

# *A Study on the Differences in Education Between China and the United States and Their Intrinsic Reasons*

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**Abstract:** The significant differences in education between China and the United States ultimately stem from the differences in basic national conditions. If Chinese education wants to change the current situation, it must start from the national conditions. Maintaining fair and just competition is the most critical point, as shaping a fair and just environment, depriving privileges, and preventing corrupt bureaucrats from interfering, while also learning from each other's strengths and weaknesses, and absorbing advanced concepts from Western education. To make progress in Chinese education, it is necessary to reduce ideological differences, take a long-term perspective, and return to the essence of expanding educational horizons and developing human abilities. Although the current education system in China is not satisfactory, due to the continuous growth of the Chinese economy and the continuous attention of various sectors of society to education, there is still hope for the future development of education in China.

**Keywords:** Differences in education, Limitations of Chinese education, America educational advantages.

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, due to the rise of social media, international information exchange has become more frequent, and some teaching concepts abroad have been widely accepted by Chinese people due to their unique advantages. In the context of economic globalization, education has also been given a new mission to guide students in aligning with the international community. At the same time, Chinese education itself has some insurmountable chronic problems, so it should be reformed. Today, we turn our attention to American education, explore the internal differences between Chinese and American education, and the deep reasons rooted in the differences to help Chinese education develop better and healthier in the future.

By comparing the education systems between China and the United States, especially the differences in the college entrance examination, Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of education in both countries to facilitate future improvements to the entire education system.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. A review of Chinese education

Every unified exam requires a ranking system, and students with low scores cannot hold their heads up at home or school. Students become too focus on scores, and parents also have these problem Students study until midnight every day, writing endless homework. According to the investigation high school students in china only sleep 6.5 hours one day, they spent more than 3 hours on their home work[1]. Many people believe that the college entrance examination is fair and provides students from mountainous areas with opportunities to study and work in big cities. However, this is only a one-sided fairness. Various bonus policies are emerging one after another. By 2024, ethnic minorities, children of returned overseas Chinese, and residents of Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan will all enjoy a 10 point bonus. One bonus point has become a shackle that hinders fairness and justice. In addition to bonus points, the admission score lines in different regions of China are also different. For example, the minimum admission score line for 985 project universities in Henan is 606, while the score line for Beijing is as low as 521[2]. At the same time, the undergraduate admission score is also huge due to the region, which indirectly indicates that in China, family background is to some extent more important than ability. How fair is such a system. In my opinion, so-called fairness is only one sided, students can not enjoy equal treatment.

### 2.2. A review of American education

Compared to aligning everything with standard answers in China, education in the United States provides people with more possibilities, emphasizes the cultivation of comprehensive abilities, and the development of creative thinking. The standards for evaluating students have also shifted from scores to more diverse ways. Compared to the rote memorization of knowledge by Chinese students, the United States places more emphasis on cultivating independent thinking. For example, American history classes not only talk about history but also use it as a reflection and reference for personal growth. On the other hand, in China, history classes are more like tools for thinking control. Not only do they require standardized and unified formats for answering questions, but the history they promote carries a lot of subjective color, which is not conducive to students understanding the truth and cultivating dialectical thinking. It is good to promote the confidence and institutional superiority of a great country, but we should not use smearing others to highlight ourselves. This approach is extremely childish. Of course, education in the United States is not perfect either. The United States does not attach great importance to "basic knowledge" and highly values the cultivation of students' "creativity", which is why there are things that American white-collar workers do not consider 10 minus 6 to be almost "ridiculous". Dr. Ma Li ping from Stanford University once conducted a comparative study and found that out of 23 randomly surveyed American elementary school teachers, only 9 people correctly answered  $1 \frac{1}{4}$  divided by  $\frac{1}{2}$ ; And all 72 Chinese elementary school teachers did it right[3]. Furthermore, no American elementary school teacher who participated in the study knew what the mathematical concept of "dividing by half" meant; But all Chinese elementary school teachers answered correctly. Teachers are like this, and the level of students can be imagined.

### 2.3. Previous studies on educational differences between China and the United States

So, many Chinese people are puzzled: why are American primary and secondary education so poor, and why are American universities so impressive? Why is the United States far behind China in both technological and cultural innovation?

Regarding this, Fang Fan, the bilingual department director of Lincoln High School in the United States, said that the most significant difference between Chinese and American education is that

Americans believe in "not falling behind the finish line", while Chinese people prefer to believe in "not falling behind the starting point"[4].

Chinese education places special emphasis on the so-called "foundation", emphasizing the practice of "basic skills", and neglecting the cultivation of students' creativity and thinking abilities. American students have low scores and high energy, while Chinese students have high scores and low energy. Therefore, Fortune Global 500 companies generally do not want to accept Chinese students. Li Gang, partner and CEO of Accenture China, said that Chinese students lack the ability to withstand setbacks and are unwilling to publicly express their opinions. In their view, Chinese education is a servant of cultivating knowledge, rather than educating people. Although there are some problems with American education, its advantages and starting point are people-oriented, arranging learning and life according to the natural laws of human development, which is worth learning from in China

Ultimately, the significant differences in education between China and the United States are fundamentally due to the following factors: (1) Historical and cultural differences; (2) Economic and institutional differences; (3) Ideological differences.

(1) For thousands of years of history, China has advocated Confucianism, which prioritizes the interests of the country and society, and when it is necessary to sacrifice for the collective interest, individual interests are lower than collective interests., Lu Xun once said that Confucianism emphasizes loyalty, filial piety, benevolence, and righteousness, but neglects individual freedom. The Confucian gentleman is often hypocritical. Western education emphasizes struggle, equality, democracy, and human rights, with the manifestation of placing learners in a prominent position and emphasizing personality development.

(2) Economic Gap: Although China has experienced economic takeoff brought about by reform and opening up, there is still a significant gap in its total economic output compared to developed Western countries. In terms of total output, China's GDP in 2017 was 11.2 trillion yuan, while the United States was 18.57 trillion yuan. It will take at least 10 years to catch up with the United States[5]. Moreover, the phenomenon of resource scarcity caused by the large total population of China is becoming increasingly serious. The seventh national census on November 11th revealed that the population of China is 14117.8 billion[6].The essence of the Chinese high school and college entrance examination, which is said to be a talent selection competition, is actually an elimination race. It first depicts a bright future for ordinary families without backgrounds and backgrounds, and at the same time, uses this opportunity to eliminate those who have failed to supplement society's cheap labor force.

(3) Ideological gap: China is guided by Marxist ideology, and education in China is also based on social orientation, emphasizing "society first" and pursuing collectivism and patriotism as values. It cultivates students' socialist values and dedicates themselves to achieving socialist modernization with Chinese characteristics. While this starting point is correct, it is used by some as a tool to imprison thinking.

### 3. Intrinsic Reasons and Suggestions

As is well known, a strong ideology is not conducive to the emergence of a democratic environment and the healthy development of education for the younger generation. Taking North Korea as an example, democracy is talked about every day, full of benevolence, righteousness, and morality, but even the most basic rules are not followed. The continuous election of president, hereditary throne, symbol of independence and terrorism, and the autocratic monarchy system are shrouded in the world like a dark cloud. Young people in North Korea believe that they are happy in lies and lack understanding of the world. On July 1, 2009, the representative of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) to North Korea, Tolborne Do, stated in Beijing that North Korea was experiencing a new food shortage. According to a research report by the World Food Programme last year, it is

estimated that approximately 8.7 million North Koreans require food aid, accounting for more than one-third of the country's total population[7]. Tolborne Du said, "The current situation is very bad, many people are starving, and some people are using wild food to satisfy their hunger." On the other hand, the United States is a strong country built on the foundation of equality and freedom, and education provides unlimited possibilities for everyone. For example, Obama, who rose from an unknown civilian family child to become the President of the United States, cannot be achieved in China.

Although China's education system has more or less problems, it is still a newly developed country with a long way to go in the future. As long as there is determination, we can definitely solve the existing problems. If we want education reform to be effective, we must first ensure fairness. Fairness is the foundation of competition and the cornerstone of future development. From now on, the effective means to ensure fairness is to optimize the allocation of education resources.

In order to promote the balanced development of education, the Chinese government should vigorously promote the optimization of educational resources. Firstly, increase support for education in rural areas, build more rural schools, and improve the infrastructure and teaching conditions of rural education. Secondly, encourage excellent educational resources to tilt towards impoverished areas and improve the quality and level of education in these areas through the flow of educational resources.

Secondly, strengthen the narrowing of the education gap between urban and rural areas. The education gap between urban and rural areas has always been a prominent issue in China's education reform. In order to narrow the gap between rural and urban education, the Chinese government can take the following measures. Firstly, the introduction of high-quality educational resources in rural areas should be increased, and the quality of rural education through recruitment of excellent teachers and the construction of advanced educational facilities should be improved. Secondly, establish a connection mechanism in the urban multi education system to promote the sharing and flow of educational resources between urban and rural areas, and enable urban and rural students to enjoy more equitable educational opportunities. Due to the shortage of existing educational resources, it is still necessary to do a good job in education diversion, while also improving the quality of education.

In order to enhance the comprehensive quality and vocational skills of the national labor force, strengthen the construction of the vocational education skills training system, relevant policies can be established and implemented to encourage cooperation between enterprises, vocational colleges, and training institutions, provide vocational training programs that are more closely related to actual needs, promote skilled talents, and solve the problem of tight labor supply and demand.

The improvement of university education can be achieved by strengthening guidance on the interests of new students. In addition to providing necessary basic courses, philosophy and self-cultivation courses should be offered to new students, and courses, tests, lectures, exchanges, and practices related to interests, life values, and careers should be conducted to help students understand their interests, talents, and the current industrial structure of our country. After the end of their freshman year, students are encouraged to switch majors. For students who switch majors, slightly stricter graduation requirements should be given or students should make their own guarantees to prevent the proliferation of major transfers.

The implementation of the above two plans can indeed improve the quality of higher education, but they are only similar to the restoration of the Great Building, and cannot fundamentally change the current situation of education in China. To fundamentally solve the problem, we need to start with the high school and college entrance exams

The college entrance examination adopts a single subject examination. Secondary education does not divide subjects and does not change the current learning difficulty. For example, if a candidate has scores in various subjects (on a percentage basis) and wants to apply to the Department of Physics

at Tsinghua University, the requirements for the department are as follows: Chinese, self-cultivation, mathematics, and physics are mandatory courses for the department. From the perspective of conditions, the student is eligible to apply to the Department of Physics at Tsinghua University, and the department also needs to conduct an examination and interview for the required courses. Final score = Average score of mandatory courses in the national unified examination (30%) + Required course score in the college entrance examination (30%) + Interview score (20%) + Practical score of 20% (Comprehensive Subject Ability Examination and College Entrance Examination Reform, Fujian Education). "The average score of mandatory courses" refers to the student's performance in the national unified examination of the first, second, and third year of high school, while the Practical score refers to the student's operation in physics experiments and relevant factory internship certificates. This can meet the unified standard of quantitative scoring while evaluating student abilities from multiple aspects.

#### 4. Conclusion

Looking ahead to the future, China's education still has a long way to go. In order to keep up with the trend of the times and not be eliminated by history, it is necessary to actively connect with the international community, trace the original intention of expanding education's horizons and development capabilities, rather than being a tool for corrupt bureaucrats to protect their own interests. Despite this as long as theory can be transformed into action, it will definitely revitalize Chinese education. Since the reform and opening up, China's economic growth has been very fast, economic development will push education development, this already happened in Hainan province in 2000 Hainan fully popularized compulsory education. Present, we need to humbly seek advice and actively try new methods to break the deadlock.

This article mainly evaluates and provides suggestions for the shortcomings of Chinese education, but lacks a description of its advantages, which needs to be viewed dialectically. A detailed plan and detailed content have not yet been developed to emulate the American education system.

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