

On the Causes of CHC Students' Passive Learning Style with Confucian Ideology of "Ruling by 'Li' (Rites)"

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Abstract: This paper aims to interpret the passive learning styles of students who come from CHC countries from the perspective of the Confucian ideology of "Ruling by 'Li' (Rites)" and to prove the mediating mechanism of banking education in this process. Starting with the passive learning style presented by students in CHC countries, this paper is committed to studying the reasons behind its formation and the role played by the traditional cultural background of CHC countries—Confucian ideology of "Ruling by 'Li' (Rites)". In addition, it tries to prove that banking education plays an indispensable role as a "bridge" between them. Meanwhile, in combination with the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire, the author gives some thoughts and discusses the relationship between freedom and authority in CHC's education mode. Through grounded theory and critical interpretation of Freire's critical pedagogy, this paper finds the intermediary mechanism that banking education plays in this process as well as tries to put forward constructive suggestions.

Keywords: Banking Education, Confucian ideology of "Ruling by 'Li' (Rites)", Passive Learning Style, Paulo Freire, Critical Pedagogy.

1. Introduction

Higher education research frequently addresses the Western perceptions of Confucianism's influence [1]. By the 1990s, development and comparative education theorists like Ruth Hayhoe and Julia Pan had pushed for cross-cultural research to better understand how social settings, particularly those with Confucian values, were represented in educational systems [2]. Moreover, in recent years, as traditional culture has been mentioned more and more frequently in public, the reflection on the Confucian ideology of "Ruling by 'Li' (Rites)" has been echoed and involved by more and more scholars.

This study is dedicated to interpreting the passive learning styles of students who come from CHC countries from the perspective of the Confucian ideology of "Ruling by 'Li' (Rites)" and proving the mediating mechanism of banking education in this process. Firstly, this paper discusses the relationship between the Confucian ideology of "Ruling by 'Li' (Rites)" and the causes of banking education. CHC countries take Confucianism as their traditional cultural background, societal values are affected by one's culture, and culture could even be one factor affecting student behavior and reactions in class [3]. Students in CHC countries are naturally deeply influenced by Confucianism culture. The core of the Confucian ideology of "Ruling by 'Li' (Rites)": the hierarchical order,

reflected in the classroom teaching, shows a strong "authoritarianism". Under the radiation of authoritarianism, teachers become the very center of classroom teaching, while students, the main object of learning, have less and less initiative and discourse power, thus forming banking education. Secondly, the relationship between banking education and the causes of the passive learning style is discussed. Banking education greatly weakens students' autonomy in class and reduces students' self-concept. As time goes by, teaching in this mode forms a common passive learning mode in CHC classes. Finally, we can see that banking education indirectly interferes with the process of the Confucian ideology of "Ruling by 'Li' (Rites)" shaping the passive learning style of CHC students.

According to Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy on freedom and authority, he raised objections to the banking education and advocated that teachers in CHC countries are supposed to engage in deep self-reflection about their position and the affects of their authority in the classroom, for providing a supportive environment of equality and openness.

2. Research Method

In order to gain a deeper insight into the relationships between Freire's theories and other key concepts, I conduct my research through grounded theory and critical interpretation with the goal of exploring the intermediary mechanism that banking education plays in the process and trying to relate Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy to it.

2.1. Grounded Theory

2.1.1. Literature Review

The limitations of existing studies were discovered through reading and reviewing existing literature; searching for the essence of the core concepts explored in this paper based on systematic collection of relevant information and literature; then proposing the hypothesis of this paper through the interconnection between these concepts; and constructing the internal logical system of the issues to be explored.

Order, stability, hierarchy, self-discipline, and obedience are values emphasized in Confucian culture. It's possible that the authoritarian school system in China, which enforced conformity, was detrimental to the growth of critical and imaginative thinking [4]. Education thus turns into a depositing act in which the instructor is the depositor and the students are the depositories [5]. In banking education, the teacher has the primary role, and knowledge is kept under the instructor's control. This suggests that students are passive knowledge recipients, accumulators, and empty vessels [6]. In contrast, according to Freire's critical pedagogy, both the teacher and the pupils are the objects of this process. The instructor discovers reality and generates global knowledge. According to this theory, students gain the ability to critically analyze their place in society [7].

2.1.2. Analysis and Theory Generation

Through an in-depth analysis of the literature collected, the Confucian ideology of "Ruling by 'Li' (Rites)", "Passive Learning Style" and "banking education" were extracted as the main research concepts of this paper. In addition, the connotation and denotation of the theory are determined by classifying and integrating the concepts of various branches in the literature, and a specific theoretical framework is formed by induction. Meanwhile, the existing theory is constantly optimized, thus forming the theory of this paper: banking education, as an intermediary mechanism, intervened in the process of forming the passive learning style under the influence of the Confucian ideology of "Ruling by 'Li' (Rites)".

2.2. Critical Interpretation

In order to comprehend Freire's critical pedagogy, this paper uses a critical hermeneutic approach. "Critique" is a weapon for liberation used by Freire. Furthermore, it is believed that individuals have a critical relationship with the living world [5]. Because of this, we can see the importance of "criticism" in Freire's critical pedagogy, and the critical interpretation approach has been chosen to explore the relationship between Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy and the education mechanism of CHC countries.

3. What is Passive Learning Style

Asia tends to view students' passive attitude toward learning, which is influenced by Confucian heritage culture (CHC), as a passive learning style. This traditional acquisition of information is often expressed as knowledge being transmitted from teacher to student, and then tested by examination, and memory recall by those CHC students.

Students from Asian nations with a Confucian legacy, such as China, Vietnam, Singapore, Korea, and Japan, are referred to as having a Confucian heritage [8]. Student behavior and responses in class may be influenced by cultural factors; for instance, Singapore continues to have values and belief systems that are deeply rooted in Asia [9]. Chan also believed that Chinese education was still heavily influenced by Confucianism, which is characterized by rote learning and the application of examples [10]. As a result, this passive learning approach is frequently associated with "Confucian ideals" and is seen as belonging to the Asian CHC.

Passive learning is profoundly ingrained in socio-cultural institutions, as was previously described, making it difficult to discard. For instance, it's often believed that Hong Kong Chinese students learn by rote and are more likely to adopt a surface-level learning strategy [11]. Additionally, misconceptions regarding Chinese students as rote learners, passive knowledge receivers, and accumulators are present in the literature [12].

3.1. Concrete Behaviors of Students' Passive Learning Style in CHC Classroom

Students in CHC countries often display various obvious and concrete characteristics of a passive learning style in class.

According to lecturers' reports and a number of studies, CHC students are generally less spontaneous, more likely to conform to their teachers, and less acceptable to the Western participative style of learning due to concerns about embarrassment, shame, and excessive modesty [10]. They also struggle with ambiguity, need clear direction, rely too heavily on textbooks, and don't take ownership of their learning. In his research, Dasari found that Hong Kong Chinese students prefer to collaborate in small groups but remain silent when asked direct questions [13]. They engaged in step-by-step supervised learning, therefore they were uncomfortable working alone on online activities. They anticipated clear instructions and a prompt response from professors. Their behavior and attitudes were typically indicative of Chinese learners. And when it comes to self-development, a study based on Singapore's education system showed that it is probable that students in developing nations will place a higher value on dedication and the desire to put in a lot of effort than students in developed nations [14]. According to the Education Bureau, further research is required to determine why our students' achievement levels are high but their self-concept, motivation, and classroom engagement are low [15].

3.2. Passive Learning Style and Authoritarianism in Classroom

Authoritarianism, the core idea of Confucian Ideology of "Ruling by 'Li' (Rites)", can be used to

explain why CHC students show the above behaviors of passive learning style in class. All features of those behaviors displayed by CHC students point to a classroom model: the teacher is the authority, and the students respect and obey the authority unconditionally—which reflect the core viewpoint of authoritarian education system. The passivity, obedience and compliance that students often show in class can be explained by the "seniority rules" in Confucian Ideology of “Ruling by ‘Li’ (Rites)”. Confucianism values etiquette, teachers are elders, and elders are prestigious, so students directly challenge, refute or even ask questions in class to make teachers "lose face", these behaviors are not polite. This also leads to a new mode of learning that they prefer: work cooperatively in small group situations, because in their view, peers are at the same level as them, so they can question and refute them without pressure or burden, without worrying about "crossing the line of hierarchy". This may explain why they rarely speak up in class and their motivation and engagements in lessons are lower -- they don't want to appear "disrespectful" to the teacher. Kirkbride and Tang stated that Chinese students favored a teacher-centered, didactic form of classroom instruction and had a high regard for their professors' intelligence and knowledge [10]. Meanwhile, this also explains why, despite their high motivation and regular attendance in class, they were less eager to engage in tutorials and refrain from asking questions, because they believe that high attendance is also an intuitive way to show their respect for teachers.

4. What is Confucian Ideology of “Ruling by ‘Li’ (Rites)”

The Confucian ideology of “Ruling by ‘Li’ (Rites)” has always played a role in shaping moral norms and living standards in CHC countries, and it has been enduring for years.

The core of the Confucian ideology of “Ruling by ‘Li’ (Rites)” is to maintain the patriarchal hierarchy, and the nature of the hierarchy is division. Contrary to most Western ideologies, Confucian-based cultures traditionally place a strong emphasis on the family, hierarchy, collectivism, and harmony. Students' preferred learning methods, noticeable respect for educators, preference for group learning, and appreciation for excellent success all reflect Confucian values [16].

4.1. From Confucian Ideology of "Ruling by 'Li' (Rites)" to the Authoritarianism in CHC Classrooms

The Confucian ideology of "Ruling by Li' (Rites) " was applied to classes, which formed a teacher-led class. Teachers' rights of discourse are incomparably high and have an almost irrefutable status, followed by strong dependence and low autonomy of students. The reason for the formation of this classroom phenomenon is authoritarianism in class.

Teachers are seen as leaders in traditional Chinese cultural discourses because they are compared to other significant cultural figures like heaven, earth, the emperor, and parents [17]. Chinese students are accustomed to a hierarchy with the teacher acting as the leader, although there is no lack of mutual respect and acceptance between the two. For instance, because Hong Kong Chinese students tend not to assume that expertise is certain or unchanging, but rather that authoritarian or expert knowledge from authoritative figures (e.g., professors), they appear to accept their teacher as the "expert" and prefer the teacher to deliver the "best" solution [18].

Instead of giving professors unrestrained power to oppress learners, Freire argued that there should be equal and dynamic conversations between teachers and students, as well as respect for one another. Teachers also have a critical reflective role, which means they must engage in in-depth self-reflection on their position and the effects of their dominance in the classroom in order to create an open and equitable environment [19]. Students are therefore equipped with "critical consciousness" and the confidence to do so.

5. Banking Education as Mediating Mechanism

In the academic era whenever banking education is mentioned it always creates negative connotation.

The teacher's narration enables the learners to automatically memorize the narrated material. They become "containers" and "receptacles" that the instructor fills as a result of this process. The better pupils are, the more quietly they allow themselves to be filled [20]. The instructor describes reality as if it were immobile, static, segmented, and predicable. His duty is to "fill" the students with the narrative's contents—contents that are separated from reality and the larger context that may have given them value.

However, in Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy, he argues that the teacher-student relationship should be properly treated. According to Freire, there is a fluid relationship between students and teachers, meaning that both parties can be teachers. The statement made by Freire that "no one teaches another, nor is anybody self-taught, men teach one another, mediated through the teacher" [7] is also supported by this statement.

5.1. The End of the Authoritarianism in CHC Classrooms is Banking Education

When authoritarianism is reflected in CHC class, we can all glimpse the shadow of banking education, no matter in the teaching style of teachers or the learning style of students.

Thanks to the teacher-centered class where the banking model of education is prevalent, hierarchy is well maintained. As was already said, CHC students have a great esteem for authority as a result of their formal education or cultural traditions. The current study also supported the notion that students in Hong Kong are accustomed to a hierarchical relationship with the teacher serving as the leader and that they frequently turn to professors to provide knowledge [21]. As a result, students are in a passive state, unable to think independently and losing the ability to think critically, only accepting food from "authority figures". Thus, the banking model of learning is a discursive activity in which the students are marginalized and the teacher maintains a dominant position as the provider of all information necessary for the teaching-learning process.

This teaching model has been criticized by many scholars, who believe that banking education leads to a serious imbalance between teachers and students, and deem that it is against critical pedagogy. They noted that teachers should challenge the status quo by standing against the cultural norms and expectations of their own reality and the system, as well as by renouncing much of the authority bestowed upon them by their titles [22].

5.2. Banking Education and Passive Learning Style

The implementation of banking education in CHC classrooms is incredibly consistent with the passive learning style of CHC students, both in terms of teachers' high discourse power and students' strong dependence.

It is considered that knowledge is something that must be acquired with presumptive certainty. This suggests that students are passive knowledge receivers and accumulators who are like empty vessels that need to be filled with information. Freire makes a distinction between problem-posing education and banking education. In the typical view of education, or in banking education, educators are the pillars of knowledge; they are in possession of all knowledge, while learners are ignorant. The learners don't think; the educator does. Students adhere to the topic chosen by the teacher. Students submit to authority, and the teacher is the authority. According to this paradigm, students are knowledge recipients. They are not required to connect this knowledge to the injustices and issues that society is currently facing in an effort to make society better [7]. Accordingly, they get a passive role in this view, and the passive learning style of CHC students comes into being.

5.3. How to Explain Banking Education as a Mediator?

Then, how does banking education play an intermediary mechanism in the process of the Confucian ideology of “Ruling by ‘Li’ (Rites)” shaping the passive learning style of CHC students?

The Confucian ideology of “Ruling by ‘Li’ (Rites)” emphasizes the stability of the hierarchical order and focuses on a high and low order society. When this concept is expressed in the classroom and the interaction between teachers and students, an interesting teaching mode—banking education is formed. The attitude that learners recognize the authority of their elders is implanted in their subconscious thinking. Due to their sense of inferiority, they voluntarily submit to their teacher's authority in the classroom, but most of the time, they do so without hesitation or consideration.

Thus, the popular educational mode of "banking education" has been formed in the class. Teachers only blindly “feed (transmit and export their unchangeable knowledge)”, and pay little attention to students' classroom feelings. Students only blindly “swallow (receive and memorize knowledge from their teachers rigidly)”, seldom think, seldom do things independently. For a long time, under the subtle influence of Confucianism and the day-to-day shaping of "banking education", students in CHC countries tend to display a marked cliff descent of autonomy in learning and a distinct "passive learning style" with lower and lower self-concept.

5.4. Issues of Freedom and Authority in Paulo Freire ‘s Critical Pedagogy

The idea of critical pedagogy (CP) is not new. In CP, Freire strives for a balanced approach to the discussion of the conflict between freedom and authority. He asserts that freedom and authority may coexist since doing so prevents the violation of either one [23]. Students learn to think critically and acquire a critical consciousness through problem-posing education and challenging the troubling situations in their own lives, which enables them to take the necessary steps to create a more just and equitable society. Thus, it may be claimed that CP works to end injustice and marginalization by opposing all forms of dominance, oppression, and subordination.

Meanwhile, Freire critiqued traditional education for considering students as empty agents and sought to empower them as a purpose of education in his problem-posing education [24]. In contrast to the problem-posing method, which is seen to encourage learners to think critically and challenge the world, the banking method of teaching is thought to reduce students' capacity for critical thought [25]. According to Freire, both the teacher and the learners are the subjects of this process. The teacher discovers reality and generates global knowledge. According to this theory, learners get the ability to critically analyze their place in society [7].

The goal of education in CP, in contrast to conventional methods, is to transform students. By concentrating on the topics that the students actually need to discuss, allowing them to talk about the matters that concern them, assisting them in developing their critical thinking skills, and ultimately empowering them to alter the social structure of their society, the use of this approach can make class more enjoyable [26]. In other words, students and their environment, as well as professors and students, are accepted and trusted on an equal, open, and critical basis.

6. Limitations and Prospects

Although the present mechanism findings and the comprehensive analysis of previous literature have important implications, there are limitations for future research to explore as well as implications for educational policy.

(1) The statement that CHC students are more inclined to the passive learning style is controversial. We cannot assume that students in CHC countries all show passive learning styles because this statement itself may be a one-sided conclusion rather than a general one. Flynn, Sue, and Okazaki

found that the CHC learners outperformed their Western counterparts in academic performance, and such high levels of proficiency were not possible by memorization alone. Because of this, Biggs came to the conclusion that CHC students were deep learners who valued meaningful learning at a high level over memorization [27].

What is more, there may be various other reasons for students to illustrate the passive learning style. According to research, the three primary issues claimed by Asian overseas students are language hurdles, cultural barriers, and different learning styles [4]. When students are reluctant to ask questions in class, it may be because they don't comprehend the question because of colloquialisms or regional accents (this is particularly true in areas like Hong Kong, where professors come from all over the world) [11]. They found it tough to duplicate the lecturers' notes while still attempting to comprehend them, which was complicated by the fact that they had no previous experience taking notes during lectures [4]. In order to try to grasp what the professors are trying to say with their accent, they simultaneously copy like crazy. There is no time to take into account the interaction with teachers in class.

(2) As for banking education, we expect more diversified education models to flood into CHC countries, which are more diverse or more in line with the educational conditions of these countries. As for these educational models, they could be group learning, they could be blended learning, or they could even be a fully student-centered learning environment. For instance, for CHC students, Littrell advises group learning as a profitable and culturally acceptable learning strategy [28]. Alternatively, a blended learning approach is advised as a teaching strategy since it may both promote active learning and sustain the effectiveness of the "traditional" CHC approaches [21]. Additionally, a fully "student-centered" environment that emphasizes students' learning and acknowledges that learning is a reflective and interactive process in which the teacher's role is a facilitator can even be built, emphasizing the journey (the learning experience) and using more interactive learning approaches that engage the students more [29].

Successes and failures that occur during students' exchanges with individuals of different abilities have an effect on one's self-concept, according to Kulik [2]. Therefore, more open education models such as those mentioned above can foster a frank exchange of views between students and their peers showing varying performances and levels, and in doing so, exercise their ability to output their views.

7. Conclusion

Through grounded theory and critical interpretation of Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy, this paper finds the intermediary mechanism that banking education plays in this process.

Students in CHC countries are deeply influenced by the Confucian culture. The core of the Confucian ideology of "Ruling by 'Li' (Rites)": the hierarchical order, reflected in the classroom teaching, shows a strong "authoritarianism". Under the radiation of authoritarianism, teachers become the very center of classroom teaching, while students, the main object of learning, have less and less initiative and discourse power, thus forming banking education. For a long time, under the subtle influence of Confucianism and the day-to-day shaping of "banking education", students in CHC countries tended to behave more and more "passive learning style" with lower and lower self-concept. This educational model, which is coerced by authoritarianism, goes against Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy and is detrimental to transforming students into capable, critically-thinking participants in the democratic process.

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