

# Comparative psychological studies distorted by applying procedures of the West to other regions, says researcher

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Klaus Boehnke, Professor of Social Science Methodology at Constructor University in Bremen, pleads for more fairness in comparative psychological studies. Credit: Constructor University

Klaus Boehnke, Professor of Social Science Methodology at Constructor University in Bremen, pleads for more fairness in comparative psychological studies. In his article, recently published in *American Psychologist*, he sheds light on how uncritically transferring the procedures of the Western world to other regions in comparative cultural studies distorts reality.

According to Boehnke, Anglo-American methodology dominates quantitative psychology but fails to extensively acknowledge [cultural differences](#): As an example, he quotes a cross-cultural questionnaire to measure paternal warmth. "There is of course a huge difference in how paternal warmth is shown in Scandinavia or in Zimbabwe," said Boehnke. However, different forms of affection are not being extensively recognized when only using Western survey tools, which might consequently lead to the false assumption that an African father is less affectionate.

While there are standard procedures for applying psychological research tools in different cultural contexts, they appear insufficient. In his recently published [essay](#) "Let's compare apples and oranges," the [scientist](#) presents a method that meets strict mathematical and statistical criteria, as well as recognizing cultural aspects and allowing comparison of the results in an intercultural context. "My aim is to better include non-Western cultures in our scientific tools," Boehnke explained.

**More information:** Klaus Boehnke, Let's compare apples and oranges! A plea to demystify measurement equivalence, *American Psychologist* (2023). [DOI: 10.1037/amp0001080](https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0001080)

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