

Progress in Asian Psychology Series

Global Issues and Challenges in a Changing World Psychological, Cultural and Group Relationships

Edited by

Rosnah Ibrahim MA Elizabeth J Macpherson PhD Nor M. Noor Chua PhD & Evelyn



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Progress in Asian Social Psychology: Vol. 7

Global Issues and Challenges in a Changing World

Psychological, Cultural and Group Relationships

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General Introduction

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The seventh conference of Asian Association of Social Psychology (AASP) was organized from 25th to 28th July, 2007, at the Magellan Sutura Harbour & Resort, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. The AASP conference which calls for greater Asian Unity was jointly organized by Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Malaysian Psychological Association and AASP. This conference was held for the first time in Malaysia and UMS is proud to have hosted this conference. With the conference theme of "Social Psychology: Global Issues and Challenges in a Changing World" the co-organizers' expectation of a successful gathering is assured as it falls within the objectives and framework of the conference i.e. towards enhancing in-depth research on Asian social psychology, its current status and future direction among the various Asian societies.

The theme for this conference is appropriate in that psychology has played a pivotal role in helping us meet the challenges of globalization. Globalization required not only economic and political cooperation, but also a new "architecture of dialogue" among nations. There exist numerous countries, which can enrich one another and even share some common values. People who group up in them can increase their mutual

understanding and this requires a new "education for dialogue".

The past two decades has seen a growing interest in critical ideas and qualitative methods of research in social psychology. In addition, the increasing awareness of the social, cultural and political dimensions of social psychology has increased debates about its contribution and the role it plays in shaping the dynamics of human development, be it as individuals or as the human capital of any organization of the academia. Indeed, this conference has been convened to consider the impact of these ideas within the realms of social development and to discuss how social psychologists can further develop theories and methods, which can lead to a better understanding of the mosaic make-up of our society.

With its theme, the conference strives to promote active dialogues and debates among academics, researchers and social activists, who are at the cutting edge of discovery in this ever increasing acceptance by society on the importance of social psychology vis-à-vis dynamic human growth. What is equally important is the realization of calling participants to deepen their understanding and appreciate the contribution particularly, of Asian social psychology, its current status and its future course and direction.

This conference has been the convergence of a uniquely diverse group of leading social psychologists, in particular from Asian countries, to discuss and debate implications of recent advances in the field, addressing cross-cutting questions and identify fertile areas for future collaborative research opportunities.

It was beyond our expectation to see a total of 725 participants from 25 countries attended this conference, 551 of them being international participants and coincidently this augurs well with the objectives of International Visit Malaysia Year 2007.

The chapters compiled in this volume are classified into six parts. The first section, entitled "History, Political, Global Economies and Religion" provides historical and theoretical analyses as well as religious and global economics investigations concerning both interpersonal and intergroup conflict in Asia, and other parts of the world.

Section two of the volume features six chapters that explore the socio-cultural dimensions of learning. One empirical studies collected in

this section demonstrate the diversity in educational approaches that are observed among Asian and Western cultures. The authors address the differences in learning styles, and diverse classroom norms.

The third section, "Emerging Identities in Intercultural Contact" examines vibrant aspects of multiculturalism involving either Asians in non-Asian parts of the world or vice-versa. Three chapters focus on the adaptation of non-Asian migrants to Asian countries while one chapter examines the constructed scale and compared with western students' intention to seek help for personal problems.

"Culture, Group and Social Relationships" are explored in the contexts of intercultural contact and social change in the four chapters in section four of this volume. The four chapters focus on a very important aspect of the Asian social experience-spiritual values, shared identity and indigenous concepts used to characterize qualities possessed by individuals in a given culture.

Section five of the volume comprises of five chapters that explore the "Family Relationships and Quality of Life". This section, most diverse section ranges widely from, parent-child interaction, women and depression, adolescent behavior to health and social processes. The five chapters having a stronger focus on cultural influences on behavior, on applied social phenomenon, and the use of diverse research methods to characterize Asian social psychology.

The final section, "Organizational Technology and Well-Being" features five chapters. One chapter examines reverse-buffering effect on the relationship between contract breach and employee performance. Two chapters examine effects of self-efficacy and priming of strategies on task performance. The rest of the chapters focus on the effects of high-technology on socio-psychological, environment and quality of life of the people.

Social issues that were once confined to one of a few countries are now spread across the world. Thus, it takes a multi-national effort to address these social issues. One of the social issues we all face is the need for more researchers and scientists so that our knowledge may be expanded and then applied. Scientists provide the innovation that is needed in order for our countries to advance.

The past decade has been a great deal of innovation in theories and research in psychology. Psychology has contributed to our lives in developing individuals and human capital in organizations and academia. Indeed, this conference has been convened to consider the impact of these innovations and to discuss how psychologists can further develop theories and methods which can lead to a better understanding of social interactions.

All presenters are commended for the contributions they have made towards improving the life of people through research. Their scientific research have helped us understand the factors that shape our thoughts and behavior in social situations. They have identified ways to develop people who care about other people. They have shown us how to influence others. They have shown us how to resolve conflicts. Their research has been used in the areas of personal health, relations with others, work settings, multicultural issues, environmental concerns, and, yes, even in teaching and learning. Social psychologists are, then, outstanding examples of applying research for the public good.