

Exploration of Issues and Continuous development of Educational Psychology for Adolescence

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Abstract: Inequality of resource and psychological service, insufficient awareness of mental health issues, lack of funding and professional support still prohibit growth of educational psychology of adolescence. While discovering history and ongoing process for educational psychology, the achievement of recognizing and applying theories into study among students and educators' relationship is valued, especially for practice in school settings. However, more research is needed for adolescents' emotional and psychological change during a critical period of transiting to adulthood. The following contents would be focusing on the development and related issues of educational psychology for adolescence.

1. Introduction

Dated back to the early 20th century, educational psychology is extended and developed from general psychology. It is a subject which focuses on studying learners' motivation, methods of learning and their development of cognition. Based on different age, researchers provide explanations of behaviors and expressions in certain stage regarding neuroscience and cognitive development. According to the concepts mentioned by Jia and Tianqing^[1] as well as the article written by Xing^[2], educational psychology obtains diverse school and combine with theories in different systems, such as behaviorism which believes that behaviors are acquired through conditioning and could be learned systematically with observation. Since multiple theories are introduced, it becomes complicated to choose which to follow. Also, based on Zhang's article^[3], the outstanding debate happens when determining the adscription of educational psychology. Some professionals indicate it is developed from teacher education since it provides insights into how to evoke students' motivation of learning and modify teaching strategies, while others link educational psychology with human cognitive science and study of psychology, or deem it as an independent subject area.

Among studies towards human development, adolescence is considered as a critical period of adapting transition from children towards adulthood. Extended from Luke and Quint's views^[4], while pursuing a sense of values and discovering self-identity, the establishment of healthy relationships with adults or peers and participation in the supportive environment contribute to their cognition, belongingness and further development. To ensure positive development during adolescence, awareness of youth's self-esteem is the basis for achieving orientation of their self-identity. As it is discussed by Dong^[5], major factors including belongingness, sense of value and capability lead to youth's accomplishment of self-esteem. During puberty, youth are sensitive towards critical changes around circumstance. It includes signals of adults' attention and care which represent evidence of 'existence' for adolescents. Whether they are able to receive immediate encouragement or praise for their achievement or receive assistance when they need support also contributes to their development of a sense of value.

With the strong inclination of gaining success either in social interaction or academy, adolescents also realize their uniqueness in being expert in specific areas and offering assistance to individuals who are in need. While neglect and lack of self-identification happen, youth might seek for sense of existence with exaggerated methods including rule-breaking or absolute defensive of their own notions. As many of them directly express their emotions, without noticing and understanding the

consequences that they would pose to other individuals, they are actually not intended to harm others.

Some adults might regard adolescents' action of challenging individuals' 'authority' as the effect of hormones and characteristic impetuosity during puberty. In fact, as youth start their exploration of their identity and responsibilities, they also develop critical thinking which allows them to pose skeptics towards suspicion of certain social norms, values, and authorities. Development of independency and incidents happening around provide them with insights about reconsidering the 'authority' that they usually look up to. Successfully questioning their 'authority' including educators and parents could be regarded as one way of building their confidence and heroic figure comparing to others who choose not to challenge. Neither simply approval nor direct dispute modify or lead adolescents to acknowledge the meaning of challenging and being suspicious. While recognizing their ability of discovering critical points of view, regarding adolescents' psychological and cognitive development, adults might guide them to examine things in diverse perspectives instead of remaining in the same position.

Including the history and process of development in educational psychology in this paper, I would be focusing on the development and related issues of educational psychology for adolescence.

2. Recent condition of educational psychology for adolescence

While adults' awareness arouses towards students' emotional change and reasons behind their feedback, the involvement of educational psychology started its first stage. However, the further development of educational psychology, especially in area about study of adolescents still requires more research. More attention is devoted to educational psychology for cognitive growth in early childhood since it has been recognized as a critical period of human development. Also, unlike young adults including university students, adolescents are not deemed as independent individuals who obtain self-awareness. For adolescents, they might obtain consciousness of changes in both physical and psychological status of themselves as young adults, but either confuse about asking for assistance and suggestions, or withstanding the pain in silence which make them appear strong enough for becoming independent individuals. Therefore, without professional guidance which assists adolescents with psychological changes and cognitive awareness, it might impact their momentous period of transiting towards adulthood.

The achievement of educational psychology's growth engages study of related subject areas including technology. As it is indicated by Xing^[2], the involvement of computer science and artificial intelligence become a trend of publication about educational psychology. However, there are arguments about how technology contributes to educational psychology if it is not accessible in certain areas. Still there are concerns towards which perspective is more beneficial for the study of educational psychology, either focusing only on one goal towards study of educational psychology, or regarding other subject areas as supplement of educational psychology research. Wide range of research opportunities in educational psychology allow scholars to examine individuals' cognitive development from multiple contexts and background. However, it also leads to confusion about which factor pose most significant impact on cognitive development and motivation of learning.

3. Related problems of educational psychology for adolescence

3.1 Resource inequality

The primary concern is focusing on insufficient and unequal access to resources. Divided into two aspects, the accessibility is discussed from both professionals including educators or counselors, and adolescents with their families. As it is indicated in a passage written by Alkalay and Dolev^[6], an urgent matter of impeding delivery of mental health services and information of educational psychology is the inequality of economic status and individual context. While many mental health services require diagnostic cost, it is difficult for families who are under middle class to offer the

sum of money, not to mention how certain symptoms such as depression require further treatments and continuous payment. Under such circumstance, paying extra for the diagnostic cost and long-term medication is difficult. Considering adolescents suffering in poverty, while their parents are working three jobs, they need to work part-time and take care of their younger siblings, it is also impossible for them to spare time on participating in checking mental health status even if the service is free. Unfortunately, the group of individuals who spend all the time on making a living suffer more mental health issues comparing to others, while they are most unlikely to receive treatment.

In the area of educational psychology, more attention is contributed to students' mental health due to the concept of 'student central' not limited to aspect of academic engagement or cognitive development. However, if the reciprocal characteristic of the relationship between students and teachers is not discerned, it is possible that role of professionals including educators would be neglected. There is no specific training program of educational psychology for general teachers that more attention is devoted to the contents they are teaching. Without instruction of some strategies of establishing relationships with students, new teachers find it difficult to manage classes, especially when they need to take care of multiple large classes with at least 30 students each. The exhausted teaching experience provides teachers insufficient time of self-examining and reconsidering their teaching strategies. Also, the lack of expert or advisor who are able to provide suggestion or counseling for new teachers are missing. Under the circumstance, many new teachers are confusing about arranging teaching process which also leads to students' confusion.

3.2 Insufficient research of emotions

The insufficient research towards adolescents' development which related to emotions basically affected by the following factors: less opportunity of researching a wide range of emotional states, difficulties of setting criterion which help recognizing emotions and insufficient range of contexts for studying emotions. As it is mentioned in 'Students' emotions and academic engagement: Introduction to the special issue', while studying adolescents' emotional changes which impact their academic learning, more attention is devoted to students' anxiety instead of a wide range of emotions^[7]. Specific advantage of focusing on specific emotion instead of board range or emotional states is that it allows researchers and scholars to investigate the effect of certain emotion in details. However, as independent individuals, students in adolescence experience emotional change rapidly, not limited to anxiety towards future academic learning or career. For example, some students also undergo weary of academic learning instead of concerning about their future. Being forced to attend daily schooling or confusing about reasons for studying aggrandize their inclination of escaping the classroom. In that case, more samples of emotions that affect students' development should be considered.

Also, as it is discussed by Tim and Lisette^[8], regarding the extent of emotion of each adolescent, it is difficult to set up criterions for directly confirming how certain emotion pose same influence among students. When achieving sense of value and self-identity, individuals connect themselves with own background including family context and social norms from various societies. For example, students who are taught 'expressing emotions is a sign of weakness' or 'failure is not permitted in your life' are more appeal to hide and control their expression of emotions but usually encounter more anxiety comparing to peers. When worried about fulfilling expectations from parents, teachers, and people around, especially for adolescents who make efforts of developing their confidence and self-esteem, they are more appeal to face the difficulties on their own. Consequently, when educators intend to estimate the anxiety or depression level of students by conversation or observation, some students might choose to conceal real emotion and indicate that they are not in the least worried.

On the other hand, combining conclusion from Xin and Liangshi^[9], contexts for researchers to study adolescents' emotions are constricted to school settings, such as regular science class with about thirty students and one educator. It is the consequence of deeming schools as the standardized area where learning would happen. Concerning the concept of learning, individuals learn through

imitation and generalization which help transfer new content into the formation of own understanding and knowledge system. In that case, learning is not restricted in classroom context, but also take place in extra curriculum activities, family education, tutoring, and even small group work for projects. Though diverse learning context could be taking into account, the uncontrollable factors exist among observation or investigation for researchers. For example, students might 'pretend' to become engaging in class if they receive hints from others that they would be observed, or they would be evaluated based on their performance. Therefore, it is hard to ensure if students' emotions are expressed totally natural even in regular classroom context.

3.3 Inadequate care for minority

Regarding notions of Eunjin, Yishan and Aprile^[10] as well as Guoliang Yu and Yunting Ju^[11], more effort still needed in concerning minority group includes individuals of sexual minorities, bilinguals or multilinguals, individuals with disabilities including developmental disorder, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), also need equal access to educational psychology. It does not mean that we exclude minority group from receiving assistance and involving in educational psychology, but pondering from perspective of 'a whole common group' with established standards, it is difficult to offer individual plan or service to minority group. As we indicate necessary of provide individuals with personal plan which fulfill their needs, the assumption of time and sufficient professionals still need to take into account. It requires involvement of professionals from special education, educational psychology and human cognitive developmental science, but many specialized individuals are trained in only one subject area or generalized program training rather than specified in multiple dominants with capability of communicating using diverse languages.

3.4 Awareness and stigma of psychology

The unbalance of educational psychology's accessibility and attention received among different areas exaggerated the differences of service's quality and how societies value educational psychology, especially regarding the comparison of research from Eastern and Western countries. According to Anne Greig, Tommy Mackay and Linden Ginter^[12], in Scotland, the insufficient service of educational psychology leads to a long waitlist for even several months before individuals are able to receive support and counseling. A similar situation happens in England and America that more agencies are needed for professional services which deliver to youth. On the contrary, based on Sarit Alkalay and Vivit Dolev^[6], not until recently service of mental care in either China or Israel receive attention and funding from governments or public. However, the service is insufficient for adolescents who obtain intellectual disabilities or emotional disturbance. Also, the service is available in large cities where resources are plentiful, while rural areas could not access to mental care due to lack of transportation or technology.

Also, the misunderstanding towards educational psychology which is not only for adolescents but also for individuals in various age group still exists without professional guidance. Unfortunately, in different area with insufficient information about importance of paying attention to individuals' mental health, some parents do not take notice of their children's emotional change or symptoms of experiencing risks in mental health including depression or toxic anxiety. We could not blame how some families take 'family pride and honor' as supreme state that they deem their children's mental health issue as 'shame' or 'incidents which could not tell any others', but it poses a signal of promoting publicity to care about individuals' psychological health.

Another misunderstanding involves idea of 'fixing problems' rather than guiding individuals to discover and promote their abilities. Based on Ting Zhou^[13], Yu and Ju's notions^[11], the situation exists that educators intend to locate individuals' mental 'handicaps' and 'fix' the 'faultiness' which 'prohibit individuals' development'. Still many people including educators and parents persevered in correcting students' 'defect' regarding the standards of normal trends of development which recognized in public. For example, when an individual refuse to read the passage assigned by teachers, teachers or parents might regard it as unwillingness of engaging in learning. Such phenomenon needed to be corrected since finishing the reading task is fulfillment of regular

schooling. However, the attitude of ‘fixing problems’ might induce more focus on methods of correction instead of figuring out reasons behind. Back to the example, the student who refuses to read might obtain difficulties recognizing new vocabularies or find it too easy to read. If teachers neglect the reasons which lead to refusal of reading, it would cause more confusion or objection and even disturb further teaching process. Therefore, the process of helping individuals improving their capabilities includes: guiding them to figure out if their behaviors or notions need to modify and supporting them to transfer certain behaviors or notions in better purpose.

4. Considerations about the problems existing in educational psychology

Regarding the inequality and unbalanced accessibility of resource, unfortunately there is no direct method for reducing the gap since it is not simple task which could be solved by providing funding. Thus, to assist families with obtaining hardship receiving psychological services, information such as recognizing mental issues or handling distinctive changes during puberty could be delivered to adolescents and their families as self-aid. Families might be provided guidance of how to search for professional counselors if youth need extra support despite self-awareness, self-rescuing, advice from online information. All individuals should aware that committing discomfort feelings and even mental illness is not the symbol of weakness, rather, individuals with huge courage and powerful mind embracing their frustration instead of preserving them. On the other hand, it refers to how educational psychology should not be limited to school environment or specifically target educators. More research could be focusing on situation of tutoring, family education or extra curriculum activities that involve individuals’ learning process.

The aspect of attention towards adolescents’ emotions is generated from one principle about effect of socio-cultural contexts. It leads to the understanding of how cultural background shape individuals’ development. With their constructed self-identity and attitude towards surrounding environment, adolescents establish their own understanding about sense of value regarding social norms and expectations. The issue is even related to gender inequality that females are more appeal to express their emotions and sensitive towards changes in surrounding environment, while males are discouraged of revealing their feelings and express negative emotions because being ‘sensitive’ is violate of expected masculinity.

While emotions accumulated, emotional ‘explosion’ actually becomes a symbol of exceeding tolerance that induce serious misbehaviors or even physical violence as methods of releasing overwhelming emotions. Therefore, as educators, we should inform students that adapting to social norms about emotional expression is a requirement but also possibility of neglecting needs for self-consciousness. Instead of hiding actual emotions or provide expression with dramatic physical behaviors, educators or professionals could also help with discovering suitable methods for releasing emotions and pressure for adolescents. Either sports or self-interest such as drawing or listening to music could decrease possibility of negative inhibition of expression. Schools might be able to arrange thirty minutes’ leisure time for students to relax from high intense academic learning or pressure.

When discussing about attitude towards ensuring adolescents’ growth, especially focusing on minority group, instead of forcing adolescents to achieve certain traits which related certain stage of development, adults should combine individual differences including their family background, cultural context and self-consciousness. The distinct pace of growth would be revealed in various areas, so comparison should be focused on same area with same level. To ensure the support for minority group, more recruiting of professionals who fulfill requirements of special education or counseling services should be considered.

Under the differences of circumstance, as the point which also stated by Ang Yaxuan^[14], strategies need to apply for evoking importance about how adolescents’ mental care devote to success of academic leaning and future career. As we intend to fulfill adolescents’ need for individual goal and plan for either psychological health or cognitive development, it refers to more financing and resources support with higher level of expertise and credibility. To achieve the goal of recruiting more professionals, I would recommend more contents of basic educational psychology

would be added to training programs for educators, researchers and psychologists. More opportunity for fostering and training new professionals for educational psychology is essential. Based on Allen^[15], Woodley-Hume and Woods' discussion^[16], the role of not limited to research of psychology but also participating in real world settings provide assistants and educational psychologists with skills and confidence that allow further contribution in their work and more deliberation.

The combination of research and internship is beneficial comparing to only focusing on research or only career-based training. Some theories might be unable to apply directly in real life settings and new educational psychologists would experience confusion during internships. In that case, advisors are needed for delivering assistance for new educational psychologists' work and providing psychological support. New faculties experience transition of ideal theories to identity of working in actual settings, they might appear to be afraid of asking questions or could not figure out what aspect to start questioning about. Considering some new educational psychologist are too busy to set up meetings with their advisors or experienced expertise, they could send questions through electronic devices and wait for advisors' responses. But in order to ensure mutual communication for sharing of knowledge, the meeting between new faculties and expertise should arrange for a few times.

Regarding the support, funding is still an essential factor of supporting extension of educational psychology and mental care. It is not only a symbol of officials or government's recognition of importance of educational psychology, but also a method of attracting more participants contributing the subject area. Due to lack of funding, it is hard to recruit professionals or assistance, especially when specialists in educational psychology are required to receive at least 5 years of training and gain at least 3 years of working experience. Therefore, ensuring the amount of salary is one factor which make professionals to decide if they would remain and continue their position.

Before achieving necessary funding, individuals need to gain positive attitude towards educational psychology and attention towards adolescents' psychological health. Publicity of importance for adolescents' mental conditions should be extended. For example, individuals could promote attention towards adolescents' mental health and situation which would present during puberty and symptoms of mental illness which parents or care givers might pay attention to. It could be set up as diverse form of media which attract public's attention. For example, with style of storytelling, a series of comics could be created which explain why adolescents experience dramatic emotional change. Except for comics, short videos could also serve as dedication of introducing parents or care givers to possible mental health issue which happens among youth including depression and toxic anxiety. When facing adolescents as audience, considering their interest towards technology, online information session could be set up for recognizing their emotional changes and how to adopt to diversification during adolescence.

5. Conclusion

The paper presents how educational psychology is under the process of evolving and developing which regard needs for both professionals in education and adolescents, but more researches is needed for further exploration including various emotional changes and how to foster youth's cognitive growth. While insufficient funding and awareness for educational psychology of adolescence appear as primary concern, increasing individuals and public's attention towards adolescents' psychological health and emotional changes which impact their life and academic learning serve as the first stage. The previous contents have indicated how different countries develop diverse recognition towards educational psychology and how educational psychology for adolescents is divided into focus of educators' strategies of motivating students and students' mental health, but might neglect educators also need suggestions and psychosocial service. Consequently, more professional training and psychological support should be provided for new admitted educators and faculties as another method of ensuring educational psychology for adolescent's development.

The complexity of driving individuals' attention of psychological well-being is that it involves

environmental factors and intrinsic factors. It includes care, support and agreement from surrounding environment and even cultural context which support psychological health of adolescents. Before recognizing appreciation and being need in their relationships or context, adolescents are able to gain sense of self-esteem or understand their psychological needs. Developed in Dawn's article^[17], the demanding participation of parents and care givers help foster adolescence's mental development. Therefore, more encouragement towards establishing healthy relationship between caring adults and adolescents should be fostered, while support from peers also deemed as contribution towards adolescents' psychological health. They are involved for creating safe environment that allows expression, learning and deliberations.

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