

Chinese Traditional Family Values Impact on Chinese University Students' Educational Performance

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Abstract: This paper explores the intricate relationship between Chinese traditional family values and the educational performance of Chinese university students. Drawing on a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys, the study delves into the challenges and opportunities presented by the evolving role of these values in contemporary education. The findings highlight the multifaceted impact of family values on students' academic achievements, character development, and overall success in higher education. This study delves into the influence of traditional Chinese family values on the educational performance of university students. The study draws from the experiences of students, parents, counselors, and administrators. The findings provide insights into the complex interplay between familial values and educational attainment within a university context.

Keywords: Chinese traditional family values, Educational performance, Character development, Higher education.

1. Introduction

In the intricate tapestry of Chinese society, the enduring influence of traditional family values on individual character and conduct has been profound. However, mounting concerns arise as contemporary Chinese university students grapple with various forces that challenge the preservation and embodiment of these values. This study aims to unravel the repercussions of these challenges on educational performance, while also probing the evolving role of these values within modern education.

The rise of an intense focus on core competencies for employment casts a shadow on the historical emphasis on virtues and familial bonds, replaced by an emphasis on technical prowess. This shift fuels discussions about potential impediments to the development of well-rounded individuals who embody the fundamental principles of traditional family values, potentially impacting academic performance and the holistic character of Chinese university students. Another unsettling phenomenon pertains to the erosion of moral integrity among certain university students, manifesting as dishonesty in academic settings. Furthermore, a dilution of national identity emerges as China's integration into the global community prompts a scrutiny of how this integration impacts the preservation of cultural values and national pride among the youth. Moreover, certain students exhibit waning enthusiasm for altruism, challenging the values of compassion and societal contribution. Amidst debates over the emphasis on core competencies versus moral development within higher education, the potential imbalance threatens the overall growth of Chinese university students.

To illuminate this complex panorama, this research embarks on a journey into the experiences of exceptional students, investigating the interplay between these challenges and the deeply ingrained traditional family values that shape them. The insights garnered promise to offer a multi-dimensional understanding of the formidable challenges faced by Chinese university students, while also unraveling the intricate relationship between timeless family values and contemporary educational imperatives.

2. Literature Review

The significance of familial values in educational achievement has long been recognized across cultures. Within the Chinese context, the Confucian value system, emphasizing filial piety and the importance of education, has historically played a crucial role (Feng, 2021). Yuan (2019) has posited that family dynamics significantly impact academic performance and personal development. However, there's been limited exploration on how traditional values shape university students' educational experiences within contemporary settings.

Researchers have highlighted the central role played by traditional Chinese family values in molding the educational trajectory of students. The ethos of 'respect for elders' and 'duty towards family' has been at the heart of this dynamic. However, with global exposure and the increasing influence of Western ideologies in education, there is a growing need to understand this interplay within a rapidly modernizing China (Chang, 2019). Yuan (2019) further elaborates on this juxtaposition by commenting on the nuanced shifts in traditional values and their corresponding implications on academic performance.

Family has always been a crucial institution in Chinese society. Scholars such as Zhao (2019) have opined that the Confucian tenets, which emphasize filial piety and familial responsibility, deeply permeate the Chinese education system. While these values have contributed to the historically lauded academic prowess observed among Chinese students, the changing societal dynamics call for a reevaluation. Zhang (2019) has pointed out the mounting pressures faced by the younger generation, resulting from the intersection of these traditional values and globalized educational standards.

Core literacy comprises essential character traits and competencies developed by students during their education, catering to lifelong personal and social development. It includes knowledge, skills, emotions, attitudes, values, and more (Lin, 2016). Core competencies enable students to flexibly mobilize cognitive and non-cognitive resources to address complex scenarios effectively (Zhang, 2018).

3. Methodology

This qualitative descriptive study employed two primary data collection instruments:

Semi-Structured Interviews: With a flexible interview protocol (Yu, 2019), interviews captured the participants' understanding, perspectives, and experiences. At its core, a semi-structured interview is characterized by a predetermined set of open-ended questions, which act as a guide rather than a strict protocol (Yu, 2019). This format offers the researcher the latitude to delve deeper into topics that may arise spontaneously during the interview, ensuring that no stone remains unturned. These lasted approximately 30-45 minutes each. This duration is often considered optimal in research settings. It's long enough to build rapport with participants, allowing them to warm up to the conversation and delve deep into their experiences. At the same time, it's concise enough to keep the discussion focused and prevent potential fatigue or disengagement. Given the sensitivity and depth of the subject matter - the impact of traditional Chinese family values on educational performance - this timeframe ensured that participants had sufficient opportunity to reflect upon and articulate their experiences without feeling rushed.

Document Analysis: Official university documents, teaching materials, and records of extracurricular activities were reviewed to further understand the topic (Zhao, 2019).

4. Results

The study yielded several insights into the current state of family values and their relation to academic achievement among Chinese university students:

Overall Family Values and Academic Achievement: The prevalent family values among university students are found to be relatively low, whereas academic achievement leans towards an above-average level. The study indicates that the education level of parents, especially fathers, is generally lower than mothers. The findings also suggest a decreased emphasis on traditional family teachings and values, pointing to a shift away from household traditions and customs. However, family interactions, particularly the attention and communication provided by parents, were higher. This was juxtaposed against the students' overall academic achievement, which is found to be moderately high. This suggests that the campus environment, combined with students being at their prime age, facilitates diverse activities contributing to the development of their civic consciousness, core abilities, and professional proficiency.

Disparities based on Region and Family Structure: There were notable disparities in academic achievement and family values between students from urban areas compared to those from rural areas. This is attributed to two primary reasons: the lingering impact of urban-rural gaps evident since primary education, and the economic advantages and resultant enriched family values prevalent in urban settings. Moreover, single-child families demonstrated a significant advantage in both academic achievement and family values, as the concentration of resources on a single child usually results in enhanced outcomes.

Positive Correlation of Family Values with Academic Achievement: A significant positive correlation exists between family values and students' overall academic achievement. Institutionalized and specific family values seem to play a major role in influencing this achievement, possibly due to the educational background of the parents.

Higher-educated parents generally engage in more reading and active communication, unknowingly creating an atmosphere enriched with superior family values. This environment plays a pivotal role in a child's formative years, which eventually mirrors in their academic prowess. The socioeconomic advantage that often accompanies higher-educated parents also equips them with the means to expose their child to diverse cultural experiences, further boosting the child's academic potential.

Influence of Family Values on Overall Proficiency vs. Ranking: While family values significantly influence a student's overall proficiency, their effect on academic rankings is comparatively subdued. This difference might be due to two reasons: the comparative fairness in the ranking system and the underlying motivation of students from lower family value backgrounds to pursue academic excellence as a transformative tool. The comprehensive skills of students, categorized into professional proficiency, core abilities, and civic consciousness, are substantially influenced by family values. It is observed that students from families with richer cultural atmospheres exhibit enhanced innovative and interpersonal skills, thanks to an upbringing that embraces open communication and diverse cultural exposures. Such students also tend to be more articulate and confident in academic settings, emphasizing the importance of family values in nurturing holistic development.

In summary, while academic rankings provide a limited perspective, it's evident that comprehensive abilities—shaped significantly by family values—are crucial for a well-rounded education and personal development.

5. Discussion

The profound implications of familial values on the academic achievements of university students present a timely discourse in the educational realm. The findings of this research elucidate a robust positive correlation, asserting that heightened family value orientations are inextricably linked with superior academic accomplishments. The research also highlights an overall lower familial value level amongst university students, punctuated by significant discrepancies based on regional variations.

Community Level Recommendations: The gap in familial values amongst university students yields a discernible difference in their academic achievements. Students with enriched familial values invariably perform better academically and holistically. Addressing imbalances in community cultural capital can help in supplementing the traditional cultural awareness of university students.

Rural-Urban Disparity: Rural students often lag behind their urban counterparts in familial values. Strategic investments to alleviate disparities in cultural resource distribution can play a pivotal role. Establishing cultural facilities like rural libraries, cultural centers, and youth community centers can revitalize the rural cultural milieu and instill an appreciation for traditional values.

Home Education Advocacy: The community has a responsibility to educate parents about the significance of family values. With technological advancements like the internet, spreading awareness about holistic home education becomes imperative.

Promotion of Traditional Culture: Communities should be instrumental in fortifying traditional values. Establishing cultural parks, organizing cultural events, and promoting cultural tourism can foster an enriching cultural environment

for their inhabitants.

Parental Recommendations:

The role of family values cannot be overstated in shaping a student's academic journey. According to the theory of habitus, the family environment has life-long implications on children.

Continual Learning: Parents need to adapt and evolve their educational strategies in tandem with the ever-changing societal dynamics.

Promotion of Family Cultural Capital: Fostering a reading culture and actively engaging in cultural activities is paramount. A well-managed familial environment acts as a beacon for children, subtly influencing their values and perspectives.

Digital Communication: In the age of digital communication, distance shouldn't deter parents from staying connected with their university-going children. Expressing aspirations and hopes can motivate students and reinforce their ambitions.

Higher Education Recommendations:

Universities play a significant role in shaping the cultural capital of students, especially those from less privileged backgrounds.

Individualized Education: Universities need to pivot towards a more student-centric pedagogy, accommodating the unique backgrounds and challenges each student brings to the academic table.

Enhancement of Cultural Resources: Strengthening academic infrastructures, expanding academic resources, and fostering an ethos of "morality in education" can significantly enhance the student experience.

Focusing on Vulnerable Student Groups: The widening chasm between urban and rural students necessitates special attention to the latter. Rural students often grapple with inferior cultural resources from early education, making their university journey more challenging. Offering financial aid, providing psychological support, and fostering a sense of belonging can mitigate feelings of inferiority arising from a lack of familial values.

Parent-University Collaboration: A synergy between educational institutions and parents can exponentially benefit students. Regular updates about the student's progress and well-being can harness the collective strengths of both institutions and homes to facilitate student growth.

In conclusion, the triad of community, home, and university plays a pivotal role in shaping the academic achievements of students. A synergistic approach, with each playing its part efficiently, can bridge the gap caused by varying familial values and ensure an equitable academic experience for all.

6. Conclusion

The importance of family values and their direct correlation with the academic achievements of university students cannot be understated. Our research underscores a significant positive correlation, suggesting that as family value levels increase, so too does the overall academic achievement of university students. It's concerning to discover that many students currently possess a relatively low level of family values. Interestingly, noticeable discrepancies arise in the academic achievements and family values between students from different regions.

Community intervention is pivotal. By emphasizing the equitable distribution of public cultural resources and

promoting educational fairness, we can help bridge the disparities in family values and thereby positively impact academic outcomes. Rural students, in particular, seem to be at a disadvantage in terms of family values compared to their urban counterparts. Therefore, optimizing rural cultural infrastructures and encouraging higher-quality educational endeavors in rural areas will be crucial to leveling the playing field.

Parents play an irreplaceable role in shaping their children's values. By emphasizing cultural capital accumulation and recognizing the importance of family values, they can directly and indirectly influence their children's academic trajectories. Our findings suggest that a conducive family environment not only aids academic achievements but also becomes a repository of cultural capital that is passed down through generations. Consistent communication, understanding, and setting realistic expectations are key elements in fostering such an environment.

Universities too have an indispensable role. They must provide abundant traditional cultural learning resources and ensure the holistic development of students. The provision of specialized educational resources, creating conducive learning environments, and nurturing faculty to become role models are some of the pivotal actions universities can undertake. Special emphasis must be laid on addressing the needs of students from marginalized backgrounds, particularly those from rural areas. Their unique challenges require tailored solutions that ensure they don't remain at a disadvantage due to a lack of family values or cultural resources.

In essence, the triad of community, family, and educational institutions forms the backbone of a student's academic success. Their combined efforts, guided by the insights from our research, can herald a new era where every student, irrespective of their background, has an equal shot at academic excellence.

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