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Summary

This study focuses on comparative research on the lifelong learning motivations and influential factors in China and Germany. As lifelong learning is a widely recognized system, which possesses international importance, multiple connotation and complex branches, the research and analysis on lifelong learning and concrete learning behaviors, politics, theories, performances and influential factors is extremely difficult. However, in order to be able to analyze the concrete learning experiences as well as individual attitudes and thoughts on lifelong learning according to the reconstruction of

their respective experience, we can use biographical narrative interview as an instrument of data collection and the researching steps of Grounded Theory as methodology to develop an empirical theory on our research subject.

The study sample consists of 20 selected Chinese and 20 selected Germans from different background and conducts interviews with them to investigate their whole learning experiences and views on the motivations and influential factors for their own lifelong learning. Based on the analysis process of open, axial and selective coding, we can find the learning motivations and influential factors on lifelong learning are coming mainly from the four main groups including family, society, individual, and schools, peers and teachers. In order to describe the relationships among these factors and the typical influencing aspects in each country, we can divide them into the 'postmodern', 'Scandinavian', 'transforming' and 'traditional Asian' types with the "Ideal type" as a guiding ideology. In the concrete analysis of the types of Chinese and German lifelong learning motivations and influential factors, we can label the "Autonomous" and "Authoritarian" features on the y-axis and the "Individual" and "Social" factors on the x-axis so as to draw the cluster shapes of the factors in each country graphically.

The concrete analysis of influential factors and motivations relies on the general background of the national conditions and the reality of educational development in each country. Each main category of the influential factors and motivations has its profound reason from the macro, meso and micro objective reality, such as the national history, laws system, educational institutions, teaching and learning practices, economic situations, overall figuration and educational cultures, as well as the educational system in each country. According to the analysis and comparison, we can see that each country or region has its own characteristics, implementation methods of lifelong learning, as well as their educational policies, individual learning methods, principles, learning and teaching experiences.

However, the driving force for the improvement of the educational reformation and progress could rely on referencing the successful experiences of others and historical examples to develop their own educational system or establish their own educational policies. Therefore, based on the researching conclusions and results we can make suggestions and guidance for the promotion of lifelong learning performances and achievements in the future not only in China and Germany, but also in other developing and developed countries.