Research on the Difference in Talent Cultivation Between Chinese and Foreign Educational Systems

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Abstract. After a long time of exam-oriented education, China's educational system has great limitations in cultivating various types of talents. However, society needs compound elites to develop. Due to different national conditions and economic development, diverse structures were employed in different countries. This paper aims to explore what are the differences, why the differences exist, and how diverse educational systems affect students. The interview was adopted as a research method for this paper. Five respondents from all over the world were found to finish the research and to make the comparison more referential. The outcome demonstrated that the educational systems have a crucial influence on many aspects, including their attitude toward life, personality, and career choice. The impacts of all those aspects led their lives in completely different directions. Through the result, it is apparent that if a country wants to drive social development and progress, it needs to modify its educational system constantly and reasonably.

Keywords: Senior high school; Educational difference; Talent cultivation.

1. Introduction

China has been predominated by test-oriented education for a long time, thus, the students nurtured in this environment are quite similar in thinking, behaving, and reacting. It gave them an incorrect impression of the diversity of society. But once they started to interact with people from other countries and the educational systems, they would realize opinions vary from person to person even on the same topic. That's how culture shock happened. In the process of contacting persons from overseas, the author discovered huge differences between their way of viewing and solving things. However, what is the cause of the issue? To figure out the reason for it, the author was attempting to know how their minds and values were shaped and where did they get their ideas toward the world. It is worth noticing that both family and school were mentioned as a reason, but school was the answer people inclined more. Based on the information amassed, a specific plan was designed by the author to dig out more about what influence education has on students and how it affects students. To make the research more instructive, five people come from all over the world are being studied, and the interview was regarded as a suitable way to do the research. Due to the different countries, ages, and various factors of the respondents, a phone call is the only way to accomplish the interview. In addition, some interviewees graduated a long time ago, so it is difficult for them to recall things from the past. Consequently, high school was deemed a period that people remembered the most. Since China keeps reforming and developing its educational method, this research is not only used to find out the differences between countries but also to collect ways that are enlightening and referential to China's education system.

2. Method

2.1. Research Objectives

Given that the educational systems are various in different countries, the five interviewees in the research are from different areas worldwide (see Table 1). The author invited males and females of different ages to make the interview more persuasive. Considering the impact each educational system has brought them is different, the author found five persons with diverse characters. Some

people are positive and have achievements in certain fields, while some are pessimistic and disappointed in life.

Table 1. Profile of respondents

	A	B	C	D	E
Age	21	22	20	65	35
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male	Male
Nationality	China	Russia	America	Canada	Africa
Occupation	University student (English major)	University student (Translation major)/ former athlete	University student (Nursing major)	Basketball coach/ English teacher	English teacher in China

2.2. Interview Questions

This paper focuses on the impact of differences in educational systems, so the answer to the question should be conducive to comparison. For instance, how long do they spend in school in a day? It is acknowledged that Chinese high school students might stay more than ten hours per day in school. On the contrary, students in some countries have more free time. Or how many kinds of courses do they have? How the courses are arranged? As a result, whether their school life is colorful or monotonous can be known.

2.3. Interview Procedures

The main form is that the interviewees answered questions about their high school. All the interviews were conducted by phone calls because of the time difference. At the same time, the conversations were recorded while calling. After the interview, the main differences and key information are reorganized in a new document for comparison. The average time of the interview was about 30 minutes, and if there was information that was overlooked, the interview would be carried out twice.

3. Result

3.1. Circumstances at School

Some detailed information about the interviewees' schools was provided. As a matter of fact, education methods in big cities are not widely adopted in China, so students from remote places are more representative. Thus, a female student was picked from Yunxi County, Shiyan city, Hubei province, a rural area. Her high school is the best one in her area. The African and American interviewees are both in the intermediate school in their region. There is no clear hierarchy for schools in Russia and Canada.

3.1.1 School hours

The Chinese girl's school began at 7'o clock in the morning and ended at 10:20 at night, which is about 15 hours. One hour is the sum of her breaks, including lunchtime, nap time, and dinner time. She needed to go to school on Saturday and Sunday afternoons as well. It is similar to the African interviewee's system, his school day is from 7:30 am to 5 pm, and there was a three-hour noon break. Sometimes they also had evening classes. However, for all the other interviewees, their average school time per day is around 7 hours. Their school time is approximately started from 8'o clock in the morning to 3 o'clock in the afternoon and they have free weekends. The school schedule had a great impact on their lives. Students who stayed at school for a long time had little time to do what they like, and they were too exhausted to enjoy themselves even though they had spare time. Yet those students who have lots of free time attended diverse activities and expanded their scope of knowledge.

3.1.2 Class consituation

Class constitution is an essential part of student's life since they spend a lot of time with their classmates. Through the interview, it was found there is a huge difference between different countries. It was common to have more than fifty students in Chinese and African interviewee classes. There were even eighty students in the African men's class, while the remaining three people's class consist of about twenty to thirty pupils. The number of students in a class led to some problems. In a large class, teachers can't pay attention to all the students as there is not enough time for them. As a result, being overlooked is not uncommon for students and those who were ignored get fewer opportunities to be helped by teachers, and also have fewer chances to explore their potential. On the contrary, students are more confident and livelier in the small class because they were unconsciously affected by tutors when communicating with them.

3.1.3 Curriculum provision

As for curriculum provision, it is probably the most variable part of education systems in different countries. When it comes to the main course, Chinese students in the first grade of high school had to decide what courses they would study in the next three years even if they know almost nothing about each subject, and they couldn't change. It caused a problem that many students figured out what they like or dislike after a period of study but they could only carry on the subject they selected. This sense of powerlessness reduces people's interest in learning. Students are luckier in Canada and America, nevertheless, on the ground that they had the right to transfer their subjects. For this reason, learning will not be torture for them. Concerning the Russian interviewee, he started to choose elective classes when he entered primary school. During the whole process from primary school to senior high school, he was allowed to change his mind at any grade, which gave him enough time to probe his preference and laid a firm foundation for his study. The African interviewee's system is slightly different from the Russian's and it's even more considerate. A variety of course sets was provided even in junior school and they could adjust at any time as well. The best part is that his school offered him course consultants who could help him select optional classes. More to the point, the consultants could solve any confusion related to course and job, for example, they would tell students all the industries that students can pursue in the future if they choose the course. This kind of advanced awareness gave them a clear idea of their career plans and prospects early.

Schools are not supposed to be the place where students could only gain academic knowledge, but also about jobs and life. Take life orientation resources in South Africa as an example, the subject is a combination of "health education, life skills, career guidance, and so forth" and may contribute to solving social issues such as poverty, abuse, and sexually transmitted infections, which helps students build a more complete personality and a more comprehensive understanding of society [1].

It was found that students who participated in more extracurricular activities for more years during high school were more likely to earn a bachelor's degree and their grade point average is significantly higher than non-participants [2,3]. So extracurriculars are indispensable, but there were only main courses like Chinese, math, English, and history in the Chinese girl's school. She didn't have any extracurricular classes like painting and dancing. She was supposed to have PE class but it was replaced by the core curriculum. This arrangement not only overloaded the students but also buried their talents. Tyler (1949) pointed out that "when designing any comprehensive curriculum plan, the source of each educational goal should be considered" [4]. So, schools can't design the same curriculum for all students. Unlike the African man's school, they had some extracurricular classes and events on weekends despite their long school day, for instance, basketball, football, and cleaning activities. Needless to say, the pupils whose school time is only about seven hours. Manifold extracurricular classes were offered on campus, such as sports, art courses, and practical courses. Students chose the course depending on their interests and some of them could change the subject if they were not interested in it anymore. Thus, although students' academic performance is not good, they mastered different skills as study is not the only way to success.

3.1.4 Teachers and teaching methods

Every country has its teaching syllabus and standard, but not all teachers followed them. Part of the reason is that the syllabus is too demanding, and the other part is that they don't want to. But the classes are in the charge of the teacher, hence, the teacher's character and teaching method enormously influence the students. From the interviewees' descriptions, tutors in Canada, America, and Africa are more creative and interesting. Most of the time they tried to use gadgets or other colorful ways to make the course more amusing and attractive. What is more, students were taught how to think, and time was given to them to discuss and express their ideas. As a consequence, learners who studied in this environment are more productive and thoughtful. Conversely, mentors in China and Russia tend to be less creative. Through their statements, the class was chiefly about the repetition of the textbooks. Sometimes the teachers might utilize tools to better organize a course, but it was just another representation of the textbook repetition. Meanwhile, the class was more teacher-oriented because the teachers lectured most of the time. Students scarcely had a chance to make their point and teachers were not good listeners. But some research showed that it will improve students' learning achievement in textile weaving knowledge and skill, learning experience, and self-efficacy if the class was flipped [5]. From the Russian boy's standpoint, the knowledge was imparted in a general way by teachers so that they couldn't fully understand and didn't know how to put it into practice. What's worse, the Chinese girl's school seldom considered its situation and blindly imitated some models of teaching from other schools. Finally, the result is a chaotic, featureless system. All the reasons above made pupils more likely to be timid and indecisive people. And lack of practical ability and critical thinking ability is also one of the obvious characteristics of these students.

When talking about teachers, it is inevitable to mention one thing--punishment. People may reckon punishment is not allowed or illegal at school, but the truth is it happened a lot. By the elaboration of the Chinese interviewee, each student in her class had a competitor, they needed to compete with each other in every test, and the one who failed had to apologize in front of everyone. This punishment not only did not help students realize their mistakes but also humiliates students, more importantly, it is nothing wrong with studying poorly. She said it caused serious psychological trauma to some of her classmates. Punishments existed in another way at the American girl's school. Students who made mistakes were required to have a detention Saturday at school when everybody else was having a day off. The mistakes specifically refer to mistakes of the principle, like disrespecting teachers and bullying classmates. Under these circumstances, appropriate penalties helped students establish correct moral qualities and concepts. Besides, teachers should be fair, when teachers behave unfairly in classroom management and education processes, the negative perception of students would be reflected in their behavior [6]. However, injustice existed in nearly all the schools because teachers tend to care more about the good students, which led to problems that some students don't have the desire to learn.

3.1.5 School resource

Even though the governments strongly support education, the distribution of educational resources is uneven, and the issue exists in every country. The "hard" infrastructures in each school might be the same while the "soft" infrastructures like human resources are not. Teachers are reluctant to go to schools in remote regions, especially teachers who received a good education and professional training. So, most of the tutors with high teaching levels stayed in the city, while the tutors with lower teaching levels went to the countryside, which resulted in the average teaching level in rustic areas being lower than that in central areas. Students who live in big cities possibly have a more promising future on account of superior resources.

3.2. Attitude toward Life and Personality

As it was mentioned above, school environments and teachers played a crucial role in their attitude toward life. Due to the Chinese girl's painful and monotonous school experience, she always holds a negative attitude toward life and particularly the educational system. On the contrary, the other

interviewees are mostly relatively happy and positive about their lives. The Chinese interviewee is inclined to think in the worst way while others prefer there are always good things happening.

In terms of personality, interviewees who stayed in a pleasant environment are more confident when facing various things. They are adventurous and will not back down because of difficulties. People like the Chinese girl who studied in a repressive environment always worry too much and are less likely to be assertive.

3.3. Career Choice

For the reason that lack of understanding of different subjects and exploration of her interests in high school, the Chinese girl was lost when choosing a major in university, which directly affected her choice of future career. After she had studied English for three years, she found that she liked the law and decided to get a law master's degree. Nevertheless, if she chose law at the beginning, things would be easier. Due to good guidance and no restriction on interest exploration in high school, other interviewees had clear goals for their occupations.

4. Discussion

In this paper, the educational system in five different countries was compared and the outcome is that differences existed in each aspect. The leading reason is that every country holds diverse educational philosophies and social trends. A majority of western countries attach great importance to students' comprehensive development; therefore, students were given abundant course options. Besides, the school conveyed the idea of professional equality to students and society has little prejudice against different professions. All those reasons have created a more open and inclusive education system. With reference to China, has experienced the notion of exam-oriented education for a long time and society and families have a preference for certain careers. This concept has caused limitations to education in a subtle way.

As discussed above, there is no doubt that the educational method should be improved to better cultivate elite talents for society. At the top of the list is that the government needs to pay more attention to it. Promulgate more regulations that are conducive to the comprehensive development of students and make sure the schools implement the policy. Such as the examination enrollment reform launched in 2014, broadened the way of running schools with characteristics, expanded students' right of independent choice, and stimulated students' interest in learning [7]. Concerning schools, they can't set limits for students. Diametrically, the effort should be made to stimulate students' creative ability in all aspects. It should formulate feasible international development concepts and strategic objectives according to its own development level and advantages and characteristics [8]. More and more extracurricular classes and career analysis courses should be provided to broaden their horizon and help them comprehend. Moreover, students' time for learning and relaxation should be arranged reasonably and evenly. Only when their creativity and potential are activated can they have unlimited possibilities. Psychological counseling should also be an integral part of the school as high school is a critical period of psychological construction for students. For example, findings suggest that teachers not always noticed the warning signs of suicidal behaviors which required mental counseling [9]. And students who have received good mental health consultation are more likely to form a good personality and courage to overcome life and be able to remain calm and develop better in the face of a complex environment [10]. It is high time to protect them from being misled by the incorrect notion. Teachers play a crucial role since they are the people who spend the longest time with students except for their parents. To maximize the role of teachers, the class should not be assigned too many people in case teachers can't allocate their time to students, and at the same time, the teachers need to attend more specialized training to impart knowledge better. As for parents, they can't make decisions for their children, especially about their majors and careers. It would be better to let the kids discover interests themselves. In a more open, diverse, positive, and warm learning environment, students' possibilities can be exploited to the largest extent.

5. Conclusion

This paper discussed the different educational systems and analyzed what the systems had brought to their students in diverse aspects. It was demonstrated that education has a lot of clout on the development of human beings, so its role cannot be overlooked or underestimated. Moreover, each country should attach great importance to it to provide a better environment for students. However, the research has some disadvantages on account of certain objective factors. It is hard for people to recall things from a long time ago so high school was chosen to be the research stage, yet some significant impacts might exist before high school or arise after it. As time passes by, the system and policy have been continuously improved by the governments and countries, and it could be when this research is completed, some problems have been solved.

If any further research wants to be done in the future, more stages should be considered, such as primary school, junior middle school, and even university because influences could be brought at any time. It will make the study more reliable. Moreover, future research should be done on the basis of current policies and regulations so that it will be more persuasive and advisable.

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