical innovation of domestic researchers. Only by carrying out practical innovation based on absorption and reference can we accelerate the construction of our educational psychology system. Learning and absorbing do not mean completely copying. Due to differences in social and cultural backgrounds, problems and perspectives in education may not be the same as those in the west, and there may be differences in the definition of concepts between China and the West. For example, our definitions of crucial concepts such as "self" and "happiness" are significantly disparate from those in the West. This is unavoidable. So we are in the process of reference, which is not simple transplantation and replication, but want to split the dialectical view of the theory. Therefore, we should not only learn western theories but also notice significance of the establishing process, including the background, the adoptive method, application limitations and existing problems to fully understand the whole process of its creation. It provides method guidance and a theoretical basis for us to construct a systematic and complete educational psychology system.

### *4.3 Construct Educational Psychology System by Integrating China and the West*

Inherit and develop educational psychology thought which is infiltrated in Chinese traditional culture, and absorb western excellent theory. On this basis, combined with the present characteristics of the study object in our country, and look for proper ways to coalesce the Chinese and western education psychological thought to make western learning into "for me to learn". What's more, build a suitable theoretical system for our students' development and explore a road of educational psychology with Chinese characteristics, so as to better promote the development of Chinese educational enterprise.

## **5. Conclusion**

Due to the differences in natural environment and social surroundings, different countries will give birth to diverse civilizations. The system of educational psychology was first established and developed by western countries, and now our country has made some progress in educational psychology. To meet the requirements of national education, we should not only draw lessons from foreign outstanding achievements but also innovate and practice according to our concrete national situation. Pay more attention to the problem of educational

psychology that our country urgently needs to solve, and establish a suitable psychological thought which fits our students' psychological characteristics, then applied in practice to improve the teaching effect. Through the above strategies, we can improve the development of educational psychology and serve domestic educational practice more thoughtfully.

### References

- Dajun Zhang, & Xingchun Xu. (2005). The role of educational psychology research in promoting educational reform in China in recent 20 years. *Psychological Science*, 12(06), pp. 1418-1420.
- Lujia Ge. (1994). Chinese traditional morphological psychology and localized scientific morphological psychology. *Social Science Front*, 32(02), pp. 68-73+137.
- Dengfeng Wang. (2012). *Sinicization of psychological research*. Beijing: China Light Industry Press.
- Liangbao Ren. (2008). Localization of educational psychology. *Journal of Mudanjiang College of Education*, 25(04), pp. 124-125.

### Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).