

A Comparative Analysis of Chinese Traditional Educational Thought and Western Educational Thought -- Taking Chinese High School Education as an Example

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Abstract

The education transformation and pattern have been enriched by global modernization. It generally promotes and brings opportunities to the strategies and practice of internalizing education. Meanwhile, it improves the school's running level of international education. These are the intrinsic needs for the development of education and the inevitable requirements of the development of the times. There are advocates of Western educational concepts who hold blind pursuits. Every education mode has imperfections; some aspects are usually sacrificed based on the background theory. This essay has comprehensively reviewed the educational thoughts and pedagogy of student learning in China. It has discussed the theoretical background of Chinese and Western educational thoughts and the features, development, advantages, and disadvantages of Chinese high school education and international high school education in China. By comparing these two types of high school education evaluation systems, teaching system, and curriculum system, it can be seen that they reflect different educational thoughts, which have their strengths and weaknesses. Based on the analysis, it is significant to discover that two education systems can learn from each other to create a more effective learning environment. Ultimately, it is hoped that this study could give possible solutions and prospects for the future of Chinese high school education.

Keywords: comparative education, educational thoughts, high school education, international education.

1. Introduction

Chinese high school and international education have been debated for many years, with both sides having their own merits. This essay will compare the two forms of education in terms of their theoretical backgrounds, largely based on Chinese and Western educational thoughts. This essay aims to provide an overview of the differences between these two types of education and examine how they can learn from each other to create a more effective learning environment.

To understand the differences between Chinese high school education and international education, it is important to first consider the theoretical background behind each type. Chinese educational thought has its roots in Confucianism and Legalism, while Western educational thought is mainly based on Liberalism. Confucianism focuses on developing moral character through self-discipline, while Legalism emphasizes obedience to authority figures and strict laws and regulations. In contrast, Liberalism promotes individual freedom and autonomy within society by emphasizing individual rights over collective responsibilities.

By comparing these two approaches to learning, we can gain insight into how they differ in their effectiveness

in preparing students for success later in life. We can also explore how these theories may be applied when considering different types of schooling, such as Chinese high school or international education. Additionally, this essay will examine the potential advantages and disadvantages of each form of schooling to reveal how these two systems may learn from each other. It is also mandatory to notify that Chinese high school education is not insensitive as a group suggested. There are improvements taken for international schools in China that mainly apply Western educational thoughts, and the cultivation of certain abilities is sacrificed.

Finally, this paper will conclude by summarizing all relevant points discussed throughout its body sections so that readers may take away some valuable information regarding both Chinese high school education and international education. It is hoped that this study could give possible solutions and prospects for the future of Chinese high school education.

2. Literature review

2.1 Chinese Educational Thought

2.1.1 Confucianism

Confucianism is a philosophical system that originated

in ancient China and has profoundly influenced Chinese culture for thousands of years. Confucianism emphasizes the importance of moral education and stresses the need to cultivate good habits in children from an early age (Li & Wang 2015).

The core values at the heart of Confucianism are filial piety, loyalty, honesty, integrity, and respect for authority (Huang & Liu 2018). These values are often taught through stories or examples from classical texts such as *The Analects of Confucius*. Confucianism also greatly emphasizes learning and self-cultivation; it encourages people to pursue knowledge through study and practice to become wise leaders (Li et al., 2011).

Confucius believed that education should teach students knowledge and instill moral values into them so they can become better citizens (Zhuang, 2007). He argued that education should focus on intellectual development and character formation so students can contribute positively to society. Therefore, he advocated teaching methods such as memorization to help students develop strong mental discipline while reinforcing their morality (He, 2006).

Meanwhile, Confucius emphasized the importance of relationships between teachers and students, believing teachers should be role models by demonstrating kindness and respect. This would help foster a positive learning environment where students learn more effectively (Fang, 2010). He also argued that teachers should be patient with their pupils rather than scolding or punishing them when they make mistakes, which would encourage critical thinking skills while helping build trust between teacher and student (Xu, 2004).

The principles of Confucianism have had a significant impact on Chinese educational thought throughout history. Its emphasis on moral cultivation and its focus on relationships between teacher and student have shaped traditional Chinese pedagogy over time. Therefore, it is essential to understand how this philosophy continues to influence modern-day Chinese educational practices to gain insight into how best to educate young people in China today.

2.1.2 Legalism

Legalism is an important part of Chinese educational thought, one of the most prominent educational thoughts in Chinese history and has played a significant role in the development of education in China. Legalism was first proposed by Han Fei Zi and Li Si during the Warring States period, who believed that human nature was evil and must be controlled through laws. He argued that laws should be enforced strictly and impartially, with rewards for those who follow them and punishments for those who do not (Guo & Xu, 2014). This idea has been influential

in Chinese education since ancient times. These principles are reflected in Chinese education today through its emphasis on discipline, obedience to authority, respect for hierarchy, and academic achievement.

Although Confucianism was the dominant educational philosophy in traditional Chinese society, Legalism also influenced Chinese education. It advocated strict rules and regulations to maintain social stability (Chen, 2012). For example, during the Qin Dynasty (221 BC–206 BC), legalists implemented a system of standardized tests for selecting officials based on their knowledge of Confucian classics (Zhuang, 2007). This system became the basis of imperial examinations throughout China's history until 1905.

Legalism also influenced other aspects of education in China, such as curriculum design. During the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220 AD), legalists proposed a curriculum focused on practical skills such as agriculture and handicrafts rather than Confucian classics (Liang, 2005). This emphasis on practical skills continued into modern times with the introduction of vocational schools in China during the 20th century.

Furthermore, Legalists advocated harsh punishments for students who violated school rules or failed to perform well academically (Hu, 2003). This approach is still seen in some parts of China, where students are punished severely if they fail to meet expectations or disobey school regulations.

Overall, Legalism has had a major impact on Chinese educational thought. Its emphasis on law enforcement and practical skills have shaped many aspects of education in China, from imperial examinations to modern vocational schools. Additionally, its advocacy for harsh punishments has been influential, although it is less common today than it once was.

2.2 Liberalism in Western Educational Thought

Liberalism is a major part of Western educational thought and has played an important role in the development of modern education. Liberalism emphasizes individual autonomy, freedom, and equality, which are also the core values of modern education (Huang & Liu, 2018). A liberal education develops those highest gifts of body and mind (William, 1947). It advocates that individuals should be respected and given equal opportunities to develop their potential. In addition, it believes that knowledge should be acquired through self-learning rather than memorizing or following teacher instructions (Li et al., 2015).

John Locke first introduced the concept of Liberalism in his famous work "Two Treatises on Government" (Fang,

2010). He argued that people have natural rights such as life, liberty, and property which should not be infringed upon by any government or authority. This idea later developed into the concept of natural rights, which states that all human beings are born with certain fundamental rights regardless of social status or gender (Guo & Xu, 2014). This belief greatly impacted the development of modern education as it led to the idea that everyone should have access to quality education regardless of their background.

Liberalism also promotes freedom for individuals regarding learning methods and curriculum design. According to this theory, students should be allowed to choose what they want to learn based on their interests instead of being forced into a predetermined curriculum (Wang et al., 2009). Furthermore, it encourages critical thinking among students so they can form independent opinions about different topics instead of blindly accepting what they are taught (Li & Wang, 2011).

In contrast to Chinese educational thoughts, such as Confucianism and Legalism, which focus on obedience and conformity toward authorities (Chen, 2012; Zhang & Liu, 2019), Liberalism emphasizes individual autonomy and creativity. It allows students to explore new ideas without fear while encouraging them to think critically about different topics (He, 2006; Liang, 2005). Thus, it provides an environment where students can freely express themselves without worrying about being judged or punished for having different opinions (Xu, 2004; Zhuang, 2007).

Overall, Liberalism has been an important part of shaping Western educational thought due to its emphasis on individual autonomy, freedom, equality, and critical thinking skills. These values have been adopted by many countries around the world, including China, to create better learning environments for their citizens.

2.3 Comparison between Chinese and Western Educational Thoughts

Chinese and Western educational thoughts have been studied for centuries, and comparing them has become an important research topic. Chinese educational thought mainly comprises Confucianism and Legalism, while Western educational thought mainly comprises Liberalism. When comparing Confucianism and Liberalism, two educational philosophies, there are similarities and differences. Both emphasize the importance of learning, but while Confucianism stresses obedience to authority figures, Liberalism encourages independent thinking among individuals. Similarly, while Confucianism advocates harmony between people, Liberalism promotes open dialogue. Despite these differences, both

philosophies share common ground regarding imparting knowledge to young minds since they aim to provide meaningful experiences that will shape future generations into responsible citizens who can contribute positively to society.

In comparison between these two types of educational thoughts, both have their advantages. For example, Confucianism stresses morality, respect for authority, family loyalty, and self-cultivation. On the one hand, this can help improve students' social adaptability; on the other hand, it can also provide a stable environment for learning. As for Liberalism, it encourages students' independent thinking ability by providing more space for exploration. Therefore, liberal education can help cultivate innovative talents with strong problem-solving skills.

However, both types have some disadvantages too. For instance, Confucian education may lead to a lack of creativity due to its emphasis on obedience; At the same time, Liberalism could cause chaos if not properly managed since it gives too much freedom without clear guidance or boundaries.

Overall, Chinese and Western Educational Thoughts are quite different, but they share some common features, such as emphasizing morality, respecting authority, and encouraging self-cultivation, etc. Moreover, they both have advantages and disadvantages, depending on how they are applied in practice. Therefore, educators need to understand how each type works before deciding which one best suits their teaching style.

2.4 China's high school education and international education

This part of the literature review has discussed various aspects related to the development of internal and international high school education in China from an educational thought perspective.

This part has explored how these two forms of schooling have developed over time. The comparison between these two forms provides insight into how different educational thoughts can shape student learning outcomes within different contexts.

2.4.1 China's high school education

In terms of the educational system, Chinese high school education in China began with the implementation of the "new educational system" (the "6-33 system") in 1922, which divided the primary and advanced stages of secondary education. Chinese traditional education is mainly based on Confucianism, Legalism, and other philosophical thoughts (Chen, 2015). Confucianism emphasizes self-cultivation through moral education, emphasizing respect for teachers and respecting the rules

(Zhao, 2011). The legalists advocate strict discipline in teaching methods to cultivate students' sense of obedience (Tang et al., 2012). Liberalism advocates freedom of learning and encourages students to think independently (Huo & Huang, 2013). These three kinds of educational thoughts have different characteristics but are closely related.

Chinese high school education follows traditional Chinese educational thought. Chinese high school education emphasizes traditional values such as filial piety while providing students basic academic knowledge (Cai, 2010). It focuses on cultivating students' moral character while paying attention to academic performance (Zeng & Yang, 2014; Li & Zhou, 2015). The evaluation system mainly comprises examinations such as college entrance examinations that emphasize knowledge accumulation rather than creativity or critical thinking skills (Zheng & Wu, 2016). The teaching system mostly adopts the lecture method, which lacks interaction between teachers and students (Li & Zhou, 2015). The curriculum system is relatively fixed, with few elective courses available (Zheng & Wu, 2016). Internal High School Education has both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it can promote students' academic performance by providing a unified standard for all schools; on the other hand, it tends to ignore individual differences among students due to its rigid curriculum design.

Looking into the future direction of Chinese high school education, we should take advantage of different educational thoughts by combining traditional wisdom with modern technology to provide a better learning environment for the next generation (Liang et al., 2021; Qin et al., 2021).

On the other hand, Chinese high schools continue to be dominated by Confucian values but have incorporated some elements from Western pedagogy, such as group activities or individualized instruction, to better prepare students for college entrance exams (Ding, 2020; Zhang et al., 2020).

2.4.2 China's international education

China's "international schools" have developed rapidly in recent years and constitute an important part of today's "international education" in China. The origin of China's "international education" has a very different background from that of Western developed countries. It can be traced back to the first batch of children studying in the United States at the end of the Qing Dynasty. In the development history of international education of more than 100 years, especially since the reform and opening up in 1978, China's "international education" has always been committed to promoting the construction and

development of China's modern society by learning from other countries. International high school education was introduced to China in this circumstance during the late 19th century by missionaries from Europe and America, and it has become increasingly popular among Chinese citizens due to its focus on developing practical skills that are applicable outside academia (Ye, 2019).

Subsequently, driven by the interests of the market economy, the number of "international schools" increased on a large scale because schools can directly enjoy the market and customer sources by "joining" some international education brands. Specifically, people with insights back then, such as Fu Yan, advocated that school teaching should be guided by Western realistic scientific methods and introduce scientific methodology in teaching and learning. In this way, the new kind of school imitates the school system, teaching method, and teaching organization form of modern Western countries. As explained by Ma (2003), "According to the patterns of students' acceptance of knowledge, the new school arranges the teaching content step by step, pays attention to students' understanding, and changes the traditional method that emphasizes rote memorization"(Ma, 2003).

From the literature review on this topic, although many scholars have conducted various studies on the electoral system in China, there are also contradictions and deficiencies in these studies. Specifically, some scholars state that two approaches to international education might be termed the pragmatic and the ideological aspects (Fesheh, 1985 & Umar, 2013). However, a 'dearth of writing about the philosophical underpinnings of international education in all of its forms' (Harvard Educational Review, 1985). Moreover, it is unassured whether an ideological philosophy applied to an otherwise national school can lead to a somehow international characteristic.

Despite numerous studies conducted on Chinese traditional thought systems such as Confucianism, Legalism, etc., a lack of research still exists into how these systems influence current internal/international secondary schooling practices in China. Furthermore, there is limited research into how different aspects, such as evaluation systems, teaching systems, and curriculum systems, can reflect different philosophical perspectives and how they interact with each other. In addition, little research has been done regarding the advantages/disadvantages associated with internal/international secondary schooling practices from an educational perspective. Lastly, a comprehensive study exploring future development direction for Chinese secondary schooling based on different philosophical perspectives is of scant amount. With the gaps filled, this study hoped

to do the comparative analysis, investigate Chinese education and teaching, figuring out the merits and demerits, respectively, thereby two sides may learn from each other and have better development from distinctive backgrounds, better adapt to the needs of human development and meet the contribution of social talents in the perspective of education.

3 Discussion

3.1 High School Education in China

3.1.1 Evaluating the System of High School Education in China

The evaluating system can first be seen in the exams. For example, ways of continuing education, examination content, and assessment aspects. Chinese educational thought has been in place for centuries and is well-established. This evaluation system has been used for generations and is based on traditional Chinese educational thought, which emphasizes rote memorization, test scores, and academic performance. The Imperial Examination System is the most direct source of educational evaluation in China (Liu, 2013, p140), which leads to a tendency that schools merely emphasize the Imperial Examinations instead of nurturing a person, which requires skills of thinking and getting information independently and creativity, focusing more on students' knowledge acquisition and moral education rather than their creativity or practical ability. This is reflected in the fact that most tests are based on memorization and recitation, which does not encourage critical thinking or problem-solving skills among students.

Moreover, the idea of summative evaluation is also a significant component, resulting from utilitarianism as one facet of the traditional spirit of Chinese education. There was a great deal of emphasis on score performance after implementing the method of selecting officials through exams in the Han Dynasty. Since then, school exams have been linked to the system of awarding officials, especially since the implementation of the imperial examination. It adopts an evaluation system that quantifies all abilities into scores; the measurement standard is thus extremely comprehensive and single. This gradually encourages the conception that people who win in tests are elites and successful. The exam-oriented education has therefore prevailed in ancient times. Nowadays, The Chinese Ministry of Education has implemented several policies and regulations to ensure that the evaluation system of high school education in China is based on this educational thought. These policies include implementing standardized tests, such as the National College Entrance

Examination (NCEE) and high school entrance exams. Legalists believe that rewards should be given to those who excel academically, while punishments should be imposed on those who do not meet expectations (Tang, 2012). This idea is still evident in modern-day Chinese schools, where high achievers are rewarded with good grades, while poor performance results in punishment such as detention or suspension from class (Huo & Huang, 2013).

3.1.2 Teaching System of High School Education in China

Teacher-oriented classrooms are very commonplace in Chinese education. Firstly, The absolute authority of teachers is always advocated that students obey the rules and receive the information delivered. In China, the emergence of authoritarianism in the educational concept stems from the political characteristics of ancient despotism and the form of "Caesaropapism" in the educational field (Hu, 2001, p87). The relationship between teachers and students resembles the relationship between monarchs and ministers. Teachers have absolute authority over students, and students must follow what they are taught and respect teachers' authority. Legalism also demonstrates this phenomenon. The core concept of Legalism is that people should be governed by law rather than morality or personal preference. This means that all citizens should follow rules without exception, regardless of their social status or moral beliefs. In terms of education, students must obey teachers' orders and adhere to school rules without question. Moreover, teachers' lectures usually show the course content, and students simply listen or take notes. Activities like group discussion and debate are rare; if students want to deliver their viewpoints, they should raise their hands and ask for permission.

As for what has been taught, respecting authority remains relevant. In the feudal society dominated by agriculture, economic and social development were relatively stable. This social environment and order gave educational ideas the characteristic of "post-metaphorical culture"(Yang, 2009). For example, educators generally believe that the role of education is to pass on previous experience to the following generations, allowing them to use previous knowledge and thus survive under traditional limitations. Therefore, traditional education exhibits the features like sincere worship of ancient sages, with the educational content mainly based on the works of ancient ages. Students over generations learn from previous knowledge from predecessors, and the sanctity of educational content should not be challenged.

Moreover, as discussed above, practicing exam-style

questions is a crucial facet reflecting the educational purpose. The workload of homework and classwork are thus likely to be large, and students have to solve subject problems all the time. To obtain better grades in examinations, tasks that entail creativity and critical thinking are less likely to be assigned as they are thought to provide nothing conducive to exams directly and are a waste of time.

3.1.3 Curriculum system of High school education in China

When talking about the curriculum system, course election comes to mind. In many regions in China, the curriculum mainly consists of courses such as Chinese language, mathematics, history, geography, politics, and science. In addition to these core courses, there are some elective courses, such as music and art. However, these elective courses are not mandatory for all students, and most schools do not have enough resources to provide a wide range of elective courses for students to choose from. During high school education, take Zhejiang province as an example; despite mandatory courses that are Chinese, math, and foreign language, students should choose three courses in a range of geography, history, politics, physics, chemistry, and biology. Compared to international education and other subjects and majors people can usually come up with, the range of selection seems relatively unitary and with minimum changes.

This is also reflected in the attribute that Chinese education emphasizes commonality over individuality, requiring that individual should keep up with the group. For example, the curriculum system and teaching progress are set to be unitary by the teaching and research groups. In this case, students passively adapt to the teacher. In the exams, it is usual that the same model, standard, or exam paper is used in distinctive schools, even cities. A conclusion may be safely drawn that the exam format is relatively single. Plus, the close-book format entails memorization of knowledge and general manual solutions. Lastly, high school education in China attaches importance to knowledge in the textbook. That is to say, there is a relative lack of opportunities to cultivate hands-on skills. Teachers mainly teach by rote, and students learn by memorization. This can be again traced back to the period of the feudal society dominated by agriculture, that this education mode and concept is more beneficial for maintaining the stability of society and even conservation of cultural inheritance.

3.1.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of High school education in China

High school education in China has been a part of Chinese

culture for centuries and is deeply rooted in Chinese society. It focuses on traditional Chinese values such as Confucianism, which emphasizes respect for elders and family loyalty, and a well-structured curriculum covering topics such as mathematics, science, history, and literature. Additionally, high school education provides students with an understanding of their cultural heritage by studying ancient texts and philosophies.

The advantages of this education system are obvious. In addition, the oppression from authority may force students to focus in a given period and thus produce the greatest study yield. This can be reflected in the amount of knowledge memorized, exam questions practiced, and exam skills and experience stocked. Moreover, a teacher-oriented classroom is likely to cultivate a sense of discipline among students due to the outstanding characteristic of teacher-student relationships in the Chinese elementary education stage: teachers' strong authority and students' strong obedience. Under the background that Chinese students have to strive to get better grades in exams, this teaching system may result in the highest efficiency of meeting the needs of exam-oriented education to the greatest possible extent, in which students' ability to learn knowledge is brushed up.

Additionally, the widespread application of the examination system is accompanied by guarantees of social equality and shows more care for children from ordinary families. The unified textbooks, syllabus, and exam-oriented education requirements indicate that all children are on the same starting line. The hierarchical examination system established by the Han Dynasty Imperial Academy was a significant symbol of the standardization and institutionalization of the examination system(Liu, 2013, p140); the range of participants is effectively enlarged that opportunities of obtaining higher social status or better outcomes are provided to lower class people. Due to the great extent of comprehensiveness of measurement standards, the slightly lower social classes previously discussed are blessed with a real opportunity to surpass the upper class in a certain way. Furthermore, legalists believe that everyone should have equal access to resources regardless of their social status, which is reflected in the current education system, where all students have access to free public schooling regardless of their economic background (Li & Zhang, 2017). As long as they have a better grasp of specific knowledge, the children of farmers will likely surpass the children of millionaires in the college entrance examination.

There are still defects that can be discussed. One disadvantage is that, as for the curriculum system, the study content used in high schools is often outdated and does not keep up with modern educational standards,

social lives, and students' practical circumstances. In the college entrance examination, these assessments for specialized subjects are mandatory and generally have a certain degree of difficulty. Due to the limitations of choosing subjects, students are very likely to study numerous subjects that may not be related to their future development. Therefore, students are less likely to brush up on their potential abilities and apply what they have learned to future use in practical situations or workplaces. This may lead to obliviation of the knowledge learned in high school, such as manual solutions to math questions, which can be considered a huge wastage of individual limited learning ability.

As for the teaching system, the method of rigid indoctrination dominates, neglecting the individual differences and autonomy of students and the mobilization of learning initiative and intellectual development; Inappropriate emphasis on the leading role of teachers may result in students being cautious and obedient, lacking the cultivation of a sense of autonomy and innovative and creative thinking. This teaching mode treats students as sole containers and revivers of knowledge instead of a creative and vivid subject of absorbing knowledge. To be specific, whenever a student wants to deliver an argument, it may be considered breaking the classroom rules and thus discourages students' intention and behavior of self-expression and innovative thinking.

As for the evaluation system, firstly, due to the educational purpose that ranks the acceptance rate of higher education as first place, receiving high scores become the single expected outcome, which causes cheating, and even enterprises that make a living on helping students to cheat. Secondly, the extensive practice, testing, and unified exams triggered by exam taking deprive students of other rights to learn subjects that they are interested in or majors that may provide more practical use, which further ignores talent and willingness to learn something new. The educational outcome is measured through a completely fixed and meager domain, which is too small compared to all known knowledge at present, and this system still suppresses the vast majority of Chinese students' potential. Additionally, the questions asked that seem open still entail students learning the knowledge from the perspective of test builders because the scoring criteria limit students' answers. There is no freedom in this case.

Similarly, some responsible adverse effects psychologically should not be overlooked. A certain person may decide to forbid a hobby because of a failure in an exam, losing interest in something that he used to be fond of, and not knowing what truly attracts him. In this case, there is a loss and wastage of social potential. Last but not least,

people from relatively poorer backgrounds who get into greater universities and even better workplaces may still find the social gap inevitable that other people of higher social status always possess resources of greater quantity and quality, so a kind of pseudo-social mobility and social equity is achieved. Now all the efforts are made to get better scores to have an ideal social life, which supports an educational purpose of achieving social mobility instead of an educational one of nurturing a person.

3.2 International Education in China

3.2.1 Evaluating the System of International High School Education in China

In international high schools, students usually apply for universities and colleges abroad. Taking American universities as an example, their admission assessment indicators include a series of prescribed college entrance exam scores and high school grades, teacher reviews, recommendation letters, thesis writing, personal application materials, arts, sports specialties, social practice, interview performance, and even race, which are comprehensively considered to determine whether to enroll students. Many facets are shown in the application materials that allow people to judge and evaluate a student more comprehensively from more angles. In this case, the importance attached to scores is relative to possessing a lower proportion, which is not the only factor determining the outlook and future of education. This leads to another significant component in evaluating the international high school system, called GPA. It is a formative process measure usually composed of several elements enacted by respective schools and their judgment. For example, elements like attendance, classwork, mid-term exam, and final exam can account for the final value of GPA by certain calculations (varying among each school). Every performance during the study process may affect the final result based on genuine and reliable records by teachers.

The whole evaluation system is designed to examine a student from multiple angles. Even though people who are both academically prepared and have a high level of cultural literacy are outstanding, the requirement that the modernized world imparts on individuals is of higher demand, entailing students to have greater overall quality. This is reflected in the educational purpose, which coincides with humanism.

Although the evaluation system is rather all-around, standard tests are still required. Taking SAT as an example, the main assessment is students' abilities in reading comprehension, English language application, writing, and logical thinking, as known as core competencies. The module focused on math is designed to cultivate critical

thinking, mainly focusing on the ability to solve a question with an acceptable degree of rigor compared to math subjects tested in Chinese college entrance exams. The United States also provides non-mandatory SAT2 exams to assess a range of twenty “professional capabilities,” providing a more specific guiding direction of diversion for students. This evaluation approach implemented the contributions of Plato in Western educational thought, as illustrated in *The Republic* that everyone should be educated into different professionals according to their gift and nature.

3.2.2 Teaching System of International High School Education in China

According to the history of Western education, humanism has greatly affected education’s purpose and concepts from many aspects. One of the most significant features of humanism is adhering to the value of putting people first or treating people as the “main body.” What Jan Amos Komenský has illustrated in *Magna Didactica* is the direct reflection of this idea, stating that teaching must be adapted to students instead of students adapted to teaching. International high school education in China is based on student-centered teaching, encouraging students to think independently and develop critical thinking skills. This is achieved by providing an environment emphasizing collaboration, inquiry-based learning, and problem-solving. The curriculum also includes project-based learning and field trips that allow students to explore their interests and gain real-world experience. International high school education in China also encourages students to take ownership of their learning. For example, teachers often allow students to choose the topics they want to study and provide guidance on how to approach the topic. This allows students to understand the material more deeply and encourages them to think critically about it. Additionally, international schools often use cooperative learning strategies that involve group work and collaboration among peers. These phenomena also convey the humanistic concept that “students are the main body of education,” and as E·Key argues that ideal education should minimize external interference and suppression as much as possible. By increasing students’ participation and immersion in the classroom and teaching content, students may use their intrinsic potential at most. Moreover, contrary to the teachers’ and predecessors’ authority, students immersed in international education are freely available and permitted, even encouraged to judge the authority, to be more precise, not holding the blind pursuit of their former knowledge. This educational concept is mainly rooted in the historical fact that the scholastic teaching method of medieval missionary

schools was sharply criticized by humanism. The leading concept then stated that having the experience in person is necessary, and treating the words of ‘authority’ as the ultimate truth is unacceptable.

Additionally, international schools often use technology to enhance the learning experience by providing online resources or interactive tools for students to use in their studies. These teaching methods are designed with flexibility so they can be adapted for different learning styles, allowing all learners to benefit from them equally regardless of background or ability level. Finally, many international schools have access to resources such as libraries or laboratories through partnerships with local universities or organizations, making them just as well equipped, if not better, than traditional schooling institutions.

3.3.3 Curriculum System of International High School Education in China

The curriculum setting in international schools is influenced by humanism after the Renaissance on school curriculum and teaching methods. Renaissance humanism guided the school curriculum to undergo conspicuous adjustments from “seven liberal arts,” designed to nurture clergy, to setting up new and more diverse courses.

A-Level (General Certificate of Education Advanced Level), IB(International Baccalaureate), and AP (Advanced Placement) Are three major courses in international education. AP is an Advanced Placement or Advanced Placement course in the United States. It allows students to take an AP exam after completing their coursework and earn college credit for certain grades. IB programs are mainly offered by foreign children’s schools, from kindergarten to pre-college; A-levels are British high school courses, and certificates are used by almost all English-taught universities as admission criteria for new students. Take the IB program as an example. The International Baccalaureate (IB) program is an internationally recognized educational system adopted by many international schools in China. The IB program focuses on critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills, essential for success in the modern world. The assessments used to evaluate students include exams, essays, projects, presentations, and portfolios designed to measure student performance in each subject area. Additionally, the IB program encourages students to engage in independent study projects, which allows them to gain a deeper understanding of the material they are studying and apply it in real-world situations.

It is universally acknowledged that with the rapidly modernized and sophisticated global society, individuals are asked to be educated and more well-rounded instead

of only possessing expert skills. The IB program also promotes global citizenship and intercultural understanding by encouraging students to explore different cultures, values, and perspectives. It also emphasizes the importance of service learning, which allows students to gain a better understanding of their local communities and how they can contribute to society. This whole educational progress indicates a wider space freely available for students to choose from.

International high school education in China also provides students access to a global network of peers, teachers, and resources that can help them develop the skills and knowledge needed for success in the 21st century. Some schools provide a course called Global Understanding, which includes opportunities to learn about different cultures, explore new ideas, build relationships with peers from around the world, even go to a foreign country and meet the peers in person. Furthermore, advanced classes and extracurricular activities not available at internal Chinese high schools are more likely to render students' abilities to face up to different incidents and make decisions with bravery.

3.2.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of International Education in China

International education in China has become increasingly popular over the past few years, with more and more students opting to attend international schools. This is because international schools provide students access to a wide range of resources and opportunities that may not be available in high school education. Additionally, many international schools offer programs such as exchange trips and internships which can help students gain valuable experience and brush up on internal potential to a greater extent.

First and foremost, inspirational teaching methods of having students lead the classroom and enroll in extracurricular activities can awaken students' internal learning motivation, meanwhile enhancing students' capacity. For example, students are more likely to nurture skills like public speaking, communication, and leadership through group work and discussions, as well as experiencing failure and practical obstacles not mentioned in textbooks when doing hands-on science experiments. Student leaders who often organize big events will undoubtedly learn from the planning, selecting, and cooperation, which may render them a competitive edge when tackling such situations afterward, even in working places. Generally, students' individualities are always being respected and even promoted, and some valuable nature is blessed with the opportunities to be discovered and developed, which is again the perfect

reflection of Western educational thought rooted in humanism. International education in China also provides students with an international perspective, access to global resources and networks, and the opportunity to learn from a diverse range of teachers; they also provide students with the opportunity to interact with peers from different countries and cultures, which renders students' international thought and instill values that will help them improve international understanding, global issues, and multicultural awareness. The well-resourced, up-to-date technology and facilities further ensure the purpose of developing a new form of elites that meets social needs.

Overall, it is clear that Liberalism has had a significant impact on contemporary Chinese educational thought. By advocating for greater personal freedom and autonomy within classrooms and beyond, this philosophy has enabled educators in China to create more equitable learning environments where all students can thrive. Additionally, by emphasizing critical thinking skills over rote memorization techniques, it has encouraged students to become active participants in their learning process rather than passive recipients of knowledge imparted by teachers alone. Thus far, these changes appear promising but further research is needed into how they will continue to shape high school education systems both internally within China itself as well as internationally across borders.

However, there are some drawbacks associated with international education in China. Take the teaching system as an example; if students are always free to express their opinions, even in the right situations like group discussions, the class order is not easy to maintain, and the teaching progress, which aims to let students learn the required knowledge, is hard to be assured. Due to the possible existence of free riders, the overall mastery of soft skills is difficult to quantify and test promptly. Thus the time devotion for students to lead the learning process may be fruitless. Additionally, while international schools may provide access to a more diverse range of teaching staff than high school education in China, they may not provide the same level of cultural immersion as Chinese high school education. There comes a hidden danger of cultural identity. We cannot deny the preponderance brought by the improvement of a second language and international thoughts. Still, one crucial part indicating the localization of international education is the bilingual balance, which cannot be simply corrected by imparting traditional Chinese curricula. What is truly awaited to be dealt with is the remaining interests of initiative Chinese reading and writing and the consequence of cultural identity. A person's sense of identity as a foreigner in a foreign country can also make them more sensitive to

examining their own country, and they may feel awed and unable to recover from the impact of cultural shock. It reinforces the idea that the traditional root is the essence of an individual when incorporating oneself into society. Furthermore, international schools may not have the same level of resources or access to extracurricular activities as high school education or provide students with the opportunity to learn from teachers familiar with Chinese culture and history. What could be worse is that, in the words of definition. However, having international thoughts is not completely equal to being immersed in a foreign culture and multicultural awareness is not equal to only promoting the dominant culture, some groups of people may gradually have less identity to their mother country, probably due to the inappropriate instructions instilled and insufficient information transmission about national pride. This can also be traced back to the first era of international education in China when such schools were provided only for foreign children. The educational mode with a single language of English, only foreign teachers and foreign textbooks show that it is very Westernized and leaves people with an impression of “international schools.” In addition, in the process of localization, it is also possible and even a tendency that international education is also becoming increasingly exam-based. The basic purpose of introducing international courses in most schools is to meet the needs of some students who want to study abroad to receive an education that aligns with international standards. A vast array of tests are required to evaluate students’ learning ability. For example, language assessments such as TOEFL and IELTS and international curriculum systems such as AP, IB, and A-Level. International high schools usually construct such classes to learn for exams, which requires much student endeavor. In some schools that attach importance to, for example, the rate of students getting A* in subjects, only those subjects that are relatively easier for students to score high on campus and subjects closely related to further education will be offered. Other subjects are thus compressed in teaching time or even not provided. This undermines the diversity and selectivity of the curriculum, giving rise to a new “exam-oriented education.” Moreover, personality development and all-rounded development are important value representations of quality education, but there comes a problem of how to balance personal development and social development. It is sometimes regarded as a new product of criticism against traditional education and exam-oriented education, sometimes regarded as an ideal model of educational practice, a slogan of educational reform. This individualistic concept of development cannot reveal the actual relationship between individual

and social development and somehow cannot give us a real understanding of personality. The relationship between individual development and social development should be seen as a common process of construction and completion; it is not only a process of an individual getting involved in society gradually. In this case, for the development of personality, it is by no means a so-called socialization process from nature to society. On the contrary, it is a product of the development of individual psychology from the level and perspective of society. Probably the advocates of such all-rounded development have paid too much attention to and emphasize only the positive effects produced and seldom think about the loss. In particular, the potential and profound impact that it may cast on overall educational development. The consequence itself contains a potential ideological crisis that may lead education to the extreme individualism pass road without striking a proper balance. Last but not least, the cost of tuition fees for attending an international school may be far more expensive compared to regular high school education in China, which is even higher when finally entering the university. Back to the evaluation system when applying for foreign universities, to fulfill these sophisticated requirements more outstandingly set up an invisible barrier that keeps poor students away, as the brilliant resume usually has to do with the help provided by family support. Therefore, this education system is more affordable in well-developed cities with relatively advanced economic development, where the prevalence of international education and overall social acceptance is also likely to be higher. Meanwhile, international education is whatsoever a new system introduced in China. Some people are still unfamiliar with this educational mode and choose to remain their attitudes on the sidelines, even disapproving of it. The original reason is that the overall society does not accept some Western educational ideas.

4. Conclusion

This essay has provided a comprehensive review of the educational thoughts and pedagogy of student learning in China. It has discussed the theoretical background of Chinese and Western educational thoughts, as well as the features, development, advantages, and disadvantages of Chinese high school education and international high school education in China, meanwhile recording a series of explanations occurring in this process. By comparison between these two types of high school education, we can see that they reflect different educational thoughts, which have their strengths and weaknesses.

From the discussion part, we may sum up that through

the comparison between these two types of high school education, it may safely conclude that Chinese high school education, as a reflection of traditional education, has both negative and positive aspects; although the leading aspect of modern education mode is more advanced, there are also some imperfections. Therefore, traditional education and modern education should be understood from the perspective of their integration rather than complete separation, and the advantages and disadvantages of the two should be viewed dialectically and realistically. The ultimate goal is to improve the current education situation. As for Chinese high school education, it possesses merits. For instance, it is more likely to help students maximize their learning potential in the short term by relying on external pressure, such as teachers' general teaching mode and objective evaluation systems. Some people are undeniably blessed with the opportunities to obtain a better social life through good grades and a resultant better school. On the other hand, due to historical reasons, people have already become accustomed to relevant policies over this long period. In this case, some phenomenon is considered hard to transform, which may serve as demerits of this education system, such as the ongoing use of outdated study content and fewer opportunities for students to intellectually develop as well-rounded people and make better use of self-potential. On a grander scale, the purpose of achieving social mobility is also not necessary to be fulfilled due to class solidification somehow.

As for international high school education in China, there are also advantages and disadvantages. First and foremost, students can practice a plethora of soft skills such as innovative learning and critical thinking through the student-centered teaching system and more diverse course content, meanwhile having their individualities respected. Moreover, their potential and internal motivation may be encouraged. The drawbacks mainly focus on the difficulties of managing the classroom, the complexities of evaluating a person, and the subtle grasp of national identity in the cultivation of multicultural awareness.

Around 2015, Chinese international education was gradually characterized by a school-running philosophy of "taking China as the foundation and looking into the world." From this process of development, international schools are actually slowly developing towards a trend of integration. The promulgation of *Regulations on the Implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Promotion of Private Education* and other regulations in the past two years, including supervision of course materials, have undeniably promoted such integration. Students in this way are more likely to combine Chinese and Western cultures. Overall, what is

worth learning in each high school education is basically what the other system relatively lacks. Despite the preponderance of Chinese high school education discussed above, it also includes the cultivation of a sense of discipline, the significant effectiveness in achieving test-taking results in the short term, and a relatively fairer and more direct evaluation system of the entrance to further education. Moreover, to truly implement quality education into the actual educational process and cultivate people who are adaptable to the comprehensive development of modern society, Chinese high school education should reexamine the old educational concepts, systems, models, and content, meanwhile learning from Western educational thoughts. The development of Chinese high school education should be based on the combination of traditional culture and modern milieu while taking into account different needs among students. In addition to providing quality teaching materials and resources for students' all-around development, teachers should also pay attention to students' intellectual development instead of simply imparting knowledge so that they can better adapt themselves to the ever-changing social environment.

5. Evaluation

There are still some deficiencies in this essay. It is necessary to acknowledge the descriptive nature of this essay readily. The purpose is to make the comparison by contextualizing a deep analysis of many facets of the phenomenon. This description is of small likelihood to stand a chance as an independent contribution if there are no other ones presented in this issue. Some illustrations are not deeply analytical enough either due to the time limitation of this project. For example, there may be a lack of elaboration on the breadth and the detailed historical reasons why certain concepts are accustomed then or how the mental state of the entire society, such as materialism and partial worship of money, links to the education system. Moreover, moral education and ideological and political education, which serves as a vehicle for imparting political viewpoints as components of the curriculum system, are not suitable for a detailed explanation in this article due to political reasons, the sensitivity of wording, and the social positioning of the author.

As for the reflection of the whole process, a great amount of time is devoted to evaluating the resources and coming up with ideas from different perspectives. And there is hardly coherent time for fluent thought construction and continuous writing. In this case, the ability of time management and problem-solving are enhanced. Moreover, it seems that the essence of constructing the link is the process of figuring out the nature of the issue,

which is a process of the solidification of the knowledge learned and inspirational thoughts and accumulation of the stock. The ultimate goal is not necessarily getting an excellent grade and striving for an innovative idea but faithfully presenting what is learned with own understanding and comments. A better comprehension of historical facts and their correlation with current situations is needed.

To sum up, it is expected that future relevant studies can apply more field research, data analysis, and empirical investigation so that the outcome of the comparison can function more productively. More revolutionary discoveries still need to make in the future.

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