Cross-cultural Education and Training of Innovative Talents in Colleges and Universities

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Abstract: China is striving to build innovative country, which must be supported by innovative talents. With the deepening of internationalization development of higher education, the campus culture of colleges and universities presents a diversified trend. Under the multi-cultural background, how colleges and universities train innovative talents become a new subject. Cross-cultural education is a new concept of innovative education that is aimed at the multi-culture phenomenon. It has the characteristics such as tolerance, equality, respect, and critical absorption of educated objects in culture and so on, which is conducive to train innovative talents. The specialty which innovative talents have is compatible with the cross-cultural education method to some extent.

Keywords: cross-cultural education; colleges and universities; innovative talents; training.

1. INTRODUCTION

Innovation is the first driving force for leading the development, and innovative talents are sustainable resource for a nation and society to improve. Nowadays, all countries in the world regard the training of innovative talents as the commanding heights for sustained development of economy and society. In the practice of economic construction and scientific and technological development, China has profoundly felt that innovative talents play an irreplaceable role in promoting social and economic development, scientific and technological progress, and raise the training of innovative talents to national strategies. As a place for training high-level professionals, colleges and universities have a bounden duty for training innovative culture and accelerating the construction of innovative countries. At present, the tentacles of globalization are all-pervasive, and education is no exception. Due to the globalization development of education, the multi-ethnic and cross-border diversification characteristics of college students' source, the training of innovative talents must be integrated into the international vision, cross-cultural education as an innovative educational concept, which has attracted the attention of educators.
2. THE CONNOTATION AND INTERRELATION OF CROSS-CULTURAL EDUCATION AND INNOVATIVE TALENTS

The “Contribution of Education to Cultural Development” document issued by UNESCO thinks that cross-cultural nature or multiculturalism are knowledge and understanding on different cultures, as well as establishing active communication and complementary relationships in various cultural components within one country and among different cultures in countries all over the world. Lu Wizen of Central China Normal University thinks that cross-cultural education is that conduct cultural and educational activities related to other human groups for educators of human groups of a certain culture, so guide these educators to obtain rich intercultural knowledge, develop respect, tolerance, equality, open cross-cultural attitude, objective, unbiased cross-cultural concepts and world consciousness, and form effective cross-cultural communication, understanding, comparison, reference, absorption, abandonment, cooperation, and propagation ability, thus eliminating cross-cultural conflicts, build a harmonious cross-cultural society, and promote the development of the entire human society [2]. It can be seen that cross-cultural education is essentially a new education method which aims at educational objects with different cultural backgrounds; its content includes the recognition, selection, and absorption of different cultures, its purpose is to train educated people to be innovative talents who are unbiased, persons with world consciousness who are unbiased open and active ideology, critical thinking, and easy to accept different opinions. Innovation means producing or creating new things and triggering changes and development in related fields. The American anthropologist Homer G. Barnet defined innovation as: “any new idea, new behavior or new thing which are different from the inherent form in essence, all innovation is a concept or a group idea” [3]. Innovative talents are those who obtain innovative results through their own creative activities; they have a strong innovative sense and perfect innovative thinking, and have strong innovative capabilities and sound innovative personality. The training of innovative talents mainly is that the systematic education that aims to implement innovative consciousness, innovative thinking, and innovative ability as the main goals for students in schools [4].

3. INNOVATIVE FACTORS OF CROSS-CULTURAL EDUCATION

All human education activities are based on a specific culture. That is to say, everyone has a certain ethnic identity, and each kind of education is also inseparable from a specific national culture. Cross-cultural education is exactly such an education method based on the heterogeneous culture of different nations and countries. It starts from the cultural differences of the educated subjects, promotes respect for the diversity of cultures and enhances the understanding of different groups. What is the relationship between the inherent characteristics of this education method and innovation? Or what is the innovative factor of cross-cultural education?

First, cultural differences create opportunities for innovative activities. Because cultural differences can produce different thinking individuals, these active thinking individuals can
give full play to their unique functions. In various creative activities, because the individual has different knowledge and skills, and different ideas, so they can ask questions and provide solutions from multiple perspectives. Second, the innovative ability is associated with a specific culture, such as the creation and invention of United Kingdom, and pragmatism of the United States and Japan. However, cultural differences alone cannot lead to rapid innovation. Because innovative activities are motivated and inspired; the American scholar Arête regards the cultural environment as a "gene of creation," he thinks that "the cultures which create genes in combination with individuals who are potentially creative" will produce creativity. The convenience of cultural means, the opening of cultural stimulation, and the acceptance of different and even opposing cultural stimulation are more conducive to the innovation of social members than those of the opposite culture [5]. Culture usually is people's values, behavioral patterns, ideals and beliefs formed in daily life and so on. In this sense, cross-cultural education itself is also a kind of culture, because it is a new type of education idea and educational value orientation. This education idea can respect fresh cultural knowledge, pay attention to what has been neglected by habitual thinking, change the cognitive structure, update the idea and awareness, can stimulate the creative passion of every different cultural individual, and create a cultural atmosphere conducive to the emergence of innovation activities and innovative talents.

Second, bilingual education of cross-cultural education can stimulate innovative thinking. In cross-cultural education, language teaching is the main content. The "Contribution of Education to Cultural Development" issued by UNESCO initiate, "select one or several languages (mother tongue, national language, or foreign language) as a separate subject or as medium for learning other subjects" [6]. The "English Curriculum Standards" published in 2001 in China stipulates in different stages of basic education, the goals of cross-cultural education of English subject education are, respectively: Interested in foreign cultural custom encountered in English language learning; take delight in learning about foreign cultures and customs, can realize the cultural differences that exist in language communication; notice differences between Chinese and foreign cultures in learning and daily communication; further enhance understanding and cognition of cultural differences, can understand the cultural connotation and background of language in communication; understand cultural differences in communication. It can be seen that the cross-cultural language teaching mainly train students' cross-cultural language thinking. Language is the same as idea, which is also an indispensable element of thinking. As a tool of thinking, language directly influences the result of thinking. Bilingual teaching in cross-cultural education promotes people to think creatively and it is conducive to produce creative ideas. The reason why bilingual education is to train students' creativity is that bilingualism may have a more flexible way to understand the world, because they can perceive the world from two language perspectives, and thus educators are better at organizing and applying knowledge in different ways; bilinguals can have more connections to the same concept because the same concept is in a conceptual network of different languages; bilinguals are more tolerant of ambiguity. Because when they come across some subtle differences in thinking about communicating in different languages, they do not feel
unaccustomed; the creative advantage of bilinguals lies in their living conditions, they can often participate in two cultural group activities to understand the emergence, development, substance and differences of the two cultures, and analyze their advantages and disadvantages. It is beneficial to absorb essence, eliminate dross, choose and follow what is good [7].

4. THE SPECIALTY OF INNOVATIVE TALENTS UNDER THE PERSPECTIVE OF CROSS-CULTURAL EDUCATION

Innovative talents must carry out innovative activities and create new material forms and concept cultures, their specialties must be reflected in divergent thinking, not limited to one type, flexible and open brain, not superstitious and obedient, and cooperation with others etc. The concept of cross-cultural education for toleration, respect, and critical absorption of different cultures just provides the proper soil and climate for the training of innovative talents. The concrete manifestation is the following areas:

4.1 It is conducive to train the multi-dimensional nature of innovative talents

The multi-dimensional nature of innovative talents means that it is not restricted by traditional single ideas and has broad ideas. Ask questions from all directions, can put forward more imagination and answers, option is wide. If the idea is blocked and encounters problems, they can flexibly transform certain factors, think from a new perspective, and be good at skillfully changing the thinking direction, and generate new proper methods [8]. Cross-cultural education is an education which aimed at different cultural people under the multicultural background. Due to the cultural differences, the educated objects have many different thinking ways. In cross-cultural organizations made up of different cultural groups, different ideas, beliefs, and values interact with each other, and people's thoughts sparkle when viewpoint collides, produce inspiration and creativity. All kinds of human cultural systems contain positive factors conducive to the development of human society. In learning and creative activities, if students can absorb positive results of various cultures, and understand and appreciate different types of ideas, they will certainly be able to broaden their horizons. This kind of talent is trained through cross-cultural education, if they encounter problems, they will be able to find the right way to solve them from a wide range of knowledge. The qualities and characteristics possessed by cross-cultural members are just the creative talents who break through their traditional culture and draw on the essence from different cultures, and then carry out creative activities.

4.2 It is conducive to stimulate open thinking of innovative talents

The thinking of innovative talents is highly open. Creative people's logical thinking is bound to be abnormally active. From the angle of philosophy, thinking is the human subjective consciousness, but this subjective consciousness is the reflection of the objective world in the human mind. Therefore, active thinking must have a living source, that is to say, there must be continuous knowledge nutrition. It is hard to imagine that if the educated people are limited to picking up the research results and knowledge resources of their own nation or country, then his thinking must be relatively closed. The resulting ignorance and narrowness will only
severely restrict their subjective initiative, let alone make innovations and breakthroughs in ideological concepts and inventions. Cross-cultural education advocates that educated people must develop an equal, open mind, objective and unbiased awareness after acquiring cross-cultural knowledge. The educational approach based on this concept, know to respect the diversity of different cultural patterns, can absorb the advantages of other cultures in a receptive mood, and learn widely from others’ strong points for themselves. The historical practice of China and foreign countries fully proves that the openness of thinking is positively related to the emergence of innovative talents. The European Renaissance produced a large number of innovative humane and scientific talents under the environment that eliminates all paranoia, ignorance, respect for science, and openness and pragmatism. China's Qing Dynasty avoid having contacts with other countries, as cheeky as Yelling, assume air of self-importance, and opened the country by the foreign powers, the later Westernization Movement and the addition of Western learning is open-minded and pursue true knowledge. "Traditional Chinese values aided with modern Western ideology" at least enable the compatriots realize that there is still western learning beyond studies of Chinese ancient civilization. Obviously, the inherent conformity and old-fashioned cultural atmosphere is not conducive to the cultivation of curiosity and the innovative spirit, the open and diverse culture is the soil for the growth of innovation [9]. In general, the creative action of a civilization has an upward trend after it receive outside influence. Cross-cultural education adheres to the purpose of cultural diversity and openness, this process can be promoted through various means, such as immigration, going abroad or studying under the guidance of foreign teachers.

4.3 It is conducive to train critical thinking of innovative talents

Critical thinking is an essential quality for innovative talents. There is a much research on critical thinking, and D.F. Halpern thinks that critical thinking is “application of cognitive skills and strategies to increase the likelihood of acquiring desired results” [10]. There are studies think that critical thinking is a process, it is a purposeful, the self-regulatory thinking process for the correctness of the process, theory, method, background, evidence, and the evaluation knowledge standard, etc. The critical thinking does not superstitiously blindly follow the existing knowledge structure system and value, and constantly rethink and abandon. The accumulation and innovative history of human knowledge are realized in constant critical exploration. When Marx and Engels talked about the role of the Renaissance in Europe, Renaissance went out of the darkness of the Middle Ages and created an emerging culture, they said: "They (the European critical innovative talents at that time) did not recognize any external authority. Everything must defend their own existence or give up the existence in front of a rational court.[11] Therefore, the most important thing for universities to train innovative talents is to train students' awareness and courage to ask questions, dare to challenge authority and seek differences.[12] In cross-cultural education, the purpose of education is to allow all educated people to abandon the dross of various cultures and get what are available after they have digested and absorbed all kinds of cultural systems. That is to say, after the cognition and critical rethinking of various different types of culture, they form their own unique insights.
Because all cultures have their negative side and positive side in the multicultural background of education. Some cultures have superstitious and arrogant characteristics; they despise different cultures and refuse to accept the concept of different cultures, regardless of whether this concept can be used for reference. What is more, under the current situation of frequent exchanges among cultures, they all stand on their own national position for interpretation and reply to various questions. The consequences of such education can only obliterate people’s ability to distinguish between rights and wrong, train students who receive knowledge in mechanical way; it is difficult to train innovative talents. Therefore, cross-cultural education forms conscious cross-cultural criticism ability in training educational objects, which in turn stimulates its innovative knowledge structure, avoidance of paranoia, and self-centeredness, it has a strong practical significance in inspiring its innovative knowledge structure, avoiding paranoia and self-centered aspects.

4.4 It is conducive to the form team spirit needed by innovative talents

The American social psychologist Abe Emmanuel found that cooperation and competition generally promote creativity [13]. He cited from 1901 to 1972, among the scientists who won the Nobel Prize, 1/3 of them were cooperating with others. Watson et al. studied the teamwork of members from different cultural backgrounds. They found that cultural differences will restrict the work process and job performance of a newly formed work team, but over time, cross-cultural teams had made great progress in work processes and performance, and found that cross-cultural teams has advantages over those of single-culture teams in finding problems and finding solutions to problems [14]. The above research results found that it is easier to achieve innovative results under the condition of teamwork. With the deep development of international economy, education and other aspects, teamwork members cross the borders of culture, they come from all corners of the country; have diverse knowledge structures, active thoughts, and more dynamic in innovation activities. Therefore, in the process of training innovative talents, colleges and universities can update educational ideas, improve current teaching methods, and create active teaching environment which has cultural tolerance and stimulate creativity under the initiative of cross-cultural educational ideas, encourage students to think about the benefits of mutual reciprocity of various cultures, supplement each other in knowledge, and influence each other in cultural concepts.

5. CONCLUSION

As a life mechanism of culture, education plays a key role in the generation and development of culture. Then, how cross-cultural education generate a culture conducive to train innovative talent? Education itself has the function of cultural innovation, and cross-cultural education can naturally produce a kind of culture that is based on multi-culture and conducive to innovation. Culture itself has a strong correlation with innovation, the culture generated under the mechanism of cross-cultural education, it must include openness, compatibility, respect for differences, equality, and cross-cultural awareness, and it must also have the critical thinking and team cooperation spirit that creative talents must have. This newly-generated culture is
exactly what colleges and universities need in training innovative talents. With the continuous development of the globalization process, the internationalization of education has made cross-cultural education increasingly a problem that educational circles must envisage. Cross-cultural education is carried out under the condition that world cultural exchanges are frequent and international culture is highly open and innovative. There should be new innovative talents in the new situation, innovative talent must adapt to the new situation of social development, must face how to interact with people with various cultural backgrounds, and absorb knowledge nutrition which is conducive to innovation from different cultures. The education methods for training this kind of talents must also advance with the times, keep pace with the process of education internationalization, break through the traditional single education model, and try new practices of cross-cultural education, then new ways to train innovative talents can be found.

REFERENCES


