The differences and social influencing factors between contemporary Chinese and Western education systems: Discussion based on teacher-student interaction

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Abstract. Education is a critical element in shaping individuals' lives, and as the world becomes more interconnected, research on the impact of different educational systems on student outcomes is gaining interest. A crucial aspect of this research is the teacher-student relationship, which can significantly affect students' autonomy and creativity. This article explores the differences in the teacher-student relationship in Western and Chinese educational systems and their impact on student outcomes. The article argues that a relationship that is equal, respectful, and interactive can help stimulate students' autonomy and creativity, leading to the development of free citizens..

Keywords: education, teacher-student relationship, autonomy, creativity, Western educational system, Chinese educational system, student outcomes, free citizens.

1. Introduction

1.1 General Comparison between Chinese and Western Education

Education is a crucial aspect of human development, shaping individuals' social, cultural, and economic lives. As the world becomes more interconnected, the exchange of knowledge and ideas across cultures has become more commonplace, leading to increased interest in the study of educational systems and their effects on student outcomes. One important area of research is the teacher-student relationship in different educational systems, which can have a significant impact on students' autonomy and creativity.

In the West, the teacher-student relationship is often based on equality, mutual respect, and interaction. Since the development of bourgeois liberalism in the 19th century, the goal of education in developed capitalist countries has been to cultivate free citizens who can think independently and creatively. In Western classrooms, teachers simply introduce the main points in class, allowing students to read and think more. At the end of each class, the teacher assigns reading tasks based on the teaching content of the next class, allowing students to be fully prepared for deeper discussions with classmates in the next class, stimulating students' learning autonomy.In contrast, China's traditional education system is based on obedience and conformity, with a strong emphasis on discipline. Although China has made efforts to promote quality education and shift away from the traditional teacher-centered classroom, the pursuit of stability remains a priority over the pursuit of freedom. Chinese society is committed to cultivating people who are free and fully developed as Karl Marx said, but in actual social life, the pursuit of stability is more important than the pursuit of freedom. As Chen (2002) said, "China always talks about freedom in connection with discipline, emphasizing freedom under discipline, which has become the guiding ideology in moral education."

The teacher-student relationship plays a vital role in achieving educational objectives. A relationship that is equal, respectful, and interactive can help stimulate students' autonomy and creativity, leading to the development of free citizens. In contrast, a traditional obedient teacher-student relationship can limit students' growth and development. For example, research has shown that when teachers provide students with more autonomy and opportunities to make decisions, students are more motivated and engaged in their learning. Ultimately, creating a teacher-student relationship that supports students' autonomy and creativity is essential for achieving educational goals in any system.

1.2 The purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this paper is to explore the differences in educational systems between China and the West, with a particular focus on the teacher-student relationship. By comparing contemporary teaching methods in China and the West and investigating the social factors that shape these methods, such as cultural values, political ideologies, and economic structures, this paper aims to shed light on the formation and implementation of educational purposes in these two regions. However, there is a lack of sociological knowledge applied to the field of education, which limits our understanding of the differences in educational purposes between China and the West. Therefore, this paper seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) What are the differences between contemporary Chinese and Western teaching methods? (2) What is the nature of the teacher-student relationship in these systems? and (3) What social factors influence the differences between Chinese and Western education systems?

Some of the key social factors that can shape the educational system include cultural norms and values, political ideologies, and the need for economic development. By analyzing these factors and how they contribute to the formation and implementation of teaching methods, this paper will provide valuable insights into the complex intersection of social and educational factors embedded in the student-teacher relationship. Through this analysis, this paper aims to contribute to the discourse on educational systems and provide a better understanding of the differences in educational purposes between China and the West.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept Definition

2.1.1 The Definition of Educational System

The term 'Educational system' is defined as the structure of all institutions and the opportunities for obtaining education within a country. The educational system is not just limited to formal education institutions, but also includes informal and non-formal education such as community-based education, online learning, and apprenticeships. It aims to provide individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to become productive members of society and to contribute to the economic and social development of their country.

The educational system also has a significant impact on social mobility and inequality. Access to quality education is often linked to socio-economic status, and disparities in educational opportunities can perpetuate social inequalities. As a result, ensuring equal access to education and improving the quality of education are important goals of educational systems around the world.

2.1.2 Teacher-student Interactive Relationship

The teacher-student relationship is a critical component of the education system, as it can have a profound impact on students' academic and personal growth. Teachers play a vital role in imparting knowledge, teaching morality, and providing guidance and support to students. A positive teacher-student relationship can foster a safe and supportive learning environment that promotes students' engagement, motivation, and emotional well-being.

In China's education, the relationship between teachers and students is usually a relationship of respect and worship. The "teacher, preach, teach, and dispel doubts" mentioned in ancient Chinese Confucian thought shows the mainstream relationship between teachers and students in Chinese education10. Teachers are responsible for imparting knowledge, teaching morality, and providing guidance and support to students.

In western education, the teacher-student relationship is often viewed as a cooperative relationship, where teachers not only impart knowledge but also encourage students to learn and explore independently. Teachers establish a relationship of mutual trust and respect with their students, which helps build students' self-confidence and learning motivation. For example, Hong (2011) highlighted

that professors at Western universities send emails to students outlining reading tasks to complete, encouraging students to take control of their own learning.

When teachers show respect, care, and empathy towards their students, they can create a supportive and collaborative learning environment that promotes students' academic success. Additionally, teachers who are knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and passionate about their subjects can inspire students' interest and curiosity and encourage them to pursue their learning goals. In summary, the teacher-student relationship is a crucial aspect of effective teaching and learning. A positive relationship can enhance students' academic performance, emotional well-being, and personal growth, and it is essential that teachers establish a supportive and collaborative relationship with their students to promote a successful learning experience.

2.1.3 Social factors

Social factors refer to various aspects of society that can impact human behavior, thought, and values, including the social environment, social structure, social culture, social system, and social economy. When examining the relationship between the education system and social factors, we typically consider three key social factors.

The need for economic development: Examining different education systems and their student-teacher relationship from the perspective of the labor division need for economic development is important to understand how education is preparing individuals for the workforce. Labor division refers to the division of tasks and roles in the production process, which is essential for economic growth and development.

Education plays a crucial role in preparing individuals for different tasks and roles in the labor division process. Therefore, examining different education systems and their student-teacher relationships from this perspective can help us understand how these systems are meeting the needs of the labor market and preparing individuals for various roles in the production process. Furthermore, this perspective can also shed light on the effectiveness of different education systems in equipping individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the labor market. It can also highlight the areas where education systems may need to be improved to better align with the needs of the labor market and the changing nature of work. Overall, examining education systems from the perspective of the labor division need for economic development can help inform policy decisions and improve the effectiveness of education in preparing individuals for the workforce.

Cultural norms and values: from the perspective of cultural norms and values, it is important to examine different education systems and their student-teacher relationships as they reflect the cultural values and beliefs of a society. Education is often designed to reflect the dominant cultural norms and values of a society, and this can have a significant impact on the content of curricula, teaching methods, and assessments. Understanding the cultural factors that shape education systems can help to promote cross-cultural understanding and collaboration, as well as inform policy decisions. When comparing China and Western countries' educational systems, there are significant differences in cultural norms and values that influence the student-teacher relationship. In China, for example, the relationship between teachers and students is often characterized by respect and reverence for authority, whereas in Western countries, there is a greater emphasis on collaboration and independent learning. Additionally, the content of curricula in China is often focused on memorization and rote learning, reflecting a cultural emphasis on education as a means of acquiring knowledge and passing exams. In contrast, curricula in Western countries may place more emphasis on critical thinking and creativity, reflecting cultural values of individualism and innovation.

Political ideology: From the perspective of political ideology, it is important to examine different education systems and their student-teacher relationship because the political ideology of those in power can shape the goals, priorities, and funding of educational institutions. In China, the educational system is heavily influenced by the political ideology of the Communist Party, which emphasizes collective values and conformity to the state's goals. The curriculum is designed to promote loyalty to the Party and the socialist system, with less emphasis on critical thinking and individualism. In contrast, in Western countries, education systems tend to be more liberal and

individualistic, emphasizing critical thinking and creativity. Political ideology also influences education policy, with conservative and liberal ideologies often promoting different approaches to education, such as more or less emphasis on standardized testing, school choice, and funding priorities.

2.2 The Origin of Modern Education in China and the West

2.2.1 The Origin and Development of Western Teaching Methods

There are several symbols and events that are associated with the start of modern education in Western countries. One of the most significant ones was the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century 2. After the religious reform, literacy became essential for understanding God's Word, which contributed to the development of education5. As people started to recognize the importance of literacy, it laid the foundation for the next movement of 'awakening'. The 18th century Enlightenment was a period of intellectual and cultural growth that emphasized reason and scientific inquiry. This led to the development of new educational theories and practices, such as the idea of universal education and the importance of critical thinking and analysis. The social change brought about by the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century created a need for a highly skilled workforce, leading to the development of more formalized and structured educational systems, including the establishment of public schools and the adoption of standardized curricula. This period also standardized the classroom setting and grading system in the contemporary education system.

2.2.2 The Origin and Development of Chinese Teaching Methods

The origin of modern education in China can be traced back to the middle of the 19th century. China has suffered many foreign invasions and civil strife, and its national strength is weakening. The traditional education system cannot meet the needs of society. So China began to learn modern education concepts and methods from western countries2. In the late Qing Dynasty, many educators and intellectuals began to call for the establishment of a modern school system to provide more scientific and comprehensive education for training talents. Since then, the development of modern education in China has gradually accelerated. As mentioned by Tian&Li (2002), since the abolition of the imperial examination system in 1905, China's modern education management system, school system, examination system and curriculum have just begun to take shape. At the beginning of the 20th century, China's modern education entered a new stage. The May 4th Movement in 1919 marked the beginning of a group of young people opposing the old education system. This movement promoted the promotion of modern education concepts and methods in China. In 1949, the People's Republic of China was founded, and China began to carry out large-scale educational reform, with the goal of popularizing education, eliminating illiteracy, and cultivating talents to meet the needs of socialist construction2. By establishing a compulsory education system and vigorously promoting universal education and vocational education, China's education has gradually moved towards modernization.

2.3 Analysis of the Differences between Chinese and Western Education from Various Perspectives:Cultural, Educational Philosophy, and Teacher-student Relationship and Teaching-style Preference Perspectives

2.3.1 Cultural Perspective

The differences between contemporary Chinese and Western teaching methods, and their underlying social factors, are the subject of extensive research in the field of education, with many scholars approaching the topic from various angles. The following is a literature review of relevant studies. In general, educational scholars suggest that the significant differences between Chinese and Western teaching methods are rooted in the cultural distinctions between the two societies. The famous cultural dimension theory by Geert Hofstede discusses these differences in cultural norms and values between different countries and regions, including educational culture. In their study, Hofstede et al. (2010) discovered that there are significant disparities between Chinese and Western cultures in power distance, individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, male/female roles, and

other factors that affect teaching methods and educational values. These factors affect teaching methods and educational values in education. Similarly, Yang (2007) compared the differences between Chinese and Western educational philosophies from a cultural perspective. Yang analyzed their social background and historical evolution, and discussed the impact of different educational philosophies on educational practices. Yang (2007) argued that the differences between Chinese and Western educational philosophies arise from differences in culture and philosophical concepts.

2.3.2 Educational Philosophy Perspective

Educational scholars have explored the differences between Chinese and Western teaching models and educational concepts, highlighting the impact of cultural differences on teaching methods. For instance, Mo (2010) argues that Chinese culture tends to emphasize group values and a holistic perspective, while Western culture values individualism, rational thinking, and personal interests. These differences in cultural orientation also shape teaching concepts in China and the West. Yang (2010) notes that Western personalized education prioritizes children's expressiveness and initiative, reflecting a focus on individual consciousness, while Chinese collectivism tends to emphasize understanding others and integration into the group. Research has shown that Western education is often viewed as a means for individual development and self-improvement, whereas in Eastern societies, education is more focused on collective progress and societal advancement, whereas in Eastern societies, education is more focused on collective progress and societal advancement. These cultural differences can lead to divergent teaching styles and expectations for students.

2.3.3 Teacher-student Relationship and Teaching-style Preference

Several researchers have investigated the impact of cultural and social factors on the student-teacher relationship and teaching preferences in China and the West. Yang (2010) highlighted significant differences between China and the West in these aspects. In Western countries, teachers tend to adopt a personalized approach to teaching that caters to the unique characteristics of each student. Conversely, in China, there is a greater emphasis on presenting a unified view in the classroom, with teachers taking the lead, and students passively absorbing information. The classroom environment in China values collectivism, politeness, and discipline, with students being required to listen with their hands behind their backs and raise their hands to speak if they have a question. Yang (2007) describes the impact of hierarchy and authority in China's educational ideology, which has led to a system that is often characterized by coercion and violence. Yang notes that the concept of ideological violence against teachers is based on a knowledge autocracy and cultural hegemony rooted in a unified view of truth and values10. This has resulted in an unequal teacher-student relationship in China, where authority and hierarchy are often prioritized over collaboration and mutual respect.

2.4 Review

The differences between Chinese and Western teaching methods and their associated social factors are complex research fields. Various studies have identified culture, history, philosophy, social background, and economy as the sources of differences in education. While some research has focused on comparing the similarities and differences in different teaching methods and cultural backgrounds, other areas such as the relationship between students and teachers in Chinese and Western cultures, and the social factors that affect its formation, have not been studied in depth. Furthermore, the influence of changing times on education is seldom considered. In many Asian cultures, students are taught to obey and respect authority, while Western cultures may value personal creativity and autonomy. Consequently, some scholars have portrayed the education system in China negatively, suggesting that it limits the imagination and creativity of students. However, few studies have explored the stage of educational changes in China and the West and its social factors. This paper aims to address these gaps by using the theories of three sociologists to investigate the social factors underlying the differences between Eastern and Western teaching methods and explain the different teacher-student relationships in China and the West. By providing a comprehensive analysis

of the similarities and differences between Eastern and Western teaching methods and their social contexts, this paper will contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of education in shaping individual and societal outcomes.

3.   Comparison of Teacher-student Relationship between China and the West

3.1 General Situation of Teacher-Student Relationship in China

Chinese education has a rich historical background and distinctive cultural traditions that continue to shape its teaching methods. In the context of the teacher-student relationship in Chinese education, the authority of teachers is a key element. According to Liu (2000), the words of a teacher, author, or scientific researcher printed in black and white are regarded as the ultimate truth and beyond questioning. This consensus between teachers and students results in limited guidance for students in assessing the authenticity, accuracy, and value of the knowledge they acquire. Consequently, in China's education system, students' reverence for teachers and their authority remains widespread. Confucianism plays a significant role in Chinese education, emphasizing the cultivation of basic knowledge and moral values. Confucianism asserts that the purpose of education is to foster virtue and competence, with a focus on moral development. A fundamental idea that permeates Confucius' philosophy is the "love of learning," which forms the core tenet of Confucianism. The combination of the authoritative image of teachers and the "love of learning" concept gives rise to a teacher-centered teaching method where teachers impart knowledge and students are expected to memorize and reproduce information. According to Han Yu, a Confucian educator during the Tang Dynasty, emphasized that the primary duty of educators is to "preach", followed by "teaching" and "dispelling doubts" about knowledge. This implies that the primary responsibility of teachers in teaching methods is to impart knowledge first, while the task of students is to remember these theories initially and then understand them. Moreover, the Chinese education system places significant importance on examinations, and students' scores usually determine whether they can enroll in schools or secure employment, leading to a lack of time and resources for extracurricular activities.

3.2 General Situation of Teacher-Student Relationship in the West

In contrast to Chinese education, Western education places a greater emphasis on critical thinking. Critical thinking involves the capacity to scrutinize and assess information, and to analyze and evaluate data thoroughly to develop one's own original opinions and judgments. In modern Western education, critical thinking is a crucial component, and students are encouraged to cultivate their capacity to think independently and learn autonomously.9. Therefore, in terms of the teacher-student relationship, Western education promotes a more egalitarian and collaborative approach. Students are encouraged to engage in discussions and share knowledge with their teachers. Western educational practices prioritize the development of critical thinking skills, and students are encouraged to challenge ideas and engage in interactive discussions. Moreover, extracurricular activities are given more importance in the education system, providing opportunities for students to develop leadership and social skills. This fundamental difference between Western and Chinese education may be attributed to the Western emphasis on individual autonomy and free will, which can be traced back to the ancient Greek philosophers who believed in the human capacity for independent thought and choice[15]. As Chen (2005) notes, the love of wisdom was a defining feature of philosophy in ancient Western Greece, and it played a significant role in shaping Western culture. In most Western countries, students are taught to develop their own critical thinking skills, which often become a criterion for teachers and professors to evaluate their academic performance. The emphasis on individual autonomy and independence reflects a belief that people have the right to control their own lives and futures.

3.3 Differences in Teaching Revealed from the Teacher-student Relationship

"The love of learning" refers to the process of actively engaging with learning theory, acquiring knowledge, and learning from the intelligence of others. In teaching, the core concept of the love of wisdom is to encourage students to develop their own internal intelligence through the process of imparting knowledge. This is achieved by viewing teachers as guides who inspire students to think and discuss, rather than simply the source of knowledge. In the West, the concept of free will has been developed and continued as an important part of western culture and education. As a result, students in western countries are often taught to develop their critical thinking skills, which are frequently used to evaluate academic ability.

I have experienced different teaching methods in China and the West. While studying in the West, I found that the course content was often straightforward, but the output difficulty was much higher than expected. For example, in an anthropological class, I learned about the term "Habitus" which was used to illustrate that people are a product of culture. I interpreted it as the idea that people's behavior is influenced by cultural and class symbols, such as the English accent of the British aristocracy, which becomes a part of their subconscious behavior. Over time, this develops into what we call the aristocratic accent. However, other students in the class had different opinions, believing that Habitus is not "infiltrated" in individual behavior but is instead restricted by cultural symbols. In the end, the professor did not provide a clear answer but instead asked us to write a paper based on our own point of view and to look for reference materials or challenge our own point of view.

In China, the education system often emphasizes "standard answers" that have been pre-screened by the authority center, providing students with the best answers and theories directly. This approach may be more efficient as it enables students to acquire basic knowledge and theory quickly, although they may not always fully comprehend the relevant definitions and meanings. However, this method may not encourage long-term learning and critical thinking, as students are not encouraged to challenge the "standard answers" or to develop their own opinions and ideas.

4. Understanding the social factors that cause differences in teaching between China and the West from three famous sociological theories

4.1 Basic Introduction of the three theories

Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Marx are generally considered the main pioneers of modern social science, and each of them presented their own exposition and definition of the term "social factor".

Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Marx are considered the main pioneers of modern social science, with each presenting their own distinct exposition and definition of the term "social factor." Durkheim, known as the father of modern sociology, focused on the concept of social facts, which are forces beyond the individual that are determined by the whole society, including social structure, norms, and values. Weber, another influential sociologist, emphasized the impact of social structure, system, and culture on individual behavior and thought. He highlighted the role of religion, law, political and economic systems, educational systems, and cultural customs as social factors that shape society. On the other hand, Karl Marx, the renowned figure in the realm of Marxism, focused on class struggle and economic factors as social factors that significantly influence individual behavior and thought, with an emphasis on the role of class and economic structure in shaping society.

When considering the differences and social influencing factors between contemporary Chinese and Western education systems, particularly in the context of teacher-student interaction, various perspectives put forth by Durkheim, Weber, and Marx can be applied. Durkheim's concept of social facts can shed light on the social norms and values that govern teacher-student interactions in both Chinese and Western educational settings. Weber's emphasis on social structure and cultural customs can provide insights into the differences in educational systems and pedagogical practices between these two regions. Additionally, Marx's focus on class struggle and economic factors can be relevant

in understanding how social and economic inequalities may impact teacher-student dynamics in both Chinese and Western educational contexts.

Overall, drawing upon the theories of Durkheim, Weber, and Marx can provide a nuanced framework for analyzing the complex interplay of social factors in shaping teacher-student interaction in contemporary Chinese and Western education systems.

4.2 From the perspective of structural functionalists to see the impact of different cultural norms and values in China and the West on education

In Durkheim's (1956) theory, the educational system is seen as a reflection of social factors and is an integral part of the overall social structure. It can have a significant influence on individual thoughts, behaviors, and social interactions. Durkheim's functionalist theory views education as an essential component of society, with its main role being the transmission of social values and moral norms, which in turn promotes social stability and order. In Chinese society, education is emphasized as a means of maintaining "order," requiring individuals to respect authority and follow rules. This concept of "order" originates from Confucianism, which emphasizes the need for certain rules and regulations to maintain social harmony. In the traditional Chinese education system, the focus is on cultivating individuals who meet society's expectations and who possess traditional virtues such as filial piety, loyalty, diligence, and respect for teachers. This traditional concept of "order" has been inherited and continued in education, with the aim of cultivating students' moral character and behavior norms. Western education, on the other hand, emphasizes personal development and encourages independent thinking and innovation. These differences reflect the impact of different cultural backgrounds and social structures on educational concepts and values.

4.3 From the perspective of Interactionist to see the impact of different political ideologies in China and the West on education

Weber (1978) emphasizes the diversity and complexity of social factors, arguing that different social phenomena and norms have different meanings and influences in different societies. Weber's theory is often referred to as the "conflict theory" or "interactionist theory," as he believed that social life is characterized by conflict, competition, and power struggles between individuals or groups. He posits that people's actions and behaviors are driven by their own interests and goals, and that society is made up of different groups with competing interests.

Weber believed that the educational system is a form of political system and reflects different views on educational concepts and values under different political systems. In western countries, individual rights and freedoms are highly valued, which is reflected in the educational system that encourages students to think and choose independently. On the other hand, in eastern countries like China, the political system emphasizes the maintenance of social stability and order, reflected in the educational system that emphasizes the inheritance of social values and the cultivation of traditional virtues such as filial piety and loyalty.

Traditional Chinese culture values knowledge and learning as sacred, and education is an important means to cultivate people's moral character and cultural accomplishment. The Chinese education system is relatively bureaucratic, and teachers have high authority while students mainly accept knowledge passively. Therefore, from the perspective of ideas and values, Chinese traditional education emphasizes the inheritance of traditional culture and history, and the education of moral ethics and family responsibilities.

In contrast, Western culture values the thoughts of science and positivism, and emphasizes the education of practice and innovation. Western education pays more attention to the cultivation of individual development and innovation ability, reflecting the importance of individual rights and freedoms in Western political systems. This difference between the educational concepts and values of the East and the West reflects the impact of different cultural backgrounds and social structures on education.

4.4 From the perspective of Marxism, the impact of different economic environments in China and the West on education

Marxism is a significant theory that has influenced Chinese society, and it deserves attention. Karl Marx's theory, also known as "Marxism" or "dialectical materialism," argues that society is defined by class conflict, where the ruling class exploits the working class. Marx believed that capitalism is inherently exploitative, and the only way to achieve true social justice is through a socialist revolution. He also posited that economic factors are the primary drivers of social change, with changes in economic structures having a profound impact on culture, politics, and social relationships. This implies that education is affected by the economic basis of society. In a socialist society, social division of labor is carried out according to social needs and public interests, and labor is for the interests of the whole society, rather than the capitalists' interests. As such, the development of social division of labor must be based on socialism.

The differences in teaching methods between China and the West reflect the divergence in division of labor and training objectives. China emphasizes discipline and technical skills, while Western countries prioritize creativity and innovation, reflecting their diverse goals and priorities. The emphasis on discipline in China's education may stem from the fact that a large number of rural people have migrated to cities due to economic and social changes. Urbanization has brought about a complex social structure and huge social division of labor. Education is a vital means to cultivate socialized talents, providing society with individuals qualified for various occupations. Direct teaching of existing theoretical knowledge and the rapid establishment of a discipline knowledge system through standardized examinations is crucial to meeting the needs of rapid social development and change, allowing for the quick delivery of labor to different industries. Marxism emphasizes the interests of the working class, making it imperative that education serves the working class by prioritizing the cultivation of practicality and skills.

In China, the original purpose of education was to cultivate the skills of workers and farmers, but with time it has evolved to also train intellectual elites. This evolution of education is in line with Marxism's emphasis on the political and class nature of education, and the government and Party exert control over the education system, with a focus on instilling patriotic and socialist values in students. In contrast, education in the West emphasizes the cultivation of individual political awareness and civic qualities, with a focus on individual freedom and democracy. With the deepening of professional specialization, the demand for professionalism, complexity, innovation, and other skills has increased, requiring workers to possess higher levels of knowledge and skills. Critical thinking is a fundamental skill necessary to meet these requirements. It helps individuals to understand and analyze complex problems, evaluate the reliability of information, identify the essence and root causes of problems, and propose innovative solutions. Therefore, education in the West places great importance on developing students' critical thinking skills, which can enhance their competitiveness in their future careers.

5. The impact of different education systems on individuals and society

On one hand, the differences between Chinese and Western education systems have a significant impact on the development and growth of individuals. The Western education system emphasizes critical thinking, creativity, independent learning, and diversified knowledge and skills, resulting in more innovative and adaptable students. The Western education system promotes social innovation and progress through individual freedom and inclusiveness, creating more opportunities and values. However, it may lead to students' lack of basic knowledge and skills, limiting their practical application In contrast, China's education system emphasizes knowledge and discipline, limiting opportunities for independent learning and exploration. However, the Western education system's emphasis on individual freedom and independence may lead to students' lack of discipline and teamwork, while China's emphasis on discipline, maintaining social order but potentially limiting

innovation and progress. Therefore, striking a balance between individual growth and collective interests is crucial for a well-functioning education system.

From the perspective of the overall education system, China's education system helps to facilitate social class mobility by providing equal opportunities and resources. Education is one of the important ways for social mobility in Chinese society, as it provides opportunities to change social status through learning and obtaining qualifications. The Gaokao system in China is one of the key mechanisms for achieving social class mobility, as it largely determines whether students can enter higher education and thus move up the social ladder. Therefore, by studying hard and achieving good grades, students have the opportunity to change their social status through the Gaokao. In contrast, the social structure in Western countries is relatively stable, and social class mobility is lower. Due to the relatively fixed social structure, the role of education in social class mobility is relatively limited. Social factors outside the education system can also affect class mobility, such as race, gender, geographical location, and social background, which can affect a person's social and economic status.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, education is a critical aspect of human development, shaping individuals' social, cultural, and economic lives. The teacher-student relationship is an important area of research, as it can have a significant impact on students' autonomy and creativity. In the West, the teacher-student relationship is based on equality, mutual respect, and interaction, while in China, it is based on obedience and conformity, with a strong emphasis on discipline. However, China has made efforts to promote quality education and shift away from the traditional teacher-centered classroom. The teacher-student relationship plays a vital role in achieving educational objectives, and creating a relationship that supports students' autonomy and creativity is essential for achieving educational goals in any system. The purpose of this paper is to explore the differences in educational systems between China and the West, with a particular focus on the teacher-student relationship. The paper aims to shed light on the formation and implementation of educational purposes in these two regions by analyzing social factors such as cultural values, political ideologies, and economic structures that shape teaching methods. Through this analysis, the paper provides valuable insights into the complex intersection of social and educational factors embedded in the student-teacher relationship, contributing to the discourse on educational systems and providing a better understanding of the differences in educational purposes between China and the West.

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