

# A Comparative Study of Differences Between Chinese and American Family Educational Approaches

Kangru Sang

North China Electric Power University, Baoding, Hebei, 071000, China

**Abstract:** Education is not only a science but an art. During the children's entire education, school education is in a dominant position but family education plays a key role. Children's growth needs education, help, and guide from parents. With the development of Chinese society and economy, the importance of family education of children grows more and more significant. But because of cultural traditions, lifestyle, social customs, ideas and sense of heritage, family education in China is still a weak part. The traditional concept of family education is being challenged. And many parents lack understanding of physiological and psychological development of the children during their growth, and lack proper education and effective methods to face the different stages of children's development. Consequently, parents tend to miss crucial educational opportunities. With different history, culture and social economic conditions between China and America, the formations of family education are producing a huge impact. American high level of culture and education also determines the United States the world leader in science and technology. The US has not only advanced school education but advanced family education, and their advanced educational concepts and teaching approaches are in line so that we can learn from American family education in a lot of places. Through questionnaire investigation and contrastive analysis, this thesis studies the differences between Chinese and American family educational approaches by three main aspects of intellectual education, moral and physical education, and life education. Firstly, this thesis discusses the reasons on the historical and cultural backgrounds and social conditions. Then this thesis describes the specific performance including the different status and contents, the comparison of parenting methods. In the end, this thesis has a brief summary of advantages and disadvantages of Chinese and American family educational approaches. This thesis tries to briefly describes and compares the intellectual education, moral and physical education and life education. Therefore, the aim of this thesis is in order to improve the quality of our family education. By studying the differences of family educational style between China and America, we do not mean to belittle our Chinese family education but is a kind of reflection. Absorbing American family education's advantages and removing the disadvantages of our family education style as well as keep our Chinese traditional merits of family education could make a benign circulation of healthy personnel training in our country. Thus, we could gain a competitive advantage in the future competition and gradually adapt to the world trend of the future.

**Keywords:** Educational approaches; Comparison; Chinese family; American family; Parents

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## 1. Introduction

Family education, school education and social education make up the three major power of education, but family education can never be replaced. Today, we are in a rapidly changing era of science and technology, the training of personnel is more important among the development of science and technology, and the first stop of the personnel training should be the family. Family education generally refers to the parents of the child's criticism, guidance, training and management and other activ-

ities, but we tend to agree with the expand understanding which the current family education and social change on the family: first, the family education is not just an internal matter of the family but is related to the matter of the whole society; second, the task of family education is not only to learn life skills and to deal with family relationships but from all aspects to promote family's health and get overall development; third, family education is no longer just the parents' education; fourth, the time of family education is not only limited to preschool but the life-long education that person's life are always home-schooled.

With the development of Chinese society and economy, the importance of family education of children grows more and more significant. But because of cultural traditions, lifestyle, social customs, ideas and sense of heritage, family education in China is still a weak part. The traditional concept of family education is being challenged. And many parents lack understanding of physiological and psychological development of the children during their growth, and lack proper education and effective methods to face the different stages of children's development. Consequently, parents tend to miss crucial educational opportunities. With different history, culture and social economic conditions between China and America, the formations of different family education are producing a huge impact. American high level of culture and education also determine the United States the world leader in science and technology. The US has not only advanced school education but advanced family education, and their advanced educational concepts and teaching approaches are in line so that we can learn from American family education in a lot of places.

There are several educational ways, and this article discusses the Chinese and American family education in typical way. In this thesis, the differences between Chinese and American family education approaches, are the three main aspects of intellectual education, moral and physical education, and life education. The third chapter is about the differences of intelligence in Chinese and American family educational approaches. Firstly, this thesis would discuss the reasons on the historical and cultural backgrounds and social conditions. Then this thesis would describe the specific performance including the different intellectual status and contents, the comparison of parenting methods. In the end, this thesis has a brief summary of advantages and disadvantages of Chinese and American family educational approaches. Similarly, the fourth chapter is also like the former framework. The fifth chapter is about the differences of life education between Chinese and American family. After explaining the reasons, the differential expression of specific performance comparisons is divided into four aspects from the concept of money, social contact, parental sexual health education, as well as the emotional express between parents and children. Then this thesis lists the pros and cons of Chinese and American families educational approaches which also divide into these four aspects. The sixth chapter is the conclusion and implications of the whole paper. This thesis briefly describes and compares the intellectual education, moral and physical education and life education.

Therefore, the aim of this thesis is that by the differ-

ences of family educational style between China and America, each family has to act unanimously, to take effective measures and methods and to gradually change this situation. For example, change grades-target type education for the comprehensive quality education, change knowledge-based education for capacity-based education, using the interests to promote the transformation of family education. Only absorb American family education advantages and remove the disadvantages of our family education style and keep our Chinese traditional merits of family education, can we make the formation of healthy personnel training in our country. Thus, we could gain a competitive advantage in the future competition and gradually adapt to the world trend of the future.

## 2. Literature Review

Family education plays an increasingly important role in modern society, not only for personal development, harmonious development of the family as a whole but for society. So countries attach great importance to family education. As a world power, The United States' family education has characteristics and advantages including independent personality, open democracy, and economic consciousness. However, there are still many deficiencies in our family education on aspects of its educational philosophy and educational purposes. The dictionary definition of family education is: parents or family elders educate children or young people. Family education plays an indispensable role in the healthy growth of children along with the school education and social education. Children's growth is always closely linked with a small family group. In the family, as our society improves and social structure becomes increasingly complicate, family education becomes more important and emergent. Family educational way refers to a relatively stable parenting behavior that parents raise and educate their children. It summarizes kinds of characteristics of parenting behavior. Family education is significant for all around the development of intellectual, moral and physical education, and life education. What's more, a proper way of family education plays an irreplaceable role in lots of parts in children's life, such as children's money concept, sexual health education, social contact, emotional expression between parents and children and how to get along with each other. Teaching methods are restricted by educational philosophy and goals.

In recent years, the research about family education in China and the US focus on the overall Sino-US study of family education, including the reasons of the different

backgrounds, differences of family education purposes, contents, approaches, results, and problems of Chinese family education, as well as across a comparative study of cultural communication researches. Among these, the comparison of educational purposes, contents, and methods accounts for a large proportion. The following reviews about the perspective of Chinese and American differences in family educational purposes, educational contents, educational approaches which are previous studies reviewed.

### 2.1 The Differences on the Educational Aims

From the numerous literature, it can be seen that due to the influence of traditional Chinese education "The more student copies his studies, the easier he will be an official." Our society heavies academy, and strengthens utilitarian, as well as values-based groups. So parents often impose on their children for their own purposes. Thus, the purpose of Chinese family education is to train children to be a successful man, to learn well, then is admitted to a good college, get a good job, have a good future, and live a better life. What's more, parents can also live better in their old age. So Yang Zhihua (2007) pointed out that China's family educational purposes tend to be family-centered, ignoring the wishes of their children, and the elders tend to emphasize the "feedback." In Differences between Chinese and American Family Education Zhang Xiaoliang also has written "They hope their son to be a successful man and daughter to be ambitious, too. They tend to pay more attention to children's studies. As long as the child got good results, all problems can be solved. The parents educational purposes are that the child will amount to be successful, can find a good job and live a better life." Shi Lei's *The Comparison and Analysis of Sino-American Family Educational Ways—from the Case of American Chinese Tiger Mother Family Educational Way* refers that "Children have only to open one's mouth to be fed and hold out one's hands to be dressed, as long as they study well." Due to the strong economy, improvement of the social system, the value orientation of United States is process-valued, individual-based, giving children the free choice. So the family education purpose of parents in the United States is that parents as family education supporters, cultivate children's independence, in order to be able to survive in the community, to adapt to various environments. American parents will not be too fancy on whether children will be successful men in the future. They want children to own ability to live alone and to survive independently in the community. In the same essay, Zhang Xiaoliang says "The focus is on fostering children has the ability to adapt to the environment and to

survive independently. American parents believe that the purpose of education is not preparing to make a living, but is preparing to survive. They emphasize the value of a mental shape, utilitarian, and career-related value." Liza Pin's (2008) article also pointed out that "They know how to discover their children in a positive part. The children can find their value in the family homeland."

### 2.2 The Differences on the Educational Contents

Chinese family education content is narrow and imbalanced, intellectual predominant. The content lacks skills development, personality development, and the development of children's physical fitness. Liza Pin (2008) mentioned in her article, Chinese parents regard intellectual education as the most important part of children's living and learning, but neglect children's exercise and they require children to study aesthetic culture such as painting and dance in order to increase their children's future professional competence. While they lack the basic content of social abilities: life skills, work skills, communication skills, practical ability, and neglect learning and creativity. This article also states that "Chinese parents seem to learn the importance of knowledge. In fact, they only pay attention to the low level of knowledge which is just to cope with school exams. However, the American family has rich educational content. Their family education is physically labor-round development, and is more involved in fostering children's social skills and the ability to survive. Besides, they pay attention to the cultivation of creative ability. Geshu Hui (2009) pointed out that "In the promotion of physical reinforcing, parents attach importance to young children in outdoor activities, physical exercise; on cognitive development, they emphasize on training the child's senses, pay attention to developing the child's cultural, aesthetic vision, and the child's learning interest; in the community of culture, children are required to do things by themselves, and are asked to learn to cooperate with peers, to share, and to aid mutually; in emotion education, parents teach children to listen to music, art, dance, literary and artistic works." Jiang Nannan (2013) also says that American parents pay attention to cultivating children's social practice and social viability, in order to have good independent skills and social adaptability.

### 2.3 The Differences on the Educational Approaches

The previous literature has mentioned most Chinese parents in educating children to use the form of preaching, and they are leaderships of children; they require children to be obedient and do not give children enough freedom right to choose; they take too much interference in children things and they even take on everything; they do not respect the child's privacy. Jiang Nannan (2013) referred

that "Giving children infinite love and overprotective are Chinese parents, while giving children the limited care should belong to American parents." Chinese parents take care of children in all aspects of a lifetime. In the former essay if Zhang Xiaoliang, he referred that "On fostering children's independence, Chinese parents especially these who have only one child, meet the child's basic needs in life acting, let the child do none housework and they even arrange all aspects of the child from childhood to adult." the family education in the United States is equally accessible. Parents pay attention to cultivating children from practicing rather than preaching, and they are the child's friends; they let children make a choice according to their own wishes, cultivate children's independence and ability; they encourage children to participate in various activities to cultivate children's interest, to enhance self-confidence and sense of responsibility; they respect the child's privacy. Min Granville and Li Haofeng (2008) pointed out that "American parents let children choose things freely. They give children the key to the door instead of opening the door for children." Wang Jing (2011) noted, "They respect their children's interests and choices, and encourage them not to give up their own hobbies." Shao Xuan and Zhang Jing (2011) also say American parents give children more space to accumulate experience and attain skills in the practice and training. Meanwhile, this article also mentioned that parents encouraged their children to participate in activities to cultivate children's sense of competition, self-confidence, and interest, as well as an ability of practice; they try to create a relaxed and welcoming environment to assist children in making friends, helping children develop physical and mental health.

In conclusion, there are significant differences on educational purposes, educational content and educational methods between Chinese and American family. The educational purpose of the Chinese family is utilitarian, to help children succeed; educational purpose of American family is to guide children to become social beings. Chinese family education content is overwhelming intellectual, ignoring other aspects; the educational content of American family is all-round development, with emphasis on cultivating a child social competence. Educational method of China is a closed family education type, which means parents are authoritative; the American family educational method is an equally open type, which means parents are guides. This is the previous review studying mainly in the overall education, as well as the drawbacks of Chinese family education and the advantages of American families. But the previous studies less mentioned specific aspects of family education methods and fewer

disadvantages of American family education and merits of family education in China. So the next study will be combined with the concrete manifestation of the survey data and examples, compare more detailed the advantages and disadvantages of education in the intellectual, moral and physical education, aspects of life in Chinese and American family educational approaches. Thus, we could understand more fully and correctly differences on educational approaches in Chinese and American families. Besides, with better integrated with our country, we could recognize our lack of education, take American's essence and throw its dregs, and selectively learn from foreign educational methods and ideas, so that we could improve the quality of family education.

### 3. Differences of Intellectual Education

The intellectual education in a family is the intelligent educational activities that parents or persons are conducted in. Family intellectual education is vital to the growth of children, to the socialist material civilization and spiritual civilization construction. It can be divided into preschool family intellectual education and family intellectual education after school. Preschool intellectual education in the family is the foundation of preschool children. Family intellectual education after school in the family is consistent to school intellectual education. It is the supplement to school intellectual education.

#### 3.1 Causes of Differences of Intellectual Education

The following is about different traditional historical and cultural backgrounds.

Since ancient times, China pays much attention to education. With the improvement of imperial examination system, examination-oriented education has been far-reaching, which has led all kinds of businesses have to comply with "Better education, better future." It is the emphasis on secular education. Another reason is the influence of Confucian Culture. The Chinese traditional Confucian culture emphasizes "The cultivation of one's moral character, the running of one's family, the administration of a state, the peace and security of the world." The Chinese parents care about the reputation in educating the child, thinking educating the child to become a useful person is their achievement, but if not, the parents feel shameful. The education's goal is for earning their living, for honor. This kind of culture heavies mentality and lights manual activity, heavies theory and lights practice. Besides, Chinese are consciousness-based, with emphasis on the social group. By this awareness, children are

regarded as the continuation of the family. Therefore, to make family honor is the educational purpose of the majority of parents. Especially in the seventies and eighties, college entrance examination has changed lots of people's fates of that generation.

The United States has a short history and is a nation of immigrants. The US is affected by the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. So personal development is less constraint. What's more, Americans have personal standard consciousness, which emphasizes individuality. Thus, children do not have to shoulder the task of family honor.

The influences of Different Social Conditions are also important.

China may be one of the world's largest economies, but it remains a poor, developing the nation in terms of per-capital income. With underdeveloped productivity, it is increasingly difficult for employment. The employment results in a crazy chase towards high academic qualifications. Not only for parents and students but also for the whole society. Last but not least, Chinese social pension security system is not perfect. So most Chinese parents hope that their children would have enough economic base to provide for the aged in the future.

With the US strong economy and advanced productivity, there are more employment opportunities, as well as open career outlook to people. So high academic qualification is not the only better choice for Americans. In addition, because of the perfect pension system, children wouldn't have to raise their parents in the future. Therefore, parental education emphasizes children's social ability.

### **3.2 Different Specific Performance of Intellectual Education**

#### **3.2.1 Different Status and Contents on Intellectual Education**

At the first, we will talk about the status. For Chinese parents, intellectual education is learning, grades and grades rank in school. Parents put grades in the first place which is far more than the other parts of intellectual education. In the survey, students were asked: "What is your parents care about most about you?" The results were "academic" (86.9%), "social viability" (23.3%), "health" (45%). And the results from parents are the same. Except children's grades, other issues are not taken seriously for parents.

By comparison, American parents are also concerned about children's achievements, but not like Chinese parents always put the grades first. American parents are eyeing other intellectual as important as grades, such as the

intellectual development of children's creativity, practical knowledge. According to the survey, American parents were asked the same question. The results were physical and mental health 89%, learning achievement or grades 71%, and moral cultivation 70%, ambition in the future 46%. Therefore, American parents take all the factors about intellectual education into consideration as equal.

As for the contents, compared with skills (science skills, music, astronomy, etc.). Chinese parents pay more attention to theoretical knowledge and focus more on results than the process. Secondly, parents' satisfaction towards children's study is closely related to students' academic performance. The higher the score, the better parents' satisfaction. But they are less concerned about the child's learning, study habits, and learning attitude. The dates about parents' satisfaction show that the 19.97% of parents chose to "unsatisfactory," 49.62% of parents to choose "general," only 30.41% of "satisfied." Thirdly, parents in the choice of extracurricular activities are more "realistic" and "utilitarian." The survey data show that when it occurs to that parents support their children to participate in the "private tutoring" and "academic competitions," the rates were 34.84% and 25.32%, while the two of the proportion of students' selection were 12.16% and 16.23%. Visibly, about participating in "private tutoring" and "academic competitions," the support of parents is higher than the will of the students themselves. Fourthly, Chinese parents pay more attention to children's English scores than the Chinese scores. As we all know domestic parents give their children English extracurricular courses most.

Firstly, American parents focus more on the children's quality-oriented education: learning ability rather than test scores.

For Americans, thinking and innovation is very important. Simply mastering a simple knowledge is not the crucial requirement. Secondly, American parents also attach importance to training children practical knowledge and skills, such as creativity, reading habits, interests, and the social ability. Give some common examples. In America, parents let babies eat by themselves and they allow children to make graffiti on the wall. Because they are very happy that their children are learning skills. Thirdly, American parents draw more attention to cultivating children's interest and talents beyond learning, such as music, painting, astronomy. And they support their children to participate in kinds of clubs instead of extracurricular remedial classes. When American children were asked about what kind of after-school remedial class or club they par-

ticipate in, most children chose arts club and others like forensics, track, and field, book studies, writing clubs, literary journals, editing, music, etc.. No one chose study remedial class. Fourthly, compared with Chinese parents, American parents do not care about whether their children would become lawyers, doctors, or state legislators. So they are more relaxed on the children's learning and pay more attention to cultivating children's character, habits, and emotional intelligence.

### 3.2.2 Different Intellectual Teaching Approaches

Firstly, Chinese parents have strict control on children's learning but spoil kids in other areas. They only ask children to study well and ask children to pay less attention to other things. Secondly, in order to improve children's success, parents stimulate kids by substances, and conditionally reach child's request. For example, parents will buy toys or cellphones for children if children get 85 points on score. If a child can enter the top three in the class rankings, parents will reward 100 dollars to the child. Thirdly, Chinese parents like to make a horizontal comparison between their child and others. Parents often use "other people's children" to educate their children, regarding their child as a comparison tool. For example, they compare kids with schools, grades, marriages. According to the survey, the question about what children least expect parents to do is. Children's selection "compared with other kids" was 62.71%, far higher than other options. Fourthly, Chinese parents force their children to cram schools or to have tutors, even art specialty classes. After class, most students have to finish a variety of exercises books that parents buy to them. On weekends, students have to take mathematics extracurricular classes, drawing class, etc.. Fifthly, some parents pursue stick education, such as child abuse.

Compared with Chinese parents, American parents often create a relaxing environment for children. American parents will not raise high expectations and requirements for children. They will fully tap the potential of children from the actual situation of children. And parents will guide their children to ask why. Secondly, American parents encourage children to participate in various school activities, to encourage children to do a small experiment, like science section of school. For example, many children have a "home toolbox" and "experimental angle." These "small science fans" do an experiment, engage in production, cultivate flowers and trees, and feed small animals. Thirdly, let children get engaged in more games, such as words connected intelligence tests. They encourage children to tell jokes, do all kinds of sports games. Fourthly, unlike Chinese parents intervening too much,

American parents encourage children to make their own choices, respect and support children's choices. For example, through school enrollment adviser, experts of university enrollment consultation meeting, friends, network American children to find answers about which college to go, which major to get, etc.. Parents can make their own recommendations, but generally respect and approve the child's choices. Fifthly, American parents encourage and support children to choose interest groups, do not force a child to participate in mathematics and other learning remedial classes. While domestic parents are keen to give their children Mathematical Olympiad classes, American children are generally not in the Mathematical Olympiad classes. The main interest groups for American children are sports, science and art, such as Basketball, Soccer, Mad Science.

## 3.3 The Advantages and Disadvantages of Intellectual Education

### 3.3.1 The Pros and Cons of Intellectual Education in Chinese Family

Disadvantages are obvious. If parents only emphasize academic grades, and repeatedly raise unrealistically high expectations, these will cause children great psychological pressure, and may even cause children's fear of learning. In the long run, children will become nervous, anxious towards learning, suffering from stress, desperate. If children only know learning, it is easy for children to turn a nerd who is brain-dead. Besides, children will have no time to follow their own interests, and to develop other skills that they need to succeed in life. What's more, non-intelligence factors such as innovation, imagination, competitiveness will be ignored. Material incentives will easily lead children to become a mammonism.

There is no doubt that Chinese intellectual education in the family has its significance. On the one hand, children will have a solid knowledge base. On the other hand, under the strict requirement, students tend to get earnest, assiduous spiritual quality. Strict requirement and various classes get children busy, which may avoid children having nothing to do, or becoming a bully.

### 3.3.2 The Pros and Cons of Intellectual Education in American Family

The advantages are obvious. For one thing, American education for all-round development trains a child in all aspects, especially in creativity, imagination, and ability. For another, it is helpful for children to develop good study habits, such as reading habits. In addition, American children are better in non-intellectual factors, so they can

successfully adapt to the social environment. American children do not have the too much academic burden and they also have greater autonomy right to make their own choice. They tend to have a more interesting, free, healthy and happy growth.

However, American family education on intelligence is not so perfect. Compared with Chinese children, American children's knowledge base properly is less solid. Besides, children become more dependent on electronic products in mathematics. Because adolescent children don't have firm discipline, under relatively relaxing environment, adolescent drug and alcohol and sexually diverse events are more than that in China.

## **4. Differences of Moral and Physical Education**

### **4.1 Causes of Differences of Moral and Physical Education**

Confucianism as the representative of the traditional culture, emphasizes family ethics. Under the long-term effect of the feudal peasant economy, Chinese cultural values are more restrained and more conservative. And Chinese are a lack of adventurous spirit and obedience, so obedient education has been instilled into since childhood.

American history is short, so Americans are less bounded by old ideas, and they draw attention to personal development. Besides, Christian believes that everyone is equal in the sight of God. The child is God's. Thus, raising children is a pleasure for Americans parents, not a reward and sustenance. Americans value egalitarian, personal heroism, so they like the fair of sports.

That is about the different traditional historical and cultural backgrounds and then it is about different social conditions.

Because of China's one-child policy, many families have only one child, and the elders are a dotting child. With rapid economic development, people's living standards have been greatly improved, so children have a better living condition. However, the pension system is not perfect, children will have to assume responsibility for supporting the elderly in the future.

Developed US economic forces provide sports with material basis, and commercialization of sport is to a high degree. The developed market economy requires members of society have the spirit of independence and confidence. With a sound pension system, children won't have to support for the elderly in the future.

## **4.2 Different Specific Performance of Moral and Physical Education**

### **4.2.1 Different Status and Contents on Moral and Physical Education**

First, Chinese parents pay inferior attention on physical, and moral education, especially for the child's physical exercise. Data show that among the main concerns of parents at this stage, the "everyday learning" ranked first, accounting for 60.59%, follows "habits" 49.73%, "health and safety" 43.69%, "interpersonal" 38.57%, "self-supporting" 37.12%, "character development" 30.75%, "emotion" 21.84%, and "hobbies" 18.53%. Moreover, the troubled problem for parents is "children's learning" and "academic pressure." This shows parents concern children's learning than mental health, develop habits, interpersonal relationships, emotion, etc.. Secondly, in the moral aspect, the Chinese heavy "filial loyalty" and family.

However, American parents pay attention to the comprehensive development of the child. Secondly, from elementary school kids to college students, families emphasize sports. American parents are pride with their children's engagement in sports. And the time they spent in sports is far beyond our imagination.

After talking about the status, the next is about different contents on moral and physical education in family education approaches

First of all, raising children and caring for the elderly in Chinese family life are an indispensable part. Secondly, children are asked to respect their elders and be obedient and submissive to elders. For example, in China, the elders be always the authority. Children have to follow the words of adults. Thirdly, caring for the young and respecting and obeying elders are traditional virtues.

American family attaches importance to relations among family members, with an equal relationship. Secondly, children have no obligation to support the elderly. Thirdly, American parents focus on the quality of training, such as independence, and respect for others.

For physical aspects, Chinese parents pay less attention to children's physical exercise, in order to improve children's grades. Chinese parents always consciously or unconsciously link sports with marks award and entrance to a higher school.

American children participate in various physical exercise species, such as baseball, badminton, football, mountaineering and tourism. Among many sports activities, parents must let children learn to swim. Swimming is not

only a means of survival, but also any American school and water-related extra-curricular activities need to assess children's swimming skills. And parents want to cultivate children's good qualities through sports.

#### **4.2.2 Different Moral and Physical Teaching Approaches**

Firstly, many Chinese parents like children's everything being arranged, and neglect to cultivate children's independence. Chinese parents are overprotective to their children and do not let children do any cleaning. Secondly, parents ignore to cultivate children's character, including the sense of responsibility, hard-working quality and so on. We often see Chinese parents hastily prop baby who falls down. And when a baby is crying, the mother holds the baby immediately.

Different like Chinese parents arranging everything, parents in the United States have "limited liability" towards children. Since infancy, American children have been developed independent ability by parents. For example, most children have a list of chores. Parents also let baby sleep in a small bed and let older kid sleep alone in his room. Secondly, since childhood children have been cultivated a sense of responsibility, civic-mindedness, sense of equality by parents. For example, parents take children's graduation in high school very seriously, because they think the graduation marks the starting point for their children to become adults and to the community. Into the American family, you'll find the walls plaster with children's works; toys and books will be placed where children can get; children always like to address parents as elder partner's names; parents always give children the opportunity to participate in the performance, and to give children the recognition and praise. American parents care no matter what children eat, whether children eat or not, because they train kids how to eat right by mistakes. But they do pay attention to table manners. Chinese parents pay attention to what children eat, how much kids eat every time, but not child's table behaviors so much.

In physical education: Chinese parents regard children's physical exercise and activities as the responsibilities of school. Parents will not be too active or involved in their children's physical activity, and some parents even discourage their children to participate in sports activities. Because many parents think the sport is a waste of time. They also concerned less about child's physical hobbies and children's sporting events .

American parents and children join in sports together. Parents support children to spend a lot of time and energy to participate in sports. American parents wish through an

exercise to hone children and want their children to develop teamwork ability, social ability, shape their tenacity proactive, persistent, mindful quality in physical exercise.

### **4.3 The Advantages and Disadvantages of Moral and Physical Education**

#### **4.3.1 The Pros and Cons of Moral and Physical Education**

Children under overprotective and over-indulgent environment are more inclined to show dependent, lacking self-consciousness, passive, timid, lacking the ability to adapt to the environment and strain. If parents repeatedly request children to be obedient, children are likely to lost independence and to respect for authority. A spoiled child is difficult to be hard-working and to lack of accountability. Lacking adequate physical exercise causes children unhealthy.

The advantages are as follows. Children are received more attention and being given enough attention from family. So children would not be extremists. Family ethics of children are deep-rooted. Children care for the younger and honor the elders. On the whole, the relationship among Chinese family is more harmonious than that among American family. Chinese relationship is very close, but in America, family members may tend to be separate individuals.

#### **4.3.2 The Pros and Cons of Moral and Physical Education in American Family**

From an early age, American children and adolescents showed a strong self-confidence, strong social skills, confidence and courage which could help them exist independently as members of society. Most American children can adapt to the society more smoothly than lots of Chinese children. They can face and overcome setbacks easier. Children and adolescents tend to be more positive, easier to live in harmony with people. Through hard training, the US kids can be more hard working, more perseverant to overcome difficulties and more calm to encounter things. These qualities and skills lay a solid foundation for job seekers' future employment. However, generally speaking, in comparison with Chinese children, many American children lack the sense of responsibility to support their parents.

## **5. Differences of Life Education**

### **5.1 Causes of Differences of Life Education**

By the influence of tradition "Restraining Commerce" and traditional literati thinking, Chinese people tend to be hypocritical taboo to talk about money. By the influence of traditional Chinese culture ethics concept, Chinese people



are not good emotional expression, and more subtle and restrained. Meanwhile, Chinese parents are the authority and require children to be obedient. So there will be too much interference to children's friends and children's privacy. Affected by Chinese traditional education, learning is first, and other things are not concerned with, such as social ability. Influenced by the traditional Chinese thought and thought of literati, Chinese people's dating principle is birds of a feather flock together. Another principle is that he walks with wise man shall be wise, but a companion of a fool shall be destroyed. Affected by the Chinese traditional moral values "Preserving the feudal ethics and destroy the human desire." these ideas "Starving to death is a small matter, but treacherous is a great event." "sexual shame" "virginity" has a considerable impact on Chinese people. So sexual health education is more difficult to carry out.

Americans think money is a symbol of power, so they pay attention to the cultivation of attitudes towards money. The rearing attitude of American parents is to train children to be independent. And the bourgeois value "money is first" puts money in the highest position. American has personal independence and respect for individual differences. Influenced by the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, Americans' pre-marital life tends to chase individuality. They are more concerned about sexual health education.

The former is about different traditional historical and cultural backgrounds. Different social conditions are as followings.

With China's rapid economic development, people's living standards have been greatly improved, most Chinese families have a prosperous household economic base, which results in this generation of parents more lucrative on children's economy. The one-child policy and inter-generational education cause that grandparent's generation takes care of grandchildren. It is easy to spoil and excessive protect children. Under the pressure of examination-oriented education, parents limit their children's social activities.

With a strong economy and by the influence of the United States gold rush, Americans focus more on profit, pay attention to material interests. Therefore, parents concern more on the cultivation of children's attitude towards money. Americans believe that the value of money lies in the fun of spending rather than its quantity. So Americans are better at spending money. Because of more and more sexually transmitted diseases and teenage mothers problems, the United States emphasizes more on children's

sexual health education. Individualism awareness coupled with legal protection of human rights, Americans lay emphasis on equality and personal privacy.

## **5.2 Different Specific Performance of Life Education**

### **5.2.1 The Money Concept**

Most Chinese parents lack the ability to cultivate children's independence and financial sense because they do not want to disperse children's concentration and energy. Meanwhile, they do not want their children to bear economic pressure. No matter what kind of family on the economy, most Chinese parents indulge children in the economy. For the child's allowance, parents give money without limitation. For example, parents give children pocket money regularly; they are easily meet child's material requirement and money needs.

While in order to cultivate children's awareness of conservation, hard-working spirit, and independence, most American families pay attention to cultivating children's concept of money. Although parents don't interfere too much on the child's pocket money, they have more stringent requirements. For example, parents require the child to share the housework to get pocket money; children send newspaper in the community, and some of the older kids work in the restaurant to get the money they need. Because young children do not have much reason and common sense, American parents often give guidance to teach children how to allocate their pocket money. For example, thirty percent of consumption, and thirty percent in short-term deposits, and thirty percent of long-term savings and ten percent to the dedication and the like.

### **5.2.2 The Social Contact**

Most Chinese parents set inevitably a small circle to their children with too much interference on making friends of children, lacking respect for the child's wishes. For example, parents link the child's learning with child's friends, so they do not want their children to make friends with these kids who have poor grades or are naughty; if children were excluded from the outside or being bullied by other children, the first reaction of Chinese parents usually is to blame others. Secondly, parents limit their children to participate in social activities, too. Chinese parents do not respect child's friends. But the Chinese people will focus on teaching children's courtesy.

American parents encourage their children to participate in social activities, and respect the child's friends and let children run a small family party. For example, parents allow children to invite neighbor's small partners and students to the banquet, allow kids to make room layout,

to design and landscape rooms by children themselves; children even cook together with moms and make their own dishes from the name of art. Through these small parties, children learn the etiquette of communication and life skills. American parents would deliberately arrange role-playing games along with the children. They often let children play different roles and let the children experience different roles, so that children can better understand others, and take an initiative role in interpersonal communication.

### 5.2.3 The Sexual Health Education

Chinese parents always avoid the issue of sex. For example, many young children ask their parents, "where am I come from?" But many parents will answer without hesitation "You are picked up on the street!" or there will be a variety of similar answers. Lots of Chinese parents do not know how to educate their children on sexual problems. They would feel awkward, and be too embarrassed to teach children's sexual education.

More and more American parents believe that sexual activity on children spiritually perhaps is more worthy to pay attention than the pregnancy and infectious diseases. Besides, parents don't interfere children's puppy love, and they even encourage children to fall in love at an early age. Because parents think love will make the child smarter, more confident. The responsibility of parents is just to tell the children how to make contraception.

### 5.2.4 The Emotional Express between Parents and Children

Chinese parents often consciously or unconsciously deny child's feeling, and do not believe the child, and often say skeptical words to the child. For example, if the child complains about homework, parents might say, "Why other students can finish it? You certainly didn't listen carefully in class." In addition, Chinese families are a lack of expression, such as "I love you." These emotional communications between Chinese parents and children are lack of. What's more, parents do not praise the child so much, in order to avoid children being proud. For instance, facing children's grades improvement, parents often say "The next time, you are supposed to try harder and to get 100 points."

American parents like to encourage children and establish the children's self-confidence. For example, "Good job!" "Good try!" "You are great!" these words often blurt out from parents' mouths. Apart from that, American adults respect the child as adults: parents have to knock on the door when they are entering into children's room; when moving something of children, parents should get

kids' permission; any decisions involved in their children should be discussed with children; American parents cannot casually look child's diary or other privacy. American parents are good at using the "language of love" to express feelings and encourage children to express human emotion, and they focus on fostering children's language skills. Such as parents often say "Mommy loves you" to children; "Thank you" is often said to among children and parents. What's more, American parents not only learn how to let children listen but also pay more attention to how to listen to children's saying. For example, they create a lot of opportunities to communicate with children, especially at dinner every day.

## 5.3 The Advantages and Disadvantages of Life Education

### 5.3.1 The Pros and Cons of Life Education in Chinese Family

The disadvantages are as follows. On attitude towards money, Chinese ignore or indulge child's financial management, which can easily lead to being a lack of a proper concept of money financial management for children. Besides, it is easy for the child to be over-reliance on parents. Kids are prone to be a lack of awareness of the value of labor, which is not easy to cultivate hard-working spirit. On social contact, Chinese parents are likely to guide their children on social practical interventions and to have more principles and ideas in interpersonal communication. Because the child is learning the rules of social behavior and social interaction skills. Second, parents are too much involved in their children's social activity, which is likely to lower the child's social ability, and cause child know little about how to deal with interpersonal problems. Thirdly, parents' intervention not only can not help children to have better socialization but will affect their social behavior and interaction relationship, which will have a negative impact on children's mental development. Some children may be full of confusion, and gradually do not know how to choose friends, and how to get along with friends. On sexual health education, Chinese children are a lack of sexual health knowledge, and their mental health has been neglected. For adolescent children, they are prone to be confused, which can easily lead to rebellious behavior. On the emotional exchange, parents deny the child's idea, again and again, smothering out the child's self-confidence and independence. Excessive criticism of the child by parents is prone to lower child's self-esteem and brings other character flaws, such as producing boredom and revolt of the child, which not only affects the parent-child relationship but the original intention of criticism fail.

There are also advantages. The child has less pressure

to earn money. To some extent, parents help their children on how to make friends, bringing the principle of making friends. Conservative sexual health education makes Chinese children fewer mistakes on unwed mothers, sexual promiscuity and so on. Parents spur children to avoid excessive proud and make children motivated.

### **5.3.2 The Pros and Cons of Life Education in American Family**

The advantages are obvious. On the attitude towards money, the ways of American parents are easier to cultivate children's conservation awareness, hard-working spirit, independence, and compassion. Since the age of 18, American children don't rely on the family, they have to support their own consumption required and they are economy-minded to adapt to the market. The majority of American kids is good at managing the money. So that they can smoothly adapt to the social environment. Knowing hard-earned money helps them develop a prudent, economical habits to survive. On making friends, being equal respect by parents, American children gradually establish a sufficient self-confidence, and then may burst out of the unique creativity, and learn how to respect others. American children are more free to choose friends and are less utilitarianism than Chinese children. It is apparent to children to attain strong social skills. With sexual health education, it is easier for children to be confident, and improve emotional intelligence. And earlier sex education can reduce adolescent sexual violence. This not only helps young people establish a correct and healthy outlook on life, values and love view but forms a good personality. On the emotional exchange, expression of love between parents and children in the United States is easy to resolve conflicts, enhance the feelings between parents and children, and to build a harmonious family. American children are encouraged to express feelings and to be encouraged to participate in social activities, which is easy to help children build a circle of friends, enhance self-confidence.

However, although American children are more independent of the economy, there is a certain pressure for them to earn money. Because of the open-mindedness and children's low discipline, there is still a series of social problems, such as early childbearing, teenage mothers, the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and the like.

## **6. Conclusion and Implications**

### **6.1 Conclusion**

In this thesis, through the simple explanation of the difference of historical and cultural backgrounds and social conditions between Chinese and American family edu-

cation, this thesis researches and contrasts educational approaches between the Chinese and American family from the three main aspects of intellectual education, moral and physical education and life education. This thesis also briefly summarizes the pros and cons of Chinese and American family education approaches. We can conclude that: in the intellectual education, Chinese families will give top priority to children's study, especially the children's academic performance, but other parts are secondary or even not important from Chinese parents' view. But American families attach importance to training children on independent thinking and creativity. In moral and physical education, the Chinese family has not enough emphasis on these aspects, and the parents arrange almost everything for children. Parents require children to be obedient, but they ignore children's physical exercise as well as the ability to work. On the contrary, the United States parents pay attention to cultivating moral education. Children are encouraged to play sports and labor. In life, Chinese parents do not pay attention to cultivating children's money attitude and financial management concepts while American parents pay attention to cultivating children's concept of money and hard-working spirit. On making friends, Chinese parents restrict children to participate in too much society activity and interfere with children's making friends. But American parents are totally contrary. On sexual health education, Chinese parents are not used to talk about sex, while American parents are more open about sex. On the emotional exchange, the emotional expression between Chinese parents and children is a reserved style and most of the parents do not praise children enough but criticize more. The American parents are good at praising children. Overall, there are many ways you can learn from American family education, and Chinese families have to change places such as educational ideas and approaches of family education.

### **6.2 Implications**

This thesis contrasts the differences between Chinese and American family educational approaches in details. Through the compare between Chinese and American family educational approaches, this thesis is expected to provide advice and suggestion to Chinese family education. We hope we can not only help Chinese parents to realize the importance of family education, but help Chinese parents to learn their deficiency on family education. More important, understanding the family education can help us think about the pros and cons of family education, learn from each other, and adjust the ways and means of family education in China. Thus, we can explore more reasonable, more healthy, and more conducive family ed-

ucation approaches. It is of great significance to improve the overall level of education in our country.

### 6.3 The Limitations and Recommendation

This thesis has its limitations, because the children and parents participating in questionnaire are from different ages even different eras, and the number is limited. To completely understand the differences of Chinese and American family educational approaches we need more investigation and research. We also need more typical examples to confirm the facts of Chinese and American family education. Besides, we are supposed to change our data, examples and results to keep up with the development of the society and people's educational ideas.

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