

Research on the Methodology of Educational Science with Chinese Characteristics

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Abstract: Over the past several decades, Chinese education scholars have been continuously striving to develop a form of educational science that bears the distinct mark of “Chinese characteristics.” Research methodology not only enhances teachers’ academic literacy and teaching competence but also advances the development of educational science with Chinese characteristics. This paper examines the developmental trajectory, goals, and distinctive features of Chinese educational science and explores four main aspects of research methodology in this field. It further defines what constitutes a research methodology with Chinese characteristics and offers reflections and practical suggestions for its improvement.

Keywords: Chinese Characteristics; Basic Educational Theory; Openness; Contribution; Transformation.

1. Introduction:

A scientific research methodology in education with “Chinese characteristics” should embody a distinctly Chinese style and spirit, contributing to both the world and the field of educational science through uniquely Chinese approaches, thereby constructing a favorable development framework. However, how to establish such a methodology and how to promote the integration of Chinese educational science into the global academic community remain challenges that demand our continuous efforts and commitment. [1]

2. Overview of Chinese Educational Science

The so-called “educational science with Chinese characteristics” realizes the aspirations and pursuits of Chinese educational researchers, ensuring the continuity of China’s century-long educational development. Over the past few decades, Chinese educational science has experienced rapid growth, with a strong emphasis on cultivating a uniquely “Chinese identity” and “Chinese signature.” [2] The research methodology of educational science with Chinese characteristics seeks to excavate China’s historical heritage, grasp the realities of contemporary China, and anticipate future trends, thereby constructing an educational science that reflects Chinese style and ethos. This area of research has expanded significantly in recent decades. However, how to develop a methodology for educational science with Chinese characteristics, and how to integrate Chinese attributes into educational science so that it can contribute to the global educational discourse, remain critical tasks that require persistent effort and dedication. [3]

The “Sinicization” of educational science is an ongoing process. The progress and exploration of Chinese educational science have never ceased; “search” and “dream” have become integral parts of the Chinese Dream for educational science. A consensus has already been reached in many respects regarding what constitutes educational science with Chinese characteristics. [4] It embodies the “cultural temperament,” “cultural genes,” and vitality unique to China, forming what is often referred to as the “Chinese imprint.” Nevertheless, for Chinese educational science to open its

doors and engage with the world, it must align Chinese cultural identity, educational elements, and discursive systems with international dialogues.

From another perspective, Chinese educational science must also address many issues specific to China. For instance, the country experiences significant population mobility, leading to heavy academic burdens for students and frequent difficulties in rural school enrollment. Disparities in educational access between urban and rural areas are also prominent. To address these challenges, Chinese education must shift its thinking and develop theories grounded in the realities of its national context [5]. This approach, which is rooted in Chinese-specific problems and solutions, further clarifies the goals and ideals of Chinese educational science, outlines future challenges, and seeks to provide comprehensive answers to major issues through ongoing practice, thus forming a relatively complete and systematic body of Chinese educational science.

3. Methodology of Educational Science Research

3.1. Overview of Key Points in the Methodology of Educational Science Research

Actively advancing research on educational theory and research methodology in Chinese universities not only enhances teachers’ academic literacy and teaching competence but also promotes the development of educational science with Chinese characteristics. The main points of educational science research methodology are clarified as follows:

First, efforts must be made to improve students’ understanding of the fundamental theories of Chinese education. The main content should include strengthening students’ knowledge of the current status and distinctive features of contemporary Chinese education, enhancing their understanding of the historical background and development trajectory of education, as well as the formation and evolution of various educational disciplines. This can generally be achieved through reading materials, videos, and books, adopting a popular science approach to learning [6]. In addition, particular attention should be given to summarizing

the problems that exist in educational research, improving students' sensitivity to educational issues, and actively cultivating their abilities in aesthetics and curriculum standard fulfillment, enabling students to naturally adapt to the development of contemporary Chinese educational science.

Second, the methodology of educational science research should emphasize strengthening the study of fundamental content in educational psychology. For instance, attention should be paid to students' psychological development, as well as to the psychological well-being of teachers, and the psychological processes involved in teaching and learning. Both students and teachers should develop within a scientifically sound educational environment. Moreover, participants should acquire a basic understanding of psychological principles, enhance their aesthetic capabilities, and learn to perceive, appreciate, express, and create [7]. This will enable participants to respond to educational content autonomously, scientifically, inspirationally, emotionally, and aesthetically — a series of complex reactions essential to the process. This focus on the direct "practitioners" of educational science research methodology is a major point of inquiry and helps to expand both the richness and breadth of educational science.

Third, special emphasis should be placed on exploring theories and methods of learning within the research methodology. The primary aim is to ensure that students thoroughly understand the learning process, types of learning, learning pathways, and disciplinary characteristics. Students should grasp the objectives behind classroom design and gain a foundational understanding of the structures and methods designed by teachers. They should appreciate the value and significance of teaching activities. Especially under the framework of education with Chinese characteristics, there is a need to address the challenges posed by exam-oriented education, with particular attention to students' foundational theoretical learning. Chinese education emphasizes the cultivation of students' core competencies and holistic development. Therefore, students must understand the significance of mastering educational theory in enhancing their core competencies and overall development. This approach promotes students' ability to oversee the overall educational structure, clarifies the purposes of education, and, through feedback and assistance, strengthens educational theory in alignment with Chinese educational characteristics. As the primary beneficiaries of education, students have the responsibility and obligation to participate in every stage of educational theory reform, ultimately achieving the capacity for autonomous training, learning, and research according to prescribed guidelines and recommendations.

Fourth, attention must be given to major topics such as textbook compilation and multimedia teaching. In educational science research methodology, it is essential to employ scientific methods in educating and guiding students. It is particularly important to incorporate the features of the new era, conduct educational theoretical research from a multicultural perspective, study various teaching methods, and keep pace with contemporary educational trends. Multiple methods should be employed to master the research and teaching of diverse disciplines, such as using observational methods, experimental methods, comparative methods, and empirical summary methods to integrate research methodology into practice and promote the development of educational science. Furthermore, the

advancement of the times has injected fresh vitality into the development of educational theory. The influx of multimedia teaching and information technology has become an important factor in the reform of contemporary educational science research methodology. Only in this way can a research methodology be formed that not only possesses a profound historical foundation but also embodies contemporaneity and new vitality.

3.2. Major Issues in the Research Methodology of Educational Science with Chinese Characteristics

3.2.1. How to Scientifically Preserve Chinese Characteristics

Broadly speaking, Chinese educational science must maintain its distinct Chinese characteristics. At the same time, it must actively break the bonds between tradition and reality, and transcend the relationship between self and other, with the goal of stepping onto the global stage and gaining international respect and recognition. It is necessary to reflect on and seek answers from the needs of both China and the world, especially paying close attention to issues closely tied to "China-foreign relations," avoiding both excessive division and complete amalgamation.

Specifically, any discipline, school of thought, or theoretical achievement is produced to meet certain common or specific needs. Educational theory should be grounded in real needs; if it becomes detached from reality, it loses its purpose and will ultimately be eliminated. Therefore, the disciplines applied in research methodology must first meet the standards required by China. It is well known that many concepts and methods in educational theory originate from the West, and educational needs have been shaped by Western values and interests. This creates differences that must be carefully managed. It is important to seek rules that are suited to China's unique circumstances while also considering the needs of others and the demands of global education, particularly where differences between Chinese and Western education exist.

The research methodology of educational science with Chinese characteristics must be based on a Chinese perspective. Since the 20th century, this field has developed rapidly. However, much of modern educational theory has its roots in the West, leading at times to difficulties in establishing an independent Chinese perspective. The mature systems of Western theories have become deeply embedded in Chinese educational science, making it a daunting challenge to ensure a distinctly Chinese viewpoint and to practice research methodology with Chinese characteristics. It is essential to critically reflect on and reassert awareness of the hidden Western perspectives and objectively analyze both the strengths and weaknesses of Western education. By selectively imitating and applying these theories, China can ultimately develop original contributions to education.

Chinese educational science has already achieved considerable success in terms of research methods and academic direction. The study and exploration of educational science have become part of China's academic discourse, carrying significant meaning and contributing richly to the field.

3.2.2. How to Face Daunting Challenges with Confidence

At present, Chinese educational science faces chronic problems such as a lack of distinct characteristics, insufficient

originality, underdeveloped systems, and limited influence. These problems can be expanded macroscopically to reflect broader issues in the development of the discipline or can be broken down into the practical problems of education itself. Solutions require not only the mutual influence and interaction among members within the field through academic critique and debate but also the engagement of every ordinary educator and learner as active participants in the discipline, combining theoretical reflection with practical exploration to draw valid conclusions.

In confronting the current challenges:

First, theoretical research in educational science with Chinese characteristics must be strengthened. Theoretical construction should not remain at the level of textbook development but must involve rational stratification, definition of user groups and levels, and the effective integration of theoretical research with practical application.

Second, research into the history of Chinese education must be deepened. The cultural genes of China are deeply rooted in the marrow of the Chinese nation, with an unbroken history of civilization and a well-preserved educational system that emphasizes introspection and experiential learning. It is recommended that the Chinese tradition of "learning as the foundation" be perpetuated and that efforts be made to reconnect with reality and strengthen "historical consciousness." One practical approach is to integrate the history of Chinese education into the chapters of educational science textbooks.

Third, new paths must be developed in line with the realities of China's economic and social development, and innovation in research methodology must be emphasized. The overarching guiding ideology of Chinese educational science is dialectical materialism and historical materialism, yet contemporary theoretical knowledge from fields such as complexity science, phenomenology, and hermeneutics also offers valuable inspiration for educational research. The development of disciplines cannot proceed without methodological innovation, and efforts should be made to foster an environment of intellectual diversity, establishing a system of educational science from new perspectives.

4. Reflections and Practices

In response to the major issues identified above, this paper offers the following three reflections on the development of the research methodology of educational science with Chinese characteristics, focusing on openness, contribution, and transformation:

4.1. "Input" and "Polish" — Enhancing the Openness of Research Methodology

What constitutes the research methodology of educational science with Chinese characteristics? How should it be practically implemented? In addressing these fundamental questions, the author argues that the research methodology of educational science with Chinese characteristics is, in essence, an open methodology. It should be continuously enriched through the absorption of external advantages, combining "input" and "polish" to align with global standards.

"Input" refers to acquiring a deep understanding of relevant educational theories and research methodologies through study and comprehension. Specifically, this includes how to implement research methodologies in the teaching process and how to adopt appropriate and effective methods to

accelerate the development of educational science, improve the overall quality of education, and cultivate more diversified and comprehensively skilled talents.

"Polish," on the other hand, involves extending, continuing, and reconstructing the acquired theoretical knowledge in a "Chinese discourse" manner. This means that concepts, propositions, and methods must be continually revised and adjusted through genuine teaching practices, using Chinese theories and characteristics. The goal is to form a dynamic, "living" body of educational science theory.

4.2. "Vision" and "Answer Sheet" — Enhancing the Contribution of Research Methodology

What is the significance of the research methodology of educational science with Chinese characteristics? What should China's attitude be? As an important aspect of national development, education plays a critical role in talent cultivation and the formation of the educational system. Every participant in education should clearly understand the true meaning of educational science and the scientific methodology it employs, as well as the attitudes that should be maintained within educational science with Chinese characteristics.

The author believes that China should uphold a "broad vision" to enhance the contribution of Chinese educational science. The current global landscape is highly complex, and China, as a key member of the community of shared human destiny, is increasingly influential. In the future global framework, China's approach to educational science will likewise depend on its broader vision. This is both an opportunity and a challenge of the times. As educational science advances and research methodologies are adopted, it is necessary to continuously engage in critical inquiry. Every participant in education must constantly rectify their thoughts and regulate their behavior, asking: What contributions have I made to the world? What contributions have I made to educational science? What is the significance and value of the map of knowledge?

What kind of answer sheet has Chinese educational science presented? Can it stand proudly among global educational sciences? This not only determines the development framework of Chinese educational science but also shapes the development framework of global educational science. It is a meaningful and worthwhile endeavor.

In the practical application of research methodologies, particular emphasis should be placed on the establishment of a clear mindset. Only with clear objectives and a positive attitude can research methodologies be effectively utilized, leading to fruitful outcomes — and this precisely constitutes the distinctive feature of educational science with Chinese characteristics.

For example, in the area of students' psychological development, emphasis should be placed on cultivating students' aesthetic sensibilities, teaching them to perceive, appreciate, express, and create, enabling them to develop a scientific and autonomous understanding and perception of the world and the development of educational science. This broadens and enriches the individual's informational system. In the area of multimedia teaching, students should be exposed to educational theoretical research from a multicultural perspective, using various learning methods to adapt to advanced international research models and to lead the trends in the development of educational science.

4.3. “Tradition” and “Practice” — Enhancing the Transformability of Research Methodology

What challenges does the research methodology of educational science with Chinese characteristics face? What preparations must be made? The author believes that two key issues related to transformation must be addressed:

First, the “transformation of the times” — the transition from history to reality — demonstrates Chinese educational science’s ability to confront reality directly. This transformation involves the accumulation, digestion, and application of China’s historical and traditional wealth, using it as a foundation to solve the major educational problems currently facing China.

Second, the transformation from practical experience to scientific theory is crucial — converting existing practical conclusions into theoretical constructs unique to China is essential for China’s future contribution to global theoretical discourse. One distinctive feature of China’s research methodology, compared to the West, is the nation’s profound historical and cultural traditions, combined with problems that are uniquely influenced by its economic and demographic conditions.

To successfully establish and popularize a research methodology of educational science with Chinese characteristics, these two types of transformations must be prepared for [8]. Only by transforming traditional energy into contemporary energy and practical energy into theoretical energy can Chinese educational science advance to a higher level.

China’s contemporary education is increasingly influential on the global stage. In the past, dialogues on educational theory primarily involved Chinese scholars interpreting and explaining Western theories. Today, there is a shift toward joint dialogues between Chinese and Western scholars on specific educational issues. Chinese concepts and viewpoints in educational science have gradually formed, participating in international dialogues and discussions, gaining recognition and reference worldwide, and becoming a unique and indispensable mode of expression and practice in the field of educational science.

5. Conclusion

Since the reform and opening-up, Chinese education scholars have been persistently exploring and shaping the development of educational science characterized by distinctive “Chinese characteristics.” Research methodology is an essential component for the advancement of educational science; it not only helps improve teachers’ academic literacy and teaching competence but also facilitates the development of educational science with Chinese characteristics. This paper first reviewed the development process, research importance, and significance of the research methodology of Chinese educational science, pointing out that developing a research methodology with Chinese characteristics and integrating it into the global landscape to reflect Chinese qualities and contribute to the advancement of world educational science are goals that require our dedicated efforts. At the same time, educational science with Chinese characteristics presents uniquely Chinese problems. These issues usually have distinct particularities, such as the high

population mobility in China, leading to common educational problems like school enrollment difficulties for children of migrant workers, heavy academic burdens on students, and significant disparities in education between urban and rural areas. Subsequently, this paper discussed four major aspects of the research methodology in educational science: first, efforts must be made to enhance students’ understanding of the fundamental theories of Chinese education; second, emphasis should be placed on strengthening the study of the fundamental content in educational psychology; third, particular attention should be paid to the exploration of learning theories and methods within the research methodology; fourth, major topics such as textbook compilation and multimedia teaching should be emphasized. These four aspects together define what constitutes a research methodology of educational science with Chinese characteristics. The paper then identified two key points for the development of this methodology: clarifying how to scientifically preserve Chinese characteristics and how to confidently face daunting challenges. Finally, it emphasized that the current global landscape is highly complex, and China, as part of the community of shared human destiny, is gaining increasing influence. In the future global framework, China’s approach to educational science will equally depend on its broader strategic vision. This represents not only a historical opportunity but also a profound challenge. In response to the three major issues raised, this paper proposed reflections and practical suggestions from three perspectives: “Input” and “Polish” — to enhance the openness of research methodology; “Vision” and “Answer Sheet” — to enhance the contribution of research methodology; and “Tradition” and “Practice” — to enhance the transformability of research methodology with Chinese characteristics.

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