

INVESTIGATING THE POPULARITY OF WESTERN STYLE HIGH SCHOOLS IN CHINA

by Student's name

Course

Professor's name

Institution

City, state

Due date



Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendation

This chapter draws conclusions based on the research procedure and findings. In particular, this section refers to the analyses conducted in the previous chapters and relates the discussion to the research aims, objectives and questions to trace whether the guiding drivers of the study have been utilized appropriately and the goals have been achieved. In addition, the chapter explicates the conclusions reached from the data analysis and their capability to answer the set research questions. Apart from that, the connection to the theoretical background of the study is clarified. Furthermore, the chapter shows a reflective nature of the research. In this way, it is possible to reveal the significance and applicability of the findings to the educational practice with respect to my individual experience as a teacher in the analyzed context and setting. At the same time, the section outlines and justifies several recommendations for further research in the area as well as the topicality of the results for the practical dimension of the field. All the above points are thoroughly based on the research procedure and derive from its content. Finally, the limitations of the study are presented along with the conclusions, which articulate the importance of these findings.

Background for the Study

According to the in-depth analysis of the information obtained in the process of the research, scholars have long acknowledged the influence

of the western educational style on the Chinese education. The previous studies considered in the context of this research have mostly highlighted this influence in light of opposition and criticism of both philosophies or referred to the comparative analysis of the two. For instance, western entrepreneurs have enriched and diversified the educational infrastructure of the country by introducing new types of school that affected the development of education in the long run. Moreover, researchers have linked the westernization of Chinese education to the broadened scope of the English language and its increasing usage in the area. However, since the historical presence of western educational institutions in China has been a continuous phenomenon, its significance and long-term effects on the student mindset and choices of educational path should not be underestimated. The knowledge gap on the matter has become the main goal of this research.

In this respect, the literature review showed that no current study has investigated the popularity of western education among Chinese students, especially from the perspective of learners. However, the findings of the earlier studies were a valuable contribution to the understanding of educational environment and characteristics in the country, as well as laid out the theoretical underpinning for the study. On a similar note, as an educator in an international center in China with professional experience in different institutions, I have noticed the growing interest and preference of the western educational establishments among local students as compared to domestic options. Hence, the contemporary scholars and my observations as a specialist in the given context altogether comprise a sufficient foundation for conducting the research on the topic.

Research Purpose and Literature Review

Therefore, the purpose of this research was to discover the reasons for popularity of the western education along with challenges that students are likely to encounter when opting for the international educational model. To explore the issue comprehensively, the relevant scholarly articles were evaluated. The findings of the literature review demonstrated the long-term competition of the western and eastern educational styles both within and outside the Chinese borders. Moreover, the studies showed that an international English-based education was a commonplace in today's China and the number of such schools has been growing extensively because of the increasing demand. This trend has made an evident impact on the domestic educational system as an education business model. The scholars attributed expansion and popularity of western institutions not only to the famous names of the establishments but, also to the unique learning experiences the Chinese students were able to have. For example, western schools in China incorporated teaching strategies that were not concerned with mere repetition techniques, but that broadened the scope of curricular and extracurricular student-centered activities, as well as offered continuous education among other benefits.

On the contrary, the researchers, whose contribution was analyzed in the study, have distinctly positioned the Chinese education as 'other' in comparison with western style. Specifically, eastern approach to teaching was found as conformist, reproductive and inadequate for real-life learning even with regard to the English language acquisition. The system has made the students doomed for memorizing, silent and passive learning, what was an integral part of daily routine that eliminated any

individual qualities of a learner and was detrimental to their creativity or other forms of individuality. Thus, parents enticed their children to refer to western education. With this brief insight, students perspectives were not considered in the decision making process. Nonetheless, the literature revealed the sharp contrast between the two educational systems that have positioned the western education in a more favorable light.

Research Procedure

Apart from helping clarify the gaps in the available research on the topic, previous academic findings were useful in developing the research instrument, namely, a set of interview questions. In order to explore the research question in a holistic manner, the study focused on a qualitative methodology that allowed investigating the actual experiences of the target population on the grounds of the in-depth structured interviews. For this reason, the central research question incorporated a range of important subthemes that were articulated through a list of questions as a scenario for the interviews. In this way, it was possible to clarify the details of the research topic. In the analyzed context, the important issues involved questions about the possible parental influence on the students' choice of the western educational style. Moreover, the interviews aimed to detect the root causes, which enticed Chinese learners to withdraw from the domestic educational system, and the benefits and challenges observed within both educational domains. As a result, the intertwined research design and methodology provided a multidimensional perspective on exploring possible issues in the field. No particular theoretical framework was utilized as underpinning for the research

procedure.

The research tool used to solve the research problem was an international center that engaged Chinese students aged 15 through 18 years in the comprehensive development and acquisition of the English language through the American Advanced Placement Curriculum. Eight students of different grades were recruited to participate in the study and were used to trace the opinions of the diverse target population and find answers to the research question. All stages of data collection, analysis and interpretation were planned, organized and implemented with adherence to ethical frames of the research process. This approach ensured the validity and integrity of the information generated in the scope of the research. Through the application of the thematic analysis to the obtained data set, the materials of the interviews were distinguished into themes and subthemes and were organized in a way that assisted in structuring the findings to answer the research question within the study constraints.

Findings versus Research Question

For the most part, the data collected during the research procedure allowed answering the research question. Regardless of the small sample size, the findings presented some recurring thematic patterns. This feature to a certain extent demonstrated the validity of the study results. In this respect, the interviewees named the outdated nature and numerous drawbacks in the Chinese educational style as the primary cause of opting to replace the eastern educational system with the western education as a more comprehensive and student-centered model. For instance, the main theme that derived from the data analysis

was an emphasis on the unmanageable pressure that the interviewed students experienced because of the gaokao system in China. Hence, this theme was identified as the main reason for the popularity of the western style in China. All interviewees specified that this aspect of the domestic education was the greatest difficulty they encountered that enticed them to choose western education instead. Thus, this theme was common among the participants of the study. Therefore, an assumption that gaokao education in the country can have detrimental impacts on students' beliefs and behaviors seems more than justified with respect to the studied sample.

Moreover, the identified theme entailed a more detailed insight into the problem and offered a more thorough understanding of the research problem. The findings evidenced that the interviewees' dissatisfaction with Chinese educational system was not only concerned with the main national examination but also with other shortcomings in the policy framework. In this respect, the collected student opinions varied according to their individual experiences. Nonetheless, the findings were still important as they explicated the factors which should be taken into account by both scholars and practitioners in the field. To illustrate, 3 out of 5 students explained the flawed teaching strategies as a serious drawback of the domestic education as noted in the previous studies. The interviewees expressed a specific concern regarding the limited opportunities to learn English. In particular, the teachers permitted them only to read and write, while oral communication was allowed only to teachers, namely, students were forbidden to speak in English on their own.

Similarly, the interviewed students articulated the opinions regarding a number of wrongly positioned priorities in the Chinese educational system, what is an additional reason to prefer the western schools. For example, the participants criticized excessive focus on 'right answers, not concepts', memorizing not understanding, academic disciplines and high scores not extracurricular activities, to list a few. In contrast, the interviewees praised the western style education for prioritizing the diversified teaching strategies and learning activities, individuality as opposed to collectivism and conformism, as well as more universal culture and respect to both teachers and students among other issues. To a sufficient extent, these findings from the 8 interviews were mostly consistent with the previous studies, but with a more detailed perspective of the students on the issues. Nevertheless, as noted by the findings of the researchers in the field, the results of the study once again showed the sharp contrast between the two systems, what clarifies the popularity of the western education in comparison with the non-popularity of the Chinese educational system.

Apart from that, the answer to the research question was further clarified by important details, as the findings showed the explicit role of parents in choosing the international rather than domestic educational model. The interviewed students expressed a varying degree of the parental influence on their decisions. Specifically, a greater number of participants expressed a clear impact of parents on their choice, as well as their individual beliefs or prior experiences of their relatives and friends who studied abroad. Moreover, the interviewees appreciated parents' involvement and viewed financial incentives as a sort of obligation to follow parents' will. While this theme was mostly omitted from

consideration of the researchers, it should be acknowledged as additional contribution to the knowledge on the topic.

Finally, a few more aspects answer the research question, including identification of the challenges in the educational context. To be more precise, the findings of the study revealed communication and culture to be primary challenges for the interviewed students. Once again, the students derived the linkage between the opposing worldviews as explicated by the earlier studies. At the same time, the last notable theme in the scope of the research findings was concerned with the stereotypes as substantial drivers of student decisions and behaviors in the analyzed context. Indeed, the data set demonstrated that the interviewees' choices of the western education were driven by the belief that such education could offer them better life chances. These stereotypes were common or imposed by parents but they were notable in this respect. None of the earlier studies supported this perspective. Thus, it can be noted as another contribution to the existing knowledge on the subject matter.

Relevance of the Findings to Practice

As it was previously specified, the idea of current research derived from the context of my individual observations and experiences as an educator in China. Therefore, the research outcomes and findings are important for me, as a practitioner in the field who performs duties on the verge of the two distinct and opposing cultures. For the most part, the research findings were in unison with what I observed during my teaching practice. In other words, the interviewees demonstrated that Chinese students are

under the constant pressure of multifaceted nature. First, the pressure comes from the strong stereotypical misconceptions. Primarily, these beliefs are concerned with confrontation of east-to-west educational frameworks, which are positioned as flawed versus correct accordingly. Second, these stereotypes are based on the parental worldviews about 'better future'. Third, while the interviews have not identified this pattern, I assume that the other set of stereotypes can come from the promotion of the western education. On a similar note, none of these perspectives have been scientifically grounded or proved with evidence.

Of course, I cannot make generalizations on the topic due to the small sample size under study. Nonetheless, I believe that the qualitative findings of the research were notable enough to question the character of the popularity of the western education and the unpopularity of the Chinese high schools. The issue should not entail further confrontations or oppositions, as explicitly proposed by the previous studies. On the contrary, as specified by some of the interviewees, there is a clear cultural distinctiveness between the analyzed educational systems. However, there is no need to categorize either one of them as inherently 'good' or 'bad'. In the era of globalization and multiculturalism, which are thoroughly rooted in human mindset, there is an utmost need to learn mutual respect towards one another as well as learn from each other's experiences. Both systems of education have rich practices and traditions that have been crafted for ages. Thus, there should be no place for contradiction, eradication or abandonment but improvement with a key focus on the learners.

Recommendations

Summarizing the findings of the study, a set of recommendations can be made in terms of both theoretical and practical domains of the field. Foremost, the results showed an urgent need for in-depth and large-scale research that would thoroughly study the research problem and question considered in this paper, namely, the popularity of the western educational style in China. Undoubtedly, the results of this investigation cannot represent the opinions of the general population. However, the themes derived from the context of the data set evidenced both topicality of the issue in question as well as relevance to the previous research in the field. Thus, these results can be used as independent variables for a qualitative research with a large sample size. In this way, it will be possible to clarify if the themes are similarly important to the larger target population, thus, test the generalizability of the findings for possible policy updates in the sphere. In addition, the emergent themes can be studied in the scope of either qualitative or quantitative studies, including the themes of parental influence, challenges of communication and cultural barriers, along with gaokao specificities. On the contrary, there is an evident necessity for a paradigm shift in reshaping the discourse of the topic that explores east-to-west educational patterns through opposition and criticism. Moreover, experimental practices and interventions can combine the best practices of Chinese and western educational traditions to test a possibility of culturally sensitive and comprehensive teaching and learning.

Limitations of the Study

The study had several limitations. First, as noted earlier, one of them was a small sample size that comprised of the students of the same educational center. While this factor might imply sampling biases, the study recruited a diverse sample (as far as it was possible) and adhered to the appropriate ethical codes for data integrity and validity. Second, there was no opportunity for piloting the interview guide. Nevertheless, the questions were developed based on the literature review and the information obtained through the interviews allowed answering the research question. Finally, even though the findings do not allow an opportunity for generalization, the identified themes are consistent with the earlier research and contribute to fill the knowledge gap. Therefore, the significance of the study results should not be underestimated.