



Received: 8 January 2020  
Accepted: 15 September 2020  
Published: 22 September 2020

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How to cite this article  
Nouri Ali, Mahmoud Mehr Mohammadi, Mohamad Sharif Taherpour, Ali Asghar Khallaghi. (2020). Historical Evolution of Educational Research Methodology in Iran, *The International Journal of Humanities* (2020) Vol. 27 (4): (21-31).

<http://ejjh.modares.ac.ir/article-27-39758-en.html>

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Historical Evolution of Educational Research Methodology in Iran

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**Abstract:** This study focuses on the significant lines of development characterizing the history of educational research methodology in Iran. A “historical case study” employed to collect, verify, and synthesize evidence about the same as such appeared in the Quarterly Journal of Education. The results indicated that the educational research in Iran has experienced five, distinct yet, overlapping and simultaneously operating historical moments. The first is the pre-methodology (1919- 1985) stage, during which scholars carried out their investigations without a distinct systematic scientific method. The second (1985- 1994) is a period of rising quantitative approach, during which quantitative methods were becoming central in the education field. The third (1995- 2004) is characterized by insistence on the monopoly of quantitative, during which educational and other social science researchers relied primarily on quantitative methods and statistical inference understood as a means to test the proposed hypotheses. The fourth (2005–2014), is a replacement stage started with the wave of qualitative taking over the traditional and provoked the appearance of a new hegemony. The concern for quality stage (2015-2019) is the fifth when the threat of losing credibility and leaving a relativistic impression were considered by members of the research community. It is concluded that Iran’s educational research urgently requires mobilized and rationalized methodological pluralism with the ultimate goal of improving on existing pedagogical practices.

**Keywords:** Educational Research; Methodology; History of Education; Methodological Pluralism.

## Introduction

From a general perspective, the history of education in Iran (Persia) is divided into two periods of pre- and post-Islamic education. The Iranian (Persian) culture prior to Islam is said to have had deep reverence and appreciation for knowledge education, and innovation religiously influenced by a primary principle of Zoroastrianism, e.g., “good conduct,” that could be achieved through “good thoughts”,

“good words”, and “good deeds” (Mehrmohammadi, 2014). According to the Zoroastrian religious teaching, all good thoughts, words and deeds are results of knowledge; and all ugly thoughts, words and deeds are results of ignorance (Shekari-Nayyeri, Tavousi, 2005). Hence, there were various educational institutions emerged in response to the importance of knowledge and

high value of education. The Academy of Gondishapur (Camp of Shapur) was founded during Sassanid dynasty (224–651 AD) in the reign of Shapur I. It was the heir to scientific and educational centers of Athens and Alexandria and soon became well-known for its medical studies. The library of the academy was equipped with Greek, Roman and Hindi books in the field of philosophy, mathematics and, especially medicine and astronomy, which were translated into Farsi (Jafari Dehaghi, 2005). According to the religious tolerance existing at Academy of Gondishapur, Christian, Nestorian, Greek and Jewish scientists were translating, and researching together on philosophical and scientific ideas of the East and the West (Radmanesh, 2005).

Iran became an Islamic territory in the seventh century. Submission to Islamic teachings as sacred and revealed knowledge worthy of trust, faithful commitment, and a basis for interpretation and action in private and public spheres of life became accepted (Mehrmohammadi, 2014). This acceptance could facilitate the emerging movement of translation and scientific development founded in the post-Islamic Iran. It was the result of the influence of Islam's attention to the knowledge learning, the Muslims' familiarity with cultures of their captured countries, the emergence of multicultural Islamic civilization, the rulers' interest in knowledge, the rational understanding of Islam, and the religious tolerance (Ayati, 1975). Muslims spent three centuries (13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries) translating scientific, philosophical and literary works that were remained from other nations. They got this huge human heritage from six languages: Arabic, Syriac, Pahlavi (Farsi), Hindi, Latin and finally, especially Greek languages. It was leading to the scientific and philosophical influence of thinkers such as Al-Farabi, Avicenna, Averroes, and al-Razi on the European scientific community during 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries (Ibid). However, the period of scientific and intellectual decline of Islamic

culture and civilization began in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century (Nazeri, 2004).

Concurrent with the development of the Western civilization, Iranians became acquainted with the West in the 19<sup>th</sup> century during the Qajar era to become ready for transforming various political, social, economic and cultural fields. If we consider the formation of the Qajar dynasty as the beginning of the contemporary era in the Iranian history, the establishment of Dar ul-Funun institution can also be regarded as a turning point in the Iranian history of education (Fardanesh, 2009; Mosapoor, 2009; Lotfabadi, 2009). This institution is the first academia in a western style in Iran established by Mirza Taqi Khan Amir-e Kabir (1806-1852) in 1851, for the purpose of teaching and training experts in different fields (Clawson and Rubin, 2005). The establishment of Dar al-Funun was a turning point in the educational reform in Iran that set the stepping stone of the contemporary educational system (Ayman, 1974).

While Haji Mirza Hasan Tabrizi (1851-1944), known as Roshdieh, was an influential educational reformist and among the first founders of new schools in Iran, Dar al-Funun School, Tabriz School, Moshirieh Maktab, Homayouni School, and military school of Tehran were established before Roshdieh in Iran. However, all of these schools belonged to the nobility and prominent state apparatus; and in fact, Roshdieh established a school for the public (Mozaffarmagham, 2009; Mosapoor, 2009). These attempts, in turn, led to the establishment of the University of Tehran in 1934 by integrating already existing higher education institutions such as Dar ul-Funun (World Bank, 2009). After the establishment of the Tehran University, in 1947, the University of Tabriz and then in 1949, Shiraz University were founded. In the following years, universities of Mashhad (1956), Isfahan (1958), Ahvaz (1958), Tehran Polytechnic School of Technology (1959), and National University of Iran (1959) were founded.

From the year 1962 onward, the number of higher educational institutions increased. During the early 1970s, graduate programs in sciences were founded. The first MA and PhD programs in "History and Philosophy of Education" were established in the faculty of education at the University of Tehran respectively in 1973 and 1974. One year later, in 1975, the second PhD program was established as well. Alimohamad Kradan, Gholamhosein Sedighi, Gholamhosein Shokohi, Fereydon Bazergan, Hadi Sharifi, and Shams Avari were the prominent names behind these achievements (Sha'baani Varaki, & Mohammadi Jaabaki, 2009).

The Islamic Republic was founded in Iran in 1979 and Iranian universities were suspended for a while. New policies after the Islamic revolution had an impact on the university education system in Iran (Ashraf, 1997). A few years later, two PhD programs were launched to educate prospective students in "Curriculum Development" and "Philosophy of Education" at the Teacher Training University (currently renamed to Kharazmi University) (Mosapoor, 2009). During the 1990s, PhD programs in "Educational Psychology" and "Educational Administration" were added. The M.A programs in "Educational Research" were also established with the efforts of Abbas Bazergan, a Professor of Educational Research and Evaluation at the University of Tehran. Several universities expanded their post graduate programs to accept PhDs in "Instructional Technology", "Educational Evaluation", "Economies of Education" and "Higher Education" in the following years. Research methodology courses were included in these academic programs and students were expected to master basic knowledge and skills requirement for doing research in the field of education.

Taken together, education, as one of the most important elements in terms of cultivating human character and building civilizations, has

a significant role in shaping man's cultural life. The future developments of this institution depend, to a large extent, on the cognitive abilities of educational researchers and the efficacy of their methods (Paya, 2007). By this understanding, several studies have conducted to examine the current situation of research methodology in the Iranian educational context. For instance, Shabani Varaki (2005) set out a study to examine the methodological issues of published research reports in Khorasan province to provide a snapshot view of the status of educational research methodology for policy makers as well as the interested scholars. This research revealed serious problems with conducting the phase of quantitative and qualitative methods as well as the presentation phase, including the lack of reporting of sample size or technique used for sample selection in detail. Similarly, Lotfabadi, Nowroozi & Hosseini (2007) have investigated the research methodology teaching of psychology and education in Iran. This research shows that, the epistemological and methodological foundation of the courses and textbooks for research methods teaching in universities is based on the positivism paradigm and the quantitative research methods. Accordingly, the psychological and educational articles that are published in scientific-research-based journals of psychology and education are based on the positivistic philosophy of science as well as on quantitative methodology. The numbers of teaching research method credits in psychology and education is very low and the syllabus of teaching by the professors during the courses is much less than those available in valid research-methodology textbooks. The epistemological foundation behind professor's teaching of research methodology is also of the quantitative, positivistic philosophy and no attention is paid to the qualitative methodology. Also, the students of the research methodology course are not made aware of the nature of research and the

theoretical foundations of philosophy of science in psycho-educational researches and no previous training is given to them in this matter. In another study, Mehrmohammadi (2007) conducted a phenomenological inquiry to reach a clear picture of the viewpoints by the methodology instructors in the field of education and psychology in Iran. In this research, the cases were selected from two groups of researchers in the field of educational sciences and psychology as samples, who represent the two different generations of researchers (preceding and recent). The result of this comparison shows a trend toward achieving this promising result that as time passes, not only among the recent generation but also within the preceding generation methodological plurality has been justified. In the status of belief and opinion, the researchers in the field of education and psychology, especially the recent group consider the methodological monopoly which underlies the legitimacy of the unique scientific method of quantitative research finished.

To identify the statistical errors in the articles published in the field of Educational Sciences, Yadegarzadeh and Fatemi (2017) showed that 39 articles out of 92 ones had at least one statistical error, and among them, there were 49 common errors. The results also showed that the highest frequency of errors is related to the extracted articles out of master's theses, organizational affiliation related to the Islamic Azad University, academic degree of the instructor, non-specialists in Educational Sciences, journals with a history of publication below 20 years and article with 3 authors. Another recent bibliometric analysis on major trends in the Iranian educational research literature showed that educational psychology in schools, technology-based research in higher education, improvement in language learning and micro view to teaching and learning are valuable Iranian educational

research themes (Khodabandelou, Alebrahim, Amoozegar & Mehran, 2019).

Following the above attempts, this study represents an innovative effort in this direction with a descriptive analysis of the significant lines of development within the history of educational research methodology in Iran as appeared in the *Quarterly Journal of Education (QJE)*. The *QJE*, with a leading history, is the oldest journal in the field of educational research (first published in April 1919). The present study thus conducted to describe the evolution of educational research methodology in the Iranian context based on the methodological data obtained from published papers in the *QJE* for one century during April 1919 to April 2019.

Ever since 1900, when the first educational publication came out in Iran, a number of journals in this field have been published by the Ministry of Education of which the *Quarterly Journal of Education (QJE)* with a leading history is the one. Ali Asghar Hekmat (1925), the Minister of Education and the first editor of this journal, stated "if the history of Iranian modern education will be studied in the future, the periodicals of this aging journal will be the most authoritative source and the most reliable reference" (p. 991). The first formal issue of the journal called "*Journal of Educational Principles*" published in April 1919 on monthly basis with the aim to guide teachers' practice (Vahidnia, 1971; Hekmat, 1956). The publication of the second volume of the journal began with the change of name to the "*Principles of Education*" from April 1920, under the management of Aboul Hassan Foroughi (Minister of Education), but its publication was stopped after six months (Vahidnia, 1971). The publication of the third volume began in April 1925 with the efforts and management of Ali Asghar Hekmat (Minister of education), entitled "*Education Journal*". Hekmat (1925) stated on the occasion that "the establishment of new schools, the increasing number of teachers, the



need for the publication of useful information and attention to technical issues, all the reasons that required the existence of such a publication" (p. 3). This journal was published in two sections, the first part was devoted to scientific and technical articles on educational issues and literary and historical issues needed by specialists and teachers; the second part included official and administrative information, registration of laws and regulations and statistics and news about the official and administrative documents related to the Ministry of Culture. This was continuously published by the end of 1927. The journal was understated by the Minister of Education and his deputy, and stopped in 1928 (Hekmat, 1956). The publication of the fourth volume of the *Education Journal* began after a 6-year hiatus in 1934. The journal regularly published to the thirty-second volume in 1961. The title of the *Journal of Education* was changed once again to "*Education Monthly*", in March 1962 and published on a regular basis every year until 1978, when its forty-seventh volume was released in October of that year. With the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the publication of *Education Monthly* was stopped for several months, but its publication started in the forty-eighth volume on March 1979 and continued for the next three months. However, the publication of the journal has been reformed since 1981 by a change from the *Education Monthly* to the *Quarterly Journal of Education* and published under the supervision of the Ministry of Education (Nouri, 2014).

### Research Method

This study employed a "historical case study" to collect, verify, and synthesize evidence about the history of educational research in Iran. The historical case study is a research of papers published in the *QJE* since 1919 to 2019 has been summarized in Tables 1.

design that provides evidence to uncover patterns and processes of changes and development of specific cases, events or programs (Krull, 2007; Widdersheim, 2018). The data of this study obtained from methodological considerations of articles published in the *QJE* from April 1919 to April 2019. The special focus was given to the *QJE*, since it is the oldest journal of education in Iran (more than 100 years old) and has had utmost influential on the Iranian educational research (Nouri, 2014). To achieve the research objective, first, the researchers conducted a general search to identify all the issues published in the *QJE* from April 1919 to April 2019. Second, the researchers scanned all articles in each issue to identify the research methodology as well as other essential information such as techniques that were used for data collection, sampling, and data analysis. Finally, all data organized and then, were broken down into discrete codes based on their connections to the research purposes. The coded data consequently was sorted and grouped into emergent concepts and conclusions.

### Results

The systematic analysis of the content of articles published in the *QJE* revealed that Iran's education research methodology has been developed in an evolutionary trend. This analysis specifically represents five periods of developments that Iran's educational research methodology has experienced over its unique history including: The stage of pre-methodology (1919- 1985), the rise of quantitative methods (1985- 1994), the stage of paradigm purity (1995- 2004), the appearance of a new hegemony (2005-2014), and, the concern for quality stage (2015-2019). The review of the methodology

**Table 1. The methodology of papers published on the QJE since 1919 to 2019**

Stages	N	NA	Quantitative	Qualitative	Mixed Design
1919-1984	1114*	1114	0	0	0
1985-1994	229	217	11	0	0
1995-2004	172**	103	40	3	5
2005-2014	261	72	151	32	6
2015-2019	112	5	62	31	14

\*. The number of published papers that have achieved in online databases and archive of academic libraries.

88\*\*. 21 papers of this number have achieved in online databases and archive of academic libraries.

### The Stage of Pre-methodology (1919- 1984)

The complete lists of published articles (48 volumes) during 1919 to 1984 were not available to be analyzed. Although a few of 1114 available articles were based on historical/narrative or comparative analysis, none of which had employed a systematic research method (neither quantitative, nor qualitative one) to direct the process of research. Indeed, all analyzed papers had been structured based on the author's own interpretation of some important events or topics. Drawing on this information, it could be concluded that educational research in those days was not following a systematic scientific research and thus is introduced as the “pre-methodology stage”.

### The Rise of Quantitative Methods (1985-1994)

During 1985-1994, from the total number of 229 published articles, only 12 used a research methodology in their reports (the full text of 21 articles excluded from analysis due to unavailability). The research method taken by the majority of these studies were quantitative evaluation methods. The rest were analytical and descriptive reports on international/regional conferences on education. For instance, 12 papers were dedicated to provide an introduction on the nature and process of research and evaluation in education. However, there was not seen even one paper employing a qualitative method during this time period. It is thus described as

the rising of scientific research with a preferred orientation toward the quantitative tradition.

### The Stage of Paradigm Purity (1995-2004)

During 1995 -2004, a new snapshot of progress was seen in the research methodology of QJE papers towards to a more scientific, advanced and research-oriented one. An analysis of the ways of investigating educational issues from 1995 to 2004 shows that the process has drastically shifted from a sheer intuitive view to a scientific and research-based one in the way to perceive the crucial educational issues. Among the total number of 174 published papers, research-based papers were increased from 12 to 48. There were 8 analytical papers focusing on the critical place of research in education and explaining essentials of an education grounded on scientific research. However, there was seen a little attention to qualitative research during that time (3 papers with qualitative method and 5 papers with mixed method design). Therefore, that period is described as the era of quantitative research dominance, during which much attention was focused on quantitative designs and statistical analysis of educational processes.

### The Appearance of a New Hegemony (2005-2014)

An increased interest to use qualitative research in education was seen between 2005 and 2014, as viewed in the papers published in the QJE. According to the analysis of the methodology of papers during this time period,

a majority of papers (more than 70 percent of the total) explicitly have explained the research method procedures. While the quantitative methodology was still dominant, there was seen a significant increase of qualitative and mixed methods. More importantly, a special issue of the journal in 2005 was dedicated to educational research methodology entitled "Research Issues in Education" and six papers published within this issue. These papers generally welcomed the qualitative tradition as an ignored research methodology for educational research community in Iran. In addition, 6 papers of other issues dedicated to introduce the nature and process of qualitative methods.

#### **The Concern for Quality Stage (2015-2019)**

During this period, the danger of qualitative research methodologies falling into the fatal trap of relativism motivated researchers to pay more attention to both qualitative and quantitative studies. These concerns were seen as an implicit and explicit aspect throughout the research process. Researchers mostly reported the trustworthiness of qualitative analysis often presented by using terms such as credibility, dependability, conformability, transferability, and authenticity. More importantly, there is seen several studies published during this period which have focused on the real problems of Iran's education system. For instance, some studies conducted to critically evaluate "the national curriculum project", as a solution for fundamental revision and transformation in the existing educational system and curricula (The Secretariat of National Curriculum Project, 2012).

#### **Discussion and Conclusion**

When educational research is viewed from a historical lens, it enables educators and policymakers to acknowledge major educational concerns and issues that exist in

their programs. This understanding can also help educational researchers learn from past policies and practices in order to improve their own strengths and minimize weaknesses disclosing areas of potential improvement (Eisner, 1994; Wesner, 1994). In this light, the aim of the current study was to describe and explain the significant lines of development and turning points that reflect the evolution of educational research methodology in the Iranian context as such appeared in the *Quarterly Journal of Education* during 1919-2019.

The educational research methodology in Iran has experienced five stages of development over the last century. Each stage embraces unique theoretical methodological perspectives and different considerations for data collection, analysis, and representation. The initial stage (1919- 1984) is called the stage of pre-methodology, during which education scholars' investigations were conducted without a distinct method. Drawing on this finding, it could be concluded that research in those days has been nothing more than just studying the references and getting intuitive knowledge for accomplishing expert tasks. In other words, accomplishing expert studies - not problem-solving through research procedure- was something that exclusively mattered in research. On the other hand, the decisions made by the policy-makers in those days had been rarely found to be permanent and inquiry-based and to have encompassed all levels within the educational system (Khallaghi, 2009). The second stage (1985-1994) was the period that scientific method is encouraged and quantitative methods were becoming central in the field of education. In 1984, all activities in different units of the Ministry of Education were directed towards enhancing research for especially publication purposes (Khallaghi, 1989; 2001). In line with the establishment of previous research units, the Research Council of the Ministry of Education (basically supposed to be in charge

of enhancing research in other states) was set up to widen the scope of research across the whole country with the establishment of more research councils in most of the states (provinces). In addition, this period was coincided with a national policy to developing and implementing a novel design in secondary education. These, in turn, clarified the necessity for doing research in order to get to know various issues as well as develop appropriate and practical strategies to address the problems of education (Khallaghi, 2009). However, in spite of research growth hardly could still be claimed that Iran's education rested on a sound research basis (Safi, 1992).

The third stage (1995- 2004) is characterized by insistence on the monopoly of the quantitative, preservation of "paradigm purity". During this decade, education researchers as well as other social science researchers rely primarily on quantitative methods and statistical inference understood as a means to test the proposed hypotheses. In early 2000s, the emergence of issues such as information technology, globalization, multiculturalism, and dialogue among civilizations has remarkably influenced the policy makers' attitude towards education. The consequence of all these issues shifted the policy makers' view towards education to a more scientific, advanced and research-oriented one (Khallaghi, 2009). This orientation may supported the use of quantitative methods as the most reliable scientific methods. The fourth stage (2005–2014), is the time that qualitative approach is first introduced and gradually directs educational research community towards the relaxation of traditional research standard advocating pragmatic justification. This stage was the emotional encounter or replacement stage started with the wave of qualitative taking over the traditional and started the appearance of a new hegemony (Mehrmohammadi, 2012).

The fifth stage (2015-2019), also known as "concern for quality stage", during which the threat of losing credibility and leaving a relativistic impression were highlighted by the members of the research community. For instance, the syllabus of course of research methodology for B.A. in educational study training program has recently revised and equal attention dedicated to both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The title of the course from "educational research" has changed to "basics of qualitative and quantitative research methods" to highlight the importance of the two approaches (Higher Council of Educational Planning, 2016). That means Iranian education community is acknowledging an integrated state of methodological pluralism, a new paradigmatic justification embracing both paradigms attempted (Mehrmohammadi, 2012). This movement has been further enhanced by the establishment of nongovernmental scientific associations and research and knowledge-based companies in various fields (For instance, the research activities of a number of *special interest groups (SIGs)* under supervision of Iranian Curriculum Studies Association) (Mehrmohammadi, 2014).

However, the outcomes of these advancements has no yet seen in the practice of teachers and in turn in transformation of society. In a recent study by Iranian scholars (Nouri & Etemadzadeh, 2018) showed that teachers' inadequate understanding of the nature and process of educational research and their lack of motivation and interest are among the main factors preventing teachers involved in research activities and studying the results of studies. Based on the findings, it is suggested that teachers should be trained in educational research in order to be able to understand and develop their own research and contribute to create useful and evidence-based knowledge. There is an urgent need to encourage education researchers to dedicate a section of their paper



on ethical considerations and trustworthiness of findings.

It is concluded that, a methodological pluralism orientation is an essential contributor towards utilizing of educational research in proposing solutions, and mapping out how those solutions may be devised, how they may impact upon all those affected, and how the efficacy of the solutions may be evaluated. It requires problem-based research in the complex context of practice, involving methodological pluralism, both quantitative and qualitative analyses, with the goal of improving pedagogy (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

It should be noted that there are a variety of professional journals in education that need to be analyzed carefully through systematic inquiries and the results compared with the findings of the present study. Among these is the *Journal of Psychology and Educational Sciences* which published by University of Tehran since 1970 and unfortunately stopped in 2012. The *Journal of Educational Sciences* is another scientific-research journal in the field of educational sciences in the country which has been published by Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz since 1972. This journal publishes articles containing the results of fundamental, applied and developmental research in the field of educational sciences. There have been conducted a few studies in other nations to investigate the historical evolution in educational research methodology. Most notably, in the context of South Korea, Young Chun Kim, and Professor of Education at Chinju National University using an autobiographical inquiry describes the five tales on perceptions on qualitative research in the South Korea. These five tales are as follows: (a) dangerous practice, (b) painful practice, (c) horrifying practice, (d) educative practice, and (e) brave practice (Kim, 2003). Future studies needed to explore whether the stages identified in our study must be interpreted as being unique to the Iranian

academic context or otherwise. There is a need to examine if methodological choices have placed limitations upon choices of research topics. To illustrate, a researcher who is firmly attached to purely quantitative methodologies that are appropriate for investigating topics in student learning, for example, may not be able to adapt readily to topics that may be less amenable to quantitative approaches. In the other words, whether the colloquial term "methodological straitjacket" have relevance? There is also a need to identify the factors influencing on the evolution of educational research methodologies and to identify the contributions of key drivers (governments and politicians, universities, professional societies, journal editors, and others) for the evolution of educational research methodologies.

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## تکامل تاریخی روش تحقیق پژوهشی در ایران

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**چکیده:** این مطالعه با استفاده از روش مطالعه موردی تاریخی به توصیف سیر تحولات روش‌شناسی پژوهش تربیتی در ایران، با توجه به روند روش‌شناختی مقاله‌های منتشرشده در فصلنامه تعلیم و تربیت در طول یکصد سال گذشته می‌پردازد. نتایج حاکی از آن است که پژوهش تربیتی در ایران پنج مرحله تاریخی متمایز و درعین حال مرتبط به هم تجربه نموده است. مرحله نخست (۱۹۱۹ تا ۱۹۸۴)، با عنوان «پیش‌روش‌شناسی» به دوره‌ای اشاره دارد که طی آن اغلب مطالعات تربیتی بدون پیروی از روش‌شناسی مشخص انجام شده‌اند. مرحله دوم (۱۹۸۵ تا ۱۹۹۴)، با عنوان «ظهور رویکرد کمی» معرف دوره‌ای است که طی آن استفاده از روش‌های کمی مورد استقبال واقع شده است. مرحله سوم (۱۹۹۵ تا ۲۰۰۴)، که «حاکمیت رویکرد کمی» نام گرفته و در این برهه تاریخی پژوهشگران تربیتی با اتکالی به روش‌های کمی و استنتاج آماری به آزمایش فرضیه‌های پژوهشی متوسل شده‌اند. مرحله چهارم (۲۰۰۵ تا ۲۰۱۵)، با عنوان مرحله «اشاعه رویکرد کیفی» یا مرحله جایگزینی اشاره به دوره‌ای دارد که با موج استقبال شدید از سنت کیفی آغاز شده و به برتری آن بر رویکرد کمی تأکید گردیده است. مرحله پنجم (۲۰۱۵ تا ۲۰۱۹)، با عنوان «دغدغه کیفیت» معرفی شده است که اخیراً به‌خاطر تشدید نگرانی‌ها درباره غلبه تصور نسبی‌گرایانه توسط اعضای جامعه پژوهش تربیتی ظهور نموده است. براساس یافته‌های این پژوهش، پیشنهاد می‌شود که در آینده، پژوهشگران تربیتی در چارچوب کثرت‌گرایی روش‌شناختی و با اتکاء به روش‌های متعدد پژوهش توجه بیشتری بر بهبود مسائل واقعی یادگیری و آموزش معطوف کنند.

**واژه‌های کلیدی:** تحقیقات آموزشی، روش‌شناسی، تاریخچه آموزش، کثرت‌گرایی روش‌شناختی.



تاریخ دریافت: ۱۳۹۸/۱۰/۱۸

تاریخ پذیرش: ۱۳۹۹/۶/۲۰

تاریخ انتشار: ۱۳۹۹/۷/۱

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