

The Differences in Children's Psychological Education between China and the West

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Abstract:

Psychological education is essential for developing a person's personality and social resilience. The development of children's emotional well-being is mostly influenced by education theories and methods used in various cultural contexts. From a cross-cultural comparison perspective, this report systematically examines the distinctions between Western and Chinese psychological education across three dimensions: family education, school-based practices, and broader social-cultural contexts. Findings reveal that collectivism, devotion, and academic achievement are the cornerstones of conventional Chinese education. Families and educational institutions commonly use control and expectations to control children's habits and values. In comparison, Western education places a higher value on individualism, emotional expression, and self-actualization, arguing that psychological education is essential for developing separate personalities and intellectual well-being. This report examines structural differences in family education practices, college philosophies, and environmental-cultural values through research of various empirical studies from both cultures. These differences affect children's social growth, self-esteem, and internal effectiveness, being considerable. In order to accomplish complete psychological development, the research concludes by recommending the creation of a child-centred academic model that balances self-discipline with personal care.

Keywords: Cross-Historical; Family Education; Chinese and Western Education; Psychological Education

1. Introduction

Major differences exist between Chinese and Western societies in terms of education strategies and practices, and they are particularly evident in the area of

children's mental health education due to distinct cultural and educational system characteristics. For psychological and personality development, childhood is a critical time. Educational techniques influence a child's mental culture and cognitive engagement with

political settings in addition to academic performance. Western education places a prime on personal freedom, emotional expression, and the development of innovative thinking, while standard Chinese education places a major focus on collectivism, academic achievement, and administrative norms. These differences not only show distinct mental traits among children of different cultural backgrounds, but they also cause deviations in how mental health problems are manifested.

Cross-social internal research has steadily examined the position that culture and education play in children's psychological development over the past ten years [1,2]. While Western education, which is influenced by Enlightenment theories and humanistic psychology, places more emphasis on personal freedom and personal freedom, China's education tradition, which is rooted in Confucian thought, emphasizes shared interests and behavioural norms. Getting a balance between the Western and Chinese academic systems has grown to be a popular theme in educational psychology as a result of the development of modernization and educational development.

Children in China often experience intense academic pressure and are prone to self-comparisons, which may cause anxiety, depression, and self-identity issues. In contrast, Western children are more likely to encounter feelings of isolation, cognitive difficulties, or an increased emphasis on individualism when they are raised in settings with more loosely structured family relationships and heightened cultural competition.

This research compares China and the West in children's mental health education across three core dimensions—educational philosophy, practical implementation paths, and developmental outcomes—focusing on children aged 6–12 in representative educational settings. It further explores the underlying causes of these differences and proposes improvement strategies based on bibliometric analysis and typical case comparisons. On the one hand, evaluations like this reveal standard emotional issues experienced by children in various educational techniques. On the other hand, using each other's abilities can help to strengthen children's mental health education.

2. Forms and Variations Between China and the West in Children's Mental Health and Educational Practices

2.1 Chinese Children's Mental Health Characteristics

Children are seen as extensions of interpersonal and cultural attempts in China's conventional educational

environment [3]. Their emotional well-being is usually assessed through the lenses of 'compliance' and 'achievement'. Confucian moral standards guide the development of this utopian education model, which emphasizes the importance of meticulous study and rigid discipline in achieving parental honor and societal expectations. According to research, Chinese children experience a high level of academic anxiety, self-denial, and emotional suppression [4]. Children are expected to adhere to 'type standards' for academic performance and cultural behavior, but this continual outside drive tends to destroy their psychological resilience and fundamental motivation to learn.

Additionally, children's psychological external locus of control is reinforced by China's long-standing collectivism and "face culture", which tends to concentrate on other people's assessments rather than their own emotional needs [5]. This concern with teachers and power figures, an extreme fear of failure, and emotional strategies to minimize competition are present in the school environment. From a longer-term evolutionary perspective, this internal structure may prevent the development of an impartial personality by preventing inappropriate self-efficacy, constrained creativity, and delayed development of an independent personality.

It should be noted that Chinese families have started to understand the value of mental health in recent years as a result of cultural change and educational reform. Additionally, some schools have begun introducing social and emotional learning (SEL) initiatives and psychological counseling programs. Despite lacking the basis of a comprehensive psychological education, these programs continue to be mainly focused on trivial matters like educational assistance and personal control. In effect, political aspirations, home buildings, and cultural values continue to be at the centre of Chinese children's mental health issues.

2.2 Western Children's Mental Health Features

Western education systems place a greater emphasis on the family's individual freedom and emotional expression than the Chinese type. Western families are most likely to adopt democratic or supportive parenting strategies that encourage children to have freedom of choice, express their opinions, and assume personal responsibility [6]. For children to eventually build a sense of personal identity and self-efficacy during their first years, this parenting approach places internal safety and similar communication at the top of the scale. Through job-based learning and curiosity inquiry in school settings, according to research, Western children are encouraged to reach their full

potential. This method helps lower anxiety levels while strengthening one's capacity for self-awareness and emotional regulation [7].

When encountering anxiety or depression, kids are more likely to actively seek specialized help. However, this accessibility does, in some cases, cause a "overpsychologisation", the tendency to view daily emotional fluctuations as emotional problems, undermining the development of psychological resilience. So, despite providing emotional support and respecting personality, Western psychological education must also strike a balance between assimilation and psychological regulation.

3. Educational Perspectives on Cross-Cultural Differences in Family Upbringing

3.1 Differences in Family Education Methods

The basic social environment that influences a family's psychological development is parental education. Children's cognitive well-being and character development are impacted substantially by education models in a variety of social contexts. According to a study, Chinese parents increasingly adopt a desire-driven educational philosophy, using academic performance and cultural standing as key indicators of a child's success and worth [2], a tendency shaped by collectivist cultural values that favor authoritative family education. Typical cases include the widely discussed "tiger-mom" approach and the common practice of enrolling children in intensive cram schools, in contrast to Western democratic education models that encourage independent choice; these differing orientations reveal how cultural factors drive parenting styles and may lead to long-term consequences such as heightened pressure or diminished self-esteem. Parents often exhibit strong familial tendencies in interactions with their children, adhering to rigid research schedules and psychological rules to handle the development of their children. This approach emphasizes cultural approval and alienation. Children often develop "heteronomous motivation" in such higher-pressure, higher-expectation settings, where learning and behavioral drives are mainly driven by physical evaluation rather than by intrinsic interest or psychological needs [8]. This educational approach aids in the development of cultural resilience and discipline by encouraging children's sense of responsibility, objective orientation, and social consciousness in some ways. Putting too much focus on academic performance and behavior may prevent children's self-awareness, emotional expression, and innovative thinking from a psychological development

perspective. Children who endure prolonged large-stress environments are prone to emotional issues like anxiety, perfectionism, and small self- self-esteem [3]. Parents place a similar focus on communication and emotional help in contrast to Western family education, which is usually child-centered. Children are encouraged to express their feelings, study objectives, and make independent decisions. Self-efficacy and personal regulation abilities are essentially enhanced by this' self-controlled education ' model, which is thought to be more in line with the inherent patterns of children's psychological development [6]. Also, family members ' relationships with one another are reflected in academic discrepancies. Parents are normally viewed as expert figures and repositories of knowledge in Chinese homes, with parent-child communication mainly characterized by directives and orders that often disdain children's psychological needs. In contrast, parents in Western families place more value on listening, similar conversation, and compassion, which fosters children's emotional stability and safe attachment [4]. This gap stems from unique social conceptions of household functions: Western families emphasize personal support and personal development, while Chinese families prioritize socialization goals and behavioural norms.

3.2 Differences in Educational Philosophy and Teaching Methods

Educational success is a vital part of psychological development, has a significant influence on children's socializing and psychological development. Chinese education has focused on tests for a long time, emphasizing knowledge inculcation over quality-oriented training and relying on teacher-centered classroom practices in which teachers act as the primary authority, with an emphasis on academic achievement and administrative control; typical interaction patterns include lecture-dominated instruction and limited group discussion, and mental-health support is often constrained compared with Western schools (e.g., the ratio of psychological counselors to students is generally higher). Although this method obviously benefits students ' capability for self-control and achievement, it may also result in excessive mental pressure and minimal creativity [3]. Students often develop "external desire dependency" in the quest for grades, treating learning as a task as opposed to an exploration, and lacking in good emotional experiences as part of the learning process.

In comparison, Western education places more value on emotional education and inquiry-based understanding. Cai et al. point out that Western classrooms place greater emphasis on student psychological and experiential engagement throughout the learning process [9]. Through

creative tasks, discussions, and representation, teachers encourage pupils to fathom culture and themselves, fostering psychological development and information acquisition. This rigorous approach emphasizes a routine of “experience- knowing- expression”, which increases pupils ‘ capacity for teamwork, empathy, and personal recognition.

Further, researchers explored how cultural context affects children’s psychological cognitive processes [1]. Chinese children tend to emphasize the validity of authority over the logic and justice of the “rule information” itself when confronted with law changes. This difference reflects the deep influence of internal reasoning on academic philosophies. The balance of the interpersonal order is emphasized by China’s education system, which places a premium on keeping physical power and standards. In comparison, Western education places a greater focus on establishing spiritual principles and creating students ‘ greater psychological autonomy and social reflection skills.

Although Chinese organizations are placing a greater focus on mental health curricula and counseling techniques, psychological education continues to be viewed primarily as a secondary work. A comprehensive lack of professional help and curriculum inclusion persists. In comparison, psychological education has become a key element of the proper education curriculum in Western countries. A structural commitment to safeguarding children’s mental well-being is evident in the prevalence of counseling teachers, social and emotional learning (SEL) frameworks, and campus psychological intervention strategies [10]. In effect, the incarceration of psychological education, as well as the differences between Chinese and Western education systems, collectively condition different trajectories of children’s psychological development across cultures.

3.3 Sociocultural and Value Differences

The social system is at the center of academic differences. With a cultural evaluation technique that usually measures personal value by team performance, family honor, and societal contribution, Chinese culture emphasizes collectivism and reverence for teachers and learning, drawing heavily on Confucian thoughts such as “ritual” and “harmony,” and research shows that children raised in collectivist contexts often score higher in teamwork and cooperative tasks; thus, the supreme goal of education extends beyond academic competence to cultivating morally responsible and socially oriented “ideal people,” reflecting a balanced consideration of collective interests and individual development. Contrary to popular belief, Western society is based on individualism and modernism, with

training putting more emphasis on recognizing personal value and emotional independence [10]. In comparison, Western education tends toward an ‘internalization-oriented’ view, while Foreign information’s psychological education objectives lean toward an assimilation-oriented method. This social divergence has a tremendous effect on children’s mental self-concepts and value orientations, as well as informative content.

These two education models are parallel in horizontal with globalization and cultural change. Liu et al. observed that Chinese households living abroad are developing a “hybrid parenting design” that combines Western emotional flexibility with Chinese control [6]. An efficient example of technology in psychological education can be found in this cross-social education practice. It demonstrates that trans-cultural understanding and education adaptation should be used to facilitate the creation of a more equitable and versatile psychological education system for children.

4. Educational Implications and Future Directions

Children’s psychological education has grown to be a major concern of expressed concern across international educational systems as a result of the growing development of globalization and cultural pluralism. Both China’s education traditions, which emphasize control and social preference, and the Western educational philosophy, which emphasizes freedom and personal expression, both demand integration and innovation in modern societal conditions. Alternatively to refining a single cultural model, the primary objective of psychological education for potential children should be to create an integrated psychological education system with a global perspective, achieving children’s comprehensive psychological well-being and social adaptation.

A child-centered development perception has really been established at the base of educational philosophy. Beyond academic achievement, information’s goals include social responsibility, personal harmony, and intellectual effectively- being. In order to increase pupils ‘ potential for psychological self-regulation and interpersonal communication skills, schools should systematically connect mental health education modules like Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), psychological resilience education, and personal management courses into their curricula. Psychological education should also be taught in the home environment through house-school collaboration strategies. This enables parents to create a coordinated support structure between home and school, helping them to grasp

academic mental education techniques. In a secure, inclusive culture, babies can grow a good self-personality, which lessens emotional stress and anxiety dangers [4]. Educational administrators may advertise teacher training in cross- social awareness and mental literacy, both at the level of teacher training and education policy. Instructors serve as both enablers of student mental development and as conveyors of information. Teachers may understand students ' personal shifts, identify sources of stress, and manage classroom interactions with cultural sensitivity through the establishment of in-service psychological education courses and cross-cultural education workshops [2]. Furthermore, national education policies may establish professional counseling facilities and educational oversight mechanisms to improve the institutionalization of psychological education. This allows for the psychological education programs' ongoing implementation and review.

Also, efforts should be made to promote international cooperation and information sharing in psychological education at the political and global levels. Through the creation of available research databases and informative resource platforms, countries may collaborate with foreign educational organizations, non-political organizations (NGOs), and educational alliances to simultaneously establish international standards for children's psychological education. This would encourage education equity and global management of mental health in addition to reducing the development differences between nations [10].

Lastly, establishing a complete transformation of informative objectives will result in enhanced implementation outcomes. In addition to easing the countless pressures that modern children face in the educational, social, and psychological fields, it will also foster future citizens who are ethnically inclusive, physiologically resilient, and morally responsible. This educational paradigm, centred on mental wellbeing and underpinned by global collaboration, will become a pivotal direction for 21st-century educational development. The people world can create a higher degree of synergy between children's psychological development and institutional advancement by transforming educational wisdom from different cultures.

5. Conclusion

From a cross-cultural comparison perspective, this report explores and contrasts the disparities in children's psychological education between Chinese and Western settings. The three major influencing factors—family structures and parenting designs, school-related social-cultural values, and broader social-cultural philosophies—constitute the core differences between the two educational contexts.

In contrast to Western education, which places greater emphasis on personal autonomy, emotional expression, and internal self-actualization, the Chinese education system places greater emphasis on cultural norms, academic achievement, and social belonging in psychological education for children. Moreover, the study acknowledges its limitations, such as not incorporating left-behind children and children with special education needs, which future research may address.

Future research should focus on the link between education models and children's emotional characteristics, with special attention to the effects of political change, family structure, and online education. Parallel to this, longitudinal studies and cross-cultural studies should be conducted to assess the lengthy-term effects of integrated academic strategies on children's social and emotional properly-being. Future scholarly efforts may further clarify concrete research paths—for example, conducting Chinese–Western integrated education intervention experiments, or prioritizing research based on existing gaps such as the need to integrate family and school education. In addition, practical transformation paths could be proposed, including integrating research results into teacher training programs. Just by combining the advantages of both educational systems, can people really accomplish child-centered psychological education goals and develop children's thorough, harmonious, and lasting cognitive, emotional, and social development around the world.

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