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A COMPARATIVE RESEARCH STUDY OF STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN CHINA AND AMERICA

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A COMPARATIVE RESEARCH STUDY OF STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS IN
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN CHINA AND AMERICA

by

Menghan Wu

A Major Research Paper

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

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Windsor, Ontario, Canada

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A COMPARATIVE RESEARCH STUDY OF STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS IN
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN CHINA AND AMERICA

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ABSTRACT

Student-teacher relationships are an important part of schooling. They not only affect students' academic achievements, but also affect students' behaviors and attitudes. The history, culture, and society are different in China and America. These differences sometimes lead to different relationships between teachers and students in China and America. This paper focuses on exploring the differences and similarities between the student-teacher relationship in China and America, and analyzes some of the key factors that influence these differences. I also discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the relationship between teachers and students in China and America, and it proposes that the two countries can learn from each other to establish a more close and healthy student-teacher relationship and promote the positive development of the relationship between teachers and students.

Keywords: student-teacher relationship, China, America, elementary schools, history, culture, society

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Chapter One – Introduction

This purpose of this study is to analyze the differences and similarities of student-teacher relationships in elementary schools in China and America. I analyze the historical, cultural, and social factors that shape these differences and similarities.

One aim of this study is to find the advantages of student-teacher relationships found in the schooling context in both these countries, in a way that educators can begin to distill best practices, regardless of the geographical contexts. Certainly, it seems reasonable to suggest that the two countries could learn from each other and improve the student-teacher relationships. But why China and the United States? I chose China and America as the object of study because I have experiences and knowledge of both countries in relation to schooling, but also the two countries have similar education structures. In both countries, most primary education is elementary school including kindergarten to grade five or six. Secondary education is divided into two phases, middle/junior high school and senior high school. However, one small difference is that Chinese kindergarten does not form a part of the elementary school experience, but rather functions as an independent institution. Despite the fact of some small differences, one commonality between schooling in the context of China and the United States that exists, is the student-teacher relationship. In both schooling systems, the student-teacher relationship is not only complex but very important when it comes to student achievement. So, let me begin now by sketching out briefly the general features of a student-teacher relationship.

Student-Teacher Relationships

The student-teacher relationship is an important part of education. It not only impacts the success of students in school, but also influences the students' behavior, attitudes, and interactions with others (Hamre & Pianta, 2006). However, at this point in the paper it makes

good sense to make a distinction between the *idea of education* and the *idea of schooling*.

Although often confused by the general public, schooling and education are two different concepts (Shujaa, 1993, p. 328). Education is a long process that exists and is experienced in people's whole lives. It is not only teaching and learning in school that counts, but education also includes accumulation, codification and transmission through family, social activity, extracurricular activities, and the influences from the media (Hamilton & Zufiaurre, 2014, p. 2). Put a little bit differently, education can and may happen almost anywhere outside the context of schooling. Schooling on the other hand, is the process by which students learn implicitly and explicitly in the context of an institution. Whether that learning is from the formal curriculum or the hidden curriculum. The student-teacher relationship is not so much part of education in general, but rather a part of schooling.

One difference between schooling and education is that the role of the teacher as intermediary is more obvious in the case of schooling. In education, a person may have a variety of kinds of mentors are teachers or facilitators in any given day, or over the course of a lifetime. There really isn't any formal structure in place that connects a teacher or mentor to his student in relation to the concept of education. In the context of schooling, the relationship between a teacher and a student is a formal relationship situated, regulated, and structured in the context of the institution. A school teacher guides the course that learners should follow, and their task is to bring learners from one place to another (Hamilton & Zufiaurre, 2014, p. 6). Therefore, the student-teacher relationship specifically exists in schooling, and is part of the institution's structure.

But let me be a little more specific by providing a straightforward definition. The relationship between students and teachers can be defined as the meaningful emotions and

relationships developed between students and teachers in the process of long-term interaction (Marengo et al., 2018; Pasta & Settanni, 2013; Sclavo & Settanni, 2016). There is evidence that student-teacher relationships are related to academic behavior and student performance (Bergin & Bergin, 2009; Birch & Ladd, 1997; Willms, 2003). The quality which can be defined as how good of students getting along with teachers of student-teacher relationship often operates as a multi-dimensional structure that takes advantage of multiple parallel features of student-teacher relationships, such as closeness, dependency, and conflict (Marengo et al., 2018, p. 1203). From the perspectives of students, their sentiment toward teachers, the time they spend with teachers, and their attention to class activities have all been found to be related to school achievement (Pianta & Nimetz, 1991). To put a little bit differently, it appears from the research that healthy positive student-teacher relationships can have both academic and social benefits for students.

From the perspective of teachers, the role of a teacher is paramount to improving academic attainment (Dolton, 2013). Isaac and Brijlall (2011) claim that it is necessary for teaching to begin with a teacher's understanding of what knowledge should students learn and how to teach that knowledge (Isaac & Brijlall, 2011). It follows then that an important purpose of students in schooling is to learn academic knowledge. In schools, some people have argued that teachers are the bridge between knowledge and students, and they bear the important task of imparting knowledge (Chamot & O'malley, 1987). During the construction of knowledge, the relationship between teachers and students gradually forms.

A close, healthy relationship between students and teachers is characterized through open communication, warmth and affection, mutual respect, all of which can improve students' engagement in class (Archambault, Vandenbossche-Makombo, & Fraser, 2017). The academic motivation of students is fostered when teachers show genuine care toward the students, provide

continuous support to the students, build trust in the relationship, are approachable to the students, and have a reasonably high expectation for students' achievement (Jasmi, Najihah, & Chong, 2014). Not surprisingly then, recent research suggests that the quality of student-teacher relationships may play a crucial role in helping students to navigate the challenges of the upper elementary school years (Zee, Koomen, & Veen, 2013). High levels of closeness and low levels of conflict and dependency are more likely to give students the motivation to succeed and to achieve more academic achievement in educational activities (Zee, Koomen, & Veen, 2013, p. 518).

In addition, a positive student-teacher relationship may make students less vulnerable to aggressive behaviour and loss of self-esteem and improve their ability to adapt to future social life (Mikami et al., 2011; Zee et al., 2013). Therefore, in the critical transition period in elementary school, the close relationship between students and teachers can protect student social emotional function (Zee et al., 2013), along with building academic achievement. Furrer and Skinner (2003) claim that learning engagement can modulate the relevance between student-teacher relationships and their academic achievement. Thus, learning engagement may be a way for students to achieve positive relationships with teachers, and in this way to help students achieve positive outcomes. Now that we have some idea about the nature of student-teacher relationships, let me provide you with an outline of the study.

Outline of the Study

Chapter One I provide the readers with the introduction. Chapter Two is a literature review that analyzes the importance and influence of different student-teacher relationships at the elementary education stage, including the close student-teacher relationship, and the dependency and conflict student-teacher relationship. Then, I summarize three different aspects of the student-

teacher relationship in China and America, including teacher respect and social status, workload and salaries, and student-centered and teacher-centered teaching structures. In the last part of the literature review, I analyze the different historical, social and cultural influences on student-teacher relationships in China and America. Chapter Three discusses the advantages and disadvantages of student-teacher relationship in China and America, and provides some advice on how to improve the student-teacher relationship in these two countries. In Chapter 4, I provide a conclusion.

Chapter Two – Literature Review

In this chapter, I briefly analyze the historical influence on student-teacher relationship in China and America. Following this brief discussion, I compare the differences and similarities of student-teacher relationships between two countries in different aspects, including teacher respect and social status, teachers' workload and salary, teacher-centered teaching in Chinese elementary schools and student-centered teaching in American elementary schools. In the last part of this chapter, I briefly look at the social and cultural influences on student-teacher relationships in Chinese and American elementary schools. I now turn to briefly exploring how history has shaped the schooling context in both China and United States.

Historical influence of Student-Teacher Relationship

A country's history is an important factor that shapes and influences the concept as well as the practice of student-teacher relationships, whether we look at China or the United States. For example, according to Li (2016, p. 124), the student-teacher relationship is a part of education, and education is influenced by the society, culture, policy, and philosophy, and all aspects are influenced by the history of that region. In some ways, it may seem very obvious, but it is still important to mention, as Li points out, that the present is always shaped by the past. And it is the past, the Chinese past, that I now briefly turn my attention to and its impact on student-teacher relationships.

The influence of Chinese history on student-teacher relationship. The concept of schooling emerged in the Xia Dynasty (about BC 2070 to BC 1600). During the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period (about BC 770 to BC 221), Confucianism emerged. Since then, through the efforts of philosophers and others over thousands of years, the development of Confucianism has had a tremendous impact on the schooling of children from

various dynasties (Child & Warner, 2003). Confucianism, while certainly having an important impact on schooling in the past, Confucianism also plays an important role in modern schooling. But what exactly do I mean when I talk about Confucianism?

Confucianism was founded by Confucius, a thinker of the late Spring and Autumn Period (Hackett & Wang, 2012; Pan & Xing, 2005; Wang, 2003). The Spring and Autumn Period (770 BC to 221 BC) was a period of political separatism in Chinese history, and multiple regimes competed for power and land. At the same time, it is also an era of active academic ethos, and many philosophers and thinkers have emerged. After the history of Chinese civilization experienced nearly 1,700 years of Xia, Shang and Zhou Dynasty, Confucius formed a complete ideological system, Confucianism, through summarizing and inheriting the traditional culture of Xia, Shang and Zhou Dynasties (Pan & Xing, 2005). Confucianism shapes and influences mainstream Chinese traditional culture and is considered by many to be the most influential thought of schooling in China (Kirby & Fan, 1995; Yang, 2011). The principles and key ideas found in Confucianism are rich and complex, with far-reaching influence across the various areas of Chinese society (Wei-ming, 2012). It is important to mention that although Chinese society is still influenced by Confucianism, it has some differences between past and now. Some feudal theories are abandoned, some theories that are suited for the society are kept.

The core theory of Confucianism can be divided into two aspects, in terms of individuals, requires people to have kindheartedness, loyalty, courtesy, knowledge, and integrity; as far as society is concerned, it is a moral thought which includes fraternity, benevolence, fairness, justice, honesty, trustworthiness, innovation, civilization, harmony, democracy, and the rule of law (Ren, 2013, p. 137, 117, 260, 157). For the first time, Confucius broke the monopoly of the ruling class in the old period, turning learning from the government into learning from private

lectures, so that traditional cultural education was broadcast to the entire nation (Meng, 2010; Palais, 1984; Park, 1999).

Confucianism is adapted to the cultural form and spirit of the Chinese nation, and it has penetrated deeply into the blood and spiritual world of the Chinese nation, including schooling (Wang, 2016, p. 20). Schooling is a part of Chinese culture and society, the foundation for the continuation and development of ancient Chinese culture and the driving force for continuous innovation (Li & Xing, 2016, p. 25). As an important theory to inherit social culture and promote society progress, it is undoubtedly an important part of Chinese modern schooling (Li & Xing, 2016, p. 26).

Chinese modern quality-oriented education includes three elements: personality element, intelligence element and physical and psychological element (Dello-Iacovo, 2009). It is a kind of education concept based on the development of students' personality, facing all students and making students develop in an all-round way (Dello-Iacovo, 2009). The goal of Confucian education is to cultivate people with the aim of morality and talent. It has as its focus improving students' quality, maximizing knowledge, and developing students' potential (Yang, 2016). Confucian education theory emphasizes the cultivation of students' knowledge and skills closely related to social and humanities, and enables them to develop in all aspects for a long time (Wen, 2016). Therefore, Confucianism provides rich historical experience for modern curriculum and schooling.

In addition, Chinese modern schooling focuses on the development of human personality, and pays special attention to the differences between students' personality, interests, motivations, abilities, beliefs and needs, and enhances students' initiative and independent learning (Liu, p.183). Confucianism attaches great importance to the development of individuals and believes

that by nature men are similar to one another, but learning and practice make them different (Li & Xing, 2016, p. 28). To put a little bit differently, Confucius placed enormous emphasis on an individual's growth in relation to learning in practice. Perhaps it was Confucius that said, practice is the mother of all skills. Confucianism advocates different education for students' intelligence and ability. Based on this principle, Confucian had a deep understanding of the different interests, wisdom and abilities of the students, mastered the characteristics of each individual, and applied different educations, that is teaching students in accordance with their aptitude (Li & Xing, 2016, p. 28; Zhang, 2017). At the level of teaching, Confucianism emphasizes moderation. This principle is the harmony among students and teachers and emphasizing the student-teacher relationship of respecting teachers and the unity of schooling while ignoring individual differences (Sun, 2018).

Ancient Chinese schooling is mainly a kind of moral education from theory to practice (Wang, 2004). The purpose of schooling is teaching people how to be a good person and improve themselves (Hu, 1998). Furthermore, traditional Confucius thought aims to train students to become moral people; teachers primarily become the embodiment of morality and have a lofty sense of mission and responsibility (Zhang, 2004). Therefore, in the ancient Chinese schooling concept, morality is the bond between teachers and students, and in other words, the student-teacher relationship is a moral relationship (Chicharro-Saito, 2008). In this relationship, both teachers and students use an understanding of morality as an intermediary to influence each other. Through their understanding and reflection on the meaning of their actions, the relationship is maintained in accordance with their respective ethics.

Ancient Chinese feudal society was composed of families or clans (Jung, 1984). Each person foremost relationship was to their family. The blood relationship is the most basic ethical

relationship in ancient Chinese society (Zhao, 2012, p. 199-200). Confucianism attaches the most importance to this and has established a complete ethical system. Ancient Chinese educators believe that although the teachers have no blood relationship with the students, the teachers teach them a sense of politeness, justice, benevolence and integrity. Because of this, students should be grateful to the teachers (Zhang, 2004).

Ancient educators regarded the teacher as the father; in Chinese, the teacher also called as master, in Chinese is “师(means teacher)父(means father).” There is an old saying: "One day teacher, and life-long father." The relationship between teachers and students is embodied in a kind-hearted relationship between father and son (Lu, 2010). In one way, this kind of family relationship is expressed as the teacher's love and responsibility to the students; in another, it is expressed as the students' trust and respect for the teacher. There are many metaphors for teachers to show people's respect of teachers, Xu and Stevens (2005, p. 306) describe Chinese metaphors for teachers in their article:

We Chinese live in metaphors. Ferryman, gardeners, and candles are common teacher metaphors, shared socially and culturally in China. Chinese teachers have traditionally taken a dual role: to transmit knowledge as “ferryman,” taking students from one shore of their life to another; and to transform students personally and socially as “gardeners of young minds” through their life-long dedication to education. Like “parents,” teachers care about students. Like “candles,” teachers burn up themselves to light up their students' lives. Shi Jing remembers her first English language teacher and his wife from middle school who were “ferryman,” “gardeners” and “parents” on her life journey. They were “candles” who lit up her path, shaping who she became as a teacher in China. (p. 306)

In the long history of ancient China, the influence of Confucianism on schooling has been powerful. In the traditional student-teacher relationship, teachers are obligated and responsible for development of students' overall well-being, and students are responsible for an obligated to show respect to teachers. Of course, this is not to suggest that there are not specific challenges when it comes to student-teacher relationships in the Chinese context. For example, the gaps in knowledge, experience, and age between teachers and students make them lack common topics to discuss. The hierarchy between the teachers and students also makes students afraid to communicate with teachers, at times. After talking about Chinese history influence on student-teacher relationship, I will turn to discuss how history influences American student-teacher relationship.

The influence of American history on student-teacher relationship. In the 19th century, American schooling was shaped by French philosopher and writer Jean-Jacques Rousseau who emphasized freedom and the individual (Webb, 2006, p. 88). His progressive theory had an important influence on schooling theory and practice in America (Webb, 2006, p. 88). Rousseau's contribution to shaping American education included placing a much greater emphasis on child-centered learning. This was a clear departure from past practice which focused on the teacher-centered classroom. In addition, another aspect of Rousseau's thinking that reshaped in American education was this notion of discovery learning, an idea that still holds true today. This too was a clear departure from past practices, which tended to focus on a teacher centered model of pedagogy that relied on the notion of transmitting particular forms of knowledge into the so called 'empty' minds of the students.

Although John Jacques Rousseau was an important influence and shaping what schooling look like in early American history, the key philosopher that shaped American schooling most

with John Dewey. In the 1930s and 1940s, Dewey's writing was one of the most influential representatives of American schooling progressive movement (Ambrose, 2005, p. 59; Knoll, 1997, p. 62). According to Knoll (1997), Dewey criticized traditional schooling and advocated that teachers should respect children, emphasized that schools should focus on children's interests and experiences, and replace formalism with new life learning methods (Knoll, 1997, p.62).

John Dewey is one of the famous modern educators in America (Smith, 2001). Child-centered learning (Cross-Durrant, 1984; Hein, 2004; Hunt Jr, 1981, p. 33) and learning in experience (Dewey, 1986, p. 241; Giles Jr & Eyler, 1994) are two important educational ideas of Dewey. Dewey's theory is different from the traditional teacher center teaching and learning (Petrovic, 1998), he proposes child-centered (student center) (Prawat, 1995; Tzuo, 2007; Wen, Hui, & Kay, 2011). Additionally, Dewey also emphasizes learning in experience, education is life is one of Dewey's basic educational views (Kellner, 2003). The basic implication is that schooling is not a preparation for life, but a process in which children live now, teaching should begin with the children's existing direct experience (Anderson, 2004, p. 76; Egan, 1980; Saltmarsh, 1996, p. 16), and the experience will be continuously reorganized and transformed to enable children to acquire the ability to adapt to the social environment (Rogoff, 1993, p. 123). Tzuo (2007) describes Dewey's philosophy in an article:

In Dewey's Progressive Theory, democracy is the aim of schooling. The curriculum is child-centered and is rooted in the ideas of continuity and interaction in a social context. Learning is experiencing. Teachers and children decide together what experience is meaningful to each individual student's current learning needs and later development. Moreover, the experience is always a transaction taking place between the individual and

the environment. Therefore, as children develop within a school that functions like a democratic society, they learn and develop the ability to function well in the larger democratic society (Dewey, 1998). For progressivists, schooling is also a means of personal fulfillment. Curriculum provides an enriching experience in the whole social context with implications for personal development and the maintenance of a democratic society (Dewey, 1998) (p. 35).

Dewey also tried to apply pragmatic philosophy to educational theory (Garrison, 1994) and designed a blueprint for the reform of American schooling (Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008; Tyack, 1974). In his education works, pragmatic philosophy and educational theory blend together (Kellner, 2003, p. 55; Saltmarsh, 1996, p. 13). The pragmatic education theory advocates the child-centered teaching (Gordon, 2009; Qi, 2005), and the teachers and students are democratic and equal (Martínez-Alemán, 2007, p. 584). Dewey also attached great importance to the cooperation between teachers and students in the education process (Shachar & Fischer, 2004). He believed that in the process of education, students are encouraged to find and solve problems (Hall, 1996, p. 231; Lochhead, 1985). Dewey opposed the education and teaching that relied on intimidation and suppression; he required the teaching process should be based on the interaction process of teacher-student cooperation, and both teachers and students were involved in the process of equality (Hertz-Lazarowitz, Baird, Webb & Lazarowitz, 1984).

Dewey changed the role of teacher in the teaching process. He (1997) criticized the teacher as a ruler, as sort of low level dictatorship in traditional education and also criticized the teacher as a negligible factor in progressive education; he believed that teachers should be wise leaders of a social group (the children): The teacher loses the position of external boss or dictator but takes on that of leader of group activities. (Dewey, 1997, p.59)

Dewey believed that the teacher should be a guider rather than a director:

The teacher is not in the school to impose certain ideas or to form certain habits in the child, but is there as a member of the community to select the influences which shall affect the child and to assist him in properly responding to these influences. (Dewey, 1897, p. 9)

Therefore, Dewey was opposed to an external authority, and he emphasized the guiding role of teachers to help students discover knowledge from the material world around them.

Dewey believed that a democratic society is a community with common goals (Cummings, 2000). Teachers and students are members of this community, they can realize the transformation of experience in equal and free communication (Daniel, Schleifer & Lebouis, 1992). Therefore, the relationship between teachers and students is the relationship between democracy and collaboration.

It was important to sketch out how two different philosophers shaped schooling in the context of China and the United States in order to provide some historical context to situate student-teacher relationships. Confucius and his thinking around ethical and moral development has long shaped the cultural practices found in China, and in many ways still finds a home in contemporary schooling. Similarly, the philosophy of John Dewey has had a profound impact on shaping education in the United States, in the past and still today. Next, I turn my attention to discussing student-teacher relationships in China in America by drawing out three differences but also their similarities. I begin the discussion by discussing teacher respect and social status.

Dependency and conflict student-teacher relationship.

Dependency and conflict student-teacher relationships are the opposite of the closeness student-teacher relationships. These two kinds of relationships may cause the decline of student

learning engagement (Baker, Grant & Morlock, 2008). A conflicting student-teacher relationship is considered to be a typical teacher-student relationship. This relationship is characterized by a perception of reciprocal discontentment, disapproval, and unpredictability. The conflict between students and teachers is regarded as a prominent factor that would influence students' adaptability in elementary school and early adolescence (Hamre & Pianta, 2001).

The conflict between teachers and students is rooted in the difference between the social status and culture of teachers and students, that is, the difference between the social and cultural transmitters and learners, the normative culture of teachers and the unknown culture of students (Wu, 1998). American scholar Waller believes that the student-teacher relationship belongs to the institutionalized authority and obedience; the interaction between teachers and students is largely mandatory, and there are potential confrontations and conflicts between them (Lodge & Lynch, 2000, p.47). In the student-teacher relationship, teachers usually tend to be the authority to strengthen appropriate behaviours and correct misconduct, and a facilitator of social interaction and positive peer relationships among students (Farmer, McAuliffe Lines, & Hamm, 2011). Chinese scholar Tian (2003, p. 40) has proposed that the formation of conflict is accompanied by students no longer trusting the teacher's authority. For teachers, low-quality, conflicting teacher-student relationships also have a negative impact. It may impair the ability of teachers to effectively operate in these roles as facilitator and guide, lead to a negative classroom environment, and limit the ability of classrooms to support students at risk of behavioural and emotional disorders (Longobardi et al., 2017).

Student-Teacher Relationship in China and America

The relationship between students and teachers in elementary education has some differences in China and America. I analyze three aspects to show the differences and similarities

of student-teacher relationship in two countries.

Teacher respect and social status. Respect is an important and basic virtue in school, and it is also important in virtue-oriented character education programs (Goodman, 2009, p.3). I compare teacher respect in China and America and compare the teachers' social status in the two countries in order to show how teacher respect and teachers' social status influence on student-teacher relationship.

In China, a teacher is a special and highly respected job and their social status is very high relative to other occupations and relative to other countries. According to Dolton's (2013) research, teachers have the highest social status in China among 21 countries involved in the research. As far as occupations are concerned then a context of China, Chinese people compare teachers' social status with doctors, who are at the top of the ranking along with lawyers. This is not the case in other countries including the United States. In Dolton's (2013, p. 14) index, in America, being a teacher ranks in the bottom half of professions, achieving the same rank more or less with librarians and social workers. One way in which we can explain the high status afforded to teaching in the Chinese context relates directly to Confucius in his understanding of the power of teaching.

According to Chan (1999), the Confucian tradition emphasizes that the teacher is the most respected profession in China (p. 298): In terms of teaching styles arising from the strong Confucian ethic, Chinese societies are often described as didactic and trainer centered (Kirkbride & Tang, 1992). But this is not all by way of explanation. Chinese children typically have been brought up to respect wisdom, knowledge and expertise of parents, teachers and trainers. Powerfully shaped by Confucian thought, Chinese children have been socialized to respect highly those who provide the knowledge and to avoid challenging those in authority.

But let's take a look at some numbers to help better understand the difference between teaching and social status in the two countries under study. According to Dolton (2013), only 20% to 25% of people in the United States tend to think that pupils respect teachers; however, the number in China is 75% (Dolton, 2013, p. 15). This is no small matter. Clearly how teaching is closely associated with respect in China powerfully shapes student-teacher relationships in that they would more than likely be grounded in respect. Children already come to schooling in China with that attitude of deference and respect towards teacher. But of course, and I will mention this a bit later, this does not guarantee a wholly positive student-teacher relationship in the Chinese context. There is some evidence to suggest that teachers do not respect students in the same way that students respect teachers; thus, student-teacher relationships in China may not be grounded in mutual respect. One can infer from Dolton's work when it comes to the number of people in United States good tend to think that people's respect teachers, that the student-teacher relationship is likely more fraught, and more likely open to hostility and conflict. Of course, I recognize that this is a broad generalization that may not be true in all instances, but it certainly suggests a pattern when it comes to the nature of student-teacher relationships.

In addition, a survey conducted by a British agency called the Varkey Foundation (2018) shows that Chinese teachers have more respected social status than teachers in other countries (see Figure 1). This institution is a global organization that focuses on improving and developing regional education (Wang, 2018). After conducting a survey of 35,000 respondents, they released the "Teacher Status Index for 2018", which surveyed in 35 countries and regions around the world, ranking teachers' status in society. According to this research, the status of Chinese teachers ranks first, with a status index of 100, and American teachers rank of 16, with a status index of 39.7 (Finger 1).

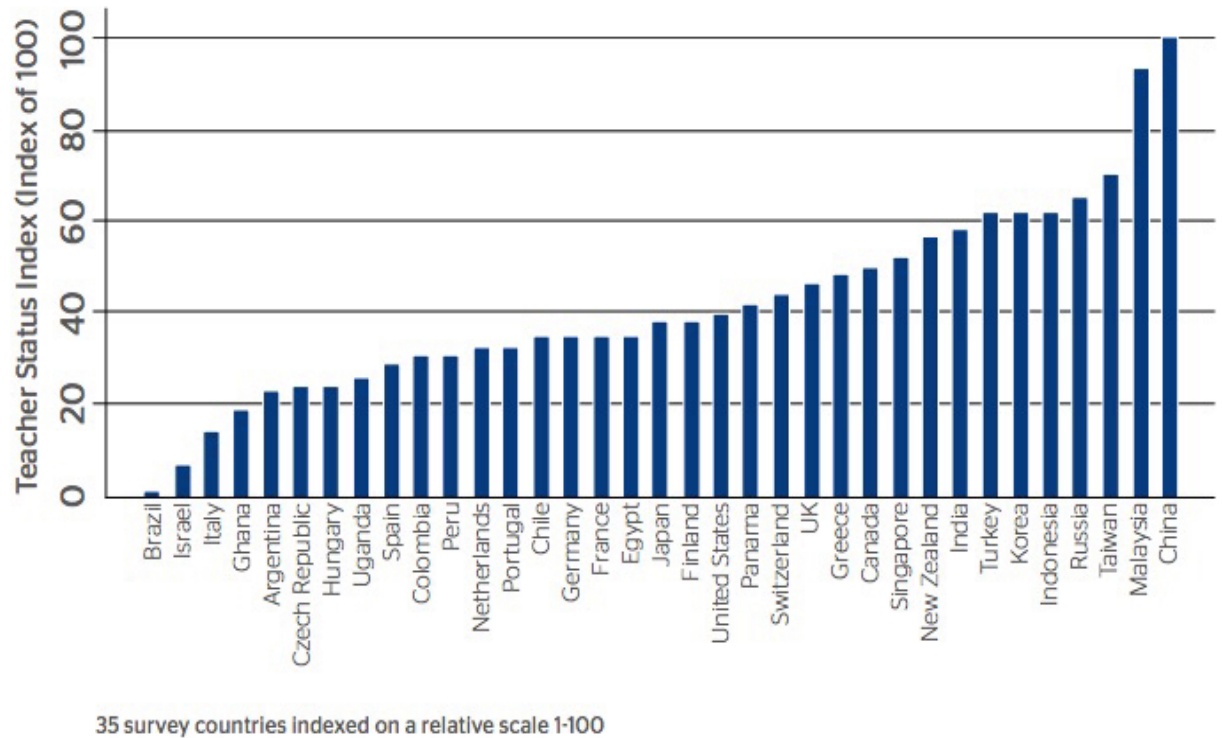


Figure 1: The Varkey Foundation Global Teacher Status Index (GTSI) (Varkey Foundation, 2018, p. 10)

The “International Teacher Status Index” survey was launched in 2013, which demonstrates the relationship between teacher respect among various countries. The graph highlighted above indicates that the Chinese teacher's social status index was 100, ranking first. The United States index was 40.1, which is about middle of the pack. In the past five years, China’s teacher status index has not changed, but the United States has experienced a slight decline (see Figure 2). Studies have shown that in countries with higher teacher status, students are also among the best in academic achievement. Vikas Pota, the president of the Varkey Foundation, said, “Although five years have passed, China is still in the first place, fully demonstrating the degree of respect for teachers in Chinese society as a whole. Improving the social status of teachers is an important factor in attracting outstanding teachers and improving the quality of teaching” (Wang, 2018, para. 7). The founder of the Global Education

Management Systems (GEMS) Foundation, Sunny Varkey, said that her ambition is that teachers are treated with the same respect as doctors (Coughlan, 2013). Unfortunately, Coughlan also addressed that teachers were no longer retain the high status that people used to take for granted in many countries around the world.

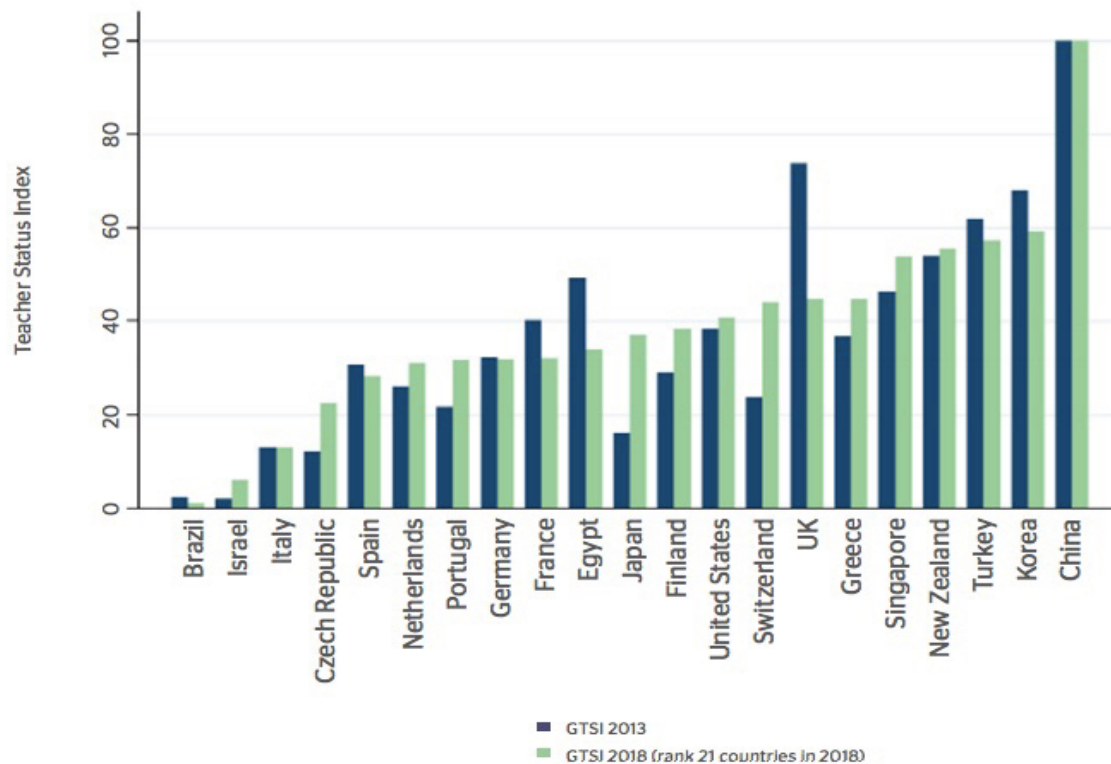


Figure 2: The GTSI 2018 Compared with the GTSI 2013 Rankings (Varkey Foundation, 2018, p. 11)

Certainly, there does seem to be a sense from the research that respect is crucial in developing healthy student-teacher relationships. For example, Gillespie (2005) claims that a close student-teacher relationship is based on mutual respect between teachers and students:

In identifying respect as a critical component of an effective student–teacher relationship, some authors suggest that it must be mutual (Appleton, 1990; Miller et al. 1990; Nehring, 1990; Sieh & Bell, 1994), while others focus on the need for the teacher to respect the

student (Brown, 1981; Beck, 1991; Oermann, 1996). Mutual respect is essential to student-teacher connection (Gillespie, 2002, p. 215).

The quote above, highlights to some degree the complexity of student-teacher relationships in relation to establishing healthy ones. So, it is just not about respect, but more about mutual respect. Teachers have to respect students, in the same way that students have to respect teachers. However, it seems that the student-teacher relationship in American and Chinese elementary schools does not maintain a good balance of mutual respect. American students sometimes lack respect for teachers and Chinese teachers sometimes lack respect for students. Teachers should be aware that maintaining a balance of mutual respect in teaching is important for developing positive student- teacher relationships (Gillespie, 2002, p. 573). Aside from the feature of mutual respect to student-teacher relationships, there are other factors including workload and salary. It is to these issues I turn to now.

Workload and salary. Increased workload of teachers is commonly related with increased stress, teacher burnout and low job satisfaction (Timperley & Robinson, 2000, p. 47). I compare the teacher workload and salary in China and America and analyze the influence of workload and salary on student-teacher relationship.

Although Chinese teachers have high social status, the income and workload of Chinese teachers are not in proportion. Many people think that teaching is a very leisurely career that does not include a heavy workload; the perception among many is that teachers only have one or two classes a day (Watt & Richardson, 2008). Of course, anybody familiar with teaching anteater labor, would find this viewed to be misguided. In fact, in order to make an efficient class, a teacher needs to spend a lot of time preparing, organizing and thinking carefully about issues around content and pedagogy. Watt and Richardson (2008) claim that teaching is a hard job:

Teacher candidates perceived teaching as a highly demanding career having a heavy workload, high emotional demand, and generally requiring hard work; and a highly expert career requiring specialized and technical knowledge. (p. 410-411)

Additionally, teachers need correct the daily homework, answer student questions, solve the students' psychological problems, communicate with the parents, and design and correct tests. Chinese elementary school teachers work about 9.67 hours a day, this means they work more than 48 hours a week (Bolin, 2007, p. 56). Similarly, American teachers generally believe that real wage income is not proportional to the workload. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2015-2016), more than 3.5 million full-time teachers in the United States work an average of 38.2 hours a week. However, when considering all other school-related activities that teachers participate in, such as after-school meetings, employee meetings and extracurricular activities, they actual work time is about 53.3 hours during a typical work week (Andone, 2018). Therefore, the teacher's salary is not proportional to their workload. In Dolton's (2013) research, in most countries, such as China, the UK, and Japan, people think teachers should have high salaries, but Americans think teachers should be paid less (Dolton, 2013, p. 13). In China, teacher's actual wage is about \$12,000 USD a year, but the perceived fair wage should be more than \$20,000. American teachers' actual wage is \$44,000 USD, and their perceived fair wage should be around \$46,000 USD (see Figure 3), which, of course, varies between and among the 50 states.

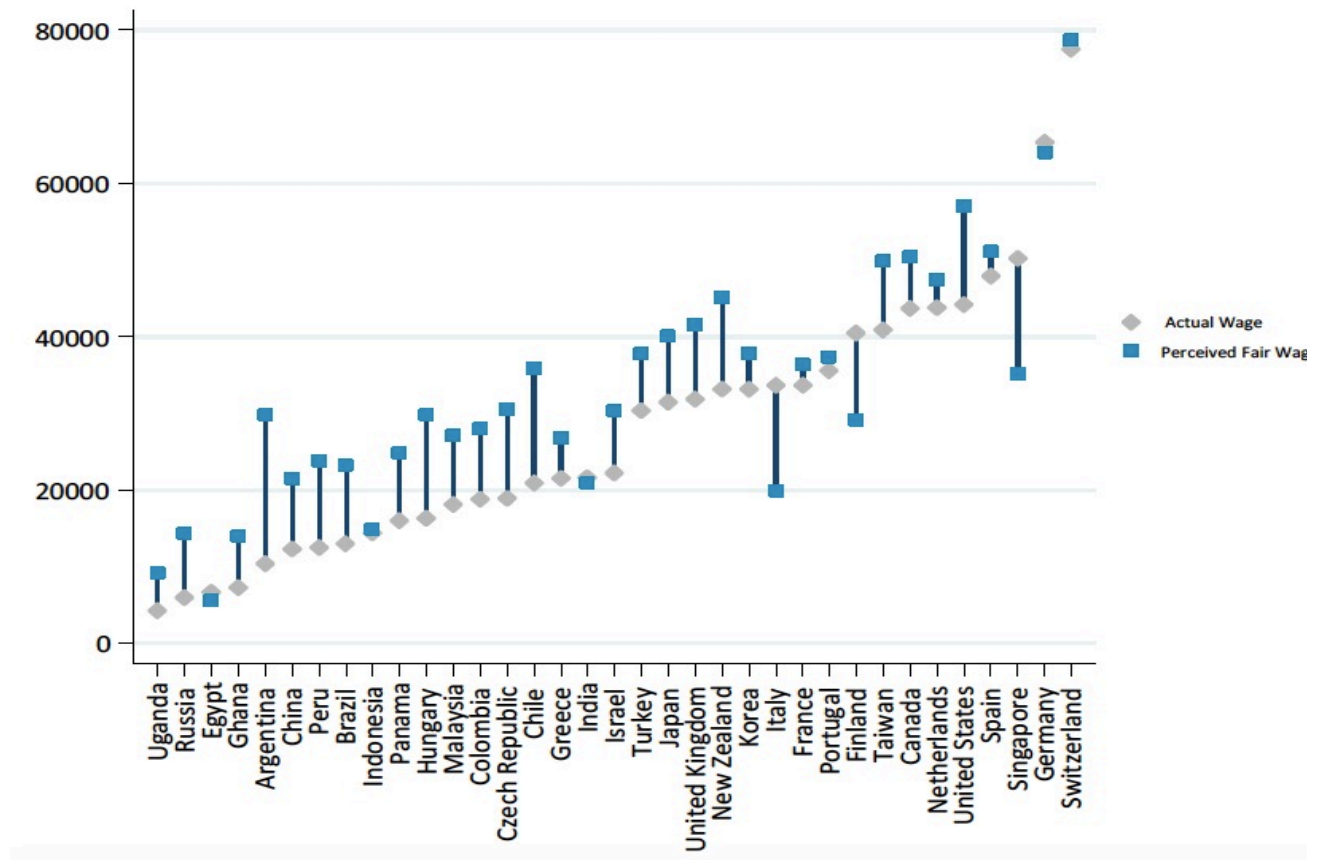


Figure 3: Actual Teacher Wages and Perceived Fair Teacher Wages by Country for Teachers Only Sample. (\$ USD, PPP adjusted) Varkey Foundation, 2018, p. 62)

Although both countries' teachers think that their workload is worth more, American teachers still receive far more pay than Chinese teachers. According to the comparison, although the teachers in China and the United States work for a similar length of time, the wages are different. The International Economic Cooperation Organization (IECO) has conducted a survey of the global education industry, which shows a peculiar phenomenon in the Chinese education industry: Chinese teachers have a high status in the world, but wage income is particularly low. According to the Varkey Foundation research report, the income of Chinese teachers (adjusted according to purchasing power parity) is \$12,212 USD and the income of American teachers is \$44,229 USD (see Table 1).

Table 1: GTSI Teacher Salaries and PISA Ranking (Varkey Foundation, 2018, p. 11)

COUNTRY	INDEX RANKING	ACTUAL TEACHER SALARY (\$USD, PPP, ADJUSTED)	PISA RANKING (1=HIGHEST PISA SCORE, 35=LOWEST PISA SCORE)
China	100.0	12,210	7
Malaysia	93.3	18,120	NOT AVAILABLE
Taiwan	70.2	40,821	3.5
Russia	65.0	5,923	15
Indonesia	62.1	14,408	27
Korea	61.2	33,141	6
Turkey	59.1	30,303	25
India	58.0	21,608	NOT AVAILABLE
New Zealand	56.0	33,099	11
Singapore	51.7	50,249	1
Canada	49.9	43,715	3.5
Greece	48.3	21,481	23
United Kingdom	46.6	31,845	12
Switzerland	43.7	77,491	10
Panama	42.0	16,000	NOT AVAILABLE
United States	39.7	44,229	18
Finland	38.0	40,491	5
Japan	37.4	31,461	2
Egypt	34.8	6,592	NOT AVAILABLE
France	33.7	33,675	14
Germany	33.4	65,396	8.5
Chile	33.1	20,890	24
Portugal	32.9	35,519	13
Netherlands	32.2	43,743	8.5
Peru	31.1	12,478	29
Colombia	30.3	18,806	26
Spain	29.1	47,864	16
Uganda	25.1	4,205	NOT AVAILABLE
Hungary	24.4	16,241	20
Czech Republic	23.9	18,859	17
Argentina	23.6	10,371	22
Ghana	18.9	7,249	NOT AVAILABLE
Italy	13.6	33,630	19
Israel	6.6	22,175	21
Brazil	1.0	12,993	28

This PISA ranking by country is based on the average actual PISA scores in Mathematics, Science and Reading reproduced in Appendix C section 6 for only the 29 countries in our data that are also included in the PISA survey.

In another survey by Varkey Foundation (2018), in both China and America, the number of teachers who agree that their income should be related to student achievement is more than the teachers who disagree (see Figure 4). If the students have achieved good grades, the teacher should be rewarded. In China and America, the income earned is far lower than the actual labor, which makes the teacher's enthusiasm at work decline, which is not benefit built a close student-teacher relationship (Ye, 2013). I will discuss how the low-income influence on student-teacher relationship in China and America.

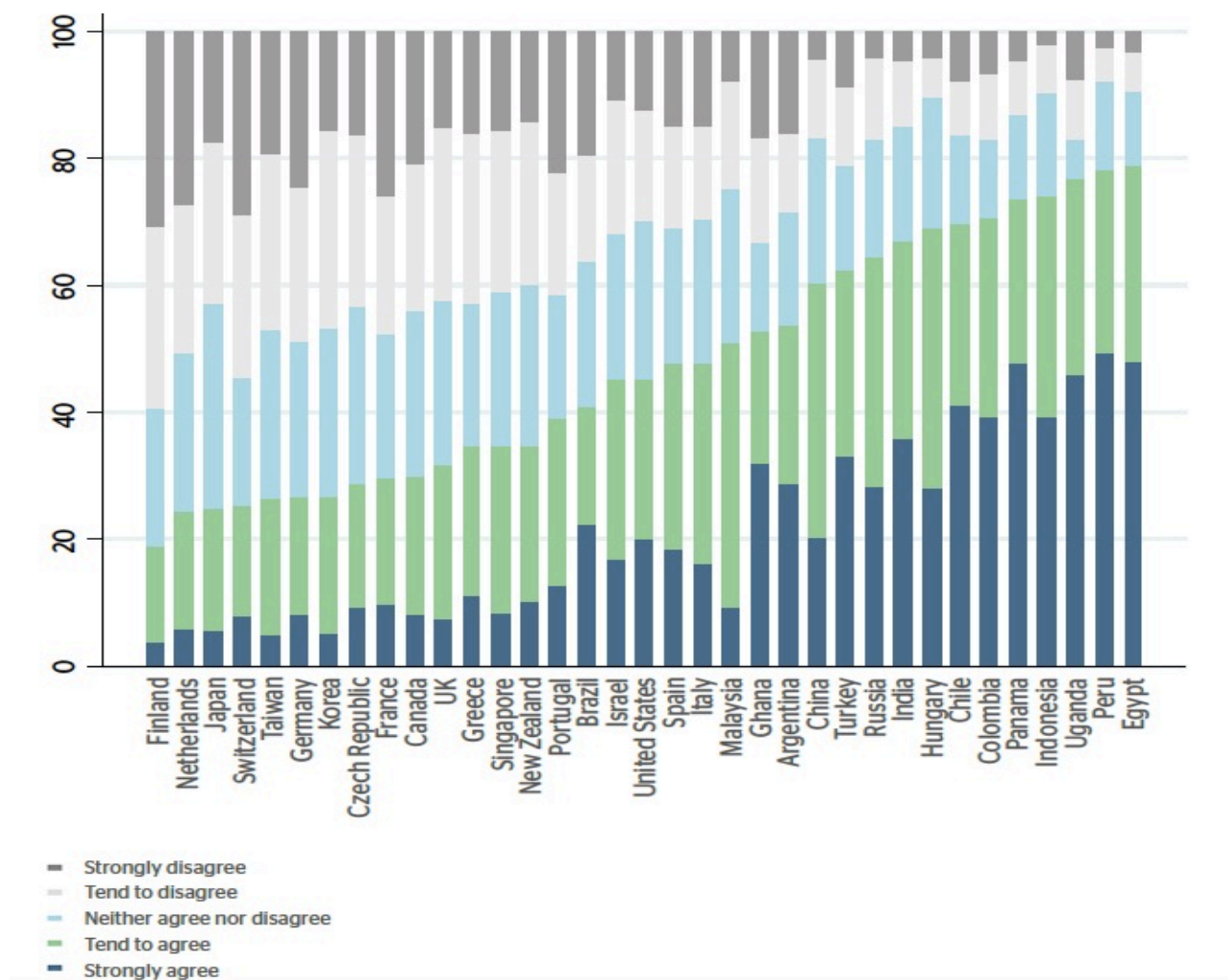


Figure 4: Responses to 'Should Teachers Be Rewarded in Pay According to Their Pupils' (Varkey Foundation, 2018, p.66)

In China, low teacher income has forced some teachers to increase their income through

other means. Some teachers increase their income by selling goods on their social network site, such as WeChat. According to media reports (Jia, 2018), some teachers sell their products through WeChat in order to increase their income, so that parents feel they have to pay for exchanging for teachers' attention to their children. In some ways, this directly impacts the student-teacher relationship because a close student-teacher relationship should not be based on money.

According to Jia's report (2018), WeChat business also allows teachers to be in an unequal relationship with students and parents. Facing with a teacher's WeChat business, parents would dare not refuse or ignore because they fear that children will be treated unfairly in school. As a result, parents will buy goods that teachers sell online, as a way to "please" teachers. Such a WeChat business is no longer a trading relationship, but a suspicion of using the position of teacher to get unearned benefits of parents and students, and it will also cause the public to query that the teachers use student-teacher relationship to earn money. It's not quite bribing, but it comes pretty close. Nonetheless, in the long term, it not only distorts the relationship between teachers, parents and students, but also has a bad influence on the schooling environment.

Good teacher resources not only influence the achievement of students (Darling-Hammond, 2003, p. 7), but also influence on the close student-teacher relationship (Spilt, Hughes, Wu, & Kwok, 2012, p. 1181). According to Baroody, Rimm-Kaufman, Larsen and Curby (2014), "Teacher and school characteristics (e.g., years of teaching experience, teaching efficacy) are associated with interactions in the classroom" (p. 73). However, in America, low-income makes the decline of teacher resource. Last year, Reilly reported about the decline of teacher resource:

Between 2008 and 2016, the number of new educators completing preparatory programs

fell by 23%, according to the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

And once teachers make it to the classroom, attrition is high: at least 17% leave the profession within the first five years, a 2015 study found (Reilly, 2018).

Therefore, the decline of teacher resource in America may influence the quality of teacher in schools, which is not benefit of building a good student-teacher relationship.

If we think about that teacher respect and teacher's social status are obvious factors which influence on student-teacher relationship, the workload and salary of teachers are hidden factors which should be considered and focused on. In the following part, I will discuss the different teaching structures in China and America.

Teacher-centered teaching and student-centered teaching. Teaching structure refers to a stable structural form that promotes the progress of teaching activities in a specific environment under the guidance of certain educational thoughts, teaching theories and learning theories (Hong, 2004). At present, most of the teaching structures adopted in schools are teacher-centered and student-centered. The different teaching structure decides the different student-teacher relationship. According to Cornelius-White (2007), the teaching structure can influence the student-teacher relationship, and the student-centred teaching not only provide more positive students' outcomes, but also provide closer student-teacher relationship (Cornelius-White, 2007).

Teacher-centered teaching. Teacher-centered teaching means that teacher decides what is taught and controls the class conditions (Toh, 1994). A teacher-centered approach to schooling usually includes these features: students are not allowed to talk during a teacher's instruction, the content of teaching is decided by the textbook guide, and tables and chairs are usually arranged facing the blackboard (Toh, 1994). The teacher-centered teaching is characterized through that teacher is the instructor of knowledge and the process of monitoring the entire teaching activity.

The student is only the object of knowledge transfer and the passive recipient of external stimulation (Zheng, 2014). Textbooks are the only learning content of students and the main source of students' knowledge. It attaches importance to the certainty and universality of knowledge. This is necessary and reasonable in the primary stage of learning, but it does not further enhance students' understanding. Students often get scattered textbook knowledge (Zheng, 2014).

In China, teaching has traditionally been conducted in a teacher-centered way. In actual educational activities, teachers often think that students do not have enough knowledge, and teachers are absolutely dominant (Sun, 2017). The theoretical basis of the teacher-centered structure is Ausubel's theory of "learning and teaching." His theory includes both the cognitive and emotional factors involved in the learning process. It is mainly reflected in his theory of meaningful acceptance of learning (Zheng, 2014). The so-called meaningful learning refers to the understanding of the nature of the things reflected in knowledge and the relationship between things. The key is only the new concepts currently learned. The new knowledge establishes a non-arbitrary substantive connection with a certain aspect of the learner's original cognitive structure. As long as the connection can be established, it is meaningful learning; otherwise, it is mechanical learning (Wu, 2005). Teacher-centered teaching structure is regarded as an approach that directly transfers knowledge to student by instructing (Nurjannah, Husniyah & Harjanto, 2017). In this teaching structure, the teacher is superior, and the students are usually obliged to accept the knowledge taught by the teacher. As a result, teachers are the people who have the privilege and power over students in a teaching and learning process (Zheng, 2014).

Student-centered teaching. Student-centered teaching, which is contrary to traditional teacher-centered teaching, it transforms the position of teachers and students and puts students at

the center of the teaching and learning process (Scientist, 2015, p. 28). An important hallmark of children schooling is recognizing the needs and strengths of children, including social, physical and academic. The student-centered teaching is the most evident in early childhood settings (Pierce & Kalkman, 2003).

In America, kindergarten and elementary school are student-centered or child-centered teaching (Hofstede, 1986). The student-centered educational concept is an extension of Rogers's humanistic educational theory, and its theoretical basis is humanism and constructivism. It fully affirms that students are the main subjects in teaching and emphasizes that learning is the most important in teaching (DeRobertis, 2006). Additionally, this approach especially points out that schooling should recognize and value the impact of individual differences on learning activities and outcomes (Nelson et al., 2014).

The connotation of "student-centered" can be expressed as follows: in the schooling activities, the students are the main body, paying attention to the students' interests and personal characteristics, fully respecting the rights and needs of the students, and maximizing the enthusiasm and initiative of the students (Williams, 2011; Zheng, 2004). Student-centered learning encourages students to participate in all aspects of educational activities and encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning (Granger et al., 2012). Student-centered teaching attaches the importance to the subjective, practical and innovative abilities of students in learning activities, and focuses on the importance to the creative construction of students in class (Zheng, 2014). In student-centered teaching process, the teacher plays the role of a collaborator and leader of the student, rather than the authority and the law enforcer. This teaching structure also could improve the engagement of students and benefit teachers to make a close and equal relationship with students (Keiler, 2018).

Teacher respect, teacher's social status, teacher's workload and salary, and teaching structure all can shape student-teacher relationships. I will discuss the social and cultural influence on different student-teacher relationship in two countries.

Social and Cultural Influence for Different Student-Teacher Relationships

Education systems are influenced by society and shaped by culture (Battiste, 2000). According to Giorgetti, Campbell, and Arslan (2017), culture, history and education have an inseparable relationship, and culture and education are complex phenomena. Educational practices and institutions are key factors in understanding and explaining social change. The formation of history is often accompanied by cultural and educational issues (Giorgetti, Campbell, & Arslan, 2017).

Different cultural influence of student-teacher relationship in China and America. In the current Chinese schooling environment, teachers have unquestioned authority. They are both the authority of knowledge and the model of morality and play a dominant role in a teaching and learning process. Needless to say, the positioning of a teacher in this particular way can be intimidating for some students. And anecdotally, it seems very clear that if a relationship is built on intimidation, it is less likely to be robust, rich and fully productive. The status of the teacher in China shaped by other factors. For example, in Chinese society, teachers are required to have a high level of schooling and social morality, emphasizing the professional honor of the teacher (Ma, 2008). Chinese society generally believes that the level of teachers' academic performance determines the quality of schooling and further determines the quality of future talents (Ran, 2018). The attitude of the society towards teachers is mainly due to the great emphasis on the dignity of teachers (in Chinese 师道尊严) in Chinese history. The notion of teacher's dignity suggests that teaching is a distinguished profession worthy of social respect (Yang, 2006).

In this cultural tradition, the professional authority may come from the morality of the teacher or from the knowledge and ability of the teacher, and it strictly determines the social requirements for schooling and teachers. Additionally, schooling and teachers have a distinguished status in China, and teachers should shoulder the associated responsibilities and obligations. This means that the student-teacher relationship in China has obvious status differences shaped powerfully by a hierarchy. The high social status makes teachers themselves have a strong sense of superiority in their own professions. And a sense of superiority, implicitly positions students as inferior. It is very difficult to establish relationship grounded in mutual respect when it is shaped along the particular kinds of lines. Therefore, it is difficult for them to put themselves in a position relatively equal to students. In contrast to the social status of Chinese teachers, American teachers' social status is similar to social workers, which is to say very low. This in some ways is not surprising. In the American context, the caring professions like nursing and teaching are often low-paid, in large part because they are populated mainly by women.

However, perhaps this is a good time to talk a little bit about what I mean when I talk about status. Status is an important sociological concept, which Turner (1988) demonstrates using six definitions. These made him think that status is equivalent to modern citizenship, but at the same time he accepted the Weber-style which is status group and the concept of life. He defined status as:

A bundle of socio-political claims against society which gives an individual (or more sociologically a group) certain benefits and privileges, marking him or her off from other individuals or groups... This cultural aspect of status gives rise to a second dimension, namely the notion of status as a cultural lifestyle which distinguishes a status group with

special identity in society. (Turner, 1988, p. 11)

Turner (1988) also mentions the unique "subjective status" structure of America (p. 5). In the social context of American consumerism in the 20th century, rapid social mobility made the level of self-identity, prestige, and emphasis on personal achievement important. Therefore, status (personal perception of prestige), and "objective dimension" (a person's social legal power) have a subjective dimension (Turner, 1988, p. 5). Especially when the subject of this subjective dimension is a teacher, their subjective status is often underestimated and their objective status is limited (Turner, 1988, p. 5).

Higginson (1996) points out that teachers are "seriously losing prestige" (p. 9). Teachers were once considered to be one of the most noble occupations, a key factor of the development of human resources in a country, and a determining factor in social and economic progress.

Once prominent local officials, teachers today are more frequently regarded as simply ordinary civil servants, a shift in status which contributes to declining standards.

Governments are increasingly obliged to seek new ways of attracting qualified young people to the teaching profession. (Higginson, 1996, pp. 9–10)

According to Hargreaves (2009), in the United States, public opinion polls have repeatedly shown that teachers have high occupational esteem, but this is not commensurate with their social prestige and status (Hargreaves, 2009). However, according to the GTSI (2018), the teachers' view of their own status has become lower than the general public's view (see Figure 5.).

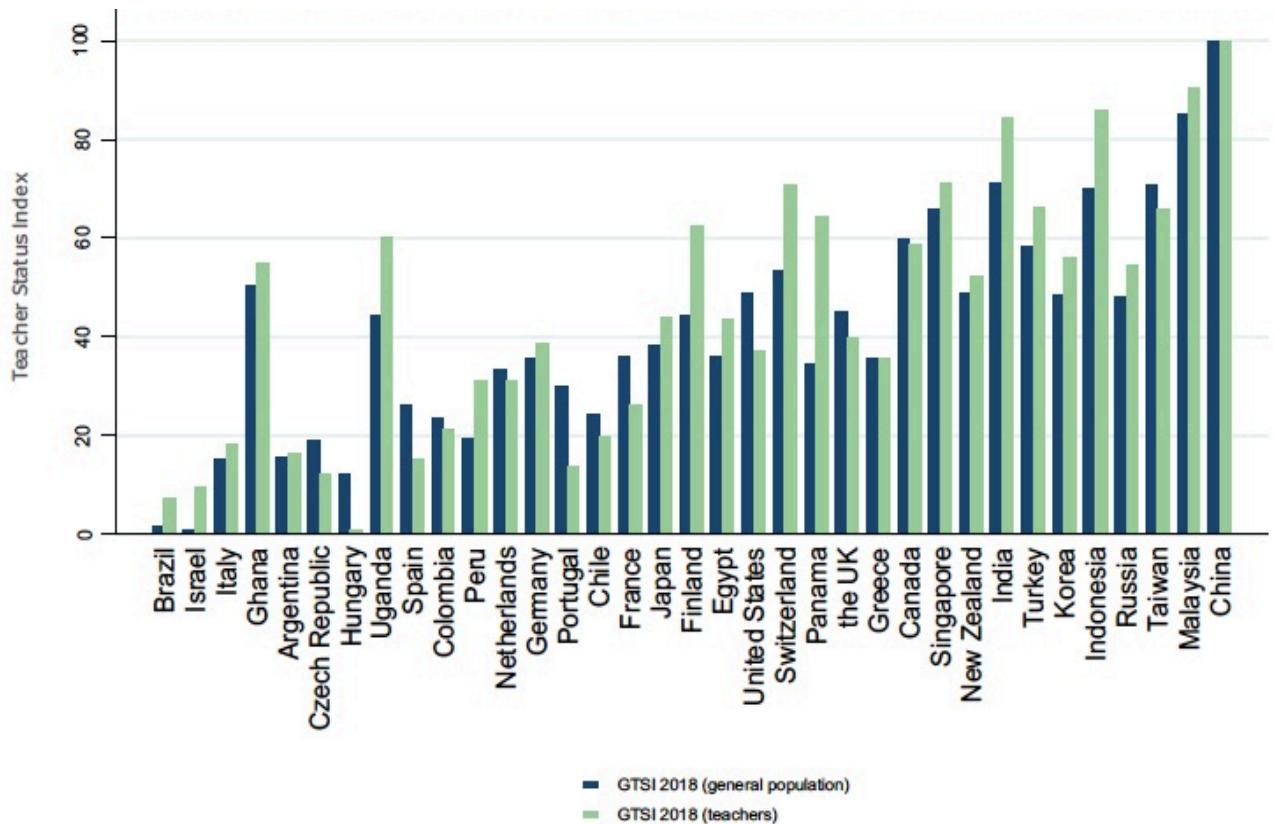


Figure 5: Teacher Status Measured Separately in The General Population (Varkey Foundation, 2018, p. 98)

Cultural factors. Education is a cultural phenomenon, and the cultural traditions of a country are inevitably reflected in schooling, especially in educational theories, affecting all aspects of education (Stevens, 2008). Different schoolings are reflected by different social and cultural connotations, and it is precisely because of the differences between social environment and cultural traditions that constitute educational differences in different countries and societies (Zeichner & Liu, 2010).

Chinese culture is an ethical culture, which is its most typical and representative feature (Ardichvili et al., 2012; Lu, Rose, & Blodgett, 1999; Smith & Hume, 2005). The culture of ethical relations and ethics affects people's way of thinking and behavior and also affects the deep structure of the entire national culture (Ardichvili et al., 2012). Under this traditional

philosophy, the Chinese form an ethical value that respects ancestors, honours parents, and values morality (Sung, 2001). Shaped by Confucian thought, this ethical spiritual culture is reflected in the field of schooling. The relationship between teachers and students is naturally dignity of teachers and ethics, with a strong ethical colour and unity in certain ethical relationships (Zhang et al., 2008). The authoritative status of teachers represents the value authority and leading role of teachers in the relationship between teachers and students. One of the main goals of Eastern schooling is to shape individuals into qualified members of a responsible, strong society. Therefore, before children enter society, they must master basic skills and knowledge to meet the needs of society (Biggs, 1996; Stevenson & Stigler, 1987).

However, the culture of respecting teachers often makes students lose their independence and criticality (Ma, 2008). They show humble, blind obedience and timidity in front of teachers, lose their adventurous spirit, and lack development, originality and ability (Ma, 2008). The “teacher is the upper, student is the lower” hierarchy of ideas exists throughout the entire process of schooling (Ma, 2008, p. 52). This makes it difficult for teachers and students to establish an equal and democratic relationship.

American culture emphasizes individual struggle, independence and respect for personal values (Glass & Rud, 2012). Individualism constitutes a major creed of American culture (Grabb, Baer, & Curtis, 1999). Because of individualistic values, Americans are encouraged to develop independence at a very young age, and American students are given more emphasis to personal autonomy and individuality by American culture (Singh, Huang, & Thompson, 1962, p.130). American teachers encourage children to make their own decisions, express their own opinions, and solve their own problems (Passmore, 2010). The student-centered embodiment reflects the cultural spirit and cultural value of individualism (Yoo, 2014). Under the influence of

individualism theory, there is an equal and democratic relationship between teachers and students in American elementary schools.

Students can challenge the authority of teachers and give their own opinion when they find they have different views from teachers. The teaching also emphasizes the common knowledge construction between teachers and students. During the knowledge exchange and discussion, both teachers and students have developed their own knowledge and skills. In the next part, I will discuss what is the views of student-teacher relationship, and what the difference of the views of student-teacher relationship between China and America.

The different views of student-teacher relationship in China and America. Many Chinese articles that study the student-teacher relationship mention the view of this relationship (in Chinese is 师生观). The view of the student-teacher relationship refers to the basic assumptions and basic orientation of the relationship between teachers and students in schooling (Ran, 2018). This concept is originally from Rogers who repositioned the role of teachers and students in the teaching and learning process (Cao, 2000). The view of the student-teacher relationship is a subjective understanding of teaching and learning activities and student development in a certain cultural background, knowledge structure, education and teaching practice and professional theory learning (Geng, Tang, & Zhang, 2005; Ran, 2018; Zhang & Feng, 2015). The view of the student-teacher relationship profoundly affects schooling and teaching in the fields of teaching methods, teaching organization and teaching mode (Ran, 2018). To a certain extent, different attitudes of teachers and students determine different modes of schooling. There are obvious differences between the schooling of China and America.

The view of the student-teacher relationship determines the nature, distance, location and mode of the relationship between teachers and students in schooling (Ran, 2018). In Chinese

elementary schooling, it is the equality of students under the guidance of the teacher's authority. This view of the student-teacher relationship is not only an inherent model of Chinese traditional education, but also compatible with the basic structure of Chinese schooling, and matches the moral ethics and social structure of the socialist tendencies of Chinese society.

In contrast, a different student-teacher relationship is present in American elementary education comparing to the one in China. One of the main characteristics is that teachers are the first among equals, which is an opinion of the well-known educator, writer, and course theorist Doll; the first among equals well defines the status and role of the teacher (Brouwer, 2012; Ding, 2017; Doll, 1993, p. 166). Doll believes that as the first among equals, the role of teachers has not been abandoned, but has been re-constructed (Doll, 2012, p.17). The role of teachers has changed from the external situation of students to coexistence with this situation, and its authority has also been transferred into the situation (Bunkers, 2002). Teachers do not have an authoritative position, and students have an equal relationship with teachers and students. The teacher is just an ordinary occupation, and there is no special place in the social profession. Therefore, in schooling, teachers are not the object for students to respect. In terms of psychosocial structure, many American children regard their parents as their idol to respect, and parents' image and status are mostly higher than teachers because American teachers do not have a structure of professional authority, and it is difficult to have a strong influence on students (Ran, 2018).

Chapter Three – Discussion

The differences and similarities of student-teacher relationships in China and America are not only caused by different educational methods, but also the result of the influence of history, culture and society. In this chapter, the discussion is based on my experience, and I discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the relationship between teachers and students in China America, and how China and America can learn from each other to improve their respective relationships between teachers and students.

The Advantages and Disadvantages of Chinese Student-Teacher Relationship

In this part, I analyze the advantages and disadvantages of student-teacher relationship in China. The advantages include family-style class, various roles of class head teacher, and management relationship. The disadvantages include unidirectional and classroom discipline.

The Advantages of Chinese student-teacher relationship.

Various roles of class head teacher. Chinese class is usually composed by a head and many subject teachers. Subject teachers are responsible for teaching, but head teacher is responsible for both teaching and managing the class. The head teachers in elementary schools are not only mediators of student conflict and correctors of problem behaviours, but also protectors of students. As mediators, teachers need to treat every student in the class fairly and focus on fair enforcement in class matters. As correctors, teachers need to be reasonable and active in correcting the problematic behaviour of students and teach students to recognize mistakes and correct their behavior. In the role of protector, teachers need to protect students' personal rights and educational rights, give students a sense of security, create a harmonious atmosphere of the class, and protect the students when they are hurt or in danger.

In schooling, Chinese teachers play the traditional role of both teachers and fathers who

have strict demands of students. They also bear the traditional role of mothers who comfort and care for students. For Chinese students, many of them have a deep emotional connection with teachers, especially the class head teacher who has a strong influence on students.

Family-style class. According to my experience, when I was in elementary schooling in China, the class is like a family and the head teacher is like the parent of the family. In class, we have a competitive relationship during our learning process, and in school, the classes also have competitions, such as the classroom cleaning, sports meet, and class discipline. When there is a competition among classes, our head teacher is the leader of the whole class, and she led us to get the class honor.

During the actual teaching process of Chinese schools, teachers manage all aspects of classes, not only teaching and learning, but also children's daily school life (Ma, 2008). Under the strong management of teachers, class culture is important for students. Therefore, students who grow up in this environment often cherish their relationship with their classmates. The relationship between students is quite intimate, and the class usually carries the students' warm memories because most Chinese classes are like a family or a warm-hearted community. This kind of family-style class not only exist in elementary but also exist in my future schooling experience. The student-teacher relationship in elementary school made a foundation for my future school life, and it is important for me to know how to get along well with teachers.

Management relationship. In Chinese elementary school classes, in addition to the relationship between the teacher and the student, there also is the relationship between the manager and the subordinate. The class head teacher has the power to organize teaching, manage classes, manage student life and behaviour. Meanwhile, the head teacher selects student administrators to assist in managing the class. Class administrators can be elected either

collectively or democratically by students, or directly by the class teacher, and the class head teacher can remove the position of student administrators. From this point of view, the class head teacher is both the chairperson of the class organization and the general manager responsible for operational management. In the same way, the class head teacher also assumes the management responsibility of the class problems. At the school level, the school can handle a problematic class teacher through dismissal or other punishments.

Disadvantages of Chinese student-teacher relationship.

One-way instillation teaching. One of the basic characteristics of the teaching relationship between elementary teachers and students in China is one-way instillation teaching. The teacher gives the lecture and the students listen to the teacher. This basic teaching method runs through the whole teaching process. Teaching format is the teacher's transfer of knowledge in a top-down manner. It is difficult for students to have their own opinions, and students act as a container of knowledge. Learning is through passive acceptance, and it is even more difficult for students to raise objections and express their opinions. The formulation of teaching objectives, the explanation of teaching content, and the evaluation of teaching effects, are all taken over by teachers. The communications in the classroom are also composed of three elements: question, answer, and feedback. The questions are raised by the teacher, then the teacher gives the standard answer directly or the student answers the question, but there is always only one correct answer. The teachers and the students are independent, and there is very little interaction during the class. Some scholars have studied the language behaviour of classrooms in China. The results show that the frequency of students' responses to teachers' questions accounts for 93.8% of the total frequency of students' communications, while the proportion of students' questions and dissent accounts for only 1.7% and 2.7% respectively (Ma, 2008). The monotony of teacher-student

verbal communication, the lack of interaction between teachers and students, and the over-emphasis on the role of teachers, neglecting the student-student relationship of students' initiative, inhibit the development of students' thinking and are not conducive to the creativity of students.

Classroom discipline. Chinese elementary school class teaching pays attention to following class discipline and rules, and teaching activities are carried out in a certain order. There is a saying: “Nothing can be accomplished without norms or standards,” so the student-teacher relationship must be integrated under certain rules. Student-teacher interaction emphasizes principles, disciplines, and organization.

The relationship between teachers and students has an invisible distance limitation that cannot be overridden. Both the teaching environment and the classroom atmosphere are strictly disciplined and orderly. When the teacher lectures, the students are silent, and when the teacher asks questions, the students' gestures that show the answering signal (ex. raising a hand) are also standardized (see Figure 6). This kind of desk arrangement increases the distance of students who sit at the back of class, and make students feel unfair. In addition, teaching is subject to strict rules. The teacher's language, movements, and expressions must conform to the norms; the students' clothing and behaviour must conform to the regulations. Teachers should stand to give a lecture, and students should sit and listen in their fixed position. In this relationship, teachers must be an example, first having strict requirements of themselves, and then imposing the same on students. Students must also be strict with themselves and follow the rules of the class.

Although this is conducive to the teacher's grasp of the classroom order, and successful completion of the teaching tasks, students can also obtain more basic knowledge of the system and get better training. However, the modularization of class teaching makes the classroom

atmosphere dull and cannot fully mobilize the enthusiasm and participation of students. In such a teaching process, it is boring and oppressive.



Figure 6: Chinese Elementary School Class. <http://www.chinanews.com/tp/hd2011/2013/09-24/248850.shtml>

The Advantages and Disadvantages of American Student-Teacher Relationship

In this part, I discuss the advantages and disadvantages of general or common American student-teacher relationship. The advantage includes student-teacher interaction, equal discussion, student-centred, and orderly in disorder. The disadvantage includes that teachers worry about themselves and the decline of teacher resource.

Advantages of American student-teacher relationship.

In this part, I discuss the advantages of American student-teacher relationship.

Student-teacher interaction. After talking with my friends whose children are learning in

America and observing in American elementary schools. I find that in American elementary schools, teachers teach through various class activities. After the teacher has taught some basic knowledge, the teachers will organize activities to let the students learn more about the knowledge they have learned. In different classroom activities, the teacher also enhances the communication and interaction with the students. Additionally, the teaching content is based on the curriculum syllabus but not limited to use textbooks. Some elementary schools even do not have fixed textbooks, but teachers use different resources to teach. This kind of teaching method allows the teacher to teach according to the students' interest. This teaching strategy help the students increase their motivation of learning and help teachers to find more common topic with students.

Equal discussion. In America, teachers generally use less authority than Chinese teachers. In terms of specific types of authority, they use less compulsory authority and legal authority and use more of pro-social rewarding authority, professional authority, and referential authority (Roach, Cornett-Devito & Devito, 2005). Teachers value students learning independently according to their own interests and needs. Teachers and students will communicate democratically and have more of a free and equal friend relationship. In fact, as an interactive process of interpersonal interaction, the student-teacher relationship in America elementary schools fully reflects the unique personality traits and mutual understanding and respect of teachers and students. One manifestation of equality between teachers and students is that students have independent choices. There is less difference in power between teachers and students because of the teachers' validation of the knowledge students already have. Students are not treated differently from one another because of their intelligence. Teachers especially respect the value of students, pay attention to the development of students' expressiveness, initiative and self-confidence, and encourage students to make their own choices within a certain range.

Learning-centered. Learning-centered is the basic principle that governs the relationship between teachers and students. Teachers only play an auxiliary and guiding role in teaching. Students are in an active position in learning, and they learn, act and explore independently under the guidance and assistance of teachers. In this relationship, teachers are no longer authoritative. Students mostly have their own ideas, which will often challenge teachers'. Students who have opinions on teachers will not be afraid to challenge teachers' authority. In an open and harmonious teaching process, the talents and spontaneity of the students are naturally released, and their personality is encouraged in the classroom. Such a student-teacher relationship is conducive to creating a democratic and harmonious learning environment.

Orderly in disorder. The elementary school classrooms in America are freer than Chinese classrooms. During the teaching, teachers can stand or sit to give a lecture, and students usually sit closely around (see Figure 7). The setting of the classroom environment is not as orderly as China's. Classroom tables and chairs are not necessarily arranged in an orderly manner. Students may take classes in a circle or discuss in groups. Educational content and order are arranged by teachers and students according to different situations, and there is generally no uniform and rigid regulation. This relationship allows teaching to be carried out in a relaxed and free environment, which is

beneficial for students to learn happily.



Figure 7: American Elementary School Class.

http://www.santafenewmexican.com/life/family/budget-woes-force-n-m-schools-to-cut-k-/article_6e9e81f3-5ee0-5c92-8bc8-46f22650a4c7.html

Disadvantages of American student-teacher relationship.

Teacher's worries. I find that the disadvantages of the student-teacher relationship in China affect the students more. On the contrary, the disadvantages of the student-teacher relationship in America affect the teachers more. An American report states that teachers are not only worried about money, but also feel misunderstood, and the most important thing is that they feel they are not respected (Hampson, 2018). This disrespect comes from many aspects: parents who are not involved or too involved; the government's mandatory mandate for the way of teaching; and insufficient school budgets, which result in teachers having inadequate preparation time and inadequate classroom supplies (Hampson, 2018).

Declining teacher resources. According to Hampson’s report (2018), since 2009, the national average wage has decreased by more than 4%. However, 90% teachers purchased their own class supplies, averaging nearly \$500 a year. About 18% of public school teachers have another job, which makes teachers spend about five times longer working than regular full-timers, and the number has been increasing from 2003 to 2016 (Talley et al., 2018). As a result, 8% of teachers leave their jobs each year, compared with only 5% a few years ago; the Learning Policy Institute says that 20% to 30% of first-time teachers will leave within five years, and two-thirds of teachers will withdraw before retirement (Hampson, 2018). From 2009 to 2014, the enrollment rate of the university teacher education program fell by 35% (Strauss, 2017). There is a shortage of teachers in some professional fields. According to a study by the Institute for Learning Policy, more than 100,000 classrooms were equipped with incompletely qualified teachers who lack proper licenses or degrees in 2017. Although the proportion of teachers without a bachelor's degree is small (2.4% in 2016), it has more than doubled since 2004 (Hampson, 2018). Available data for the 2017-18 school year show that it is still difficult for most states in the United States to recruit qualified teachers in multiple areas (Strauss, 2017).

Chapter Four – Conclusion

Elementary school is one of the initial stages of students' schooling, it is also the student's initial understanding of society (Adler, Kless, & Adler, 1992). Therefore, the student-teacher relationship in elementary school is particularly important, and the formation of student-teacher relationships in elementary schools in China and America are influenced by different factors.

The teaching structure will affect the distance between students and teachers. American elementary schools use a student-centred teaching structure, which is benefits teachers' close relationship with students. Chinese elementary schools use a teacher-centred teaching structure, which limits the students' close relationship with teachers. The teacher's social status, salary and respect will affect teacher's enthusiasm and sense of achievement for work. Chinese teachers have the highest social status and teacher respect, and Chinese teachers feel pride in their job, but American teachers feel disappointed because of their social conditions.

There are many differences and similarities of student-teacher relationship between China and America, and these differences and similarities also influence each other and promote the formation of student-teacher relationships. It is also important to find what shapes the different relationships in China and America.

Historical, cultural and social factors provide different social conditions and backgrounds for different student-teacher relationships. Historical factors have influence on culture, culture and history have influence on society, and these three factors affect schooling. Culture is a direct response to history, and society is a product of the combination of history and culture (Greenfield, Maynard, & Childs, 2000). The formation of different student-teacher relationships is also inseparable from historical and cultural influence.

The long history of Confucianism in China has determined the profound impact on

schooling, and this influence is difficult to change. The attitude of society to teachers also reflects the importance attached to the idea of dignity of teachers in Chinese culture. Therefore, the student-teacher relationship in China is authoritative and serious. Under the influence of John Dewey, American schooling has had an obvious change. Under the influence of American individualism and pragmatism, schooling attaches importance to the development of individuals and focuses on cultivating the development of students' interests.

Through analyzing the different factors affecting the teacher-student relationship and the advantages and disadvantages of the teacher-student relationship in Chinese and American elementary schools, I give some general suggestions to improve the relationship between teachers and students in the elementary schools, as well as aspects that teachers in these countries can learn from each other with their own situation.

For Chinese elementary schools, teachers can change the class arrangement. They may make desks like a circle to reduce the distance between students and students and provide an opinion notebook in which students can write their opinions of teachers and classes. Teachers also can provide various class teaching content. For example, teachers choose one or two classes a week to have teamwork teaching and learning or group discussion; in the language class, teachers can organize students to be sit together, and can teach new knowledge through telling stories or watching movies; prepare various teaching resources, not only focusing on the textbooks.

Different from the Chinese school situation, American schools may pay more attention to improving the working conditions for teachers. School may organize different activities to help students and teachers build a mutual understanding between each other. School also could organize the Parents' Day, and invite parents to observe class in order to make parents have a directly impression and understanding of teachers. Teachers can choose 10-15 minutes in one or two days

a week and ask students to teach something they are interested in. Students can feel that teachers' work is not easy, and have a better understanding of teachers.

Student-teacher relationship is important for both students and teachers. How to build a close relationship with students should be considered by every teacher. I hope this study can provide different views for teachers in China and America and help teachers to build a closer relationship with students.

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