

A Comparative Study of Chinese and Foreign Thinking Styles

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Abstract: Comparing two different ways of thinking between China and foreign countries can help people better understand the differences between different cultures. Exploring their differences in logical reasoning, value orientation and behavioral motivation, expression and communication methods, as well as their potential impacts, can help improve cross-cultural communication skills.

Keywords: Comparison of Chinese and Foreign Cultures; Thinking Mode; Thinking Difference.

1. Introduction

Different ethnic groups have formed their own unique ways of thinking in the long-term historical development process. The way of thinking is the way people analyze and solve problems, which determines their words and actions. It is presented in a relatively stable form and is a system with a complex hierarchical structure.

2. Differences in Logical Reasoning between Chinese and Foreign Ways of Thinking

Chinese culture emphasizes "intuition" and "feeling" as important factors in drawing conclusions. The so-called Chinese style wisdom refers to this kind of thinking that rejects any rules, including logical and linguistic rules, and is therefore flexible and creative. [1] Chinese culture emphasizes not just simple emotional experiences, but a deeper and more direct perception and understanding of objective things. For example, Laozi proposed the theory of "inner intuition". He compared his heart to a mirror and told us that in order to understand the way of the universe, we must maintain purity and tranquility within. When we maintain inner emptiness and tranquility, everything will reappear before our eyes. The Mohist school also emphasized this intuitiveness by providing examples to illustrate the function of the eyes in seeing things, demonstrating that knowledge can only be obtained through sensory sensations. They believe that the eyes are the key to acquiring knowledge, and only through their visual function can we see the specific forms and characteristics of all things. Therefore, sensory perception is a necessary condition for us to understand objective things. Specifically, Chinese culture usually focuses on "emotional understanding" and sees things as emotional and spiritual beings. The Book of Changes proposed a preliminary schematic of holism, incorporating all nature and human resources into the Yin Yang Eight Trigrams system and the establishment of the Yin Yang Five Elements theory, marking the formal completion of the organic holistic thinking mode. This mode tends to abstract and comprehensive grasp of things, rather than specific analysis. This non analytical holistic synthesis can only be a synthesis in an intuitive sense. [2] This way of understanding may lead to a greater emphasis on intuition and experience when

drawing conclusions, rather than logical reasoning and analysis. In Chinese culture, logical reasoning is seen as a secondary and auxiliary tool, rather than a primary method of drawing conclusions.

In Western culture, emphasizing logical reasoning and rational thinking is very important, which may lead to a greater emphasis on analysis and logical reasoning when drawing conclusions. In Western culture, there is usually a focus on "rational understanding", which regards things as logical and rational beings. For example, in Western philosophy, reason and logic are very important standards, and only through rational thinking and logical reasoning can correct conclusions be drawn. In this way of understanding, people tend to break things down into different parts for analysis and reasoning, in order to better understand their essence and laws. This way of thinking may lead to a greater emphasis on the importance of rationality and logic, rather than simply accepting or believing in things. Compared to this, Chinese culture places more emphasis on intuition and perceptual understanding, emphasizing the direct experience and understanding of objective things, rather than simply understanding the world through analysis and logical reasoning.

3. Differences in Value Orientation and Behavioral Motivation between Chinese and Foreign Ways of Thinking

In Chinese culture, harmony, balance, and sustainability are often emphasized, and these factors are considered as values. In Chinese culture, the interests of individuals and groups are often seen as interrelated, and harmony and balance are often achieved through trade-offs and coordination. The way of thinking of Chinese people has been deeply influenced by 5000 years of Confucianism. Wholeness is the most prominent feature of China's way of thinking, and the concept of 'harmony between heaven and man' in traditional Chinese culture is a concentrated manifestation of wholeness. [3] Specifically, the values in Chinese culture usually emphasize social and collective interests, rather than individual interests. In terms of personal pursuit, Confucianism emphasizes "cultivating one's character, governing one's family, governing the country, and leveling the world"; In terms of national sentiment, Confucianism emphasizes "loyalty and

filial piety are difficult to achieve", "the rise and fall of the world is the responsibility of every individual", "there is water in the big river and small rivers are full", and so on. This typical collectivist value system has led many Chinese people to have a collective concept of "all prosperity, all harm". Of course, this concept also has the influence of Marxism and modern education. This way of understanding may lead individuals to pay more attention to overall and long-term interests when making decisions, rather than short-term interests.

In Chinese culture, there is usually a greater emphasis on interpersonal relationships and social harmony, which means that an individual's behavioral motivation is usually to maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships. This means that individual behavior is usually limited by social norms, which are usually aimed at maintaining social harmony and stability. Specifically, the values in Chinese culture usually emphasize collective interests and unity and harmony, rather than individual interests. For example, in China, people usually follow etiquette norms to ensure mutual understanding and respect. This etiquette norm usually reflects the values of collective interest and social harmony in Chinese culture. This way of understanding may lead to an individual's behavioral motivation being to maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships, rather than achieving personal freedom and self-worth.

On the contrary, values in Western culture often emphasize personal interests and self actualization, with a greater emphasis on individualism, competition, and pursuit of interests, rather than social and collective interests. The ancient Greek philosopher Protagoras emphasized the subjectivity of human beings, believing that human perception is the "scale of all things". During the European Renaissance, Western society advocated resistance to theocracy and feudal autocracy, and individualism developed more perfectly. As Shakespeare wrote in Hamlet, "What a great work is man! How noble the ideal is and how powerful it is! How correct and excellent the appearance and behavior are, how like angels in action, how like gods in understanding! The essence of the universe, the primate of all things!" During the Renaissance, cultural giants were people-centered and broke away from the shackles of theology. In the modern bourgeois period of the West, French thinker Alexis de Tocqueville was the first to propose the concept of "individualism" in his book "On Democracy in America". Modern Western culture emphasizes liberalism and emphasizes the realization of personal interests and self-worth. In Western culture, individuals often pursue freedom and independence, which may be reflected in their chosen professions, lifestyles, and other aspects.

In short, there are differences in value orientation and behavioral motivation between Chinese culture and Western culture. These differences are highly likely to lead to different decision-making and behavioral styles among individuals, especially in maintaining harmonious interpersonal relationships and pursuing personal freedom and self-worth realization. In Chinese culture, people usually place greater emphasis on overall and long-term interests, while in Western culture, people usually place greater emphasis on personal and short-term interests. This cultural difference may also lead to different behavioral patterns and interpersonal relationships. For example, in Chinese culture, people usually place more emphasis on mutual relationships and group cooperation, while in Western culture, individual competition

and self actualization may be more important.

4. Differences in Expression and Communication between Chinese and Foreign Ways of Thinking

Chinese culture places more emphasis on collectivism and holistic consciousness, which means that individual expression and communication usually need to consider the overall atmosphere and cultural background. For example, Chinese culture emphasizes the importance of harmony, which means paying attention to the overall atmosphere and cultural background when expressing and communicating, in order to avoid unnecessary conflicts and misunderstandings. In Chinese culture, there is never a lack of vocabulary such as "home and prosperity" and "harmony generates wealth". The way individuals express and communicate is often seen as respecting and reflecting the overall atmosphere and culture. Therefore, in Chinese culture, personal expression and communication usually require following certain etiquette and rules to ensure mutual understanding and respect. For example, in formal occasions, Chinese people usually pay attention to the tactful and appropriate language to avoid offending others. In addition, Chinese culture also emphasizes the importance of "keeping promises", which means paying attention to one's commitment and reputation when expressing and communicating.

In contrast, Western culture usually places greater emphasis on individualism and free expression, which means that individual expression and communication are usually not limited by the overall atmosphere and culture. The way of thinking of Westerners tends towards the outside world, emphasizing understanding, transforming, and conquering nature. They seek the most valuable things from the outside world for themselves, and are imaginative. They are more receptive to new things, and the entire way of thinking is relatively open. The open thinking style enriches Westerners with a sense of cosmology and competition. [4] Western culture emphasizes "freedom of speech", which means that individuals are usually not limited by the overall atmosphere and culture when expressing and communicating, and can freely express their own ideas and opinions. However, this does not mean that Western culture does not consider overall consciousness and cultural background. In fact, Western culture also values mutual respect and understanding to avoid unnecessary conflicts and misunderstandings. At the same time, Western culture also advocates creativity and individuality, encouraging individuals to freely express their ideas and creativity.

Overall, Chinese culture and Western culture have different preferences and habits in terms of expression and communication. These differences reflect the values and beliefs of different cultures, and to some extent affect individual behavior and thinking patterns.

5. Epilogue

In a word, the differences in thinking styles between China and foreign countries are mainly reflected in aspects such as logical reasoning, value orientation and behavioral motivation, expression and communication methods. These differences reflect the values and beliefs of different cultures and to some extent affect individual behavior and decision-making. However, it is worth noting that everyone is unique and should not attribute personal behavior and decision-

making to cultural factors, but rather understand and respect individual differences.

References

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