

A Literature Review of Huaping Girls' High School in Educational Psychology

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Abstract: It begins by comparing the role of mainstream psychology and critical psychology in pedagogy, where educational psychologists are often combined with neurological disciplines in the development of educational research under the influence of mainstream psychology, while critical psychology maintains a critical perspective in research to challenge existing thinking. Based on the case of Huaping in a girls' high school, the literature from 1990 to 2021 is cited for a literature review in three areas: community psychology, discursive psychology, feminist psychology.

Keywords: Huaping Girls' High School, Community psychology, Discursive psychology, Feminist psychology.

1. Mainstream Psychology and Critical Psychology in Education

Education develops independent behaviour and critical thinking to analyse society by identifying and solving problems. Education is also a source of knowledge and the basis for creating awareness of everything. At the same time education can contribute to social development, lead to social transformation, eliminate social inequalities and try to provide equal rights for all learners. For those who are themselves on the margins of society, education may be the only way to change their lives.

Mainstream psychology offers a great deal to the practice of research in education. Through access to psychological knowledge, with the help of documenting individual differences with the help of data analysis, and combining it with brain-based learning and neuroscience. Educational psychologists create practices that can change or treat , behaviour management, conduct disorder, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism and learning difficulties (Frederickson, 2015).

Most commonly, relevant intelligence tests may be used in schools to explain changes in pupils' learning. The teacher extracts useful information from the intelligence tests to plan teaching methods to suit the student's learning patterns. In the UK, the British Ability Scales (BAS) provides a verbal ability score, a non-verbal reasoning ability score and a score of spatial ability for early years and school age. It is used to assess a child's current intellectual functioning and basic educational progress (Hill, 2005).

In cognitive neuroscience, there are differences between males and females in nocturnal assault functions due to structural differences in the cerebral cortex. Females are better at language and memory, but males are better at mathematics and visual-spatial skills (Steinmayr and Spinath, 2008). Critical psychology suggests that receiving different social learning theories from birth, as well as significant differences in values, interests and attitudes, are the main reasons for the cognitive differences in learning between males and females (Halpern, 1997)

Via Hope for Girls' Education in Poverty-Stricken Areas (Zhu, 2020) and YouTube video (2020) to learn about Huaping girl's High, a special high school in China. HuaPing girls' high school is located in Huaping County, Lijiang City,

Yunnan Province, China, one of the poorest areas in China. Zhang Guimei established this high school to provide a free education for girls who are forced to drop out of high school because of the poverty. In an effort to eliminate poverty and reduce educational imbalances, it waives all fees and entrance exams, with the only entry requirement being a desire for knowledge, which undoubtedly challenges the existing education system in China.

1.1. Combination of community Psychology and Huaping Girls' High School

Community refers to a real place, a relationship or an expression of quality of life. Community can also be seen as a place associated with wellbeing. More often, community is a social group that generates social cohesion through more intimate relationships, mutual understanding and interconnectedness (Grech, 2012).

Community psychology is about understanding people in groups and changing the possibilities in communities that prevent citizens from taking control of their own lives and breaking free. Combining traditional psychology with individual differences, it focuses not only on the main factors but also on the interplay of culture, gender and social roles in the social environment (Trickett, 2009). It helps to understand that different individual lives result from the demands of different life circumstances. We cannot simply blame the families for the unequal treatment of these girls; in fact, it is the economic conditions of the family and old stereotypes that are the main factors that lead to inequality. The influence of stereotypes will be discussed in the next part.

Community psychology focuses more on people working together to unify goals and resist oppression in order to create a better society. It follows that community psychology leads to social change in the rise of self-awareness because it provides a social framework for those who are marginalised by the social system (Burton, Boyle, Harris, 2007). 'sink estates' implies poverty and marginalisation, exclusion from the community. In community psychology it is important for socially marginalised groups to be empowered with freedom of social activity and roles. Lack of education can lead to a lack of internal competence, and political-social, family and economic competence can lead to a lack of overall competence (Grech, 2012). It has to be acknowledged that these two characteristics, poverty and femininity, force these

girls to become a socially marginalised group, excluded from the educational objectives of poor areas. While poverty is indeed a factor that cannot be ignored, Huaping High School also addresses the biggest barrier in the village that hinders girls' education - money.

Communities of practice is about bringing groups of people together to develop resources together, providing a framework for tapping into learning, identity and social change. Challenging the traditional dominance of academic learning, it discards the traditional psychological theory of placing learning in the human brain and continues to learn in a social context, using communities of practice to overcome the boundaries of social marginality and eliminate social inequalities (Grech, 2012). Huaping Girls' high schools differ from regular high schools in that they are free for girls and do not require an entrance exam. By recruiting talented teachers from all over the country and working together to improve the quality of education at the school, every girl who strives to change her destiny will achieve her goal as much as possible, making a real difference across class and breaking the vicious circle of "low quality mothers making low quality children".

Sense of community comes from identifying and uniting community members, creating emotional connections through sharing and rewards, and the impact of community reaches everyone in the group. Thus, the belief in solidarity and a sense of belonging shared by community members creates a positive impression. This common bond between members may be due to mutual understanding or to a shared identity, which can also be referred to as community of interests (Grech, 2012). All the girls at this high school share a common experience because they are not valued as women, but they have a common goal to pass their exams to get into university, get a proper job and change their life experience. As a result, they share a common bond, encourage each other to progress, challenge the unequal treatment of women and fight for the freedom of choice.

Community psychology emphasises the importance of the social environment in which people spend most of their lives, such as schools, workplaces and communities. By changing the environment, measures are taken to empower people to contribute to the development of their communities. The empowerment of disenfranchised and socially marginalised groups is also a goal pursued by community psychology (Shinn, 2015).

The focus is on three main aspects of the community environment: the connections between people - the social process, the relationship between people and the economy, and time - and how resources are already allocated (Trickett, 2009).

Unfortunately, even if equal distribution of resources is achieved, there is no guarantee that other areas of competence will not be denied (Martha, 2011)

There is no doubt that Zhang Guimei has the capacity for community building, and that expanding the pool of talented teachers and improving the quality of teaching and learning to increase local resources through social fundraising and seeking government support is an effort to address current and future issues. The establishment of Hua Ping Girls' High School not only provides a community for these girls to have the right to make their own choices, but also offers a reflection on Chinese society and education as a result of the unequal treatment caused by neglect.

1.2. Combination of discursive psychology and Huaping Girls' High School

Traditional psychology sees the vehicle of thought and emotion as language, and essentialism distinguishes people by identity and personality. Social constructionism, on the other hand, critically assumes that language has a substantial impact on people, for example, if a judge pronounces a person guilty, then this is an established fact (Burr, 2003). Growing up in a patriarchal society and being guided by such ideas from birth, it is a given for these girls to accept both society's and their family's decisions about their future as a given. As girls who are not capable of fighting against the backwardness, they are forced to give up their education and form a family to become a mother. Or we could say that some of these girls do not even have the sense to resist the moral shackles.

Discursive psychology is characteristic of social constructionism and can also be referred to as a branch of discourse analysis and linguistic psychology. Discursive psychology identifies social constructionism as denying that language is a mental state. Discursive psychology's actions have led to a shift from mainstream psychology's focus on the nature of phenomena such as memory and emotion to a focus on how people perform behaviours that originate not in personal experience but in the discursive culture that exists (Burr, 2003).

Discursive psychologists analyse situational language in order to show people how people or things behave. Discourses of femininity categorises women as nurturing, emotional, empathetic and vulnerable, and that women should be particularly capable of caring for children (Burr, 2003). This discourse of femininity is a subconscious recognition that men have more power in society and exacerbates power inequalities. In economically disadvantaged areas, this inequality of power is even more pronounced, as most of the girls in Huaping Girls' High School come from poor families with more than one child and do not have the financial means to support all their children's education. Faced with this situation, girls are sacrificed for their future studies and careers, as the identity of women is simply categorised as that of a mother.

Throughout Chinese history, women were required to observe the three obediences and four virtues, the three obediences being obedience to the father before marriage, obedience to the husband after marriage and obedience to the son when widowed, and the four virtues being decency of speech, absolute loyalty, physical charm and the ability to embroider (Cheng, 2008) instinctively exclude women from the workplace. Gender guides professional identity in discursive communities of practice and social norms govern identity, yet our identities should not originate from within, but from the social sphere. Category entitlement creates categories that men and women must adhere to, and in China the 'virtuous wife and good mother' has a very different approach to the categorisation of gender and identity is identified by socio-political ideology (Zhao and Jones, 2017). Despite the evolution of the times, such entrenched gender stereotypes continue to assign different roles to men and women. Women are often categorised as housewives and mothers, while men are seen as learners and workers.

Girls from Huaping Girls' High School are now working as doctors, teachers, police officers or lawyers. This is the most favourable rebuttal to the traditional feminine discourse, as women can also pursue careers and achieve higher positions

in society, and the family is no longer the only arena for women's talents in the workplace. The establishment of a female discourse mediates the establishment of a social order, and the way they learn to use it to position themselves within social and cultural norms can be a powerful shock to women's education and the discursive construction of identity in China.

1.3. Combination of feminist psychology and Huaping Girls' High School

Psychology is scientifically oriented and universally describes objects. Its core issues of sexuality, autonomy and identity among others are questioned as sexist and have always controlled women. The hegemony and patriarchy of developmental psychology have a strong influence on female life, where men are seen as the representatives of knowledge and power and women are seen as procreators as passive subjects. Another issue that was mentioned was de-gendering and gender neutrality, autonomy being autonomy and self-determination that develops during a time of childhood development (Friedman and Bolte, 2011).

Feminist psychology can be seen as a critique of epistemology and hypothesis theory, challenging the privilege and status of normal society as male-dominated, hence it can also be described as the study of the field of gender in psychology. Feminist psychology has been a long struggle as an important perspective in critical psychology against patriarchy and sexism. Challenging the existence of oppression in society and whether the gender and gender-neutral character of the universal subject in psychology is autonomy (Mattos, 2015). For girls in Huaping, they have no right to determine their future, and they cannot even decide whether they can continue their education. For boys living in the same place, however, it is a completely different situation. One poor family borrowed money to keep their son in junior high school but forced their daughter, who was in her third year of high school, to drop out of school. This was despite the girl's very good grades, simply due to the fact that they did not want to pay for the tuition fees for the girl. It would undoubtedly be a huge challenge for a minor girl living in the mountains to continue her studies on her own. These girls have to sacrifice their education and future for the survival of their entire family. This is we say that historically women have been unable to gain autonomy, and autonomy is the privilege of gender (Mattos, 2015).

Identity is central to personhood in psychology, and feminist psychology argues that immutable identity categories are often used to delineate women's identities. Erikson (1987) argues that the development of a comprehensive female identity can only be achieved through marriage and childbearing. Feminist community psychology combines community psychology and feminist psychology to challenge individualism. It argues that individual experiences are often shaped by social forces, while emphasising commonality and difference, enhancing mutual understanding, respect and solidarity.

Since people belong to different social groups at the same time, these intersections bring about unique experiences. Intersectionality highlights the multiple identities and designated social status of girls in rural Yunnan: poor and female. Femininity brings with it the perception of a preference for boys in the family and gender discrimination in society, and poverty limits more possibilities and the cost of trial and error.

Perhaps girls living in wealthy families have the financial

means to support spiritual pursuits and do not need to struggle to survive. Intersectionality highlights the gender biases common in Chinese society, and a central part of it is to focus on structural oppression, to challenge the notions of male superiority and female inferiority entrenched in social inequality and to help us understand and ameliorate the negative consequences and promote social justice (Rosenthal, 2016).

Public education can provide quality and equitable access to education for poor and disadvantaged children to the greatest extent possible. However, due to the intersection of social inequalities, it is indisputable that resources are not equitably distributed and that wealthier areas have better educational resources. In a poor area, it has been a great challenge to create a free high school for girls. The government and the society came together to contribute to support the establishment of the free high school. Huaping Girls' High School offers all hardworking girls the opportunity to compete fairly in the entrance examinations and to escape the shackles of poverty.

An analysis of the embodiment of community psychology, discursive psychology and feminist psychology in critical psychology, using Huaping Girls' High School as an example. It is a reference for the education of poor girls and a step towards the equality.

2. Critical Psychology in China

The long-standing patriarchy and gender discrimination in developmental psychology deeply oppresses women. In China, the deep-rooted preference for boys over girls is also a social issue that cannot be ignored at the moment. From 1982 to 2016, China had been implementing a one-child-per-couple policy, and 90% of urban children are now only-children (Poston and Falbo, 1990).

The implementation of this policy may have achieved gender equality in family, social and educational resources. Since the only-child family can only invest all of its financial resources in one child, it effectively prevents deliberate inequalities in treatment due to patriarchal attitudes. It is interesting to note that in spite of this situation, girls are still insidiously subjected to sexist criticism.

Gender stereotypes define that a girl should be a 'virtuous wife and caring mum' as described in traditional femininity discourse. Many psychologists believe that women are less able to withstand the rigours that come with higher education. Therefore, women can only be satisfied by marriage and motherhood, while those who do not choose this role lose the experience and lead an empty life without purpose.

In contrast to students at Huaping Girls' High School, the opportunity to study overseas is to broaden their horizons, enrich their life experiences and embrace a completely different educational model to that of China. Studying in the UK, there is no doubt that tuition fees can be a very high amount indeed for international students. Families without good financial support cannot afford this amount of money. There are still many people who believe that instead of spending a lot of money on a girl, it is better to just buy a house, which they refer to as an investment. After all, spending it on education may not pay off. Buying a house can be seen as real estate and investing in education is a waste as it will not pay off in future work or life, especially for girls.

Feminist psychology define that procreative freedom includes the right to procreate and the right not to procreate,

a long-standing advocacy of women's rights and the idea of gender equality (Baker, 2015). Women have the right to choose whether or not to procreate or to engage in work to realise their values.

Another interesting point on the topic of gender equality in one-child families is that parents of higher socio-economic status expect their daughters to have the same qualities as men, so that they are capable of doing the same things that men do. On the one hand, girls are raised to have desirable feminine characteristics and on the other hand, they are expected to grow up like boys. In fact this expectation does not go beyond the dichotomy of male femininity, but rather extends the expectations of girls to the male domain, which is hardly a reflection of gender equality (Liu, 2006).

Through gender role socialisation and parental expectations, gendering can unconsciously guide one to think in specific gender categories, leading to the spontaneous occurrence of violence and the perpetuation of male domination. This ideology cultivates a male leadership discourse that directly denies girls the right to pursue higher education. Women are deeply imprisoned by the shackles shaped by marriage and childbearing, and the idealised image of women is portrayed as caring homemakers and mothers of children (Zhao and Jones, 2017). In fact, as the proportion of women in higher education increases, the societal perspectives are also advancing. Women discourse in the workplace is also increasingly gaining attention, and the rise of female thought is shaping a whole new way of identity and leadership. Feminist psychology asserts that reproductive freedom includes the right to procreate and the right not to procreate, a long-standing advocacy of women's rights and the idea of gender equality (Baker, 2015). Women have the right to choose whether or not to have children or to engage in work to fulfil their values.

In psychology, gender differences can be seen as biological differences in subjectivity between the sexes, and psychological differences in personality can also be described as gender traits, a dichotomy between masculinity and femininity to distinguish them. At the same time gender differences are also socially constructed differences that produce gender-specific discourses.

The dichotomy between masculinity and femininity is one-dimensional. In China, girls are considered to be gentle, attentive and understanding, while boys are considered to be brave, ambitious and independent. Children acquire gender stereotypes by observing patterns appropriate to their gender through cognitive categorization, such as observing parents and peers, or even television and books for children, is a powerful force in differentiating gender-typed behaviours (Lytton and Romney, 1991). Children who grow up with gender non-conforming behaviour or tendencies are treated differently by their parents, including the whole school and society.

Unfortunately, women are more easily objectified than men (Bartky, 1990). In Chinese tradition there is a double standard for women and men, with 'Lang Cai Nv Mao' judging men by their talents and abilities, but women are judged by their appearance. The excessive focus on the appearance of women can be seen as another form of oppression against women. Once physical appearance becomes a gender difference, it can have an impact on someone's life. Women who grow up with such expectations, where appearance is constantly associated with self-esteem, could have serious psychological consequences. Adjusting to the values and ethical norms that

arise in societies where oppression and inequality bring about great differences, and becoming an agent of emancipation through one's own actions is also one of the goals of feminist psychology (Lykes and Moane, 2009).

Mainstream psychology is male-centred and considers women to be more vulnerable and less rational than men. Stereotypes lead to a distinct distinction between what men and women are expected to do as well. Men are thought to be more suited to adventurous and challenging work, while women are thought to be in safe, stable, unchanging jobs. My sister has completely broken the shackles that confined her, as she is a police officer and holds a leadership position. Working in a challenging job made her braver and challenged the femininity discourse that women are not suitable for top management positions and are not suitable for dangerous activities and must go home at night (Burr, 2003).

The excessive pursuit of objective truth can allow privilege and oppression to be ignored. At the heart of feminist psychology's mission is the challenge to hegemonic discourses in mainstream psychology, revealing issues that have been overlooked within the context of gender. The study of gender difference is used only as part of an approach to address sexism, converting the study of gender categories into a study that focuses on gender discrimination and identity. There is a change from a focus on needs and lives in the dominant paradigm to a focus on creating and supporting paradigms (Baker, 2006).

My wish would be for girls to have equal rights to be freedom to choose anything. To study or work, to be in a relationship or single, to have long hair or short hair. All choices are made from the heart and are not confined.

3. Conclusion

A literature review is conducted from three aspects: community psychology, discursive psychology, and feminist psychology combined with Huaping Girls' High School. The author offers some reflections from China's one-child policy and traditional Chinese gender discourses, and concludes with a call for equality in education as well as gender equality.

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