

High School Students' Obedience to Teachers' Authority—A Cross-cultural Study between China and America

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Abstract: The noun we named “stereotype” exists in daily lives, and also being researched in many papers. By combining cultural difference and obedience, we present a prediction towards the levels of obedience for students when they are in face of teachers under distinct backgrounds. The representative cultures or countries are America and China. We dedicate to the referenced participants in order to prevent the influence of several unexpected factors. Furthermore, the procedure and measurement try to ensure the feasibility and reliability of the research. Overall, this work advances the obedience to react under pressure of stereotype.

Keywords: Students' obedience, Teachers' authority, High school, Copying, Educational System

1. Introduction

Almost every student has experienced the time that they were forced to do something which they did not want to do, such as cleaning the blackboard or putting the chairs and tables in order and so on. Also, only a minority of students would refuse to do as their teachers asked. This is a typical embodiment of teacher's authority. Meanwhile, following the rapid development of internationalism in nowadays Chinese society and the significance of English as a subject in the College Entrance Examination in China, China is gradually becoming an international country. Additionally, the increasing number of foreign teachers recruited in Chinese schools increases the opportunity for the local Chinese students to be taught by a foreign teacher. Therefore, the value of evaluating the obedience level of Chinese students to foreign teachers is crucial because obedience is a thing that rather important for education. Besides, the difference in education method between Chinese teachers and foreign teachers may contribute to the various obedience level of students. In the experiment, a unique lab experiment will be conducted to test the difference in the level of obedience for students toward Chinese teachers and foreign teachers. Besides, a semi-structured interview will be used to identify the difference in teaching ideas between Chinese and foreign teachers.

2. Literature review

Teacher's authority has been studied by many researchers in their own countries, and there are many definitions of that. According to Xia Wu, teacher authority refers to a dominant force that teachers can consciously accept, influence and change students' psychology and behavior by virtue of the educational power endowed by the state and society and individual factors [1]. Xingfu Huang proposed that teacher's authority refers to the authoritative and dominant power endowed by the state and society and formed by teachers in educational practice [2]. Zhonghai Yu considered that teacher's authority refers to the power or prestige of teachers to convince students in the process of education and teaching [3]. And I think that Teacher authority refers to the power that is recognized by students. In the process of interaction with students, teachers rely on the educational power granted by the state and society and the prestige generated by personal factors to make students trust and obey.

3. Methods

3.1 Participants

The participants in the studies are Chinese and American international high school students. There are mainly two reasons why we choose to do research on the high school students. One, most of the members of our group are high school students, so studying high school students is more realistic for us. Two, High school students are minors. Compared with college students, they have less social contact and are more likely to obey the authority of teachers. What's more, Chinese students are not in the international schools. According to *china news*, the number of freshmen at China international high schools in 2019 accounted for about 8 to 10 percent of that in the whole country's high school. Thus, Chinese international high school students are only in the minority, the majority of high school students who will have college entrance examination are more representative of Chinese students.

A total of 60 students are randomly selected from the high school. After that, we will divide participants in each nation into two classes, and each class has 30 students. Then, we will select two high school teachers from China and the United States respectively who are not from the above two schools and have a standard Chinese and American English pronunciation to record this experiment's required recording.

3.2 Procedure

Firstly, two teachers will record the audios, and the content is "hello everyone, next you should copy the process of solving a mathematical problem for 5 thousand times in 5 hours, and each number and formula should be written down clearly ". On the basis of the recording, add the Chinese and English version of the subtitles, produced into four audios. Secondly, the researchers play audios. Chinese students in two classes listen to Chinese and American instructions with Chinese subtitles respectively. And American students in two classes listen to Chinese and American instructions with English subtitles respectively. Thirdly, observe and record whether the students will follow the instructions to carry out the experiment. Fourthly, the experiment ends in three situations. Situation one, when the last student who still participates in the experiment completes the copy. Situation two, when the last student who still participates in the experiment refuses to copy. Situation three, time's up.

And there are two reasons why we choose to ask students to copy in our experiment. Firstly, copying is repetitive work, and it will drain students' energy, which is not only tiring, but also boring. Therefore, it is difficult for students to continue copying. Secondly, copying is meaningless, therefore, there is no motivation for the students to continue copying, only for the obedience to the teacher. In addition, there are two reasons why we choose mathematical problems to be copied. These problems are professional and of great difficulty to understand. Consequently, students understand they are copying the combination of numbers and formulas, but have no idea what it means and they cannot find any interesting things in this process.

3.3 Measurement

In the experiment, there are two variables: time and duration. In general, we can compare the frequency of the number of people that give up the task in first 3 hours. Suppose the number of students that give in the first two hours is 6, then we can measure the frequency= $6/120=1/20$ per people/s, then we can compare this value in four different situations. The larger the frequency is, the less obedience of this situation is.

If two or more classes have the same frequency, we can compare the number of people insist to the end when these classes have students lasting to the end. The bigger the number of students is, the more obedient they are.

If these classes do not have students stick to the end, we can compare the time for the last student stick to. When the time is longer, the more obedient they are.

4. Results

There are three assumptions in this experiment. One, Chinese students will obey more to American teachers. Two, American students will obey more to American teachers. Three, Chinese students will be

more obedient to teachers' authority than American students. For the assumption one, Mr. Fei Xiaotong thought that the local society of China is a society of acquaintances, and this is a familiar society, a society without strangers [4]. Moreover, Chinese people has been long considered to be xenophobic [5]. Therefore, people might be afraid when they contact with unfamiliar people and culture. Also, Chinese students might consider there may be more possible to be punished when they do not obey the American teachers. For the assumption two, American students are more willing to obey American teachers because Americans have a strong sense of national identity [6]. And the status of national identity depends on the balance between national identity and national identity [7]. The United States, while strengthening its national identity through the construction of national citizenship education, has adopted cultural strategies for national identity in order to adapt to the complex and pluralistic social reality of ethnic structure [8]. Furthermore, American students have the stereotype of Chinese teachers who appear to be controlling [9]. And it is what they don't like, because they advocate independent learning. Therefore, they may be not willing to obey Chinese teachers. For the assumption three, the sense of hierarchy in Chinese traditional culture has had great historic inertia and basic functions [10], so in traditional societies, teachers rank above students. However, American teachers and students are more equal [9]. Consequently, Chinese students might be more obedient to teachers.

If the result is that the Chinese students are more obedient to the Chinese teachers. This may indicate that strangeness makes Chinese students more alienated from foreign teachers and seek a sense of security from teachers in their own country. Additionally, long-term compulsory education has made Chinese students accustomed to following the instructions of Chinese teachers.

5. Alternating

Because this experiment does not conduct actually, there must be some other possible results for this experiment. Then we will list some alternating results and reasons.

The first alternating speculation is for Chinese student, they may be more obedient to Chinese teacher. In this way, Chinese might do not be xenophobia anymore, as time goes by, China become different to older time: people have confident in themselves. Also, the national identity is expressed on Chinese; they are more like to trust Chinese teacher that come from the same country of them, then students are more like be obedient to Chinese teacher.

If this alternating assumption is achieved, we can also say that obedience become a rule for Chinese student in their own education system. The second assumption is for American student. If they obey Chinese teacher more, we can have the conjecture that American's strong national confidence does not enough to push them to be obedient to American teacher more.

On the contrary, they might present their strangeness before the Chinese teacher, in this way, they will be more like to be obedient. Also, we have chosen American students that can listen and understand Chinese well; these students are more like to be interesting to the Chinese culture, they might be obedient because of the passion for China or Chinese.

6. Limitation

In the experiment, there are several extraneous variables that cannot be avoided, which may influence the outcome of this experiment. Firstly, the obedience of students to their teachers may hinge on the unique teaching ideas and their personalities of teachers. Additionally, the limited sample size cannot indicate what part of obedience of students is attributed to various teachers' nationality. Nevertheless, I can only try to use the semi-structured interview to get rid of the interference of the variable such as the teaching method. In addition, students' behaviors may highly depend on their classmates because of peoples' conformity [11]. Thus, the average obedience level of a class might be decided by the students who have the lowest obedience to teachers. Thus, the experiment might not be as accurate as Milgram's experiment.

7. Conclusion

This proposal aims to find a new way to test the students' level of obedience in the high school community and distinguish whether the level of confidence and students' school influence the level of obedience toward Chinese and Foreign teachers. The inspiration for making a comparison between

Chinese and Foreign teachers comes from the phenomenon of the growing popularity of international schools in China. More upper-middle-class families are trying to send their kids to foreign countries to receive education in high school or university (the majority of them go to the U.S. and U.K.) because of the Chinese exam-based education system which is rather competitive and intense.

Our research has a limitation that is we have a very simple set of variables. In the further study, the researchers could add more variables in their experiments to study the effect of other variables on obedience, such as teachers' appearance, race, presence or absence and tone. In sum, our study provides a path for cross-cultural research on obedience to authority.

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