Comparative Research on the Motivations, Influential Factors, and Current Status of Lifelong Learning in China and Germany

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1. General background and significance of research.

1.1 Background of this research.

In traditional times, learning mainly referred to one-off or end-all school learning, neglected or rejected other learning forms, and had a partial economic center doctrine. However, along with the quick development of scientific technology and economy, as well as the advance of knowledge and the capital value of manpower, traditional school learning could not meet personal demand and needs of society's continuous development. Lifelong learning began to play an important role in an upheaval of the social policy.

Since 1972, "lifelong learning" was mentioned as a term in conjunction with "lifelong education" and "learning society," which formally appeared in the famous report by UNESCO 'Learning to Be.' Lifelong learning has not only affected education reform as an educational concept in many countries and regions worldwide, but is also understood and accepted as an educational concept by ordinary people (Lengrand, 1988, pp10ff).

Lifelong learning, according to the explanation of the German educational sociologist Peter Alheit, is about respecting and using our collective ability to learn, which may be idle or blocked by social conditions. It means to fully develop and use our brains. It is also a social learning process realized by more or less "informal," conscious, intuitive, or strategically self-organized learning processes, which go beyond the institutionalized learning periods to span an entire lifetime (Alheit & Dausien, 2002, p4).

1.1.1 The factors affecting and promoting lifelong learning.
The international academy of lifelong learning is in agreement on the factors leading to the emergence of lifelong learning concept so far. There are 7 factors which influence and promote lifelong learning to be considered.
(1) The development of society has called for people's new adaptability.
The rate of social change is increasing, and mobility and variability are becoming basic characteristics in the social development today. Ideas and mentality no longer maintain long-term stability as in traditional society. The 'thing of the past' phenomenon is quite common nowadays (Brown, 2006). It requires continuous learning to adapt to continuous changes in this rapidly developing society. This led to people questioning the traditional view that learning should be terminated with the end of the school education, and wondering when learning should or ought to come to the end.

(2) The growth of economic power has put forward new challenges.
Since the 1960's, many Western countries have been gradually recovering from the devastation of World War II, which is regarded as a remarkable

symbol of unprecedented development of economy in these countries. Some highly developed countries have embarked on a modern industrialized method of development with the power of new technology, which has allowed this period to achieve great economic prosperity in the Western society. Economic development requires more highly skilled labor force, which thus stimulates new demands on education and learning (Wu, 2007, p37). At the same time, the achievement of economic development also provides the necessary monetary support for the improvement of the education system. Just as Alheit said "Average employment no longer means practicing one and the same occupation over a substantial span of one's life, but now involves alternating phases of work and further training, voluntary and involuntary discontinuities of occupation, innovative career switching strategies and even self-chosen alternation between employment and family- centered phases" (1992, p118). The change in the economic situation and conditions worldwide not only satisfies the demands by normal people for their daily life, but also develops their working style which will influence their living style too. The shortened work day, changing of the working place, and new forms and contents of work have brought to each person in the society great burdens and challenges which require renewing their knowledge. In this way, lifelong learning is a necessary way to satisfy these kinds of demands.

(3) The growth of the aging population places more demand on education.
Two of the most important features are the increase in the total population and the expanding proportion of the aging population. As the quantitative increase in population creates direct pressure on the size of the previous educational system, we must find methods to fulfill the increasing educational needs. This requires the educational system to expand the scope of education and service objects, while breaking the tradition of aiming education only at young people (Zhong & Wang, 2009, pp34-35).

(4) The rapid development of technology requires more scientific knowledge and professional skills.
Since the 1960's, there has been an era of knowledge explosion, such as the rapid development of science and technology , the development of new energy resources, the endless emergence of new materials, methods and ideas, a rapid increase in the stock of knowledge, the synchronous increase in the replacement rate of new theories. These trends have increased people's awareness of the importance and urgency of learning how to learn over the traditional concern for the study of knowledge itself (OECD, 1996).

(5) The variability in modern lifestyle requires education to create more possibilities.
The development of technology and information has brought a general increase in productivity, and an increasing enrichment in material possessions,

so that people are left with more disposable time to themselves. In the meantime, the satisfaction of material life has led to dissatisfaction with spiritual life; consequently people are willing to spend more time and effort to upgrade the quality of their spiritual life, so as to make life more fulfilling and more diverse. Along with increased social mobility and tolerance, consistent and stable living conditions have been devalued, which results in each person having a greater freedom of choice in lifestyle. All of these changes require a response by our educational system (Zhong & Wang, 2009, pp34-35).

(6) The democratization process has encouraged the lifelong learning trends in the modern era.
During the 1960s, the democratization process in the world came to a climax. Many developing countries gained independence in this period. More and more people regarded the fight for the right to education as an important aspect of the modern social democratization process; therefore, the demand for continuing education and learning is becoming more and more urgent, and the quality of education has been given more importance than ever before (Rogers, 2006). At the same time as new social structures emerged, the traditional relationships among citizens and the state have undergone change. Democracy not only embodies a system of governance, protection of fundamental human rights, and a judicial procedure, but enables and encourages citizen awareness and effective participation in public affairs as well (Zhu & Gao, 2014, pp51-53).

(7) Modern communication media has placed higher demands on people's ability to receive and process information.
The world is gradually becoming more of a community because of increased communication enabled by modern electronic media, such as computers, internet and mobile phones. With such information sources we can gain more knowledge and information at a faster rate. However, these modes of communication place new demands on education and learning. In the face of a broad array of knowledge and information, the learner must develop new skills, such as a higher level of reading and writing, the ability to analyze, identify, criticize and choose (Shi, 2008), and to "filter" and "distinguish" the useful information from the useless or even harmful information.

The lifelong learning ideas and theories were spread and reinforced rapidly under the support of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and other international organizations. The theory was gradually enriched and deepened, and ultimately it caused widespread international concern and attention (Chen, 2002, p35). Today, many countries and regions regard lifelong learning theory as the basic guiding principle and a major policy consideration in promoting modern education reform. Since the early 1970s, many national, regional and international organizations has

formulated and promulgated various forms of lifelong learning policy in accordance with their own circumstances. These organizations have carried out a variety of education reform actions in order to adapt to the trend of lifelong learning; not only in developed, but also in developing countries. After initial doubts, suspicion, and confusion, citizens of almost all countries finally understand, support and practice the lifelong learning concept today (Chen, 2002, p18). However, not all of the agents of change in educational reform have known exactly the core notion or importance of lifelong learning in their era or into the future.

After carefully studying the development status of lifelong learning, we can recognize that there is a wide consistency of the importance of lifelong learning. Moreover, the challenges come from environment and social developments have also called for lifelong learning all the time. Therefore, the lifelong learning developments in these countries, regions and international organizations have shown their own unique features (Alheit & Dausien, 2002). Some of them cannot be explained only by one factor or one situation, but the complex circumstances overall. Meanwhile, there are also some important common characteristics (Zhu & Gao, 2014, pp51-53).

To understand the differences in performance and understanding of lifelong learning in each country, it is helpful to consider some examples. Some countries, such as the UK, position lifelong learning more in the field of vocational and technical education or learning in workplace; however, the adult education and learning is suffering from severe marginalization (Chen, 2002). In other words, lifelong learning seems to be limited to periodic educational activity, without covering the whole lifespan. Other countries, such as some Pacific islands, seem to have little interest in vocational and technical education, but vigorously advocate the kind of lifelong learning aimed at improving culture and life, especially mental health (Chen, 2002). In this way, lifelong learning is regarded as a tool with which the government can solve problems occurring in the economic and cultural areas in a country (Chen, 2002). In some countries, such as the U.S. and France, basic education is usually not within the scope of lifelong learning, because the latter always refers to adult or continuing education; and some other countries, such as Sweden and Australia, are trying to integrate "cradle to grave" learning into their educational system (Chen, 2002). As for the influence of lifelong learning, some countries (such as the Netherlands and Singapore) regard the implementation of the lifelong learning concept explicitly and directly as means of improving their international economic competitiveness in the 21st century. In contrast, Pacific Island countries place more emphasis on the relationship between the development of lifelong learning and cultural and social capital (Wu & Huang, 2008, 20ff). In terms of intercommunity, most countries recognize and actively encourage the cooperation among each aspect

required in the promotion of lifelong learning. However, there are some problems with the implementation process of lifelong learning. For example, it has produced "learning differentiation", or even exacerbated existing social inequalities. In addition, implementation of lifelong learning practice lags far behind the recognition, praise and commitment to the concept. Finally, there are some scholars who believe that the recent concept of lifelong learning emphasizes on human capital too much and ignores the basic functions and properties of education.

The considering and analyzing these differences and common trends in these countries is necessary in order to learn from successful and mature implementation of lifelong learning policies and activities, as well as to avoid the improper methods or understandings of lifelong learning. In this way, we need to develop necessary systematic and rational thinking on the lifelong learning notion, as well as master the overall development of the international lifelong learning concept, in order to carry out and strengthen the basic theory of lifelong learning (Zhu, 2008, pp4-5).

1.1.2 The basis for comparative research on lifelong learning between 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. It is seemingly impossible to conduct an international integration of the lifelong learning concept from all over the world, but there are likely valuable insights to be found by selecting some individual representative countries to carry out research. After an achieving an overall understanding and distinction of these various and complex lifelong learning modes, activities, and efforts in the international scope, this research decides to focus on a comparison of lifelong learning in Germany and China specifically. Individuals from different categories of representative people in each country were interviewed to determine their views, acts, practices and effects of lifelong learning in their daily life. These interviews were used to compare the attitudes of people in different classes and countries towards lifelong learning and how lifelong learning influences the lives of ordinary people.

The basic incentives for doing research between China and Germany are as follows:
(1) Lifelong learning concept possesses a wide range of influence and consistent recognition (Zhong & Wang, 2009, p35); however, based on the diverse and complex circumstances in various areas in the world, human's capability of understanding and their values are different and selective, which is closely related with the social and cultural environment (Zhu, 2008). The

practice and understanding of lifelong learning in Germany is more mature and advanced from the role of the government to the ordinary citizen. This can be used as a reference for Chinese lifelong learning progress, which is still at the beginning phase and is in need of relevant mature experience and theoretical guidance.

(2) Even if the social environment is in the face of similar transformational trends and characteristics changes, the impacts and outcomes of these kind of changes in each country and region are often inconsistent because these impacts are mutual, linking inextricably with the existing national or regional economic, social, political, psychological and cultural environment (Xie, 2007). This inconsistency produces differences in practical behavioral choices of lifelong learning. In social systems, cultural traditions, habits, education levels, and economic conditions between Germany and China will be helpful to point out the direction for the development of lifelong learning in China with horizontal comparison in their similarity and longitudinal comparison in their differences (Zhu, 2008, p7).

(3) The spread of lifelong learning theory and practice requires a large variety of resources, which are scarce for large groups of learners. This imbalance results in competition (Brindley, Walti & Zawacki-Richter, 2004, p5), which should be controlled and constrained by the society. Therefore, there will inevitably be a corresponding system to be produced to use resources effectively and some unexpected problems will result. Researching and learning the ways of using and allocating resources in Germany during the development of lifelong learning has great reference value for China to resolve its own problem of scarce resources.

(4) Even if we are able to fully recognize individuals' development needs and to grasp the basic trends of social changes and improvements, we can still not control everything; therefore, it is appropriate to realize the local optima in the course of practice under the guidance of effective theories (Moore, 2014, p17). Consequently, we need to start from the individual specific concepts, behaviors and impacts of lifelong learning with the correct methods guidance, and then extend to the whole range of situations for individuals from different classes and practice of lifelong learning in the two countries. Ultimately we can make a holistic comparative study of overall lifelong learning development in two countries.

1.2 The current researching situation and results in China and Germany.

Since its formation, the lifelong learning concept has stimulated the attention of nearly all countries and regions. Some countries, realizing the importance of lifelong learning, have published official statements (Kong, 2007, p90). Some have put forward a comprehensive policy for the implementation of lifelong learning, some education committees and governments have published a Green Paper, White Paper, or various other kinds of reports on lifelong learning, and some have constituted laws to protect the right to lifelong learning and reflect its great importance (Kong, 2007, pp90-91).

Lifelong learning, as an international educational concept, was originally formed in the late of 1950's in Europe. The International Adult Education Meetings, held in Sweden in 1949, and in Canada in 1960, both held the opinion that learning had to be regarded as a lifelong process for the rapid change of the society (Zhu, 2008 pp.4-7). 'An Introduction to Lifelong Education', written by Paul Lengrand in 1965, had an extensive influence among nations, and was regarded as the representative writing on theories of lifelong learning (Lengrand, 1988, p2). In 1968, another important document acting as a milestone of the development of lifelong learning 'The Learning Society' was released by the American educator R.M. Hutchins, emphasizing the importance of lifelong education and learning (Hutchins, 1968, 120ff). By 1970's it had won nearly worldwide praise. In 1972, UNESCO published 'Learning to be: the world of education today and tomorrow' which fully affirmed the formulation of the learning society and lifelong learning. A report by the World Bank provided a development model for building lifelong learning systems in developing countries (Delors, 1996, 5ff). The concept of lifelong learning was becoming universal and drawing continuous attention. Then in 1976, the United States agreed on the 'Law of Lifelong Learning'. The European Union joined the conversation in 1990 by publishing three White Papers on lifelong learning, claimed the year of 1996 to be the "European Lifelong Learning Year,' and in October 2000, issued a 'Lifelong Learning Memorandum' (Savuran, 2014, p19). In 1997, the Dutch government published an official report entitled 'The Inchoation of Lifelong Learning in Dutch' and in 1997, Norway published a Green Paper named 'New Competition'. South Korea has already enshrined lifelong learning in the Constitution in the early 1980s, and transformed the 'Social Education Law' to the 'Law of Lifelong Learning' in 1996 (Zhu, 2008 pp.4-7; Zuo & Quan, 2008; Wu, 2007, 24ff). By now, many countries, especially most developed countries, have their own policies and theories on lifelong learning, as well as the proper ways and specific aims of popularizing and making use of lifelong learning national-wide. The research on lifelong learning has become an international

topic and is emphasized by many countries and governments (Zhu, 2008 pp.4-7).

1.2.1 The current researching situation in China.

China has made a breakthrough development in the establishment of lifelong learning in recent years. Papers and writings on this concept have been increasing year by year since 2000. They are mainly focused on the interpretation and discussion of the concept, the classification of lifelong learning and other learning forms popular today, the necessity and importance of lifelong learning, various functions of components and roles in the whole system of lifelong learning, the reformation of school education from the perspective of lifelong learning, and the preliminary study of construction of the lifelong learning system based on the concrete situation in China (Wu, 2007, 24ff). Since the introduction of lifelong learning theory, the research produced is becoming more and more abundant. Furthermore, the understanding and awareness of the necessity and importance of lifelong learning in China has been awoken. The main direction of the lifelong learning study in China is based on two aspects. The first is introducing and reviewing the results and practical experience of research on lifelong learning by international organizations, particularly UNESCO, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the European Union. The second aspect is the reference, spread, and comparison of practical processes and mature theories during the development of national lifelong learning.

(1) The Chinese research based on internationally prestigious reports and publications.

Although this first step of lifelong learning research in China has not started as early as other developed countries, the Chinese researchers are enthusiastic about this topic and are attempting to catch up with the advanced and modern ideas on lifelong learning based on the analysis of famous reports and publications from international organizations. The writing 'Lifelong learning policy and practice analysis of OECD countries' written in 2003 by Wei Feng has focused on the introduction and analysis of the lifelong learning concept, policy documents, practices, and status quo since the 1990s (Feng, 2003). This work also summarized the common trends in the lifelong learning policy development in OECD countries, such as laws, the diversification of learning opportunities, changing information, and the socialization of learning (Feng, 2003). Xiaoqiang Liu focused on the change of life learning strategies of the EU since the Lisbon meeting with his paper 'The new features of the lifelong learning strategies of the EU' in 2005, such as giving the lifelong learning strategy a more important position, the complete re-understanding of lifelong learning, supporting projects and institutional developments of this new concept and promoting European integration by lifelong learning (Liu, 2005). The article 'The progress and difficulties of international organizations on

lifelong learning strategy' which was published in 2007, introduced that although UNESCO, the OECD and the EU are all in favor of the concept of "lifelong". They defined this term differently. In addition, although their lifelong learning policies issued between the 1970s and 1990s played a tremendous role in promoting the practice of lifelong learning, there were also difficulties in the implementation, such as a fuzzy understanding of the lifelong learning concept, the differences in understanding the influences of lifelong learning, the neglecting of cultural backgrounds, and the huge gap between the practice and consciousness on lifelong learning. Collectively, this meant fewer people could implement the concept of lifelong learning in daily life (Kong, 2007). 'The development, influence and inspiration of lifelong learning in the EU' has also introduced briefly how the implementation status in the education and training area have been influenced by the lifelong learning strategy since the 1990s (Guo, 2010, p5), and also pointed out its role in promoting EU employment, education and training policies and the process of European integration. The article 'The exploration of the evolution of lifelong learning concept during the education cooperation in the EU' explored the changes of the concepts, policies, practices and actions of lifelong learning, which has been a key strategy in the process of European integration since 1957 from a historical view point   (Guo, 2010, p5).

Looking to the contributions from monographs, the 'Lifelong learning: philosophy and practice' published in 2004 provided more in-depth studies on the lifelong learning strategy by UNESCO, the OECD and the EU, and also made the concrete comparisons of the periods, concepts, purpose, actions, the core ideas and issues, practical promotions, policy actions of digital divide, and indicators of lifelong learning (Guo, 2010, p5). This book concluded from the study that the objectives of lifelong learning policies of various international organizations are either universal or limited, the connotations of the concepts on lifelong learning are mixed, and the actual action attaches great importance to innovative, systematic and stable characteristics (Guo, 2010, p5).

From the articles and writings by Chinese researchers, it is obvious that they have paid great attention to the lifelong learning research of the internationally important research results, focusing not only on the historical research development, but also with an eye to the latest status and trends. Based on these works and writings, not only the Chinese scholars, but also the society as a whole, have a good intuitive understanding of the lifelong learning theory, practice, and development over time. However, the theory and practical activities of lifelong learning in China could still be enhanced and deepened. Past conventional research was lacking an assimilation of advanced theory with actual experience relevant to the Chinese situation.

(2) The research results of the lifelong learning implementation process and

theories in different countries.

There are many noteworthy research results, which include 'The policy, management and legislation of lifelong education in the contemporary world' in 2002; 'Equal education opportunities for the citizens affected by the lifelong education policy in Japan' in 2003; 'The development of lifelong learning movement and community education in the United States' in 2003; 'The developing strategy of lifelong learning in Sweden' in 2003; 'The measures and effects of lifelong learning implementation in Japan' in 2004; 'The development course and promoting measures of lifelong learning in Sweden' in 2004; 'The basic experience and revelation of the American lifelong education' in 2005; 'The social background and practice strategies of lifelong learning in Japan' in 2006; 'Lifelong Education Law-unworthy of the name, and a brief analysis of the making process and problems of the Japanese 'The Revitalization of Career learning' in 2007; 'The comparison research of the European lifelong learning policies' in 2009 (Li, 2012, pp41-42). These works and articles can be found publically and some of the notions and ideas in them have often been quoted for lifelong learning research. From the publishing years, we can conclude that the academic interests in the twenty-first century have tended to make comparisons and references to lifelong learning situations and conditions in developed countries in order to make use of them to construct the Chinese lifelong learning system and structures.

These kinds of research and academic results are mainly focusing on two aspects: 1) as a comprehensive introduction and analysis of the situation and development of lifelong learning in other countries, and 2) to address the concrete problems experienced during the implementation of lifelong learning strategies. These studies provide us a basis for the understanding of the lifelong learning development in the major developed countries abroad, enrich the existing researching data, and provide plenty of information on all aspects of lifelong learning. However, as for the further understanding of the issues related to lifelong learning, there should be more research and analysis of the actual history background and the influence of modern societal conditions on citizens' reaction to lifelong learning with the theoretical thinking on the basis of the existing research. In this sense, only introductions or descriptions of the general policies in different countries seem to be not sufficient. In other words, the researches on normal and ordinary citizens in these countries seem also important and necessary, because these people have been influenced and acted on lifelong learning polices during their daily life, and only they can reflect the effects and roles of lifelong learning in the society with actual and living examples (Liu, 2014, pp71-72).

Looking again to monographs, The book 'Modern international lifelong education theory' in 1999 and its revision has focused on the basic introductions of lifelong learning in different countries, such as the United

States, Britain, Germany, France and Japan. For each country, the book introduced the development history, policy structure, implementation and knowledge or evaluation of the characteristics of lifelong education (Wu, 2007, 2ff). 'The comparison of the lifelong education' in 2003 mainly introduced the implementation situation of lifelong education respectively in China, Korea, Japan, the United States, Britain, Germany, France and Sweden. In addition a comparative analysis between countries pointed out the similarities and differences, such as government support, financial support, emphasis on adult education, and scientific cultivation (Huang, 2003, pp1-2). In 2004, the book 'Lifelong Learning-Concept and practice' discussed different topics on international lifelong learning development from the 1990's according to an analysis and comparison of the theories and practices (Guo, 2010, p5). This book conveys that the lifelong learning style and model should be built based on concrete and current country conditions, without referencing other countries as models. The book 'Lifelong education, lifelong learning and learning society' in 2005 discussed the specific approach to promoting lifelong learning in the chapter about practical and operational strategies. The basic logic of the study route was firstly, to highlight the overall recommendations of the three concepts of lifelong education, lifelong learning, and learning society from the six aspects, including social laws, organizations, certifications, finance, time, and public opinions. For lifelong education, this book has suggested corresponding reform proposals for each level and each kind of education development form, and focused on the explanation of development strategy of the adult education area. (Gao, 2005, 2ff).

The monographs, on the whole, were more advantageous for comparative studies of different countries, because they collected more research and thorough analysis concerning the specific characteristics of different countries (Mu & Yang, 2011, pp3-5). These kinds of analysis and introductions are more persuasive than just an article and also have offered researchers more vivid and comprehensive ideas about lifelong learning in the international context. Therefore, the monographs on lifelong learning can transfer and spread their ideas and researching results with much more effectiveness.

Although these research results have stimulated interest by many Chinese scholars on the practice and the promotion model of lifelong learning and have provided plenty of information and data for later studies, the current researches have been stagnating and remain on the surface of lifelong learning situations and theories. Moreover, national-wide, the research and practices of lifelong learning has not been given sufficient attention and there is a lack of necessary theoretical and systematic understanding and reflection to the basic problems. This includes defining the basic meaning of lifelong learning, the dimensions for dividing lifelong learning into different types, and the individual and social impact from different lifelong learning concepts and

models. The system and establishment of a development model for lifelong education in China are far behind the developed countries and can not meet the current needs of people. When conducting a search in China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), only 198 articles are specially and purely focused on lifelong education in China, some of which stay on the level of theoretical analysis when it comes to building the lifelong system, rather than putting concepts into concrete practice. The discussion about the mechanism construction stays at the macro-level, and therefore fails to give clear and concrete measures for implementation. Also there is not a mature mode with Chinese characters for lifelong learning of different social groups (Mu & Yang, 2011, pp3-5).

In recent years, the lifelong learning research in China is still in the initial stages, although increased international communications have made this a topic of increasing concern in Chinese academia. Neither the amount, nor the quality of the research related to lifelong learning could catch up with the researches in Europe, the United States or Japan, due to the blind spots of the researches. Basically there is a lack of introduction of developing process and significance of lifelong learning (Liu, 2005). Most importantly, but ignored by the researchers, is the background conditions necessary for lifelong learning to flourish in a society, and finding the methods of waking up the demanding the interest of the citizens in the whole nation for lifelong learning. In addition, there are few academic articles carried out from the perspective of individual's daily life on lifelong learning in China, and no mature international comparison studies about lifelong learning. This study attempts to make efforts in these aspects that have been lacking in previous research.

1.2.2 The generally situation of lifelong learning in Germany.
From the historical viewpoint, the practice of lifelong learning in Germany has already been broadly implemented, although the theoretical research is not the most advanced compared with some other developed countries (Pang & Meisel, 2004, pp1-4). Since the 1960's, the German government implemented a series of unique lifelong learning policies which not only gave full respect to the diversity and existing tradition of adult learning institutions, but also provided support to educational activities with more diversity and freedom on this basis (Sondermann, 2005). The research entitled 'The planned structure of educational system' already made it clear that 'learning to learn' was the core principle of lifelong learning, continuing education was the key to promoting lifelong learning, and there should be laws to implement the system of Education Vacation with paid leave (Gao, 2007, p95). In 1990, the German Federal Parliament released the important policy document named 'Zukünftige Bildungspolitik-Bildung 2000' (The Future Educational Policy-Education 2000), which involved a wide range, of lifelong learning programming in Germany and as a blueprint for Germany's education mode in the future. This document

proposed that continuing education would be of great significance in the future (Gao, 2007, 95; Ohidy, 2009). After that, continuing education has been constantly emphasized and implemented as fourth German educational field. In 1995, the German Technology Research and Innovation committee published the 'Information society: opportunity, innovation and challenges,' in order to address the difficulties of living with a knowledge-based economy in the information age. In this document, the development of self-directed, lifelong learning philosophy has been emphasized (Wu, 2007, 20ff). The development and application of information and communication technology have also been referred to be as tools and methods for the lifelong learning progress. In 2000, 'Lifelong learning in the whole nation: expanding and intensifying the continuing education' was published and stated that lifelong learning would be the main objective of development and innovation of the German education system in the future, and proposed many strategies to promote lifelong learning and expand continuing education. This indicates that Germany's lifelong learning policy had been basically formed (Gao, 2007, 95; Ohidy, 2009).

In 1996, after the OECD had put forward the concept of lifelong learning, was the first time that lifelong learning was really attached great importance in the modern German educational system. It was believed that lifelong learning could help with solving domestic social problems, such as higher unemployment rate and demands on improvement of compensation of vocational skills by normal citizens, with further promotion of vocational skills and social adaptability. Reducing unemployment and encouraging economic development were the basic and fundamental driving forces for the implementation and promotion of lifelong education by the central and local government in Germany at that time (Wu, 2007, 34ff). Now, it has become the consensus of the community that "pre-education is the preparation, post-education is the development" (Wu, 2007, 34ff). To realize the ideal lifelong learning and the learning society, the German government implemented a series of lifelong learning policies and measures, and gave strong support to laws, institutions, technology, and environments that encouraged lifelong learning. The policies and programs for lifelong learning in Germany, such as variable sources of investment in education, assistance systems for individuals' continuing education, the development of self-directed lifelong learning, the higher education for the public, etc., have all showed the advantages and progress of the lifelong education system in Germany (Ohidy, 2009). The following introductions describe the lifelong learning policies and practices in Germany:

(1) The general policies and the system of lifelong learning in Germany.
The German educational theory has always paid attention to each member in the society; therefore, after adults enter their professional lives, society gives

them a chance to have courses whose level range from the elementary to the university, if they want to pursue continuing education. This is also a good chance for them to improve their own capability in order to adapt social pressures and challenges. This is the so-called "the second education road" (Tian, 2006). It is known that the traditional school system in the past in Germany was like a linear model from primary school, to middle school, to university (Tian, 2006). This kind of schooling system had been described as a "single-way bridge" meaning that the one who failed to enter middle school after the graduation from elementary school would lose the opportunity to obtain a university education. In this education system, most normal citizens could reach university graduation. After the World War II, the public required the government to provide higher education opportunities for adults who were already employed. This lead to the development of the second educational way for those employed adults who were willing to learn further. This second way aimed at linking vocational education and regular higher education by developing vocational higher school (Kloas, 2006). This opened up various paths and options from primary schools, vocational schools, vocational higher schools or specialized higher school, to universities (Kloas, 2006). Learners could change their learning steps in such a system without any obstacles. In addition, the pre-university education at night and full-time pre-university education were the two main education forms which offered higher education opportunities for adults over the age of 19 specifically. The former required that applicants who wanted to participate in the pre-university examination had already finished the systematic learning of vocational education or had professional experience which lasted for more than three years, and then studied the regular course for more than three years in night school. The difference with the latter was that participants studied full-time and the length of schooling was five years (Hadjar & Becker, 2006). This kind of educational system, which has offered sufficient vocational education opportunities, has undoubtedly had an important social significance. Society's demands for skilled and educated citizens were met to a certain extent.

The system of so called 'with paid leave' has been implemented in Germany according to the 'Promotion Act for Adult Education' from the 1970's (Wu, 2007, 40ff), which entitles workers to educational vacation for about 10 days, in order to make sure all workers have time to learn each year, no matter how busy they are with work (Sondermann, 2005). During the educational vacation, each worker could learn about a wide range of topics, not only limited to vocational education. Due to the negative attitudes from laborers and capitalists, both of whom could not see the immediate interest or wish to pay time or money for extra learning activities, this kind of educational system and reform was not optimally effective.

There was also the assistance system which helped with personal continuing

education. The German government has published 'The Federal Ministry Promotion Act for Education and Training' in 1971 in order to encourage citizens to participate in continuing education individually, and especially provided educational assistance to individuals who took part in the lifelong learning (Li, 2004). The concrete form of this kind of economic assistance was to grant scholarships to individuals who participated in continuing education in accordance with this act (Hagestad, 1989). The amount of the scholarship depended on the specific form of continuing education which the person took part in (Li, 2004). If a person chose college or university continuing education, he or she would be financed by a combined approach of funding. In this way, the demands for continuing learning were increased. However, this stimulus policy based on economic encouragement could not fundamentally drive each person to learn from his or her own heart. However, this was still a tool which could be used to stimulate the learning aspirations for a while (Ohidy, 2009).

There were also other policies which have been used to develop the continuing learning by ordinary citizens, such as in the 1990 report by Research Committee of the German Federal Parliament 'The education policy in the future: Education 2000,' which provided advices and directions for education policy in the future. Continuing education, lifelong education and lifelong learning were important themes of this report (OECD, 2014, pp6-7). The report emphasized the concept that everyone should have the access to education and equal access to education throughout life. It also stated that higher education institutions should allow equal opportunities to anyone who wanted to receive an education, no matter gender or age (Wu, 2007, 40ff).

From the inner logic of German learning theory and philosophy, it can be found that the main starting and basic point of learning is based on the requirements from each citizen in the society. In other words, the development of "self-directed capacity of lifelong learning" is an important concept in the process of building a learning community in Germany (Tian, 2006). The use of modern information technology, such as multimedia learning tools, greatly promoted the practice of this concept. In 1995, Germany published the report 'Information society: opportunity, innovation and challenges' which emphasized that each phase and form of education should actively make use of modern information technology which make the communication with each other easier and ultimately form an information society in the future, in order to train citizens to have a self-directed capacity for lifelong learning and using and benefitting from media (Wu & Huang, 2008, 25ff; Pang & Meisel, 2004, 10ff).

In 1997, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research made the report entitled 'Lifelong Learning: the situation and prospects of vocational continuing education' in the Federal Parliament. It emphasized that education policy must enable vocational continuing education to become an integrated

part of the whole education system and that lifelong learning was so extremely necessary that everyone would be encouraged and supported to participate (Barz & Tippelt, 2004, 12ff). In 1996, the German government passed the "Promotion Act for Continuing Education" to motivate the lifelong learning behaviors and willpower of the workers and labors (Wu & Huang, 2008, 25ff).

(2) The lifelong learning practices in Germany.
The implementation of learning festival, which promotes the development of new learning culture, is one of the main features of German lifelong learning process. Since 1998 Germany has conducted an annual national learning festival with the theme such as "Building and developing continuing education". This kind of learning festival is aimed at the development of adult education in order to achieve the ideal of lifelong learning throughout the whole country (Barz & Tippelt, 2004, 5ff). The word "festival" here was mainly to stimulate people's curiosity for learning; so that the public could understand the true meaning and significance of learning. As a result of such a festival activity, more and more people were regarding learning as a lifestyle (Wu & Huang, 2008, 28ff). In addition, people should realize that learning can be a pleasurable activity and one that should be celebrated. The main purpose of the learning festival in Germany was to create more learning opportunities, stimulating interest in each continuing education institution, establish a new learning culture, and finally, to achieve the ideal of lifelong learning in the entire nation (Aspin, et al, 2001).

Not only the society and government, but higher colleges and universities as well have increased the opportunities for lifelong learning. There is a long history for this emphasis on the higher colleges and universities for the public in Germany, as from the law of section 148 of 'Weimar Constitution' in 1919 "The public education in the Federal, states and rural areas, including higher colleges and universities should all be promoted...and emphasized as adult and lifelong education institutions in Germany" (Hagestad, 1989). Adults were the main attendees of higher colleges and universities, which provided abundant and diverse curriculums. Since the 1990's, there has been more flexibility in colleges, with courses offered in days or holidays according to the needs of learners, in addition to the traditional evening courses. It can be said that the public colleges and universities have deservedly become the center of lifelong learning in Germany (Guo, 2010, pp5-8).

There are a variety of institutions providing learning opportunities for the adults in Germany in addition to the public colleges and universities. This education could be known as the social and political continuing education. The kinds of institutions, agencies and organizations which provide lifelong learning opportunities for the public include the rural adult education organization, churches, family education facilities, welfare agencies, the General Federation

of German workers, the German labor unions, the Industrial Operators Federation, the Consumer Unions, private schools and research institutions, universities, correspondence university, communication education agencies, education seminars on the radio and television, the political parties, and federal political education center (Guo, 2010, pp5-8; BMBF, 2012).

The vocational continuing education has been also developing along with the evolution of industry and economy in the country. In Germany, citizens involved in the vocational continuing education activities could obtain assistance payments provided by the federal Labor Bureau (BMBF, 2012). There are a number of institutions specifically dedicated to the implementation of vocational continuing education in Germany. The general vocational education schools and labor unions can offer vocational education or training courses to the public citizens or employees (Guo, 2010, pp5-8). These programs and institutions created the developed vocational continuing education system in Germany with the features of lifelong and recurrent education.

According to the Report VII in 2000, the participation rate in continuing education in Germany increased year by year onwards from the 1990's (BMBF, 2012). This rate is an important indicator of the implementation effectiveness of lifelong learning (Guo, 2010, pp5-8). The German educational institutions investigate and analyze the citizens' participation in continuing education every two years and proposed 'The Report of Continuing Education System'. The findings show that every year, about half of adult Germans participate in formal continuing education activities nowadays (Kong, 2007). In addition, the participation amounts of both normal adult education and vocational adult education are much higher than before in Germany (Kong, 2007).

According to the available information and materials, many foreign countries and regions attach great importance to lifelong learning, including Germany. The government and society as a whole has emphasized research and investigation of opinions, activities and practices associated with lifelong learning in the daily life. There are many surveys about people's daily lives, jobs, and self-improvement resulting from lifelong learning (Kong, 2007). In this way, the development of lifelong learning in Germany has been rapid and contributed to international trends in lifelong learning. Therefore, the comparison research on German and Chinese lifelong learning can be references for each other. Especially China can draw inspiration from the German system of lifelong learning, which is already advanced.

1.3 The significance of this research

The expected effect and significance of this research are as follows:

1.3.1 The theoretical significance

The dissemination of ideas and theories on lifelong learning was an important achievement in the development of the educational history during the 20th century. The result was an expansion and improvement of the education system, national awareness of the importance of education, but also a democratization of education. The democratic ethos in the modern society is that there should be equal educational opportunities for everyone, protection of educational fairness, and promotion of each individual's self-realization (Zhou, 2006, p12). Each step of development and improvement of education and learning will promote the social progress as a result. During these four decades, residents in many countries and regions have been gradually understanding and accepting the concept of lifelong learning, and also extensively carrying out a variety of lifelong learning practices and activities. However, lifelong learning covers so many aspects and there are great differences in the societal realities and historical background among nations (Zhou, 2006, p12). So the question becomes, in what way can a country effectively promote its residents' lifelong learning and encourage the attention of researchers to this topic?

The awareness of the importance of lifelong learning in China has been stimulated since the early 1980s. This consciousness was a kind of result of the introduction of the lifelong learning theory from the western world. From then on, the amount of Chinese research on lifelong learning has been growing rapidly and the subject has deepened gradually (Jiang, 2014). However, after integrating and analyzing the existing research results, we can clearly find that the recent research mainly takes lifelong learning as an idea or a concept to accept, but it is rare to find related research which regards lifelong learning as a pursuit of the whole life, even seldom in specialized educational policies research (Jiang, 2014). Generally speaking, it is still difficult for readers to grasp the essence and rationality of lifelong learning in a certain foreign country, and sometimes reading articles can lead to further confusion. The lack of an effective, appropriate understanding or analytical framework in the theory researching the course of lifelong learning in China has resulted in the difficulties of acceptance and implementation of lifelong learning by normal people in the modern-day China. In comparison with some foreign countries, like Germany, there was much earlier promotion and develop of the practice of lifelong learning, and so these countries have more experience, and all citizens have a profound understanding and practices with lifelong learning. These citizens can integrate the lifelong learning into their daily life effectively. In the German theoretical field, the studies about lifelong learning and its promotion model began to appear gradually. All of these differences have

inspired new thinking for the comparative studies of lifelong learning between China and Germany.

This study therefore attempts to promote and strengthen the basic research according to the further excavation and deepening of the basic biographical researching method, on the basis of the analysis of the existing German theoretical results. It will be beneficial to our understanding about the "Habitus" (Bourdieu, 1984; Elias, 1998) from the dispersed individuals gradually to the overall groups by systematical analysis and expatiating of individual daily biographies. With this researching principle, we can make it clear about the evolution process of lifelong learning policies, as well as the whole process of implementation of the lifelong learning in Germany. It is easy for us to establish a basic macro understanding of the development process of lifelong learning in Germany scientifically. Another aim of the study is to sort out and analyze the existing theoretical research results in Germany, and to broaden and enrich the international comparative study of lifelong learning directly, so as to grasp the direction and trend of international development of lifelong learning. The exploration and discrimination of lifelong learning theory and related theories, such as lifelong education and learning society and other related problems, could also lead to a new growth point of theory. Along with the further expansion and deepening of the basic theoretical research, we could know and understand lifelong learning policies and its promotion model with a more comprehensive and objective attitude and this will eventually offer us theoretical guidance for the practice more scientifically and appropriately.

1.3.2 The practical significance

The Chinese scholars have gradually begun the discussion of lifelong education and lifelong learning since the 1990's. It is clear that many of the government working reports have already mentioned the theories of lifelong learning and required more attention by the citizens. The academic research on this topic has rapidly progressed, and the research results have been abundant. All these developments have provided positive encouragement for the spread of ideas and implementation of policies to promote lifelong learning (Wang, 2003). However, the current studies have following the polarization characteristics: on the one hand, the government and scholars vigorously propagandize the concept of lifelong learning, interpret a variety of theories, and deepen the theoretical studies, but the proposed policies and recommendations belong mostly to advocacies, such as strengthening the propaganda of lifelong learning ideas, speeding up the relevant legislation, increasing the financial security and intensity. However among these policies there is a lack of a logical link, and it is difficult to provide a substantive reference for the government to constitute and implement lifelong learning laws and plans (Yu & Li, 2013, pp79-80); on the other hand, many studies are too concentrated in micro- and technical levels, such as introducing and

researching varieties of specific lifelong learning methods, learning technology, learning assessment, credit transfer and time planning, etc., which have paid too much attention to the micro level of the lifelong learning development, but ignored the macro level. Although these technological aspects have many reference effects on the improvement of personal lifelong learning ability and great instructive meaning to the specific strategies from the government on lifelong learning, the macro and micro views need to be better integrated.

It is especially important how we could apply the scientific policies of lifelong learning into the reality. In other words, we should consider how we could make the citizens more conscious, voluntary and independent to accept these ideas and policies in order to make themselves implement lifelong learning in the daily activities subliminally. The hope is that this would eventually achieve gradual self-improvement and more intellectual support for the development of societies. These should be the urgent problems that need to be considered and resolved. The worthy contents in the developing process of German lifelong education should be researched and explored. Then improvements according to the existing state of Chinese should be made by answering the questions: "How should the system of the lifelong education in China be established?", "What should the government, the society, the school, and the volunteer to do to contribute in this system?" and "What are the problems inevitably to be faced in the process and how should they be dealt with?" By putting forward this research result, I hope to demonstrate the possibility of establishing the lifelong education system in China from the theory and practical aspects and suggest concrete and efficient methods to establish and improve the system, for the sake of the tremendous improvement to lifelong education in China. Therefore, this research combines the theory and practice of lifelong learning with the features and functionalities in China and Germany and does related studies about the individual behaviors which give meaning to both theory and practice. This kind of research possibly can offer direct recommendation for further deepening the current lifelong learning studies in China.

This study will implement the methods of comparative and biographical analysis, based on the present theoretical results from foreign countries, especially Germany (Zhang & Wang, 2004, p21). The primary work of this research, such as the systematic analysis and generalization of the development process of lifelong learning policies among nations, will benefit us to easily grasp the whole evolution process in order to establish a basic understanding of lifelong learning policy and to provide more scientific and appropriate theoretical guidance for practice (Zhang & Wang, 2004, p21). The comprehensive combination and integration of foreign research results will directly broaden and enrich the international comparison studies of lifelong education in China, contribute to discussion and exploration of lifelong

education from a new perspective, and grasp the forefront developments in related fields in the world. The research into promotion and enhancement of lifelong education and other fundamental issues may lead to a new growth field of theory research to further expand and strengthen the basis of relevant practical research, which will enable us to acknowledge and comprehend the meaning of lifelong education in reality with a more comprehensive and objective attitude. The classification surveys and studies to different populations and ethnicities will help to frame realistic policy and measures in accordance with the requirements of different groups of society for lifelong education.

2. Lifelong learning as challenging concept in the modern society.

Before the research on concrete lifelong learning situations in different counties, it is necessary to define lifelong learning, and explain how it works in modern society and effects people's daily life. In addition, the historical background, evolution, characteristics of lifelong learning and other factors along these lines should be clarified. What is more, the differences between lifelong learning, learning society and lifelong education must be clarified. Finally, the aspects which China should learn from the lifelong learning system in Germany should also be discussed further and much deeper. To explore these issues in-depth will be beneficial and meaningful for our understanding the international trends and development of lifelong learning today. At the same time, this discussion should be conducive to gaining a deep apperception and awareness of the importance of lifelong learning during the human development process.

2.1 The formation and development of the lifelong learning concept.

Along with the flourishing development of the "learning society" concept, as well as the understanding and acceptance of this notion worldwide by not only governments, but also individuals in the society, the concept of lifelong learning has been gradually established by active promotion and advocacy by international organizations (Zhu & Gao, 2014, pp50-51). The following will describe the main developing stages of lifelong learning notion in each different era.

(1) The main theoretical groundwork for the formation of the lifelong learning concept.
The concepts of lifelong learning and education underwent a long period of theoretical development in order to reach worldwide recognition and acceptance today. In 1965, UNESCO organized the Third International Conference on Adult Education in Paris, in which Paul Lengrand, UNESCO's Adult Education Program Director, formally submitted a proposal on lifelong education to the conference. He later published a book 'Lifelong Education Introduction' in 1970, which established and spread the lifelong education concept worldwide. Then in 1972, UNESCO published 'Learning to Be', which developed the concept further. Finally, the lifelong learning concept reached maturity with the report 'Learning: The Treasure Within' published by UNESCO in 1996 (Chen, 2006, p249).

After several years of promotion, people's understanding of education has undergone enormous changes. The traditional view on education has been subverted. Nowadays, education and learning are no longer synonymous with school or limited to the activities of a particular stage in schools or universities. People's lives should be accompanied by education from birth to death, rather than education being only the "prerogative" of children and adolescents (Chen, 2006, p249). According to the traditional view, it is believed that only children and young people have the ability to learn. The activity of learning was regarded as a privilege of children and adolescents. There was the incorrect attitude that with age, the learning ability of adults would suffer a decline (Zhu & Gao, 2014, pp50-51). However, the lifelong learning concept, which advocates that learning should be continued throughout life, has changed people's traditional understanding of education and broken the concept of dividing man's life into the absolute learning stages and working stage. It has also subverted the traditional concept of learning as a privilege for children and adolescents (Lengrand, 1988, pp2-10).

The core idea of lifelong learning is that education and learning should be a continuous process with the purpose of comprehensive development of the individuals, the precondition of which should be the continuous learning from childhood to death. It is believed that learning has always been regarded as a lifelong and eternal topic for human life and society. With this notion, lifelong learning should be attached great importance, not only for the development of society and economy, but for the progress of one's own life as well.

(2) The further development of the lifelong learning concept.
The appearance of the concept of the learning society has shifted the focus from education to learning, and provided an important opportunity for the development of the concept of lifelong learning (Chen, 2006, 251). In 1968, Robert Maynard Hutchins published the book 'Learning society' which put forward the concept of the learning society (Hutchins, 1968, 2ff). In 1969, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education issued a report entitled 'Towards a learning society'. The concept of the learning society was officially formed at this point. In 1970, UNESCO promoted a new interpretation on education, which emphasized that the education today in the world should have the lifelong character (Zhu & Gao, 2014, p52). Based on these three symbolic documents and interpretations, the new concept of lifelong learning has been widely spread and the modern educational system moved in a lifelong, national and democratic direction (Zhu & Gao, 2014, pp52-53).

From the basic idea of the book 'Learning society,' we could find that Hutchins advocates that a learning society could be established by continuous learning of everyone, with the purpose of realizing the true value of life. The discussion of this theoretical issue eliminated the long-standing misunderstanding of the

role of learning in the modern society, and allowed the concept of lifelong learning to develop (Zhai, 2004).

(3) The driving force and pioneer of the development of the concept of lifelong learning

In the 1970s, the learning problems caused great concern in the world. The report 'Learning to Be' submitted by Edgar Faure pointed out that although a person is constantly being educated in the whole life, he should gradually become to be the subject, rather than an object. The report also predicted that society in the future a learning society will eventually come true, and the society in the future should be a learning society; therefore, lifelong and constant learning for a person will be possible and necessary. It also mentioned the social demands for well-rounded persons, who could be trained and educated only by comprehensive lifelong education, will be gradually increasing along with the personal growing experiences (Faure, 1972).The report has linked the notion of "lifelong learning" with "Learning to Be", and considered that a human's survival is an endless process of improvement and learning. This report has clearly referred to the three mutually related basic notions of "lifelong education", "lifelong learning" and "learning society" (Zhu & Gao, 2014).

Since then, 'A report on the development of adult education' was adopted by UNESCO at the 19th plenary meeting in Nairobi, Africa in November 1976. With the assistance of UNESCO, the OECD, the EU, and other international organizations and institutions, the concept of lifelong learning has held the attention of the world continuously (Hodgson, 2000, pp1-3) This focus continued when the EU decided that 1996 was the "Lifelong learning year" (Zhu & Gao, 2014). Jacques Delors, the of chairman of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century of UNESCO, submitted a report entitled 'Learning: The Treasure Within' in 1996, advocating lifelong education as the dominant ideology for the formulation of education policy, and regarded protection of lifelong learning opportunities as the important goal of the education development in the 21st century. The meeting held in Koln in June, 1996 by the eight economic powers of the world, including the United Kingdom, the United States, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, Canada, and other countries, agreed to promote public education throughout the world, and made certain that the development of lifelong education is a priority (Chen, 2012).

The important opportunity for transformation of lifelong education to lifelong learning marks the tremendous development of a learning society (Li, 2012). Therefore, the–notions of lifelong learning, lifelong education and learning society correlate with each other and become a unifying whole.

2.2 The definition of lifelong learning.

Since the introduction of the concept of lifelong learning, there have been many different definitions expressing different opinions on the topic. The most common definitions are listed below:

(1) The American research advisory team for the needs of adult lifelong learning pointed out in 1978 that lifelong learning implicates the meaningful and purposeful activities which can add to human knowledge, develop skills, and correct outlooks and values throughout life (Li, 2012). The forms and methods of implementing lifelong learning could be flexible and variable. It can be carried out in the period of formal educational circumstance, such as schools, or can also occur in the period of informal educational circumstance, such as the home or workplace (Li, 2012). The teachers of lifelong learning could be professional educators or other knowledgeable individuals, such as skilled artisans, producers or peers. The teaching material could be from traditional textbooks, any other books, or new technology, such as computers or television. The learning experience may occur in the classroom or other settings, such as museums or excursions (Gao, 2005, pp20-21).

(2). The Chinese Professor Zhimin Gao, a scholar of adult education in the Eastern China Normal University, believes that lifelong learning should contain seven characteristics. Without lifelong learning, there would be neither many personal real life experiences in the society, nor great life quality. Under the idea of lifelong learning, learners become increasingly more the subjects rather than the objects as they were in the past. Lifelong learning is based on the learners' autonomy and it is a comprehensive process. It exists across all corners of human life. Lifelong learning mainly aims to build self-confidence and the ability to adapt oneself to the changes in society (Gao, 2005, 12ff).

From the presentation above, we can find that the similarities in descriptions on lifelong learning include an orientation towards people, universal acceptance without discrimination, and promoting the integrated development of people. As for the learning space, it is a comprehensive and universal learning network which combines families, schools, communities, and society. These definitions emphasize the importance of non-formal learning in a variety of different contexts, and that learning methods should cater to the needs of the learners their unique cognitive style (Guo, 2010, pp21-23). The main learning contents should aim at establishing self-confidence and capacity, to help individuals adapt to changes in society, and improve the professional capacity (Guo, 2010, pp21-23). Therefore, we can find that the basic thoughts on lifelong learning nowadays in different counties have reflected their own wishes and demands on the forms and functions of lifelong learning to change the traditional learning style. They also hope the notions of "Learning to know",

"Learning to live together", "Learning to do" and "Learning to be" could remain basic principles of lifelong learning (Wang, 2003, pp67-69).

In summary, the general definition of lifelong learning could be that lifelong learning is a kind of destination of learning activity which runs throughout one's life. It means that an individual should have an ongoing study starting from birth till death (Zhai, 2004). Also it contains formal, non-formal, and informal learning types (Alheit, 2009, 116), such as the learning behaviors which are influenced by the performance and activities of human social life naturally and instinctively, as well as spontaneous, unplanned, accidental and unconscious learning behavior in this environment (Werquin, 2010).

According to the explanation by Alheit (2009, p117) and definition by the Commission of the European Communities (2000, p8), the formal, non-formal and informal learning processes have the essences as follows:

--To the formal learning processes that take place in the classical education and training institutions and which usually lead to recognized diplomas and qualifications (Alheit, 2009, p117 & Commission, 2000, p8).
--To the non-formal learning processes that usually take place alongside the mainstream systems of education and training – at the workplace, in clubs and associations, in civil society initiatives and activities, in the pursuit of sports or musical interests (Alheit, 2009, p117 & Commission, 2000, p8).
--To informal learning processes that are not necessarily intentional and which are a natural accompaniment to everyday life (Alheit, 2009, p117 & Commission, 2000, p8).

Although traditional learning with purpose, objectives, plans, and development strategies (Guo, 2010, pp21-23), named "formal learning" or "intentional learning," is quite important for daily life the importance of informal and non-formal learning should also be emphasized. Both formal and informal learning have positive significance for lifelong learning and could be included in the system of lifelong learning (Alheit, 2009, 116).

2.3 The essential characteristics of lifelong learning.

Until now, there was no unified view on the essential characteristics of lifelong learning. However, based on the interpretation of lifelong learning, it is a kind of method for each individual in the society to explore his or her potential at anytime in life and anywhere through his learning experiences and behaviors. The government, as well as society (or private sector) should provide good learning facilities and resources for the aim of promoting the comprehensive development of its citizens. These resources should encourage lifelong learning as a kind of independent and creative learning experience that helps

learners survive in a rapidly changing society. Therefore, the three essential characteristics are that the learning is social, individually motivated, and spanning across the lifetime (Yang, et al, 2012, pp7-9),

Firstly, lifelong learning emphasizes that learning system should be opened up to all ordinary individuals. The method to promote this equity in the education system is contacting all of the institutions and organization which have the function of education and determine how to comprehensively promote and improve the cultural knowledge and skills of all members in society (Guo, 2010, p23). In this way, lifelong learning advocates that learning practices should be undergone in the context of the development of modern society and also emphasizes equal opportunities on learning (Guo, 2010, p22). The social character of lifelong learning will eventually promote the formation of the learning communities (Guo, 2010, p22).

Secondly, lifelong learning emphasizes that the individual should be the center of learning procedure. According to this view, learning is not only regarded as a kind of social behavior, but also as a style of living (Guo, 2010, p22). Everyone in the society should accept all kinds of knowledge and skills needed to adapt to the social development and self-improvement at any time or any place in life. Therefore, lifelong learning, by nature, connects people with society and the outside environment (Guo, 2010, p24). In other words, no one could learn without the influence of the unique place where he or she is living. This is a kind of social activity in which individuals improve their awareness and behavior, so as to continuously enhance the cultural accomplishment, social experience, and professional competence through continuous learning in their life, with the help of social supports and guidance (Guo, 2010, p22).

Thirdly, lifelong learning should last for the whole lifespan. It means human life is a process of learning and education (Ji, 2002, 14ff). According to continuous learning, an individual can always obtain the abilities to improve him or herself along with the development of the modern technologies and skills, in order to adapt to social development, and ultimately promote the social development and human's comprehensive development. We can use 'biography,' which is a research method with emphasis on the life course from birth to death, or a certain period, to describe the whole lifelong learning story by each individual and explain it via social language and interpretations (Endruweit & Trommsdorff, 2014, pp68-70).

2.4 The significance of lifelong learning

Each member in the society has to learn how to implement lifelong learning in daily life in order to adapt to rapid social development continuously. Lifelong learning should be regarded as one of the most urgent needs of the human

society in the future (Lu & Li, 2013, pp80-81). The lifelong learning concept has reformed the traditional concept of learning in the aspects outlined below.

Firstly, it has improved the learning content and style. Lifelong learning is neither a simple extension of the traditional school learning, nor completely denying the existence and value of school education. Rather it includes richer contents and more diverse forms of learning experience based on the school learning (Lu & Li, 2013, pp80-81). It could help individuals learn to survive. This is a process which makes it possible for the learners to have their personalities fully and harmonious developed, enables each person's potential to be fully realized, and inspires people to get all the knowledge, values, skills and understandings they need in their whole life. Therefore, from its essence, it allows ordinary people to adapt to the society actively, and eventually fully confirms and embodies the respect of the human value (Lu & Li, 2013, pp80-81).

Secondly, personal and social developments have been promoted together by lifelong learning. Lifelong learning embraces the aim of learning for better social life and physical and mental harmony of the individual. Lifelong learning, as a way of life, aims at the adaptation to the quick changes in society (Ji, 2002, pp17-20). The guiding ideology of lifelong learning is the unselfish and open learning which bases on the purpose of liberation of mind and self-growth. One of the aims of lifelong learning is to help participants to be self-guided individuals with critical and creative thinking (Ji, 2002, pp17-20). Furthermore, lifelong learning is becoming a necessary responsibility for surviving in this world, and also a way of life which humans will lead in the future society (Guo, 2010, p23).

Thirdly, the requirement for economic and technological development nowadays could only be satisfied with the help of lifelong learning (Zhong & Wang, 2009, pp35-36). With the rapid development of economics and modernizations nowadays, it is impossible for a human to fulfill all of the various lifelong demands inside and outside the work setting with the knowledge and skills learned by just one period of formal education. In the past, slow social development and lower productivity meant that the traditional educational system was sufficient. However, the continuous progress of modern society, politics, economics, technology and culture, means that people find themselves always in a rapidly changing and developing society (Zhang & Duan, 2013), which requires them to continue to receive education and training again and again in order to adapt to the new situation in the world and be competent in their social responsibilities.

Fourth, the average lifespan has lengthened and mortality is declining with each country's rapid economic development and improvement of the

environment and conditions for living. This means many countries have an increasing proportion of elderly citizens (Zhong & Wang, 2009, 36ff). With continuous development of natural and social sciences, the knowledge which is acquired by humans continues to be increased, deepened and enriched rapidly. Even if there are some elderly people who had primary, secondary and university education, which typically spans 14 years to 18 years, the knowledge and skills they have acquired become outdated and cannot meet the needs of the social life nowadays. In addition, some knowledge and skills have been devalued because they are not suited to the modern situation of economic and social development (Xu, & Bie, 2003). All of these problems require the elderly to continue to complement and expand their existing knowledge, in order to adapt to development and continue to be the useful human resources in the family, society and the state (Xu, & Bie, 2003). It is said that people are never able to graduate in a constantly updated and changing world. This describes the reality that the elderly need lifelong learning (Xu, & Bie, 2003).

Fifth, learners could be regarded as the core of the learning procedure under the idea of lifelong learning. Learning activity must be self-directed by learners, which is in contrast to the traditional teaching method and style in which students are passive recipients of knowledge. This restricts the body and mind of learners and represses the intrinsic interest of learners in learning, eventually leading to less thirst for knowledge and the disappearance of critical and creative mind (Yu & Li, 2013). The essence of the problem is that the learning activities oriented by teachers and based on teachers' guidance result in only unidirectional learning, and mental state of conformity and obedience to the orders from teachers. Ultimately the ability to criticize has been forgotten (Yu & Li, 2013). The new idea of lifelong learning, which adapts to the social development completely, can replace the ineffective education system mentioned above, and bring education back to life (Bie & Xu, 2005). Learners can fully demonstrate the initiative and creativity during this process. In addition, it is believed that not only the experts and scholars, but each learner is creator of knowledge and culture as well (Bie & Xu, 2005). Meanwhile, lifelong learning regards the learners' learning behaviors, not only as a kind of social behavior, but also as a lifestyle.

However, from the essence and function of lifelong learning, we can also find it has the double-edged effects. Lifelong learning does not only mean a kind of motivation for individuals, who can learn with this notion with enough self willingness and freedom, but also a kind of pressure which makes people's learning to be necessary and compulsory. From the out factors, we can see that "the expectations of the 'knowledge society' are raising the pressure on individuals to meet certain standards of skill and knowledge before they can be employed" (Alheit & Dausien, 2002, p10). This notion has also been proved by

the OECD's forecast (OECD, 1997b, p1) which has expressed this situation quite clearly:

For those who have successful experience of education, and who see themselves as capable learners, continuing learning is an enriching experience, which increases their sense of control over their own lives and their society. For those who are excluded from this process, however, or who choose not to participate, the generalization of lifelong learning may only have the effect of increasing their isolation from the world of the 'knowledge-rich'. The consequences are economic, in under-used human capacity and increased welfare expenditure, and social, in terms of alienation and decaying social infrastructure.

Therefore, in a 'learning society', there would be a "small majority of 'winners', serving a 'life sentence' to learn", and there would be definite "a growing minority of 'losers' who never had a chance, or who voluntarily liberated themselves from the straitjacket of having to perpetually acquire and market new knowledge" (Alheit & Dausien, 2002, p10). Based on this analysis, lifelong learning has close relationship also with the social class diversification.

2.5 The reason of referencing German lifelong learning experience.

Germany's economic strength ranks among the first in Europe, so they are a strong representative of the developed, industrialized countries in Europe. There should be a strong educational philosophy and effective educational system which supports this powerful economy. The German government and the general public generally agree with the lifelong learning idea and thinking, and they believe that it is an important way of promoting economic development and keeping the continued progress of society (Zhong & Wang, 2009, pp34-35). And as a result, the adult education is the embodiment and vivid characterization lifelong learning. The data shows that 94% of participants in adult education in Germany consider that everyone should accept and carry on adult education. 92% of them believe that adult education and lifelong learning are important guarantees for an individual's success in his or her career. In short, in Germany, it has become a universal social understanding that "education is the key to develop own character, participate in social life, and promote the professional development" (UNESCO, 2009, 16-18).

Generally speaking, there are different lifelong learning motivations in China and Germany. The basic theoretical backgrounds of these differences are described below.

The conditions generated by a knowledge society in the making render classical teaching-learning settings problematic- above all, the idea that accompanied the 'first career' of the lifelong learning label in the early 1970s – according to the human capital theory (Alheit, 2009, pp120-121). According to this theory, the investment in education and training has its specific performance on the length of full-time schooling. This theory also assumed that extending the schooling duration will have positive impacts on willingness to engage in lifelong learning (Schuller, 1998; Field, 2000, p.135). However, a number of recent empirical studies, particularly in Great Britain (Tavistock Institute, 1999; Schuller and Field, 1999), provide evidence of the opposite; that extending primary schooling, without drastic changes to the conditional framework and the quality of the learning process, led, in the majority of cases, a loss of motivation and attitude that is in no way conducive toward learning (Alheit, 2009, pp120-121), especially self-directed learning in later phases of life. Such circumstances tend to suppress rather than encourage learning (Schuller & Field, 1999) (Alheit, 2009, pp120-121)

According to the analysis above by Peter Alheit, we can find the effective and self-motivated lifelong learning do not originate from the length or regulations on learning periods for individuals; rather, sometimes these rules or regulations have negative effects on the willingness for lifelong learning (Alheit, 2009, p120). This scene depicts the actual schooling situation in China, as most students have to obey rules and regulations made by educational department or schools. It is typical to learn for a certain period and then take part in examinations to reach higher education opportunities. In this way, most Chinese students are motivated to learn in order to reach the advanced education opportunities, rather than motivation coming from interests or enjoyment (Alheit, 2009, p120).

However, along with the development of economy and technology in the current society, the status and position of "individual" become the center of the whole learning system. Economic factors are by no means the only cause; social and cultural changes also play a critical role (Alheit, 2009, pp120-121). Despite the continuation of social inequalities, the bonds to social milieus and class mentalities have become looser (Beck, 1992). Orientations have become more localized and tend to relate more now to unique generational or gender-based experience, to the perception of one's own ethnicity, or even to preferences for certain lifestyles (Alheit, 1999). Increases in the range of information and consumer products available today have dramatically increased the variety of options open to the members of society (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991). Life courses are therefore much less predictable than in the past. Critical decision-making and exposure to changing viewpoints are becoming increasingly important in of the life of the individual (Alheit, 2009,

pp120-121). With this social trend in the modern era, individual learning motivations and interests have been given more importance by a developed society, such as Germany. This calls for more individual and free learning motivations and choices in the German learning process. In this way, the learning belongs to individual, without any worries or considerations of exterior, influential factors or pressures. Therefore, the learning choices and decisions could be more based on personal interests and hobbies. In contrast, the learning situation has been restricted by social and economic situations and technological conditions in developing countries, such as China. In this setting, the learning choices by individuals have to take the outer influential factors more into consideration, and thus their learning choices and decisions seem to be more complex and vague (An, 2013, pp194-195). This is an obvious difference in the driving forces and motivations for lifelong learning in China and Germany.

With the new century, the German society and economy faces new challenges and circumstances. In this context, the adult education in Germany is also in seeking a new strategy to promote lifelong learning.

(1) The driving force for the implementation of lifelong learning in Germany.
After the reunification of East and West Germany, the economy on the whole was in a recession until 2005 (Pan, Liu & Horst, 2008, pp43-45). One of the important reasons is the decline in the proportion of low value-added industrial output. On the contrary, the industry of high-tech production has had significant growth and new economic potentials have been reached from the end of last century (Zhang & Wang, 2004). As a result, the German government and citizens have a profound understanding that workers must master new knowledge and skills in the process of the swift development of new industries and new economic forms (Zhang & Wang, 2004). As for the majority of the hired workers, they must be provided all necessary training courses by society to continuously gain this new knowledge and skill. The need of various forms of education and training were very high for Germans in order to be competent under new circumstances.

Since the 1970's, Germany population growth has slowed, with declining birthrate, resulting in an aging society. The structure of the population will lead to a serious shortage of domestic labor resources, and makes the young adult labor resources especially precious (Zhang & Wang, 2004). There is also a social problem with having a large population of young people under the age of 30 without any professional certifications or qualifications for participating in the workforce in the industrialized information age (Zhang & Wang, 2004). In addition, the nation's immigrant policy has also aggravated and triggered various social conflicts among ethnic groups (Zhang & Wang, 2004). In addition, the education levels of the immigrations are lower than the national

population, and there is a relative shortage and inequality of educational opportunities and resources among immigrants. According to official statistics in Germany, about 50% of the immigrant labor population has never participated in continuing education or vocational training courses (BAMF, 2012, p42-53).

Faced with these urgent needs and problems, both the German Ministry of Education and the local governments consider that it is necessary to focus on the implementation of lifelong learning, with an emphasis on adult education.

(2) The development of lifelong learning in Germany.
The German Adult Education Conference held in January 2007 has mentioned its primary goal for the next five years was to actively promote lifelong learning in order to increase more qualified workers nationwide. A particular focus is to improve the capabilities and integration of the immigrant labor force (Zhang & Wang, 2004). The slogans "Learning new knowledge," "planning for the future," and "unite all people" became central to the goal of lifelong learning during that period (Zhang & Wang, 2004).

Annette Schavan, the German Education Minister at the time, also pointed out that education is a key to career development and the premise of people's involvement in social progress (UNESCO, 2009, pp16-17). Education, in particular the education and training for adult people, is both the right of the individual and the obligation and responsibility of society (EAEA, 2011).

(3) The recognition of the value of lifelong learning and adult education.
At present in Germany, the life course of individuals, especially the professional life, is no longer smooth and unchanging, as in the past (Schavan, 2007). In this context, the key question of education and training is how to meet the continuous learning needs of workers as they undergo career changes. Lifelong learning became an inevitable and necessary process in order to deal with the development requirements of different careers throughout life. In order to realize and practice the concept of lifelong learning, attention must be paid to the training of learning behavior of each individual and the strategy design for education development (Schavan, 2007). The so-called training of learning behavior requires that individuals focus on improving their motivation and learning ability from childhood, which establishes the foundation for good psychological and behavioral development in their adult years. Learners could be provided with effective and far-reaching learning motivation strategies from kindergarten, secondary school, vocational school, and high school education, with the new ideas based on the notion of lifelong learning. The learning motivations should become more active and self-determined (Schavan, 2007).

It is believed that the German workers who lack vocational training or experienced a shorter education experience in their early years would be affected much more than others by adult education and lifelong learning in their future (Schavan, 2007). In this way, adult education and lifelong learning can meet the needs, improve the quality of life, and decrease unemployment of most ordinary laborers, thereby reducing the risk of social chaos and turmoil. With enough training and education, pressures from society could decrease and life enjoyment could increase (Schavan, 2007).

(4) Adult education is the main means of realizing lifelong learning.
The German nations has been aware that the main method for the implementation of lifelong learning should be, and must be, adult education (Gao & Gao, 2007, pp95-96). The new economic sectors create many novel types of careers that promote the development of individuals, economy, and society. It is believed that the learning activities for the majority of adults were becoming increasingly important and meaningful, as people's lives and careers were all undergoing a very big change. Those who do not, or are unwilling, to participate in adult education activities will have less opportunities for career development, and even will be excluded from the process of social development (Schavan, 2007).

Although some adults did not have an effective experience from their first learning phase, the German adult education system is prepared to provide a second, third or more education opportunity for those who are not fully ready to work for various reasons (GFE, 2015). It can be seen from the orientation of adult education that is no longer for the privileged minority, but belongs to the general public with the character of a social wholeness in Germany nowadays. Also, within the German vision, the adult education is extremely important to the future development of its country and society; therefore it must be drawn into the national education system. People must bring all learning opportunities and learning spaces into the plan and design of the education strategy (Schavan, 2007).

(5) Focusing on effect and role of the adult education center in the community.
In Germany, adult education centers in communities might be the largest, broadest, and strongest educational institutions of all so far. Undoubtedly, the adult education centers in community have formed significant advantages and special characteristics in the half century following World War II (Siebert, 1996). There are huge amounts of participants in this educational form and thousands of types of courses have been offered by the centers. The subjects have covered all areas of life and work, as the courses have extended from only providing the public with basic subjects to various areas of vocational skills. The flexibility of the educational mechanisms, various lengths of schooling, and the low-cost for learners are all convenient conditions encouraging the

participation of local people. Based on these characteristics, the adult education centers in the community have been well-received and popularized in each city and area in Germany by normal adults (Ude, 2007). Adult education centers have been also believed to be the most active, best equipped, and most effective organization of all adult education institutions in Germany, ensuring the effective popularization of the national lifelong learning process (Ude, 2007).

(6) There are many assumptions on the development of lifelong learning in Germany.

In order for society to function, young people should be provided with the opportunity for education and training in vocational skills again, especially for those who may have dropped out of the school (Siebert, 1996). The community should not only become the place for the dissemination and transmission of knowledge and skills training, but also the place which can promote the exchange of information, strengthening ethnic integration, and social development. As for the educational institutions, they should make effect use of government investments for specific education and training programs, strengthening the degree of openness to all the societal classes, set up language, culture, and skills training for immigrations, and improve the employability of the vulnerable groups with vocational qualification training (Ude, 2007). The adult education centers and their staff should also be more creative in exploiting more adult education programs based on careful examination of the past experiences of learners, and construct a more specialized and complete adult education system (Ude, 2007).

(7) The new strategies of promoting lifelong learning in Germany.

In Germany, lifelong learning has already played an important role in each social area. It has also promoted the development of adult education greatly (Schavan, 2007). Each state has been urged to develop a complete set of strategies to promote lifelong learning based on existing laws and regulations. Adult education is the core of lifelong learning and should conform to the different life, working, and learning styles of the vast number of learners. In addition, it should ensure that every citizen can enjoy the right to be educated and the opportunity to learn, in order to deal with new challenges that come throughout life (Schavan, 2007). According to the concept of lifelong learning, it will be the tasks of modern society to make great use of a variety of social resources and spaces, construct an education system open to the entire population, create more learning opportunities, and encourage more people to participate in education (Schavan, 2007).

(8) The policy support to encourage participation in lifelong learning by the vulnerable groups.

The population groups which have low income and are considered in the lower

classes often have difficulty showing their intention or willingness to investment in education or learning activities. Therefore, the education and training systems must find ways to try provide at least a low-threshold of schooling opportunities and reduce the cost of learning in order to inspire more people to participate (BMBF, 2012). The future educational strategy must provide the majority of adult learners, especially the ones who face adverse social or economic conditions, with the most readily available and convenient learning opportunities. The government should help with the educational institutions and organizations to vigorously develop new training programs, so that the majority of adult learners possess more learning opportunities and learning subjects (Ude, 2007). Non-formal and informal learning must also receive attention as key components of the lifelong learning system that must be perfected (Song, 2013, p115). The reason for this is that adults with low-level skills are often reluctant to participate in the formal continuing education because of past the negative experiences, such as failure, in previous studies or training. However, they are often very able to obtain knowledge and skills in real work circumstance, living situations, and even club activities with non-formal and informal learning forms (Schavan, 2007). The knowledge and skills, as well as the method of learning, should be gradually accumulated, perfected, evaluated, and recognized, in the proper spaces.

(9) Germany has also implemented project training, enhanced labor skills, and changed the working conditions.
Lifelong learning strategy also aims to implement a series of training programs to help the disadvantaged groups improve their work skills and conditions (BMBF, 2012). One example is the "The Apollo Education project," which has made use of modern information and communication technologies to help eliminate illiteracy (BMBF, 2012). "The Second Chance Online project" has been launched by the German Adult Education Association based on the implementation of the Apollo project, and it aims to build a new learning platform, which provides the necessary learning resources for adults by making use of computers and the internet. The "Adult basic education research and development" project aims to expand the existing compensatory education system for adults, eliminate the obstacles in adult learning, and broaden the extent of basic education, especially the "subsequent further learning" in which adults participate (BMBF, 2012). The "Recognized vocational qualification" project has been created for about 1.3 million Germans under the age of 30 who have not received vocational qualification. The purpose of "The alien to education" project is to promote immigrant adaptation and integration into German culture. The aim of "the Individual counseling for unemployed adults" is to design a new educational counseling system, which has the background of unemployment and job hunting (BMBF, 2012). Obviously, such a counseling system, which serves the workforce, is different from the learning advisory system in the context of general school

education.

(10) The lifelong learning in Germany also cooperates with work experiences in order to enhance the innovation ability of enterprises.

Team learning project has included members of different ages and different nationalities. Learning services project is designed to promote the education and training of employees in enterprises (Gao & Gao, 2007). It is a new learning service system with high efficiency and significance, including study guidance, learning consulting, learning methods and development, and abundant learning resources, which directly results in the improvement of the working efficiency of workers in companies and enterprises. In addition, this project also carries out the investigation and analysis of the relationship between the level of employees' training and the innovation of employers (Gao & Gao, 2007). The German Education Ministry expects that recommendations which apply for various working environments and relate to employees' learning activities could be drawn from these research results. The majority of small and medium-sized companies in Germany do not set up training departments specifically like many other countries, so the help of these recommendations and suggestions the companies and enterprises are likely to have inspiration for improving staff training (BMBF, 2012). Nowadays, under the background of economic globalization, even the white-collar or gold-collar workers need continuous education and training to make sure that can generate new ideas, form new theories, invent new technologies, or create new working processes for research and development (Gao & Gao, 2007). Advanced science and technology are the basis of economic innovation, which can only be achieved by those with superior thinking skills. On this point, the German companies are very good at finding the proper, high-level continuing education institutions for their staffs' training. They also dare to invest in these training courses, while drawing up incentive policies to encourage staff participation (Gao & Gao, 2007).

(11) The development of network technology helps with the promotion of lifelong learning worldwide.

The influence of internet has spread all over the world and each form of society has been affected to the extent that this century is considered the internet era (Schmidt & Rosenberg, 2014). As long as the lifelong learning notion requires improvement and expansion, it has to be integrated with the internet and modern technology. Therefore, the German government plans to develop and use network technology to respond to this urgent need. Based on a profound understanding of the important role of lifelong learning, the German government in recent years has increased investment in adult education gradually over the past 20 years (Gao & Gao, 2007). Recently, it was suggested that a unified national standard should be established for continuing education system. The most representative plan which has been implemented

among all the programs is the "learning zone" project, which aims at realizing the network management of all the country's adult education programs. The core task of which is to evaluate the correspondence degree of the supplies and demands of adult education training activities (Gao & Gao, 2007). Currently, a monitoring study in the project plan is being implemented. In the final stage of the entire project, the German government will promote a model example which is easy and appropriate for implementation and imitation. The specific selection criteria emphasizes the appropriateness of the guidance and consultation methods based on web learning, the universality of measures which aim at promoting adult learning initiatives, and the development and effectiveness of the new areas of adult learning (BMBF, 2012).

(12) Strengthening adult education research.
The adult education ought to be meticulously researched so that the lifelong learning process can be effectively and actively advanced. Based on current needs, the research work should explore three important aspects (Schavan, 2007). Firstly, the innovation of adult learning theory, methods and application, and the policy and experimental study of adult education are necessary. Secondly, the academic and practical research of the construction and development of the adult education system are also important for the whole researching process. All literature research should be based on the theory and ideas guidance of lifelong learning (Song, 2013, pp115-116). Thirdly, it is crucial to stress the integration of the various research resources and the cooperation of the various research factors. The theoretical research and policy studies should have practical and experimental basis and the findings should be tested and examined by practice (Gao & Gao, 2007).

The German government has to strive to develop the Germany education system, especially the adult education system for the majority of workers and adults (Schavan, 2007). The whole society should not just focus on learning courses in classes, diploma courses, or the school curriculum, but also expand our views to the training and diversification of each individual's talents, while forming a new learning culture and constructing a "learning society". This should create a new incentive for education and culture towards learning (Song, 2013, p116).

From all the information and experiences of lifelong learning in Germany, we can see the Chinese can learn a lot about how to construct the lifelong learning system and implement the adult education activities and programs. These German projects have matured and undergone a long period of testing and examination. In contrast, the lifelong learning programs in China fairly new, with few experiences and expert knowledge.

3. The comparison of lifelong and adult education system between China and Germany.

(1) The reasons and theoretical foundations for researching on the macro level.

In Elias' view, the habitus has the characters as universal principles and unit. It is a common and uniform practical principle which has been applied to a variety of different areas throughout life and in social contexts: despite distinct features in the lives of individuals, such as the professional job, clothing, food and drink, artistic preferences, etc., each person in the same society will form a similar practical behavior system, namely the same habitus (Ellias, 1998, pp34-37). The change of national fortune will be reflected by habitus by each citizen. In other works, the change of individual's habitus is based on the change of national or general fortune and process (Ellias, 1998, pp34-37). Due to this, a variety of actions and practices of social people have the feature of "stylistic similarity." (Bourdieu, 1984, 77ff)

Just as an individual's habitus produces a similar style for each person when he or she takes part in various social activities, a collective habitus of the same class or group has made each member such group have a similar nature in action and practice (Ellias, 1998, 2ff). This clearly distinguishes one group from members of other classes or social groups. In this way, we can use the collective habitus to learn about the national character or standard of behaviors in the overall social environment. In other words, we can just regard it on the macro level when doing research and analysis of each aspect of human activities and behaviors.

It should be acknowledged that the habitus is not a born character, but formed in the process of socialization through internalization of outer social structures. In this process, the early learnt social experiences play very important roles in the habitus formation (Ellias, 1998, 2ff). Due to this, people's social origin and their classes' specificities, as well as material and cultural living conditions, tend to leave indelible marks habitus for the entirety of their whole lifetime. In addition, the acquisition of habitus is not entirely through purposeful and conscious education, but more influenced by a "silent education," commonly knowns as a subtle education. Generally, habitus is acquired through observation and imitation. The whole process should be regarded as a kind of integration and reproduction of all the past experiences, individuals are continuously trying to construct new practices and experiences based on such past experiences.

Habitus enables people to generate various new actions and practices within specific boundaries. Therefore, in the study of lifelong learning, we can study

the micro levels to see differences in people's daily activities, such as the educational practices between teachers and students; however; influenced by the unity and universality principles of habitus, all of these practices generally seem like a regulated and guided improvisation based on past learned behaviors. This can only explained and investigated from the macro level long-term study of the general situation in various groups or classes, such as history, economy and laws, etc. in each country.

As a result, when we do research in the form of interviews and narrations with individuals from each social group and country, the general group's features and characters could also be investigated from the individual's habitus, such as daily activities, hobbies, as well as thoughts. Tracing the trajectory of individual's learning and living experiences, we can easily find the similarities and differences, which could prove the existence of a collective habitus in one group or society. Based on this finding, the comparison of different group's collective habitus becomes possible and simple. Therefore, the basic idea comparing lifelong learning situations in different counties, as in this dissertation, is coming from the general comparison of macro conditions in different countries with their unique histories, laws and economic situations.

(2) The theoretical foundation for researching on the meso level:
The meso level focuses on how facilities, strategies, policies, and practices at the institutional level can help support and encourage the development of the lifelong learning process and effectiveness for individuals in society (Johnston & Merrill, 2006). The institution departmental structures and cultures are the main bodies and contents of education at the meso level. All these internal factors of institutions directly relate to the daily education of individuals, since learning behaviors and activities occur in the formal and informal educational institutions or organizations. Therefore, the influences and effects from this meso level should not be neglected by lifelong learning research. Universities and schools are now the main educational institutions providing education, and are engaging with other education providers. Internally, new student groups are now entering the doors of universities as they become available not just to the elite, but also to the masses (Trow, 1973, Scott, 1995). Educational institutions have become more and more open; therefore, institutional boundaries become less tight as the interrelationships with the broader society grow (Barnett, 2003, p27). 'The nature and purpose of universities in post-modernity is, therefore, being questioned, redefined and reconstructed. Yet despite these change processes, hierarchies continue to exist with some universities remaining elite institutions' (Merrill & Alheit, 2004, p153).

The in-formalization of the classical, meso-level institutions, enterprises, and associations, is still in its infancy (Alheit, 1999). In Alheit's opinion, in a civil bargaining process, it is essential to fill and shape the important space

between systemic macro-structures and the biographical micro-world; two spheres which are drifting further and further apart. This involves not only risks of systemic monopolization, but also interesting perspectives for a new civil public sphere (Alheit, 1999). Discussing with individuals the functions and roles of institutions in the process of lifelong learning can also make clear the influences of these institutions on the general lifelong learning situations in a country.

According to the theories by Beck on the "risk society" (Beck, 1992), we can find that from the traditional society to the modern society, the functions and roles of institutions and organizations have transformed along with the era. In traditional times, the concept of "we" has always been focused as the central idea and principle of the society. Each individual in the society and social groups could share this concept (Roxburgh, 2008). In this way, the institution and organizations had a most important status and all concrete and particular structures were shaped around the collective "we". In the early modern societies, however, the concept of "we" has a narrow sense. The public and shared resources became more concretely based on real goods and materials (Roxburgh, 2008). There was little sharing on the spiritual level, but more on hobbies, habits, interests, and needs. In the reflexive, modern society, the "I" become more and more concrete, as autonomous and self-directed life became the main trend of living style in society (Beck, 1992). The social structures of rules and social resources have been reflected by agents and institutions. In this way, the modern educated people required for advancing modernity (Beck, 1992).

Therefore, modern educational institutions of today should create a welcoming and proper environment for the advancement of education, no matter the social classes, groups, ages, genders, etc of the students. As for universities, 'This means looking at the university in terms of interdependent competing coalitions, each seeking to win by imposing their interests on the larger system of the institution as a whole' (Duke, 2004, p201). Each institution should pay attention to the teaching form and contents, as 'there is a strong relationship between the discipline (knowledge community) and the epistemological characteristics of the discipline (knowledge form)' (Bourgeois et al, 1999, p149). Bourdieu's (1984) work on French universities highlights the fact that the social space of the academic field is constructed by both the symbolic capital, which defines the social prestige of a particular discipline, and by intellectual capital, which marks the scientific ranking of the discipline (Johnston & Merrill, 2006). This means the learning environments also choose different people from various classes and social groups, thereby allowing for various learning environments for different people and the personal daily learning life can also vary obviously (Gu, 2004, pp1-5)

In this way, we can see the influence of the institutions in filtering and classifying people into different learning communities in a society. As a result, the learning effects on different people will also vary. This comparison of the effect of institutions on the meso level in a social group or class could be realized. This is the idea that 'academic tribes' are significant in encouraging or discouraging participation of adult students in different educational institutions and phases (Becher, 1989). The relationships of researching on institutions and policies and practices in the social life could be explained as "the differences that are observed in adult access policies and practices across institutions and in sub-units within institutions can, therefore be explained to a large extent in the light of the interplay of power relationships and strategies displayed by the various interest groups in the decision-making processes that underpin these policies and practices" (Bourgeois, 1999, p147).

Therefore, it is also a mission for the research to distinguish the differences of institutions in different countries and compare them to see if there is any better and more mature model of educational institutions for the others to follow. The basic research material is also based on the interviews with individuals in each country, and the most important clues about the style of institutions are hidden in the daily educational activities by individuals. The biographical narration can help us identify details, such as structures, relationships, advantages, and disadvantages, of each form of educational institution.

(3) The reasons and theoretical foundations of researching on the micro level. The increased attention to the role of learners in the educational process is mainly attributed to the influence of constructivist theories, which have been widely spread in education, especially in adult education, since the 1990's (Alheit & Dausien, 2005, 27ff). The fundamental epistemological postulate of constructivism believed that "reality" and "knowledge" are not given empirically, but are only produced by the acquired and formed cognition, which has resulted in educational and self-learning processes (Arnold & Siebert, 1995). Education has been regarded as mediation of a fixed and firm cultural body of knowledge and the constructive activity of learning subjects has been the focus. Didactic concepts are based on the concept that each learner should be regarded as an active designer with their own learning form (Alheit & Dausien, 2005, 27ff). Objectives, contents, and methods of organized training are not considered to be independent variables in this way, but self-education opportunities, arrangements and potential possibilities which could be determined by the learners themselves (Siebert, 1996; 1999). In this way, the relation between teachers and students could not only be described as a simple causal relationship in which teachers are only "givers" and students are only "receivers;" rather each of the main factors in the learning process are of great concern (Alheit & Dausien, 1996, 33ff). Each factor has benefited from the learning process, meaning that not only students, but also teachers, can

learn from the methods, hobbies, interesting thoughts, and the internal learning power of their students (Alheit & Dausien, 2005, 27ff).

The constructivist view of adult education could be supported by the current discourses on "lifelong learning", "self-organized," and "informal learning" (Alheit & Dausien, 2002). This view also emphasizes the intrinsic activity of the learning subject. The "lifelong" and "life width" learning and its formation process is increasingly regarded as an actively acquired experience. The institutionalized educational opportunities of learners are always based on a previously formed learning and living experience and learners themselves should learn to fit into this form. Concepts such as "Connecting learning", "self-directed learning," and increased concern for "informal" and "biographical learning" also have relationships on this basis (Alheit & Dausien, 2005, 27ff).

The comparable debates have raised the question about whether "teaching" has become impossible (Siebert, 1999, 35 ff.). This kind of view has not led to a mode of solely self-learning by individual capabilities without outer efforts or help; on the contrary, it has created innovative perspectives on educational practice. Professional research in the adult education area has resulted in reconsideration and reflection to determine what "self-directed learning" means (Faulstich-Wieland, 1997). Biographical reflections on adult education activities have also been used for this purpose (Alheit, 1993; Behrens-Cobet & Reichling, 1997). Didactic and curricular concepts are faced with new challenges. The attention to these self-oriented and wayward learning processes does not mean a new topic to the adult learning area, but still belongs to the relative school-centered notions of teaching and learning in their constitutive conditions (Alheit & Dausien, 2005, 27ff). The biographical learning idea was formulated before the economic constructivist approaches (Henningsen, 1981; Baacke & Schulze, 1979; Buschmeyer, 1987).

The constructivist idea believes that the experiences and thoughts of students act as crucial resources and contexts for educational processes, which point to the individual-biographical organization of experience and educational processes. The depth dimension of the biographical life-world, which mostly "runs along" in everyday actions as living background, has been brought to the surface of the educational research area and systematically made available for educational processes (Alheit & Dausien, 2005, 27ff). This is also responsible for the training process shifting between teachers and learners. Adults are recognized for their role as experts of their lifelong history and considered to be active formulators of the educational process (Behrens-Cobet, 1999).

Therefore, for the learner's point of view, education can be rethought as a constructional structure (Alheit & Dausien, 1996, 33ff). The whole educational experience is not just the construction of an operational closed, self-referential

system, but should be regarded as the narrative reconstructed biographical experience by concrete social actors (Alheit & Dausien, 1996, 33ff), such as students and teachers, as well as the people around them and the social environment. Therefore, only narrative interviews can help researchers and scholars understand lifelong learning experiences and thoughts by individuals in the daily life. This helps with figuring out the concrete constructions and relationships structured by teachers and students. This could be regarded as the research and investigation of the influence of micro level factors on lifelong learning.

The biographical research methods with narrative interviews will help us explore the deeper and basic reasons and principles for each person's educational thoughts, decisions, and activities. According to the biographical research process, as the figure illustrates below (Alheit & Schütze, 2010), after the first phase of research on the narrated life through face-to-face interviews and the second phase of interpretation and analysis of the original research materials, the research gets to the configuration of the biographicity.
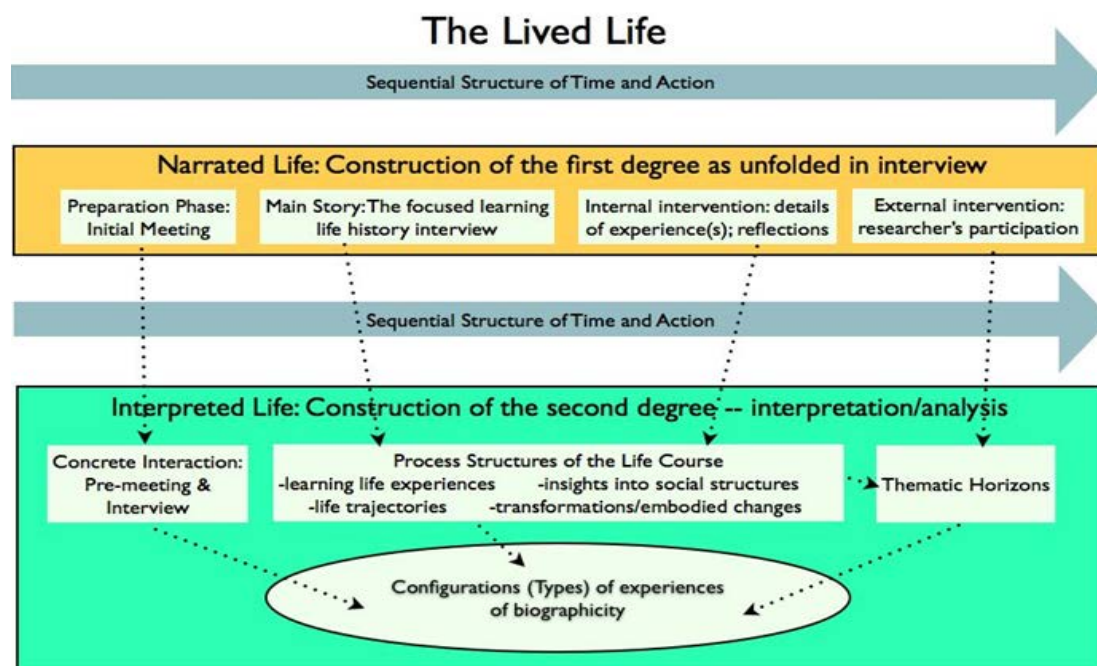
Diagram 1: The lived, narrated and interpreted life

3.1 History comparison

3.1.1 A brief history of China

Chinese civilization originated in various regional centers along both the Yellow River and the Yangtze River valleys in the Neolithic era. China is one of the world's oldest civilizations. The conventional view of Chinese history is distinguished by alternating periods of political unity and disunity. China was occasionally dominated by steppe peoples, most of who were, in turn,

assimilated into the Han Chinese population. Cultural and political influences from other parts of Asia and the Western world, carried by successive waves of immigration, expansion, foreign contact, and cultural assimilation, are part of the modern culture of China (Wang, 2014, pp34-36).

Major combat in the Chinese Civil War ended in 1949 and on the 1st of October 1949, Mao Zedong established the People's Republic of China. "Communist China" and "Red China" were two common names for the PRC (Smith & Davis, 2005). The PRC was shaped by a series of campaigns and five-year plans. After a long period of economic reform, China has transitioned from a planned economy to a mixed economy with an increasingly open market. This economic system termed "market socialism" by some, and officially "Socialism with Chinese characteristics" by the Communist Party of China. The PRC adopted its current constitution on 4 December 1982 (Scissors, 2009).

During the last ten years of the twentieth century, the PRC's economic performance lifted estimated 150 million peasants out of poverty and sustained an average annual growth rate in the domestic product of 11.2%. The country formally joined the World Trade Organization in 2001 (Ren & Guo, 2012, pp5-6). Although the PRC needs economic growth to spur its development, the government has begun to worry that rapid economic growth has negatively impacted the country's resources and environment. Another concern is that certain sectors of society are not sufficiently benefiting from the PRC's economic development. One example of this is the wide income gap between urban and rural areas. As a result, the Chinese government has initiated policies to address these issues of equitable distribution of resources (Ren & Guo, 2012, pp5-6).

3.1.2 A brief history of Germany

The concept of Germany as a distinct region in central Europe can be traced to Roman commander Julius Caesar, who referred to the unconquered area east of the Rhine as Germania. In recent times, Germany has got great development generation by generation. By 1900, Germany's economy was comparable to Great Britain. After the Second World War, the Cold War resulted in the division of the country into two parts. During the Cold War, millions of East Germans fled into West Germany (Evans, 2014; Wise, 1998). During the summer of 1989, the peaceful revolution or "Die Wende" took place in East Germany and resulted in the reunification in Germany. Great numbers of East Germans immigrated to West Germany (Evans, 2014). Unable to stop the growing national chaos, Erich Honecker was forced to resign in October. On the 9th of November, East German authorities unexpectedly allowed East German citizens to enter West Berlin and West Germany. This led to the acceleration of reforms in East Germany and at last the German reunification ended happened on the 3rd of October, 1990.

Nowadays, together with France and other EU states, Germany has been playing the leading role in the European Union. Germany was one of the main supporters of admitting many East European countries to the EU (Prowe 2002, pp. 120-138). Germany is at the forefront of European states seeking to exploit the momentum of monetary union to advance the creation of a more unified and capable European political, defense, and security apparatus (Prowe, 2002, pp120-138). Germany formally adopted the Euro system on January 1st, 1999 after permanently fixing the Deutsche Mark rate on December 21st, 1998 (Evans, 2014). In the worldwide economic recession which began in 2008, Germany did relatively well (Latsch, Seith & Traufetter, 2014). Nowadays, Germany has great performances on economy, industry, technologies, creations, international politics and democracy, etc.

3.1.3 Summary
Although China and Germany have distinct histories, there are still many similarities between them. For example, they have both suffered from many wars and unrest in the recent centuries, and have transformed from feudal monarchies into countries with modern political systems. They have both been able to lift many of their citizens out of the poverty that followed the post war periods, to create a flourishing economy and high living standard in the recent years (Zhang & Wang, 2004, pp21-22).

However, there are still differences between them, such as the degree of democracy, their economic systems, demands and requirements place on citizens, education culture, and technology. The differences between them are caused by their respective history and their unique national conditions and characters. Taken in this sense, it is not surprising that the lifelong learning and education systems in these countries are very different, given that they are dependent on the social, political, and economic conditions in these countries. However, as the developing process and background of the historical situations of these two countries do have some similarities, in is logical that research and investigation of the German lifelong and adult learning situation and conditions could help the Chinese with their own improvement and promotion of lifelong learning.

3.2 Law comparison

3.2.1 The Chinese laws and policies on lifelong and adult education
The Chinese government has issued a lot of laws and regulations on lifelong education in order to establish an efficient and standard lifelong education system.

(1) Laws and regulations of lifelong education

The 19th article of the PRC Constitution mentioned the whole state should develop each kind of educational facilities, in order to eliminate illiteracy and offer political, cultural, scientific, technical and commercial education for workers, peasants, national staffs and others, as well as encourage self-learning by individuals. The 46th Article says the Chinese citizens have the right and obligation to be educated" (Constitution of People's Republic of China, 2015).

The 11th Article of the Chinese 'Education Law' says that the state should promote education reform and coordinated development of all types and all levels of education. It also called for to establish the lifelong education system to meet the demands from economic development in the socialist market and the social progress. The 41st Article mentioned that the state encourages schools, educational institutions and community organizations to try to make every step easier and convenient for citizens taking part in lifelong education (Education Law of People's Republic of China, 2015).

(2) The policies and official advice for lifelong education in China
In 1993, the 'China Education Reform and Development Program' issued by the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council proposed that it is the only way to achieve socialist modernization with the education development. Education can help with the improvement of the whole nation's quality and transference of the population burden into human resources (Wang & Zhou, 2010). Adult education is an important component of the education system. It plays an important role in the process of continuous improvement of the quality of people's lives and promotion of economic and social development.

On May 7th, 2002, the 'National plan of training qualified personnel during 2002-2005' issued by the Central Committee of CPC and the State Council stated that the construction of a lifelong education system is the task for the new era in China. At the same time of speeding up the development of general education, the development of adult education, community education, as well as the socialization of educational training is the current tasks and obligations for the national education (Yang, 2013). In addition, this report advised that the education system should try new approaches for educational training, with accelerating the development of distance education, establishing a nationwide information network for educational training, and forming a lifelong, network, open and independent lifelong education system. Based on this document, the educational departments and the whole society should strengthen the planning and coordination of lifelong education, improve the relevant laws and regulations, increase the continuing education efforts, and form tripartite continuing education investment mechanism by state, enterprises and individuals. It also called for the society to construct the activities and institutions supporting the learning organization, learning community and

learning organization to promote the formation of a learning society (Yang, 2013).

The 16th Party Congress made it the goal to build up the lifelong education system, in order to construct the learning society with universal learning form and lifelong learning system with promotion of the comprehensive development of human in China (Yang, 2013). Decision on a number of issues perfecting the economic system in the socialist market made by the 6th Plenary Session advised the nation to create an institutional environment to implement the strategy of strengthening the state by talents, according to a large-scale and multi-level, as well as multi-channel of training for Chinese talent. Deepen the reform on education and build up a modern national education system and lifelong education system, as well as a learning society, promote quality education, enhance the capability of national employment, innovation and entrepreneurship and strive to turn the population pressure into human resources (Dang, 2012).

The 16th Plenary Session advised the creation of an atmosphere of a universal learning and lifelong learning in the whole nation in order to promote the establishment of a learning society. In December, 2003, the Central Committee of CPC and State Council put forward 'The decisions of further strengthen the talents training work', which advised to accelerate the construction of lifelong education system, promote the formation of a learning society in the whole society, form a universal learning and lifelong learning concept further, encourage people to participate in lifelong learning activities through various forms and channels, and promote the construction of a learning organization and learning community actively. Strengthen the planning and coordination of lifelong education, optimize the integration of a variety of education and training resources, take use of learning resources, cultural resources, social and educational resources integrally, improve the wide coverage and multi-level network of education and training, as well as build up the lifelong education system with Chinese characteristics. It also called for further reformation and development of adult education system with strengthening all kinds of talents training and continuing education. It paid attention to the formulation of scientific and standardized quality assessment and monitoring methods for evaluating lifelong and adult learning and education and improving the effectiveness of education and training (Dang, 2012).

In 2003, the State Council created the legislation entitled 'The promotion of the reform and development of Vocational Education', which created the regulation to carry out a wide range of various types of vocational training at all levels in order to realize the annual training for 50 million urban workers, as well as 150 million rural labors. The whole nation would implement the national re-employment training program actively so that each year more than 300

million laid-off workers could be provided and offered the chance of re-job training. All kinds of enterprises should implement the vocational education and training for workers and afford the costs according to the provisions regulated by 'The Vocational Education Law of the PRC.' The general businesses and companies should spend 1.5 % of total wages of full funding for education and training, because the enterprises demanded employees to acquire higher technical quality. More investments from companies and factories should be spent on the employees' training and lifelong learning. It should be also ensured by the educational institutions and companies together that the funds could be spent for a fixed purpose on the education and training for employees, especially the workers in the producing sectors. A proportion of funds for the technological upgrading and introduction of projects in enterprises should be arranged for of workers' technical training. The local governments at or above the county level can charge the education funding for vocational education for the development of the regional vocational education from enterprises which refuse to afford the regulated fees and costs for vocational education and training (Wang & Zhou, 2010).

On January 13, 1999, the State Council put forward the legislation 'Revitalization and Action Plan of Education for the 21st Century' issued by the Ministry of Education. This directed the education system to carry out the community education experiments and gradually establish and improve the lifelong education system, in order to improve the quality of the people in the whole nation. By 2010, construct the basic lifelong learning system, so as to provide adequate personnel support and knowledge contribution for the national knowledge innovation and modernization system (Gu, 2000).

The '2003-2007 Action Plans for Invigorating Education' directed that the system should develop a variety of adult and continuing education, in order to encourage people to participate in lifelong learning in various forms and channels, strengthen the school and continuing education with combining each other together for further reform and development of adult education, improve the multi-level education and training network with wide coverage and establish the continuing education funding guarantee mechanism with the main role played by individual learners. This project should be supported by employers and enterprises and funded by the government gradually. During this process, the credits system of certification and accumulation for variety of part-time learning and training would be established as a concrete performance. The whole society should focus on the knowledge updating and skills enhancing, develop learning enterprises, learning organizations, learning communities and learning activities in the state, as well as entitle industry and company authorities and power in strengthening the education and training of employees, as well as the reorientation of laid-off workers, developing

positively a variety of university continuing education, integrating various resources at all levels, emphasizing the role of colleges and universities, adult colleges and universities, radio and television universities and self-examination, and promote actively the community education, forming the public resource platform for lifelong learning, and developing modern distance education, and exploring new modes of continuing education" (An, 2010, pp3-4).

3.2.2 The German laws and policies on lifelong and adult education

Germany has 17 legislative institutions, including the 16 states in the Federal Republic of Germany and the federal republic itself. The federal and states have special requirements for a variety of educational institutions. There are 13 states which have their own legal system for continuing education. These laws for continuing education have regional differences (GFE, 2015). The federal laws do not control the principles for continuing education laws in states, but rather apply to the regulations for the continuing education system under the federal jurisdiction. Therefore, it is impossible to give a comprehensive overview of the legal basis for continuing education in Germany, but some of its attributes can be expressed with exemplary language and articles.

Although continuing education includes an extensive subset of educational fields, such as general continuing education, professional continuing education, and cultural and political continuing education, there are fewer German laws applying to this area of education than others, such as primary, higher and other formal education systems. Even if there was a comprehensive law system, it would hinder the flexibility of continuing education. This aspect of adaptability is important, since continuing education has to reflect the changing needs and aspirations of the learners. Thus, legislators do not regulate some areas of continuing education rigorously (Barz & Tippelt, 2004).

Certain principles of continuing education in Germany come from laws and constitution made by the state; in particular, from the fundamental right to free development for the national welfare (Füssel, 2001, pp8-10). The government has a responsibility perform the following tasks in particular: ensure the framework conditions for normal operation of the continuing education market and institutions, guarantee the appropriate supply of basic services according to public funding of continuing education, seek the cooperation of all participants, and make it possible for the disadvantaged groups to participate in continuing education (Füssel, 2001, pp8-10).

Germany has a federal structure; therefore, the legislative jurisdiction on education is almost entirely held by the states (Li & Lou, 2012). According to the basic laws, the states usually take the responsibility for enforcing

educational laws. As for the continuing and lifelong education, the federal jurisdiction comes firstly from the economic and labor laws. The governance of continuing education in Germany is separated into three parts: the state, the federal government, and the EU. Each part affords its own responsibility in supervising the educational system (Böhm, 1995). For example, each state is responsible for general and cultural continuing education, primary and secondary school diploma continuing education, etc. The federal government has the duty to supervise continuing education outside of schools, vocational training and retraining, providing financial assistance for personal participation in continuing education, etc. However, there is also collaboration among states within the "Federal Minister Meeting for Culture and Education Executive of the German states" in the field of education, as well as cooperation between states and the federal government. Each union or political league has its own responsibility or authority in terms of continuing and adult educational affairs, as well as lifelong learning matters (Niehues, 2000). According to Article 91 of the Basic Law, each state and the federal government must collaborate in the commission of "Promotion of Educational Planning and Research by Federal and State Council," as the federal and each state government all have representatives in the commission. The local government and the EU can also play a special role as contractors and facilitator in the continuing and lifelong education process, as well as limited jurisdiction on the labor market and structural policies (Niehues, 2000).

There are the provisions concerning the continuing education content in many state constitutions, such as the general statements found in the Article 139 of the Bavaria constitution, "adult education should be promoted and supported by national public funding on universities and other institutions." The Article 17 of the North Rhine-Westphalia Constitution says "adult education shall be promoted. In addition, besides towns and villages, other contractors, such as churches and other organizations are also to be recognized as official institutions undertaking adult education." The Article 33 of the Brandenburg Constitution says, "continuing education should be promoted by the state, towns and villages. The contractors' rights and freedom of establishing continuing educational institutions should be protected and guaranteed, so that everyone has the right to participate in cultural and political full-time continuing education" (Böhm, 1995).

As supplement to continuing education laws, school laws also contain information and provisions about the schools' commitment for further education in the education system, such as provisions on obtaining school diplomas. The academic continuing education has also been regulated by the Higher Education Act. As for the continuing education for civil servants, there should be the corresponding provisions for the collective contracts (Xue, 2014). In the federal laws, there are only provisions for branches of the continuing

education system because of the limited federal jurisdiction in continuing education. Such laws include the 'Statute Book of Social Laws', the 'Promotion Act for Continuing Education', the 'Vocational Education Law', the 'Federal Education Promotion Law', the 'General Law on Higher Education', the 'Distance Protection Act on Education', the 'Business Organization law', the 'Income Tax Act', and the 'Federal Civil Service Law' (Ye, 2005, pp20-23).

The proposal about lifelong and continuing education made in the 4th meeting of Educational Ministers' Council has been ratified by all 16 states and reiterated the common belief and guiding principle of these education systems. In this 4th meeting, the significance of self-directed and informal learning has been highlighted in the context of lifelong learning in particular. It has emphasized the significance of continuing education and stressed the structural diversity of continuing education to allow growing collaboration among contractors for continuing and lifelong learning (Song, 2013, pp115-116).

3.2.3 Summary
From the description above, it is clear that the Chinese law system on continuing and lifelong education is always gives rather general regulations and there are more pandects and principles on the promoting lifelong education; however, there is lack of detailed provisions, which could be implemented by organizations at the grass-roots level. Although there is always the emphasis on the importance of lifelong and continuing learning from the central government, there are fewer regulations which reflect the concern for this topic from the local governments. The law system in China is vertical, meaning that the fundamental laws can only be made by the powerful centralized administration. Therefore, the power, and function by the local government on education is quite weak. In such a law system, individual continuing and lifelong learning behaviors and opportunities have been influenced significantly by the central governmental regulations and provisions (Wang, 2003, pp67-68).

Compared with the Chinese continuing and lifelong education law system, we can find that the attitude and regulations by the German government on continuing education allows more freedom. The central government only provides the guiding principles and the detailed regulations are made by local governments, or even individual educational institutions. Therefore, such regulations have local features with consideration for the needs of the local citizens (Wang, 2003, pp67-68). In this way, individual learning behaviors have more freedom and personal choices. There are fewer limitations on the qualifications for establishing a continuing or adult educational institution. There is more policy support for this establishment of learning centers. The result is that the lifelong and continuing education can gain more financial

support and attention from the whole society, while simultaneously avoiding interruption and interference from the central government. This includes non-governmental institutions, which are always key resources for providing continuing and adult education (Wang, 2003, pp67-68).

3.3 Comparison of Institutions

3.3.1 Chinese lifelong and adult educational institution system

The adult education administrative management system is established by the state to fulfill its adult education functions. It is constituted of various elements, such as organizations, regulations and applications. The education system in China has been divided into four sections, including general education, vocational education, higher education, and adult education (Chen, 2002, pp13-14). The current administrative organization of the adult education system belongs to the centralized administrative leadership system which is led by the Communist Party. In June 1987, the State Council approved 'The decision on the reformation and development of adult education' created by the State Commission of Education. This divided the adult education management into three classes, including (1) the state, (2) the province, autonomous regions, and municipalities, and (3) the county and towns (Chen, 2007). This longitudinal, vertical, and centralized institutional structure determines the different functions of various classes of administrative departments.

The Ministry of Education, formerly the State Commission of Education, is the most powerful department for the implementation of adult education at the macro level. The responsibilities of the Ministry in the aspect of adult education management are: (1) Responsibility for drafting development guidelines, strategies, policies, and regulations of the national adult education under the leadership of the State Council in conjunction with the relevant departments; overall planning and conducting the reform of the adult education management system and school system, and implementing the macro guidance for national adult education; standardizing the teaching and management at all levels and places of adult education (Wu, 2004, pp38-40). (2) Researching and drafting the development planning of adult education affairs, to determine the focus, size, and speed of adult education development in a certain period; to organize and coordinate the implementation of the adult education planning. (3) Responsibility for the examination and approval of the qualifications of each college or school on organizing adult education, and the establishment, revocation, renaming and adjustments of adult colleges and private colleges and universities. (4) Determining the specifications and standards of adult higher education. (5) Classifying and managing the admissions and certification work of the college students in various adult higher educational institutions. (6) Responsibility for drafting evaluation and methods of various

types of institutions of adult higher education and guiding and organizing the assessment of the teaching quality in these schools. (7) Guiding and coordinating job training, promoting the establishment of training, and assessment system for certification of vocational qualification. (8) Consultation with the relevant departments to determine financing resources, channels, standards, and methods of adult education, in order to provide enough materials to ensure the development of adult education. (9) Planning, organizing, coordinating, and constructing the research work on the national adult education (ELPRC, 2015).

Ministries and commissions under the State Council are in charge of their respective duties for adult education. The principle of the macro-management of the employee education is "industry as mainstay," and the specific ministries play a major role in the implementation of governing adult education in their industry. Each province, autonomous region, and municipality of the government has responsibility for the direct guidance and management of adult education in their specific region. The province governments manage and govern adult education through their adult education administrative departments. Each county government makes overall plans and takes all factors into consideration for the basic education, as well as vocational, technical, and adult education in the counties (ELPRC, 2015).

In 1987, 'The decision on the reform and development of adult education by the National Education Committee' outline the structure of the Chinese adult education administrative system. The leadership belongs to the State Council, while the National Education Committee (now the Education Ministry) is responsible for decision-making and coordinating the national adult education affairs. Each ministry of the State Council is responsible for the management of adult education of their respective areas. The provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities shall be responsible for adult education in the region directly under the supervision from the State Council. Finally, the adult education management institutions oversee and coordinate these policies and regulations specifically (Ying & Yan, 2008). The county governments make overall plans and take all factors into consideration for basic education, vocational and technical education, and adult education in the region, while enhancing the quality and increasing the number of adult education institutions and their full-time staffs in the rural education sectors. This kind of adult education administrative system is essentially unchanged to this day. The general adult education administrative system in China could be summarized with the following diagram (Pang & Meisel, 2004, p72):

```
┌─────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Educational         │   │ The adult           │   │ The                 │
│ ministries of       │   │ educational         │   │ provinces,          │
│ the State Council,  │◄──│ management          │   │ autonomous          │
│ including           │   │ institutions of the │   │ regions, and        │
│ Department of       │   │ Ministry of         │   │ municipality        │
│ Education,          │   │ Education of the    │   │ governments         │
│ Department of       │   │ People's Republic   │   │                     │
│ Science and         │   │ of China            │   │                     │
│ Education, and      │   │                     │   │                     │
│ Department of       │   │                     │   │                     │
│ Training            │   │                     │   │                     │
└─────────────────────┘   └─────────────────────┘   └─────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐
│ The specialty       │   │ The adult           │   │ Municipal People's  │
│ departments of      │   │ educational         │   │ Government,         │
│ education and       │   │ institutions of the │   │ district            │
│ department of       │◄──│ educational         │   │ administrative      │
│ training etc. of    │   │ committees of the   │   │ office, People's    │
│ the provinces,      │   │ provinces,          │   │ Committee in the    │
│ autonomous          │   │ autonomous          │   │ autonomous          │
│ regions, and        │   │ regions, and        │   │ prefecture          │
│ municipality        │   │ municipality        │   │                     │
│ governments         │   │ governments         │   │                     │
└─────────────────────┘   └─────────────────────┘   └─────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐
│ The specialty       │   │ The adult           │   │ The country         │
│ bureau in the       │   │ educational         │   │ or district         │
│ Municipal           │◄──│ institutions of the │   │ People's            │
│ People's            │   │ educational         │   │ Governments         │
│ Government and      │   │ committees or       │   │                     │
│ regional            │   │ education bureau    │   │                     │
│ government          │   │ in the Municipal    │   │                     │
│                     │   │ People's Government │   │                     │
│                     │   │ and regional        │   │                     │
│                     │   │ government          │   │                     │
└─────────────────────┘   └─────────────────────┘   └─────────────────────┘
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          ┌─────────────────────┐
          │ The adult           │
          │ educational         │
          │ management          │
          │ institutions of the │
          │ county and town     │
          │ governments         │
          └─────────────────────┘
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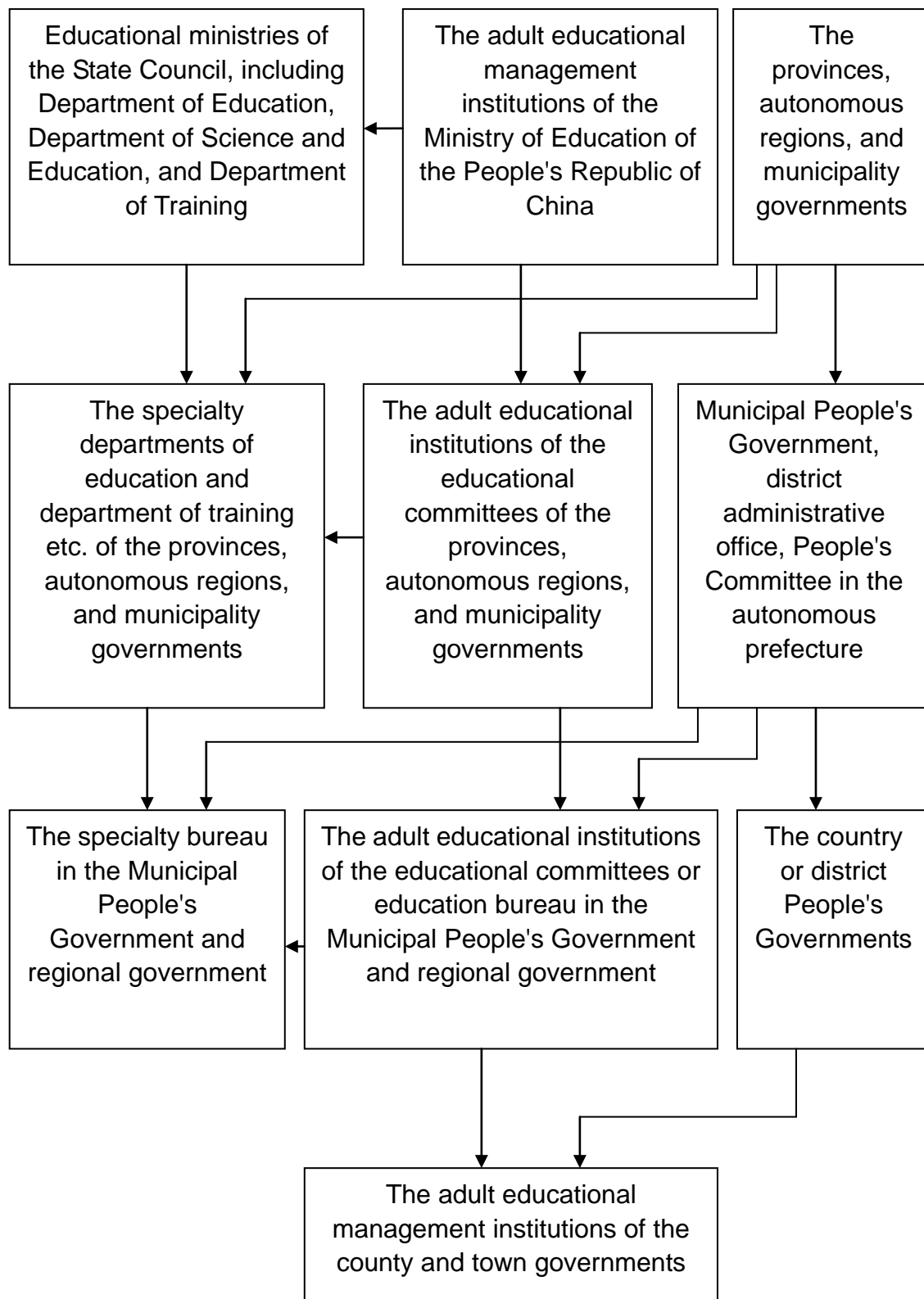
Diagram 2: The Chinese current adult education administrative system (Pang & Meisel, 2004, p72):

Note: The "→" means there is a governing relationship.

3.3.2 German lifelong and adult educational institution system

It is clear that the structure of the German continuing educational institutions vary widely. This is inevitable based on the legal foundation which features both federal and state laws and agreements for governing German continuing education. A structure diagram of the continuing education system can be shown as follows (Pang & Meisel, 2004, p166):

```
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │   Adult education   │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                               │
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │ Continuing education│
                    └─────────────────────┘
              ┌────────────┴──────────────┐
    ┌──────────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐
    │ Vocational continuing     │  │ General adult        │
    │ education                 │  │ education            │
    └──────────────────────────┘  └──────────────────────┘
      ┌──────────┴──────────┐       ┌──────────┴──────────┐
  ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐
  │ Advanced │   │Vocational│   │  Basic   │   │Political │
  │ learning │   │ training │   │education │   │education │
  └──────────┘   └──────────┘   └──────────┘   └──────────┘
```
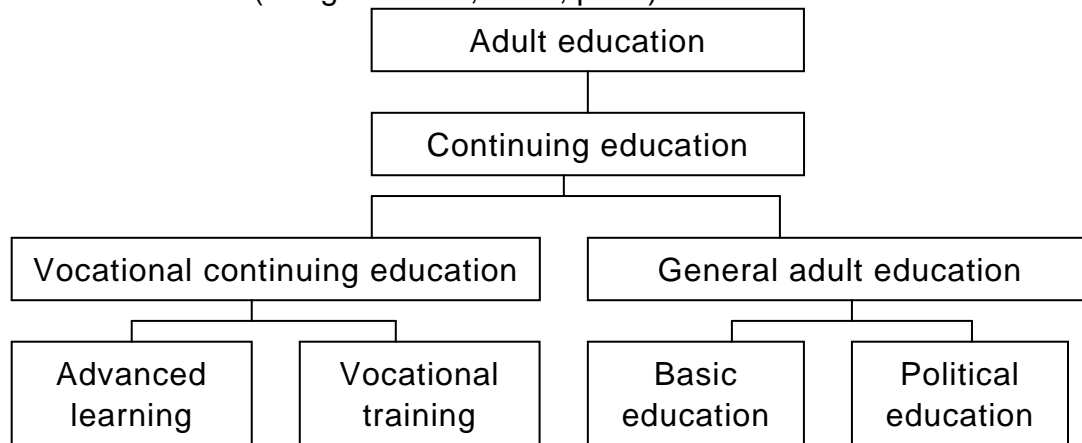
Diagram 3: The structure of continuing education

The so-called "contractors" and "educational institutes" are different in the expression of adult and continuing education in Germany; the educational institutes are adult schools or colleges while the contractors are the consortia of similar institutions, such as the German National University Federation or organizations which construct the schools or colleges, such as the German Federal Labor Unions (Pang & Meisel, 2004, p166). The contractor can be an association, such as a consortium of institutions and inter-regional organizations, or social institutions, such as churches and labor unions (Song, 2013). The classical taxonomy related to the laws of continuing education institutions will often be used in the description of the structure of the main contractor (Pang & Meisel, 2004, p166).

Continuing education

- **Enclosed continuing education**
  - National departments
  - Enterprises and association
  - Other institutes
    - States and counties
    - Broadcasting, TV, and colleges
- **Open continuing education**
  - Public contractor
    - Churches and labor unions
  - Private contractor
    - Commercial institutes

Diagram 4: The structure of the main contractor

The feature of "enclosed" here means that only a member of the enterprise or association can enjoy opportunities to participate in learning activities, while the "op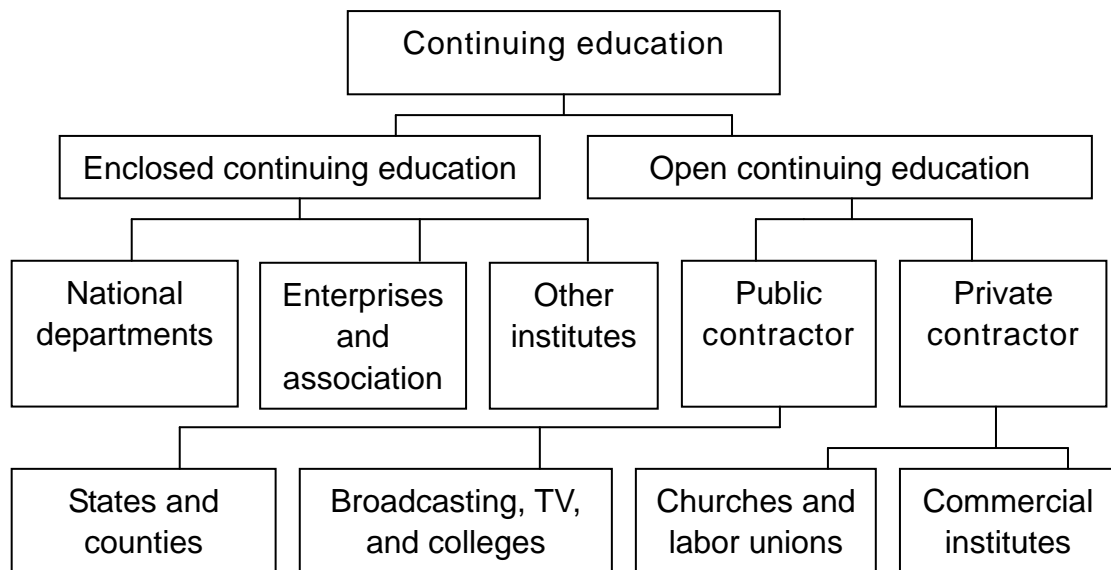en continuing education" means that continuing education activities are accessible to everyone in society (Pang & Meisel, 2004, p166).

There is also another system structure of continuing education in Germany which is classified according to systematic degree, without taking content or law into account. The main standard of classification of this method is based on the basic European classification of continuing education as formal continuing education, non-formal continuing education, and informal continuing education (Song, 2013).

	Formal Continuing Education	**Non-formal Continuing Education**	**Informal Continuing Education**
Features	Advanced leaning and vocational training with certification	Non-vocational, social, and cultural education with certification	Deinstitutionalization of adult education
Places	Enterprises or cross-enterprise institutions	Private and public institutes of adult education	Communication center
Content	Vocational education	General adult education	Communicational education

Table 1: The classification of continuing education by UNESCO

As can be seen from this table, the learning ort is no longer limited to educational institutions, but also enterprises, cross-enterprise institutions,

communication center and median, and accordingly, the learning measures are distinguished according to the degree of systematization (Song, 2013). Generally speaking, a unified description of contractors and the range of courses for continuing education in Germany are difficult to be described, and even more difficult to distinguish when they relate to the extent and operation style of the institutions.

The number of continuing education institutions is huge, including public institutions recognized by the federal and states governments and national universities (Song, 2013). Besides the size and structure, the importance of adult education institutions also depends on the extent of guarantee by the legal framework and policies, and its influence as a member of the national or federal consortium formed by similar institutions.

There are many important adult education institutions and their unions in Germany, such as the national universities, which are closely linked with the civil liberties theory of national education in terms of functions and working styles. There are more than 300 national universities in Germany, many of which have branches throughout the nation, and have a responsibility and commitment to local and regional continuing education (Song, 2013). The adult education in Labor Unions, based on the tradition of labor education, also maintain and finance most of Germany's vocational continuing educational institutions, such as DGB and DAG. In addition to vocational education, the federation of labor unions has made use of their own educational institutions to train the members of labors committee in enterprise and cadres in labor union under the regulation of Enterprise Act. In addition, they hold political training seminars for members in the labor union (Behnke, 2013, pp443-446). Enterprises also carry out their obligation to adult education. Since the 1980's, adult education has become particularly important in each enterprise, as many large enterprises, especially the ones in the metal and chemical industries, have set up their own training institutions for adult education (Behnke, 2013, pp443-446). The adult education of Catholics and Protestants has also promoted the lifelong and adult learning activity with positive effects. These two churches have a nationwide network organized by boarding educational institutions, colleges, national boarding universities, national universities in states, and other educational institutions (Behnke, 2013, pp443-446).
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The commercial adult education institutions have had rapid growth and development since the 1980's, but has slowed recently (An, 2013). These commercial organizations offer adult education and courses, especially in the field of foreign language and data processing, for all of students with the ability to pay tuition. These commercial institutions actively participate in the competition for public education funding (An, 2013). The Tele-education

institutes, the "work and life" association, national boarding universities and other educational boarding institutions, national continuing education agencies, as well as chamber of commerce (including the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Federation of Handicraft, and State Chamber of Commerce) have all provided a variety of continuing education courses and award certificates. Educational institutions organized by economic departments, as well as some foundations of political parties and the welfare association, state Athletic Union, and educational institutions organized by states, also play very important roles in their respective region and scope (Song, 2013). Therefore, the forms and types of lifelong and adult education in Germany are various and abundant. With the help of a great number of educational institutions and opportunities, there is a sufficient and concrete basis for lifelong learning in Germany (Song, 2013).

All of these adult education institutions make up the diverse system of the German adult education as a whole. The nation just makes regulatory intervention to the continuing education system because of the specific social and economic background of Germany. According to the subsidiary principle, the adult education institutions play the role of the executor for continuing education.

3.3.3 Summary

There is an obvious difference between these two systems of continuing learning in the aspect of governance and organizing. The Chinese system has a strong administrative background, as each educational institution and organization carrying out lifelong and continuing learning has to be arranged and governed by the central and local governments. In China, only the government has the authority to establish social educational institutions. Therefore, the adult and continuing learning in China have always been controlled and governed by the government. In contrast, we can see the German adult and continuing learning institutions and organizations are established according to the needs of the learners. Each institution has a specific teaching aim, methods, and functions; therefore, the learning in such institutions become quite more pertinent, resulting in more efficient and effective learning (Zhang & Wang, 2004, pp21-23).

3.4 Comparison of Practices

3.4.1 The Chinese teaching and learning practices

Since ancient times, the Chinese have held the attitude towards education that teachers have the absolute authority and students have to obey the orders given by teachers. This philosophy has lasted into the modern era, although the status of students has improved with the end of the feudal dynasty and the establishment of the modern political system (Yu, 2011, pp42-43).

Nowadays, in both the formal and informal learning activities of schools, universities, educational institutions, and organizations, classes are always led by teachers. Therefore the education mode is the "Teacher-oriented Type," which means teacher has the central role in the classroom and he or she will give orders to the students (Ye, 2005, pp31-33). The main teaching direction is from teacher to student, is a passive receiver of knowledge. The main method of communicating between teachers and students is the question process by the teacher, which aims to test students to see if they have paid attention and understood the material. This communication process is also controlled wholly by the teacher, who decides the questioning time, contents, and aims. Therefore, in such a class, the teaching and learning are always separated with a unidirectional relationship between teachers and students (Zhou, 2000, pp13-14).

The learning process is oriented towards exanimations, which identify the excellent students which can enroll in the top universities and schools (Ye, 2005, pp31-33). Therefore, the learning motivation is achieving higher marks in each examination and better performance during each competition with other students. In this way, the learning content and interest in the material is less important for both the student and teacher.

The adult school formal learning period is a little different; however, the learning aim and motivation for adult learners is still for the degree or certifications after each learning period. Of course the taught skills and capabilities should be could be enhanced and mastered by each individual; however, the ultimate learning motivation for adult school formal learning is always partly and importantly for the certifications which help individual learners have an advantage in the job market or better prospect for promotion to jobs with higher pay (Zhang & Zhang, 2005). The learning during the informal learning period is mostly for individual interest and to meet the requirements of the career, society, reality, or other factors in life. Therefore, such learning activity seems to be more positive and active. The learning purpose is for the sake of the individual.

Generally speaking, education in China always has pragmatic purposes, and the teaching behaviors are aimed at the improvement of student performance on examinations. We can always see that the role of teachers in the classroom is very authoritative and can be offensive to students (Zhang & Zhang, 2005).

The majority of Chinese universities and adult learning institutions have adopted the fixed class setting. This means that students are taught in separated class at the same and integral schooling time; therefore the classmates during the learning years are just the ones learning in the fixed

classroom (Zhang & Zhang, 2005). Many Chinese universities and educational institutions are still using the one-off final examination system to evaluate the performance of students, without any other criteria (Zhang & Zhang, 2005). In China, the opinion of teachers seems to be that the main purpose for learning during the formal school years is for higher and higher scores. Therefore, the main task for teachers is to force knowledge upon the students that will be important for examinations. Students are expected able to absorb this content to the greatest extent possible and to cope with a variety of exams during their studies.

The behaviors of students in the classroom have been restricted by teachers and schools, which do not encourage active or critical learning. Instead, the learning behaviors are trained by the guidance of teachers (Zhang & Zhang, 2005). Therefore, the vast majority of students trained under this educational system have a talent for memorization, rather than creativity. In the classroom, students are not allowed to ask questions without the permission of teachers. Therefore, the learning process is wholly controlled by teachers. In the informal learning period, such as the adult and further learning institutions, the teaching style seems to be little more free and active, as the teachers can combine knowledge with practical experience.

As for the Chinese learners, the learning proceeds by the supervision and instruction of teachers. Moreover, learners are always protected by parents or family members in the daily life, without too much house or homework; therefore, Chinese learners have lost their independence and self-sufficiency, and instead rely on the help or instructions from external factors (An, 2013). Thus, learning is not an individual behavior, but mixed with influences from teachers, family members, society, and other factors. The learning process prompts no individual interests, but rather focuses on the tasks assigned by teachers. There are not many original ideas or thoughts coming from students when they are merely learning with the goal of higher exam scores (An, 2013). During the adult learning period, adults are learning mostly for certifications, promotion of social status, improvement of jobs, and so on. Therefore, the basic idea and motivation of such learning is relating to the social and career requirements (Zhang & Zhang, 2005). The individual learning motivation is non-essential to many adult learners. Learning in order to pursue interests or hobbies is rare, as there is not sufficient funding or time during the working years. Time is mostly spent earning money and promoting ones' social status

From the description above, we can see that the learning in formal and informal periods seldom relate to interests or hobbies. Students in the formal learning process mostly answer to the instructions of teachers and schools, who have a dominating role in the education process. Learners in the informal learning period struggle for career development and social benefits.

3.4.2 The German teaching and learning practices

Generally speaking, learning behavior should be a lasting behavior based on experience. According to the new definition, learning means to expand knowledge in order to solve problems in reality, deal with life situations, and improve one's capacity and proficiency (Zhang, 2003). There is a German saying which goes, "Old Hans can never learn if young Hans does not learn," which means an adult can not make up the knowledge which he does not learn in his childhood. This notion has continued until the 1960's in the learning research field and insists that learning ability starts receding from the age of 20. However, this view has lately proved to be too ambiguous to describe learning ability more specifically. The adult education researchers Siebert and Gerl have begun to study the behavior of adult teaching and learning in the early 1970's. The basic research results found that "One can form a professional specialized memory with age increases although the amount of memory storage decreases...The adults are more able to combine the new information from new events or technologies with their own experiences stored in the daily life he has experienced" (Siebert & Gerl, 1975, p21).

Gerl has summarized the learning process with the formula "Learning = Information + Processing" (Gerl, 1995, p4). When a learner feels the message passed to him is new or unfamiliar, then the learning behavior occurs. In this procedure, the learner decides which information from the whole to accept and possess (Gerl, 1995, p5), while a teacher's task is to provide sufficient information. So in this mode, the teacher's role is primarily limited to the assisting in the collection of information for the student to process.

According to this discussion on German adult education, it can be found that this interpretation and emphasis on the learning mode of adult education depends on the spirit of the times and the findings of relevant research studies (Zhang, 2003). Some adult education teaching and learning principles, which relate to the study of psychology and sociology, stand out from the rest in the changing times. During the last century, German adult education inherited the spirit of science and educational philosophical tradition in the Weimar Republic, which advocated education without any purpose. Adult education is required to fulfill the educational functions and contents which school system has not made for the first time (Zhang, 2003). According to the understanding of learning by behaviorists, the course, teaching content, and methods should be systematically arranged to fulfill the possible important eligibility requirements in the future.

In the 1970's, research interests have turned to the socio-cultural and economic conditions of teaching and learning. Since the mid-1960's, the adult education trend has already turned from the spirit of science (hermeneutics of

education), to the social sciences (experience in educational research) (Huebner, 1990, p9). Until then, it has been discovered that teaching and learning in continuing education depend on a variety of social factors. Accordingly, theoretical analysis points more to the macro-social problems of daily life (Huebner, 1990, p9).

In the teaching and learning process in Germany, there is always a discussion about the status of teachers and students, as well as their relationships (Tietgens, 2001, p305). This means it is always confusion over who should be the "subject" and who should be the "object." Nowadays, students are central to the interest of teaching theory once more. The "for students" concept has been created, meaning that the training offered by adult education is not determined by an objective system, but depends on preconditions and expectations with which educational activities intend to attract people (Tietgens, 2001, p305). The traditional theory ignored not only the minds and capabilities of students, but also their real problems. Now the concept of "for students" has developed into many other concepts, such as the "object-oriented" or the "contact with life world" concept (Tietgens, 2001, p305).

The prerequisites of potential students should be taken into consideration before planning education activities, and teachers should consider the identity of students. Students should play an active role in the classroom, and even influence the content of the course.

Teachers cannot automatically understand the motivations and living conditions of all participants; therefore, it requires the theoretical and empirical analysis of social living conditions of students, so that adult educators can adapt to the characters of the target student groups and make teaching plans and syllabi for their students specifically. In this sense, "for students" can also be described as "contact with the life world," which means to insert the unique life experience and issues of students into the learning process with daily living matters as educational themes.

In recent years, a new dominant concept, the so-called "Self-controlled Learning" (Chiviacowsky, et al., 2012), has influenced the theory and practice of the adult education field. Self-controlled Learning has inherited, and even expanded, the principle of learner freedom during educational activities. This concept is generally regarded as the basis of the "new learning culture" to be created. In Germany, such learning theory has been developing generation by generation, along with social development and ideological emancipation (Pan, Liu & Horst, 2008). Therefore, the independent self-controlled learning idea has been regarded as central core of the German learning spirit. Adult education has assumed an important role, as it must help with the construction

of individual learning habits and independent learning ideas for adults, who already have a mature learning concept in their minds (Pan, Liu & Horst, 2008). The self-controlled learning concept encompasses the desired self-learning ability of students in order to meet the requirements of social development, and satisfies the self-determination theory and ideals for adult students originated from traditional education. From this perspective, we can clearly see the importance of self-controlled learning on the daily educational activities of German students.

Today, constructivism learning has dominated the mainstream of teaching in the German educational system. Constructivism learning requires that learning become a more autonomous and independent activity, with a self-organized learning method. As mentioned by Lankapalli, constructivism learning usually encourages "students to use active techniques (experiments, real-world problem solving) to create more knowledge and then to reflect on and talk about what they are doing and how their understanding is changing" (Lankapalli, 2014, pp678-680). The teacher's function under this learning form has changed to a more subordinate, assisting role. The main tasks for teachers are to understand the content of students' existing knowledge, and guide the activity to build on this knowledge (Lankapalli, 2014, pp678-680). It is also especially important for teachers to stimulate curiosity for learning new knowledge. Students, who are treated as the subject in the constructivist classroom, should ideally become "expert learners" (Lankapalli, 2014, pp678-680). One of the main aims of this learning form is to teach students "how to learn" based on a subtle change of roles between teachers and students (Lankapalli, 2014, pp678-680).

This learning theory suggests that humans construct knowledge and meaning from their experiences. The difference from the traditional classroom and the constructivist classroom is described in the following diagram (Lankapalli, 2014, pp678-681):

Traditional Classroom	Constructivist Classroom
Curriculum begins with the parts of the whole. Emphasizes basic skills.	Curriculum emphasizes big concepts, beginning with the whole and expanding to include the parts.
Strict adherence to fixed curriculum is highly valued.	Pursuit of student questions and interests is valued.
Materials are primarily textbooks and workbooks.	Materials include primary sources of material and manipulative materials.
Learning is based on repetition.	Learning is interactive, building on what the student already knows.
Teachers disseminate information to students; students are recipients of knowledge.	Teachers have a dialogue with students, helping students construct their own knowledge.
Teacher's role is directive, rooted in authority.	Teacher's role is interactive, rooted in negotiation.
Assessment is through testing, correct answers.	Assessment includes student works, observations, and points of view, as well as tests. Process is as important as product.
Knowledge is seen as inert.	Knowledge is seen as dynamic, ever changing with our experiences.
Students work primarily alone.	Students work primarily in groups.

Diagram 5: The comparison of traditional and constructivist classroom

3.4.3 Summary

From the description of the Chinese and German educational practices, we can find the following main differences between them:

(1) The teachers' role in education.
In China, teacher is instructor, supervisor and planner for each student's learning process; therefore, the authority of teachers cannot be challenged, which affects student behavior in the classroom. As for German teachers, their role is more like that of an advisor or friend, who is giving pertinent suggestions to students based on their own experiences and learning skills. However, the final decision for how to approach learning is made by students themselves, without interferences from outside factors. In such a process, the learning habits of students are established and trained; therefore, future learning behaviors have an independent and autonomous character.

(2) The learner's performance and perspective on learning.
Chinese learners are more dependent on the teacher's instructions and plans, which assist and control their normal learning activities. Therefore, there is no need to consider much besides learning performance. However, for German students, learning is an individual matter without many influences. The main feature of such learning is that it is "self-controlled," meaning the learning behaviors by German students are carried out with self-direction and freedom. Therefore, each learning choice and motivation is dependent on the thoughts and opinions of the student.

3.5 Economy comparison

3.5.1 The Chinese economy and investment in lifelong education

(1) The general economic situation in China.

In recent history, the Chinese economy has become stronger and stronger. Therefore, the comprehensive national strength, international status, and influence of China have improved significantly. In 1952, Chinese GDP was only 67.9 billion RMB, while in 2014 it has reached 63.6 trillion RMB with an average annual growth rate of more than 8%. In the 30 years since 1978, the average annual growth rate was at 9.83 %, which made China the country with the fastest economic growing in the world (NBSPRC, 2015). According to data from 2010, the Chinese GDP has surpassed that of Japan, and ranks second in the world. As for foreign trade, the total import and export trade in China has reached 2.56 trillion US dollars in 2008, ranking third in the world. Notably, this is 104 times greater than the amount in 1978 (NBSPRC, 2015). In addition, according to the statistics by the State Administration of Foreign Exchange, the Chinese foreign exchange reserves reached 1.95 trillion US dollars, ranking the first in the world in 2008 (Zuo, 2014, pp12-14).

Meanwhile, the living condition for normal people has greatly increased greatly, lifting many people out of poverty. In 1978, Chinese per capita net income of rural residents was only 133.6 RMB; by 2008 it reached to 4,761 RMB, with an average annual increase of 6.7%. In 1978, per capita disposable income of urban residents was 343.4 RMB; by 2008 it grew to 15,781 RMB, with an average annual growth rate of 7.2% (NBSPRC, 2015). Based on this economic trend, the quality of life in China has been significantly improving. Before the early 1980's, the household consumption was mainly focusing on food, clothing, and other basic survival needs. After about 30 years of development, the political policy of "Reform and Opening up" has made many people relatively well-off in the year 2000. Realization of prosperity for all hopes to accomplished gradually in the future. The Chinese Engel coefficients of urban and rural households fell from 57.5 and 67.7 in 1978 to 36.3 and 43.1 in 2007 (Zuo, 2014, pp12-14). There has been a substantial increase in the consumption of television sets, refrigerators, washing machines, computers, cars, and other consumer goods by the ordinary people. In addition, people's cultural life has also been significantly improved.

(2) The situation of educational investment in China.

In modern education administration, education funding is an important regulatory tool. Investment in education funding has a significant impact on schools and other educational institutions. The operation of education funding should include the investment system operation, management system, and audit supervision of education funding. The establishment of a stable,

reasonable, and effective adult education funding system, and a scientific and efficient management system are important features in order to guarantee the development of adult education.

However, according to the Chinese 'Government Finance Statistics Yearbook' in 1998 and the 'Statistical Yearbook' by UNESCO in 1998, the average worldwide proportion of public spending on education out of the total GDP was 4.9% in 1994 and 5.2% in 1995. Specifically, the proportion of GDP spent on education investment was 5.4% in the United Kingdom, 5.2% in Brazil, and 4.1% in Thailand. Other countries such as India, Korea, and Singapore spent more than 3% on education. However, Chinese national spending on education accounted for 3.02%, 2.94%, 2.74%, 2.52%, and 2.46% from 1991 to 1995, which shows a trend of declined investment in education as a proportion of GDP. The highest proportion of State education budget out of GNP accounted for only 4.13% in 2013, which was lower than the average proportion of 6.2% for developed countries and roughly equal to the average spending by developing countries. In fact, China accounts for only 2% of the worldwide education funding to maintain educational activities for 25% of the world's population (Ma, Xu & Jia, 2013). This is the result of low per capita spending on education in China. The Chinese per capita annual public expenditure on education is $42; however, the United States spends $ 2,684 per capita, which is 63.9 times that of the Chinese. The Chinese per capita public expenditure on education is only 0.82% of the whole per capita GDP, while the United States spends 6.10 % on education, which is 7.4 times more than the Chinese. Japanese spends 4.28%, South Korea spends 3.01%, Brazil spends 2.29%, and Russia spends 1.87 % (NBSPRC, 2015). Therefore, there is a big gap between education spending in China and that in both developed and developing countries. Nowadays, the proportion of educational investment out of total GDP in China is equivalent to 44% that of German (Li, 2012; Zuo, 2014, pp1-6).

According to this data analysis, we can see that China is a typical country which develops education for a huge population with poor funding. The serious shortage of investment in education, especially the public education funding, has greatly affected the health and overall development of Chinese education (Xie & Wu, 2014, 74-76). Lifelong education is a result of both economic development and development in the fields of science and technology; therefore, it cannot be constructed well without certain economic conditions. As the funding situation for continuing and adult learning is insufficient, the state encourages enterprises, institutions, and other social organizations to finance teaching and self-learning activities via various strategies such as television, broadcasting, internet, correspondence or face-to-face teaching under the regulation of course syllabi and plans for higher education programs (Xie & Wu, 2014, 74-76). The required source of funding for self-study

examination of higher education generally comes from the financial appropriation for education, as well as the registration fee paid by the candidates in the county or the administrative departments above that.

From the descriptions above, we can see that although the general economic circumstance in China has been improved quite a lot, the investment in education, especially adult and continuing education is quite limited. The reason for this condition is the traditional view of education, which is expected to show quick results after a short period of investment. Therefore, the investment for education in China is far from sufficient.

3.5.2 The German economy and investment in lifelong education
(1) The general economic situation in Germany.
Before unification, the Federal Republic of Germany was the main promoter of the European Common Market. Germany has a strong industrial economy, stable economic growth, firm currency system, and a prosperous domestic market. These features guarantee that Germany plays a leading role in the European economy. With the German reunification in the early 1990's, its economic share of the European Union increased from 25% to about 30% (Sun, 2004). Moreover, Germany has maintained close trade with the Middle and Eastern European countries, which enables German manufactured goods to access a vast market in these countries (Sun, 2004). Compared with other countries of Western Europe, Germany maintains steady economic growth, which has largely benefited from external investment during the period of economic transition and revolution in the Middle and Eastern European countries. Historically, Germany has had a leading role in Europe, although its economy has stagnated in recent years (Sun, 2004).

In the 63 years since the end of World War II, the German economy has only had negative growth in two years (1975 and 2009), and zero growth in one year. In the 21st century, the German economy achieved continuous economic growth from 2004 to 2008 after experiencing some slowed growth for this first time since the war. According to the data by the German Federal Bureau of Statistics, German GDP still achieved 1.3% growth and an inflation rate of 2.6% in 2008, the year of the global financial crisis. However, in 2009, the German economy was severely affected by the financial crisis and its GDP fell 4.9% comparing with the last year. In 2010, the German economy led the recovery trend in Europe after the biggest recession since World War II, with its GDP at 2.5 trillion Euros, an increase of 3.6% (Hu, 2014, pp2-5; Li & Sun, 2014). GDP continued to grow by 3% in 2011, 1% in 2012, and 1.5%-2.0% in the year 2013 (Hu, 2014, pp2-5; Li & Sun, 2014). Under these relatively favorable conditions, the disposable income of Germans experienced an unprecedented growth of more than 3% in both 2012 and 2013. Correspondingly, the national budget deficit is decreasing as a proportion of

GDP from 4.3% in 2010 to 0.2% in 2013. The number of unemployed people has fallen to just above 6%, which is the lowest rate in the EU (Hu, 2014, pp2-5; Li & Sun, 2014).

(2) Investment in lifelong learning in Germany.

The complexity of the continuing education system makes it difficult to describe the funding sources for continuing education succinctly. There is a complex network of funding channels, so no exact data issued about the total cost of continuing education. According to estimates, the annual expenditure on German continuing education is about 40 billion Euros, which includes the opportunity cost of workers' receiving continuing education rather than working (Hu, 2014, pp2-6). It is hard to account for all the diverse sources of funding for continuing education because of the increasing prominence of lifelong learning in all social sectors (Kade & Seitter, 2013).

Some main sources of funding are from official departments and institutes such as the federal, state, and local government, as well as from the Federal Labor Bureau, and even from enterprises and individuals. The Federal Labor Bureau offers great financial support for vocational continuing education annually. Each state provides basic conditions for general, cultural, and political continuing education and supports the construction of public continuing education institutions and free contractor departments. The local government is in support of public continuing education, shown by their financial support on widespread national universities. The participants themselves also have to pay a great deal of a tuition fees, as the state only partially covers costs (Hu, 2014, pp2-5; Li & Sun, 2014). The cost and expenses of continuing education are afforded by each supporter and agency with auxiliary principles, and the whole of Europe is paying increasing attention to the funding projects of continuing education. The European innovation continuing professional education programs can be funded from the Leonardo project, while the funding of Sokrates and Grundtvig project sever for the transnational general adult education projects (Hu, 2014, pp2-5; Li & Sun, 2014; Kade & Seitter, 2013)

There are five sources of funding for continuing and lifelong education. (1) Tuition payments by student; (2) payment by companies for their employees to participate in continuing education, or the business expense to support their own continuing education; (3) the costs afforded by public regional institutions, which in Germany includes federal, state, local government, and local associations; (4) the donations by public organizations, which are supported by the voluntary payment or mandatory dues afforded by members in the organizations (Li & Sun, 2014, 96-100); (5) the private donations, income dues by members of the Federation of Education, agency advertising costs and interest (Li & Sun, 2014, 97-100).

The educational process of continuing and adult learning requires manpower, resources and venues to provide appropriate services. Generally, appropriate agencies and organizations are required to plan, organize, and provide the material guarantee for continuing education. In Germany, continuing education has two types including open form, which is open to all adults, and the closed form, which only belongs to specific member groups (Li & Sun, 2014, 96-100). Unlike primary and secondary education, participation in continuing education is voluntary (Song, 2013). The opportunity for each German to be involved in continuing education depends on the local availability of continuing education, as well as the economic conditions and backgrounds (Altin et al, 2014).
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Although the financial system in Germany is quite complex and various, there are many financial aids from different organizations and individuals. Therefore, the need for lifelong learning can be satisfied by such a thorough financial system. Especially in recent years, the financial investments in adult and continuing learning in Germany have been increased continuously so that the financial burden for learners themselves become less and less. This, in turn, improves the learning motivation and interests of individuals to carry out continuing education during or after their working years (Kade & Seitter, 2013).

3.5.3 Summary
Compared with the German financial circumstance for adult and lifelong learning and the overall economic situation, we can see that the Chinese financial aid for lifelong learning is insufficient. In China, there are not so many organizations concerned with lifelong learning. Therefore, the financial burden for individuals seems to be heavier in China than in Germany.

After comparing the economic condition in these two countries, we can see that the gap between them is narrowing. However, when we look into the financial investment for adult and lifelong learning by these two countries from government, enterprises, and individuals, we can see that there is an obvious disparity between them. Therefore, the learning motivations, interests, and opportunities for Chinese people to pursue lifelong and adult learning seem to be less than those for Germans.

3.6 Overall figuration comparison

3.6.1 The Chinese concrete lifelong and adult learning activities and programs.
Different forms and styles of lifelong learning stand for different cultures and ideas of lifelong learning in different countries. The lifelong educational system in China mainly contains formal education, such as elementary, secondary,

and higher education (Chen, 2012, pp36-37). These are conventional educational forms, which obey the basic principles and customs in the general educational environment in China. There is also informal education and learning, such as family education, learning in the daily life, and social activities. This includes all the different learning forms except the formal and non-formal learning. This kind of learning is regarded as the most extensive and comprehensive learning type in our daily life, without concrete forms or fixed models (Li, 2012, 41-42). Therefore, according to the dispersive learning models and forms by each person or each social group, it is difficult or impossible to make clear the general similarities of the informal learning styles or forms for each person or social group after analysis. In this way, the formal and informal learning in China do not have many specialties which require specific analysis (Li, 2012, pp41-42).

However, for non-formal learning in China, there are different forms with various teaching or authentication methods by the local or central government, as well as educational organizations. The system of adult education, including the adult academic credential education, non-degree type, or other different types of adult education beyond school education, is also a kind of daily learning with supervision by teachers and educational organizations in learning periods for the improvement of adults' capability and skills in working and living (Chen, 2012, pp36-37). In this way, it is necessary to do an in-depth and concrete analysis and investigation of the adult education in China within the scope of non-formal education.

In China, the adult academic credentials education is the general term for all adult education, which is very different from the ordinary school education system (Jiang, 2014). Adult academic credentials education mainly includes three sequences: adult elementary education, adult secondary education, and adult higher education. Adult elementary cultural education is a two to three year-long primary education for the adults who are illiterate or have only basic education, so that they fail to meet the elementary education level (Gu, 2004). Adult secondary education is for adults who have completed primary education only, but fail to meet the education degree of secondary school. The task of the adult secondary professional education is to train and educate workers, who have graduated from junior or senior middle school, with certain practical experience that will help them adapt professionally to modern economic and social needs. These students are equipped with middle-level applied expertise (Gu, 2004).

Adult higher education offers educational levels including the junior college based on senior middle school level, regular college based on senior middle school level, regular college based on junior college level, and the second junior college. All of these alternatives can also be classified according to the

number of study hours as a part-time or full-time student. Additionally, they can be classified according to the teaching forms, which include evening university, correspondence education, broadcasting and television education, the modern remote (network) education, self-taught examination, and full-time classes (Ding, 2012, pp118-119). The enrolled students in these various types of higher education institutions include cadres, workers, farmers, social youth with knowledge, and recent senior middle school graduates, all of whom have to participate in a unified national examination. The highest achieving from this group has the opportunity to be enrolled in colleges and schools. The participants will be granted a graduation certificate recognized by the nation upon finishing the prescribed course and passing the examinations. With the certificate, students participating in adult higher education can obtain better opportunities for work, as well as the better performance in their job. There are many forms of adult higher education in China, such as the vocational colleges and universities, the Broadcasting and Television University, and the correspondence higher education and evening university (Ding, 2012, pp118-119).

The non-degree type of adult education in China refers to various types of educational activities outside the scope of required education by the national administrative departments. The participants of the non-degree adult education are generally not required to be registered since they are not issued a diploma, degree, or qualification certification after graduation (Zhou, 2000). This educational form includes literacy education, which focuses on educating workers and peasants who cannot read and write, or have low literacy. Job training is another educational training activity which focuses on improvement of production skills, quality requirements, and job responsibilities according to the standards set by employers. Continuing education is a kind of education whose purpose is to update knowledge and industry information for the on-the-job workers, who already have an educational degree or professional and technical titles. This improves their professional ability to adapt to social development and scientific and technological progress. Social and cultural life education aims to meet the demands for healthier and better spiritual and cultural life (Ying & Yan, 2008). This kind of education has the features of social schooling, mass activities, intellectual and interesting learning contents, and flexible teaching methods. Moreover, there are also different forms such as healthcare education, physical education, family life education, personal life education, education for old-ages, women education, and adult self-taught examination (Ying & Yan, 2008).

The Chinese government also encourages enterprises, educational institutions, and other social groups to organize and carry out counseling and extra-curricular classes for self-taught examinees through television, broadcasting, correspondence, internet, class teaching, and other forms in

accordance with the requirements of the professional programs and course syllabi of the self-taught examinations, so as to improve the learning quality and effectiveness of the examinees (Chen, 2007). However, the principle of higher, self-taught examination requires the separation of examination questions from counseling. This means that the examiners and the ones making up examinations questions must not organize or participate in any form of counseling and educational activities for the examinees (Chen, 2007).

Statistics show that the number of majors tested by higher, self-taught examination amounted to more than 400 by 1996. The number of examinees applying has reached more than 20 million, among which more than 1.3 million are graduates from senior and junior college and more than 40,000 are graduates of universities. Therefore, it can be said that the self-taught examination has become the most flexible form of adult education with the maximum influence in China (Xie & Wu, 2014).

Adult education must adapt to social development and aim at promoting social progress; therefore, the types and forms of adult education should adapt to the changing learning requirements of adults. At present, China has formed an adult education pattern with various forms, levels, and specifications, as well as the combination lifelong education system of pre and post-vocational education, academic education, and continuing education, in which the academic education is the most important aspect in the scope of adult higher education currently in China. The full-time teaching organizations for adult education are primarily the same as general full-time teaching organizations, with a difference in training aims and teaching content, which will be discussed shortly. In fact, the various types of non-academic education and adult secondary academic education are also carried out with such teaching forms (Xie & Wu, 2014).

From the analysis and introductions above, the formal adult educational teaching and learning forms are the basic, but not the sole or most important, forms of the adult education. There are also forms of adult education and learning which not received much attention, but still play important functions in the general adult educational system (Gu, 2006). One of them is the evening university, which is organized by general universities and is a part-time complement to full-time education. The teaching and learning activities in evening university take place when participants have spare time; in addition, they may also take place on Saturdays and Sunday (Gu, 2006). Another form is correspondence education, which is a self-study-based education. It is supplemented by face-to-face counseling, and makes use of a variety of teaching methods for distance education. The correspondence education graduates must achieve the equivalent knowledge and practical level as the graduates from the general universities; therefore, the teaching programs of

correspondence education should refer to course syllabi and requirements in the full-time general universities, while integrating characteristics unique to correspondence education (Gu, 2006). The third important form is the broadcasting and television education, which uses broadcasting and television network installments for distance education. The broadcasting and television universities carry on higher academic and secondary education across the whole country, and conduct all levels and various types of continuing education and job training. Compared with the traditional education forms, the time and place of broadcasting and television education is more flexible and convenient, making accessible to the majority of pursuing continuing education and lifelong learning (Chen, 2007). Internet education is a modern education form which makes good use of satellite and internet technology to create a virtual classroom environment in a different time and space in order to realize the remote propagation of teaching information. The concrete method of this education is to convert the information, image, and scene of teachers' classroom to a digital signal, which is made into courseware in the form of DVD or CD with video techniques (Chen, 2007). This technology allows students to learn in a multimedia classroom with other classmates present, or alone on the computer with access internet. They can even communicate with teachers through video conferencing system or a computer network during the learning process in order to ask questions and discuss content.

The evaluation system to analyze achievements of adult learners is also open and convenient. One possibility is the self-taught examination, which is a kind of education which combines the individual self-study, social aid and financing, and the national examination together, and conducts national degree examination for autodidact. The main task of self-taught examination is to promote and expand the range of personal self-learning, the on-the-job professional education, and continuing education after graduation and social financing on education with the approach of the national entrance examination. Citizens can participate in self-taught examination regardless of their sex, age, ethnicity, or education status. The required academic degree of self-taught examination should be consistent with the academic degree in colleges and universities (Chen, 2007). The higher self-taught educational examination is a social examinations system and educational form, which is a fenceless "university" open to society (Chen, 2007).

3.6.2 The German concrete lifelong and adult learning activities and programs.

Both the national universities and private institutions can offer general education courses, while the latter pay much more attention to the adult and continuing education for workers and adults. The main influential and concrete forms of adult education in Germany are vocational continuing education and general continuing education (Gao & Gao, 2007, pp95-97). The evaluation and

examination forms for the adult education and learning are graduation certificates.

Firstly, the vocational continuing education includes training, retraining (which happens when there is a career change), basic vocational education, and vocational orientation. There are public and private vocational schools, in addition to vocational associations, chambers of commerce, and vocational education institutions (OECD, 2014). All of these organizations play important roles in the general adult and vocational education system. One of the most important forms is staff training that occurs within an enterprise (Gao & Gao, 2007, 95-97). According to a survey, the number of people participating in internal training is higher than participation in outside training (Pan, Liu & Horst, 2008, 43-46). The basic vocational education and vocational orientation training are provided mainly by the national colleges and universities.

In Germany, many professional skills and qualifications are obtained through advanced learning and continuing education, as well as the professional training. Vocational education plays a very important role in the field of management by ensuring the professional qualifications of administrative staff. Typically, the vocational education will be provided as a "dual system," in which there is a period of vocational education, followed by a period of continuing education while working, and finally a promotion to a higher position at work (Gao & Gao, 2007, 95-99; OECD, 2014). Some advanced education requires the recognized graduate examination. In addition, there is also vocational basic education provided by many commercial organizations. The enterprises themselves also organize staff training in the form of sales training courses, leadership qualifications seminars, and technical training without diploma or certifications.

The general continuing education is also an important piece. Typically, the general continuing education is very different from vocational continuing education because it is always carried out in the national universities. Although the amount of general continuing education has been slightly increasing, national universities make up only 1/3 of the education in this field, while the public organizations, made up of political associations and churches, also take up a small share of organizing continuing education (Pan, Liu & Horst, 2008, 43-46). The share of education performed by political parties, labor unions, and foundations has declined gradually, mainly because of a reduction in their investment on political education (Bhandari & Blumenthal, 2013, pp316-317). In contrast, employers, enterprises, the private sector, chambers of commerce, and vocational associations have taken up almost the entire field of vocational continuing education. The most noteworthy finding is that employers have created half of all courses and enrolled half of the employees from their enterprises in vocational continuing education (Gao & Gao, 2007, 95-99).

The German adult and continuing learning system has also set up its own graduation evaluation system by issuing certificates to the qualified graduates (Schmid, 2014, pp137-140). The conditions and prerequisites for participants to obtain graduation certification depend on the learning contents, time, and forms, as well as the different sponsors who organize the continuing education. The evaluation is made in the form of an examination, certification, or certificate. Most of the short-term continuing education will award no certificates. As for long-term continuing education, there are three main forms of certification:

The first is a special certificate issued by national universities, which is a kind of national certificate. One important function of national certificates is compensate for a lack of primary and secondary school diploma, especially the ordinary high school diploma, which has historical and social significance for providing opportunity equality (Gao & Gao, 2007, pp95-99). Most certificates of continuing education are the same as those from other educational systems, such as vocational education, primary and secondary education, and higher education in colleges and universities.

Secondly, specialized continuing education certificates are available in some specific areas, especially the career-related areas, such as language and information science. There may also be several similar certificates, such as the Cambridge Certificate and ICC in English (Schmid, 2014, pp137-140).

Finally, churches and labor unions mainly issue certificates from specialized organizations, which have internal usefulness in the respective organizations. These certificates are evidence for the learners who have participated in continuing and adult learning activities with specialized vocational qualification. Since the forms of continuing education in the past few years have changed gradually, there will likely be different new types of certificates, or a combination of several certificates, according to needs of the learners (Schmid, 2014, pp137-140).

In Germany, the national culture has trained individuals to have the independent and self-determined characters and learning interests. Therefore, the self-directed learning habits and preferences have been inherited and the self-controlled learning system in Germany is highly developed. It is reported that the number of non-systematic continuing education institutes for self-controlled learning are increasing; therefore, the forms of continuing education are becoming more diverse. For example, there has been a combining of courses organized by sponsors and institutions, which indicates the formation of a new continuing education structure (Schmid, 2014, pp137-140).

Over the past few years, theoretical discussion, as well as practical discussion, of adult education has been greatly influenced by the concept of "self-controlled learning" (Hu, 2014, pp20-24). It is the basis of the "new learning culture" to be created (Dietrich, 2001). The concept of self-controlled learning does not replace the earlier principle of "for students;" on the contrary, it develops and expands this concept further. This concept purports that it is a social necessity for all individuals to achieve self-controlled learning. Adult education should mimic the trends and requirements of the changing society and workplace, which today require more personal independence, sense of responsibility, as well as flexibility, capability and willingness to adapt.

The concept of self-controlled learning contains the aim and expectations of society to develop the students' self-learning ability. It also complies with the ideal of self-determination of adult students in traditional educational theory (Schmid, 2014, pp141-150). Self-direction in learning can cover all aspects of the educational process, including learning objectives, content, methods, media, materials, place and time, academic performance, and achievements. The more characteristics applied in the learning process by students, the higher the degree of self-control (Ying & Yan, 2008). There is the theory that the learning process will last for a longer duration period when students actively acquire knowledge in a self-directed way, and especially when students are interested in the learning content and believe it has great significance for them personally.

In this way, self-controlled learners assume responsibility for the entire learning process. In addition, this learning style requires students to have a higher degree of introspection and reasoning ability. The ideal situation is that self-controlled learners are not only able to describe their own learning goals and find personally important issues, but also take advantage of various learning strategies and media resources available to them (Hu, 2014, pp20-24). In addition, the student should grow to know themselves as learners, by understanding their own learning needs, preferences for learning form, and challenges to be overcome. Finally, the student should also have the capacity for good self-management and self-evaluation (Hu, 2014, pp20-24; Schmid, 2014, pp143-147).

The self-controlled learning programs created by educational institutions have a lot of prerequisites. It is not surprising that the "self-controlled learning culture" in Germany remains a theoretical discussion far more than an actual implementation thus far (Hu, 2014, pp20-24). The experimental basis of this field is still weak. In collaboration with seven different continuing education institutes, the German Institute for Adult Education implemented a project called "self-controlled learning: providing service for development of a new

learning culture" from 1998 to 2000, which scientifically investigated the possibilities and conditions for realizing self-controlled learning within the scope of school education activities (Hu, 2014, pp20-24). Within the framework of this project, there were research groups for teachers and staff of adult education, which discussed the following four topics: "the methods and media of self-controlled learning," "learning consultation and the ability of consulting," "interactive learning software," and "experience accumulation" (Schmid, 2014, pp143-147).

Therefore, the general education culture and structure in Germany, especially lifelong learning, has this aspect of self-direction, and is supported financially and concretely by the government, as well as private sector companies and community organizations like churches (Zhang & Wang, 2004, pp21-23). In the self-controlled learning system, the individual has thoughts about the learning process which influence the overall learning models and habits, and even the general learning culture in the society. In this way, the society's learning culture embodies the learning preferences of individuals.

3.6.3 The summary

From the lifelong and continuing educational activities, organizations, institutions, and regulations, we can see that the Chinese educational activities have obvious collective and organized features, which are reflected by the nature and form of the educational institutions and activities in which Chinese citizens participate (Zhang & Wang, 2004, pp21-23). Almost all the lifelong and adult educational organizations and institutions are established and supervised by the governmental and official authorities; therefore, learning activities in these organizations are always governed and organized by the government and official departments directly or indirectly. Thus, the learning activities are closed and conservative. Therefore, the individual learning activities in such an educational system are also quite restrained, without sufficient freedom (Zhang & Wang, 2004, pp21-23).

In contrast, the German lifelong and adult educational institutions and organizations are always established with local or civil support, which have non-governmental background. Therefore, the individual learning activities in such organizations are characterized by greater freedom (Zhang & Duan, 2013, pp9-12). One such example is the modern and successful self-controlled learning method, which is based on self-direction in learning content and methods. In this way, such learning is more democratic and self-motivated, without authoritative interferences from the government. The learning activities in this context are characterized by more freedom, self-management, and self-discipline (Zhang & Duan, 2013, pp9-12).

Collectively, the different forms and styles of lifelong and adult in these two

countries have resulted in distinct educational cultures. Individual learning behaviors are always influenced by the organizational forms and styles of educational institutions and organizations, which in turn have great influence on the nation and future generations.

3.7 The comparisons of lifelong and adult education systems

3.7.1 The system similarities between China and Germany
(1) A similar development procedure
The modern lifelong and adult education in China began in 1949, after the founding of People's Republic of China, while the adult education system initially formed in the early 1950's to mid-1960's (An, 2013, p13). The structure of lifelong and adult education was composed of different levels, including literacy, primary, secondary, and university education. The education categories included education for employees, farmers, cadre, and unemployed youth. After more than ten years of practice, a varied and multi-level schooling form has been shaped. A dominant ideology of adult education has been established, which combines unity and diversity, popularization and improvement, comprehensive planning and decentralization (Zhu, 2008, pp4-6). During this period, the Chinese adult education focused on the tasks of increasing literacy and cultural education of adult workers and peasants. The quality of teachers was also very poor because they lacked specialized teaching and management experience. The understanding of adult education was still very one-sided and superficial, which shows there was an incomplete understanding of adult education (Ying & Yan, 2008). The concrete implementation of adult education meant organizing and developing the national schools and factories, enterprises, agricultural cooperative schools, general education and vocational education, adult education and children education, full-time schools, work-study and advanced learning programs, school education and self-learning, as well as free education and tuition-based education simultaneously (Ying & Yan, 2008).

Since 1978, lifelong and adult education had rapid and healthy development. The state issued a series of laws, policies, and measures to promote and guide the development of adult education. The importance and function of adult education has been clearly recognized by the central government, and a relatively complete theory framework of modern adult education has been formed. The contents, types, and management of adult education have also changed. The continuing education after graduation from universities gradually became an important part of the adult education (Zhu, 2008, pp4-7).

Meanwhile, in the Federal Republic of Germany, the modern adult education was also slowly constructed in the first few years after the end of World War II. From the early 1950's to the 1960's, the German national, state, and local

governments could not afford a leading role in adult education; therefore, lifelong and adult education was not included into legislation at that time (Schmid, 2014, 137-145). The government, society, and education departments were not aware of the importance of adult education. They only understood it as a short-term task or intervention with a limited function for individuals in their personal development and adaption to the community process (Gao & Gao, 2007, pp96-97).

Germany has implemented a wide range of educational reforms in the 1960's to the late 1970's. A legislative context for adult education was developed. Society discovered the significance and status of adult education in this background, and regarded it as a public issue that required funding (Schmid, 2014, pp137-145). Since the 1980's and 1990's, the adult education in Germany has gained social broad support with rapid expansion, and an urban-oriented, decentralized, and life-related adult education system flourished. The concepts of lifelong learning and continuing education become an important theoretical pillar of adult education.

(2) The management of lifelong and adult learning systems
In China, the range of adult education opportunities is extremely wide, and the management fields involve all sectors of society. This makes the evaluation of the effectiveness of adult education very complicated. The management of adult education adheres to the basic principles of the socialist market economy with Chinese characteristics, and strives to become more pertinent and adaptable, while also making management more standardized and institutionalized according to the legal framework (Zhu, 2008 pp4-7).

The current Chinese administrative system of adult education is constructed by three levels, including the central government, the provincial, autonomous regions governments, and county governments (Xie, 2007). As for the present situation in adult education, the state encourages enterprises, organizations, social groups, and citizens to set up adult schools and other educational institutions and constitute various forms of adult education in accordance with the law. It can be said that the Chinese adult education has essentially realized diversification, as shown by the range of educational institutions, the multiple channels for school financing, the dynamic and open adult education school system, teaching content, and teaching methods. Collectively, this has formed a suitable adult education mechanism under Chinese conditions.

Lifelong and adult education in Germany is the broadest concept in the education system. There is not a national adult education system in Germany, nor a unified or centralized adult education management system. The adult education management philosophy, based on the provisions of the Basic Law, focuses on the protection of the fundamental rights to free development of

individual's personalities, and the principle of diversified schooling and free education (Gao & Gao, 2007, pp96-97; Schmid, 2014, pp137-140). The federal and state governments work together in applying flexible and collaborative approaches to implement the adult education management system and operational mechanism. There is an emphasis on state-based stimulation of social organizations to sponsor lifelong and adult education. The highly developed adult education in Germany is mainly driven and prompted by the state and local governments, social organizations, and other school sponsors (Schmid, 2014).

(3) The social protection of lifelong and adult education.
One of the important reasons for the steady development of the Chinese and German lifelong and adult education is the support and protection by a set of comprehensive laws and policies gradually built up by national and local governments in both countries.

From the 1990's, the Chinese government and the state administrative department of education promulgated a series of laws and regulations on adult education to adapt to the new circumstances in the modern era. In particular, the 'Chinese Educational Reform and Development Program' announced in 1993 and the 'Education Law of the People's Republic of China' issued in 1995 have clearly defined the status, significance, basic functions, division of work, assessments, teachers' obligations and rights, main forms and contents and funding source of adult education (Zhu, 2008).

Germany is a federal state, which means that the basic education legislation and administrative privileges belong to each state. The development of adult education in Germany is also built on the basis of comprehensive legal protection and policy support. Most of the adult education and continuing education, as branches of the general education, have been subject to independent laws enacted by each state, such as the 'Continuing Education Act' (Robert, 2013). The jurisdiction of the Federal government in the field of continuing education is very limited (Gao & Gao, 2007, pp96-99). Therefore, it is incorrect to say that there is a complete system of national continuing education laws, regulations, and policies in Germany. However, the system is also not controlled entirely by the states. Each state coordinates and deals with educational and cultural issues of transregional significance. However, the federal legal protections of the national adult education are still very important. Therefore, the adjustment and development of the basic principles of adult education have been provided by the federal government, which are wholly in accordance with the provisions of the 'Basic Law' to protect the fundamental rights to free development of personality and the diversity and independence of adult education contractors (Robert, 2013). The federal government offers funding and financial support to the development of interstate adult education,

continuing education demonstration projects, and research institutions such as the German Adult Education Institute. This funding is in accordance with special financial and tax policies, such as the Income Tax Law (Zhu, 2008). In this way, the federal government and each state work flexibly with each other in the field of adult education, which has resulted in distinctive state-based legal and policy frameworks with both diversity and unification.

3.7.2. The differences of the systems in China and Germany
Due to differences in social conditions, political systems, and education management traditions between China and Germany, there are four notable differences in their adult education systems:

(1) The differences on the concrete management forms and behaviors
The implementation of a unified administrative leadership system in China has resulted in the formation of three longitudinally administrative levels, including central provinces, autonomous regions, and counties. As the highest management department of the national adult education, the Ministry of Education has such functions as approving and auditing the qualifications of adult education schools, drafting the various types of adult college evaluation criteria, and organizational assessments (Xie, 2007). Each ministry of the State Council is in charge of respective adult education according to its duty, to ensure that the requirements of the relevant national adult education in each industry or system could be met. Provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities organize, coordinate, guide, and promote each aspect of the regional adult education in accordance with the national educational planning and requirements of the central government and the education administrative departments (Zhu, 2008, pp4-6). County governments and municipal governments balance the elemental, vocational, technical, and adult education in each county and city (Xie, 2007). The rural adult education management system, composed of county and town governments, as well as villagers' committees, has played an important role in the spreading of adult education in a wide range of rural areas (Zhu, 2008, pp4-6).

In significant contrast to the Chinese adult education management system, Germany has stressed the principles of variety and freedom, so that there is no unified adult education system in the whole country (Schmid, 2014). There are some general regulations and principles about education from the federal to the states, especially the laws and regulations of the state governments on adult education. However, in the practical execution of the education policies, local educational departments always have priority to make concrete policies and programs with the decisive right on the educational programs developed in local district (Gao & Gao, 2007, pp96-99). It also affords a special responsibility for the regulation, appropriate framework, and boundaries for adult education, such as the guarantee of pluralism, information and

consulting, quality assurance, and the help to the educationally disadvantaged (Gao & Gao, 2007, pp96-99; Schmid, 2014).

The school size, teaching forms, contents, schooling time, and organization types of these educational institutions in Germany are different from one another, but they all freely and actively implement adult education activities nationwide (Reich-Claassen & Tippelt, 2013). These institutions are sponsored by different contractors, which are often part of some consortium of institutions, such as the German federation of adult colleges, the state association of adult college, or the organizations sponsoring these schools (Gao & Gao, 2007, pp96-99). The two national associations DGB and DAG maintain most of the continuing vocational educational institutions in Germany, as well as some commercial adult education institutions, educational institutions held by chambers of commerce, colleges, and universities (Gao & Gao, 2007, pp96-99). These different school sponsors, contractors, and institutions carry out and promote the national adult education freely and openly, in accordance with the principle of pluralism. This national diversified and complementary model in management embodies the most important difference in adult education between China and Germany, and results in other differences between the systems (Zhang & Wang, 2004, pp21-24).

(2) The differences in teaching performance and activities by teachers.
In China, the adult academic education, especially the adult higher education, has become a fundamental and important part of adult education. Its teaching targets, contents, methods, and requirements are close to the general higher education, and very different from common adult education which has the main task of just training and continuing education. In recent years, the Chinese colleges and universities have created adult higher education institutions, provided necessary duties in the development of adult education, and played a key role overall (Ying & Yan, 2008, pp47-48). Some independent adult colleges, such as the broadcasting and television universities, cadres' colleges, and education colleges have had rapid development. A large proportion of all of the adult education participants are striving for a diploma and degree, which are the main purpose of their studies, rather than job training or business skills. This phenomenon is related to the reality that the general development of higher education in China does not meet the needs of the Chinese society (Chen, 2007, pp19-21).

The adult education in Germany has been focused more on continuing education, which is generally defined as resumed learning before or during employment, after completing the different stages of elementary education. It is the common task of both the state and society (Zhang & Wang, 2004, pp21-22). Continuing education has been regarded as an independent education field, which is closely related to schools, universities, and vocational

training (Schmid, 2014).

In Germany, a lot of important professional skills and qualifications are obtained through advanced education (Schmid, 2014). The main form of vocational advanced education is internal training organized by enterprises themselves, so that workers obtain more skills and professional working knowledge (Zhang & Wang, 2004, pp21-24). The adult colleges can provide courses in each field, and focus more on general education rather than vocational education. The organizations and programs of continuing education are flexible and diverse, such as training and retraining projects of up to two years of full-time courses, or short-term seminars, presentations, and other forms (Zhang & Wang, 2004, pp21-22). Of those who participate in continuing education, the majority are employed workers rather than unemployed individuals; therefore the purpose of continuing vocational education is more definite than the general continuing education (Zhang & Wang, 2004, pp21-22).

(3) The structural differences in teaching staff
A number of Chinese adult educational teachers have been hired or employed by specialized higher education institutions, such as universities, education colleges and private adult colleges. On the contrast, the teachers hired in private or independent continuing institutions are always not regarded as permanent or professional staffs (Chen, 2007, 18-19). However, most of the staff and teachers who engage in the management of German continuing educational institutions are usually permanent, and fulfilling their responsibilities within the framework of the permanent staff regulations (Chen, 2007, pp18-19).

This structural difference in the employment of teachers and staffs is closely related to the differences in structure of adult education in China and Germany. This is mainly manifested in the fact that the Chinese academic education, especially the higher education for academic qualifications, has become a basic and increasingly important component of adult education. However, the qualifications of practitioners and staff in adult education are very inconsistent. Most staffs lack pedagogical knowledge and skills, and even fewer have highly specialized teaching training specific to adult education. Instead, most of them just received general professional training on teaching subjects. Meanwhile, the focus of adult education in Germany lies in continuing education, especially in continuing vocational education (Zhang & Wang, 2004, pp21-24).

(4) The differences in funding sources.
In the Chinese educational system, the main funding sources for adult education are supplied by fiscal appropriation, while a variety of other institutional financing sources are supplementary (Chen, 2014, pp71-72). In

accordance with the relevant provisions, the expenditures for adult education should be included in the state budget, as well as the local budget. In addition to the regulated payment, the lack of the educational expenses for employees and workers in enterprises can be directly charged from the cost, or from other projects and funding expenses in the enterprise (Wen, 2014, pp55-57). The funding of rural adult education and vocational education is dispersed from the whole education funding and cost of educational departments in counties or cities. The funding of correspondence and evening continuation schools organized by universities and colleges is funded by the fiscal appropriation from the government, the departments to which students belong, and appropriate tuition fees paid by students (Chen, 2014, pp71-72).

The financing sources of continuing education in Germany are also multi-channel and multi-mode (Schmid, 2014). The difference from the Chinese method is that the German federal and state governments provide subsidies or make institutions tax-free, as well as finance the schools or institutes with the fundamental material and staff resources to keep the daily operation of the schools (Gao & Gao, 2007, pp96-99). Generally speaking, the funding for continuing education is from different sources, such as tuition fees, the EU, subsidies from towns, enterprises, and more (Schmid, 2014). The funding of continuing education within enterprises is provided by employers, while the expenses of some continuing education offered by private providers is often paid by participants (Gao & Gao, 2007, pp96-99). If the purpose of continuing education is for vocational training, then the fees might also be tax exempt for participants. The funding system is also consistent with the management system of German adult education (Schmid, 2014).

In conclusion, there are similarities as well as differences in the lifelong and adult learning and educational systems in China and Germany. From the macro-scale, we have investigated the governmental policies, laws, economic situations, and educational regulations. From the meso and micro-scale, we have investigated teaching and studying performances, teaching methods, the teaching-learning behaviors, relations, and cultures, and finally the teacher qualifications. In all these areas, similarities and differences between the countries have been identified. From this analysis, we can more clearly understand the theoretical and practical foundations, as well as the basic cultures and attitudes behind lifelong learning behaviors of individuals in both countries. Therefore, based on this background information, the analysis of concrete narrations will be understood in the proper context.

4. The "grounded theory" methodological framework

4.1 The origin, definition and scope of grounded theory.

(1) The origin of grounded theory.

We often classify the social science research methods as quantitative research method or qualitative research methods. Quantitative research was first derived in the research paradigm of natural science, which emphasizes empirical findings and believes only verifiable research can be called "hard science" (Chen, 2001, p327). Findings are often verified with a statistical method, which is also used very widely in social science research fields (Chen, 2001, p327).

There are still scholars who disagree with the quantitative research method, although it is often used in social science research. They believe that the social sciences and natural sciences cannot be treated as the same, which means the research paradigm of the natural sciences should not be blindly applied to all social sciences; therefore they advocate qualitative research methods (Chen, 2001, pp327-328). Qualitative research is a more profound reflection of the social reality compared with quantitative research, and has increased in popularity recently. However, qualitative research is still often criticized for not being rigorous enough, which affects the credibility of research results (Chen, 2001, pp327-328).

The goal of this dissertation is to introduce a fairly rigorous method of qualitative research, rather than discuss which social science research method is better: quantitative research or qualitative research. However, there are currently very few clear introductions for the grounded theory in China that aim at refuting the criticisms against qualitative research (Chen, 2001, p328).

In the Chinese articles and monographs, there are mainly explanations of quantitative research methods, but rarely any discussion of qualitative research methods, such as grounded theory. The concept of qualitative research methods must be made clear before trying to understand grounded theory (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded Theory'). The qualitative research areas of social science have been divided by some scholars into three models: quantitative research, interpretation model, and critical research model (Chen, 2001, p328). However, there are also scholars expanding the scope of qualitative research, dividing it into the areas of summarized observations, interviews, case studies, phenomenology, grounded theory, and ethnography (Chen, 2001, p328).

(2) The definition and introduction of grounded theory.

The grounded theory method has been jointly developed by two scholars: Barney Glaser from Chicago University and Anselm Strauss from Columbia University. It is a kind of qualitative research method which makes use of a systematic program to develop and guide a phenomenon inductively (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp1-3).

The main aim of Grounded theory is to establish theory based on empirical data (Strauss, 1987, p5). Before the start of research, researchers generally do not have theoretical assumptions. Rather, they start directly from actual observation, sum up the experience from the raw data, and then constitute a theory system. This is a bottom-up method of establishing substantive theory, which looks for the core concepts reflecting the essence of a phenomenon on the basis of a systematic collection of information, and then constructs a social theory through the links among these concepts. Grounded theory must be supported with empirical evidence; however, its main feature is not its empirical character, but rather the abstraction of new concepts and ideas from the empirical facts. In field of philosophy, the grounded theory method is based on the post-positivist paradigm, and emphasizes testifying falsification of the constructed theory (Charmaz, 2008, pp397-402).

Grounded theory originated from an observation by Glaser and Strauss of the behavior of medical personnel in dealing with dying patients in a hospital in the 1960's. The formation of the idea for this method is associated with theoretical ideas from both philosophy and sociology. The first influence comes from American pragmatism, especially the thinking of Dewey, George Mead, and Charles Peirce, who all stressed the importance of action, and focused on the processing of problematic context and summarizing method during problem solving. The second influence is from the impact of the Chicago school of sociology, which widely used methods of observation and in-depth interviews in collecting information, and emphasized the understanding of the social interaction, social processes, and social changes from the view point of the individuals (Charmaz, 2008, pp397-402).

Strauss pointed out that the grounded theory emphasizes the development of theory, which is based on collected data from reality, as well as continuous interaction between information and analysis (Strauss, 1967, p65). Therefore, the grounded theory produces developed and validated theory through systematic data collection and analysis. "Grounded theory" could refer either to the research method itself or to the conclusions that result from this research method.

(3) The research scope of grounded theory.
Grounded theory believes that qualitative research, like any research method, should focus on data analysis and theory establishment (Strauss & Corbin,

1994, pp34-36). Therefore, the grounded theory research method is applicable to those fields with imperfect theoretical system, difficulties with effective explanation of practical phenomenon, theoretical gaps, and those in which new phenomenon are occurring. This methodology should be implemented with constant comparison, analysis, and transformation of data into the establishment of a theory. By interacting with events and phenomena, researchers get more sensitivity for refining the theory based on new conclusions.

One of the features of grounded theory as dependency on data has linked the theory with the case study methods so closely that the follow-up analysis of grounded theory can only be better carried out based on case selection and data collection (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded Theory'). The case study method, which has historically been questioned by researchers, has had a revival with the emergence the rigorous and scientific analysis of grounded theory. In grounded theory, data collection and analysis occur simultaneously and continuously. As researchers form tentative conclusions based on the data analysis, a large and growing reserve of data if constantly introduced to adjust the focus of the analysis. This methodological approach is very different from general qualitative research methods, which only carry out focused analysis after data collection (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded Theory'). Grounded theory requires the simultaneous data collection, analysis, and adjustment of the specific direction of the study. This drives researchers to define the research subject very broadly initially, and their controlling ability and dynamic flexibility are especially important (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded Theory').

4.2 The fundamental idea for grounded theory.

(1) Theory emergence from data and materials.
Grounded theory emphasizes that a theoretical framework can only be gradually constructed through in-depth analysis of the data and materials. It is an induction process in which information and data is continuously concentrated from the bottom up (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded Theory'). Grounded theory does not make logical deduction about the set assumptions beforehand, but starts from the data summarization and analysis. The theory can be equipped with a practical coordination of theory and data. Therefore, it can be applied to guide the specific life and daily life activities.

(2) The method of continuous comparisons.
The main analytical concept of grounded theory is comparison. There are constant comparisons between information, data, and theories. Generic attributes are then refined into categories based on the relationship between data and theories. There are usually four steps in this kind of comparison (Li,

2007). Firstly, there is data and information comparisons based on the concept categories. This means that after encoding the data and normalizing them to the concept categories as exactly as possible, there is a comparison of the encoded materials and data in the same and different concept categories to look for an attribute and category for each concept. Secondly, there is integration of the relevant concept categories with their attributes and a comparison of these categories, while considering the relationships existing among them, and linking these relationships in a specific method. Thirdly, one must outline the initial presented theory, ensuring the connotation and extension of the theory, verifying the initial theory with the original data, and optimizing the existing theory so that it is more refined. Finally, one can answer the research question by declaring the theory, and describing the acquired materials and data, the concept categories, their attributes, and the relationships between them (Li, 2007).

(3) Sensitivity to theories.
The main aim of grounded theory is to construct theory, so there must be a high degree of sensitivity by the researchers to existing theories and their own developing theories during the research process. The theoretical sensitivity will not only help to have focus and direction in the stage of data collection, but also to pay attention to concepts which can express the content of information and data more intensively in the process of data analysis, especially when the content of data and information is relatively loose and dispersive (Li, 2007). Grounded theory believes that theories have more explanatory power than pure description, and therefore, it stresses that each researcher should be sensitive to theories.

(4) The theoretical evaluation.
Grounded theory has its own criteria for checking and evaluating theories, which can be grouped into the following four items (Charmaz, 2008, pp399-402). Firstly, the concepts must be derived from the raw and original materials, which are the basis for the arguments being made (Charmaz, 2008, pp399-402). Secondly, the concepts abstracted from theories should be fully developed, and the density of the concepts should be relatively large. This means there are many complicated relationship among concepts and their significance in theories (Charmaz, 2008, pp399-402). Thirdly, each concept of the theory should have a systematic link with the other concepts, because theories are rational connections among sets of concepts (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p278). This means that all concepts should be closely intertwined to form a whole with unified and intrinsic relations. Finally, theories linked by sets of concepts have a strong value for a broad range of practical applications. The theories should have strong explanatory power and sensitivity to the subtleties of individual behaviors.

4.3 The features of grounded theory.

(1) Inductive and deductive thinking.

Inductive and deductive thinking are very important aspects of the analysis in the grounded theory. These important thinking strategies demonstrate the implications and significance of the study. The researching clues may not be recognized from the existing data and materials, or there is sometimes not enough data, which both make the phenomenon in the process not obvious. The research findings are enriched through continuous observation, induction, comparison, and verification (Li, 2007). In this situation, researchers should turn to interpretative thinking. Researchers can assume that the changes will occur under certain circumstances and occasions, and then look back to the existing data and materials to see if there is evidence to support, deny, or modify these assumptions (Li, 2007).

Some procedures of grounded theory could release some assumptions by researchers, and create a new system order from the previous data system. The innovative aspect of this method lies in the researchers' ability to redistribute the collected data and materials through the process of conceptualization. Innovation is extremely important for the possibility of establishing an effective theory by researchers (Li, 2007). Comparison helps to improve the researchers' theoretical sensitivity, to note some areas or categories with development potential, and identify the conditions and results of the category establishment by the data and materials (Li, 2007).

(2) The theory requires a strategy of constant comparison.

The strategy of grounded theory research is based on data collection, which is realized by constant interaction between researchers and interviewees. The researchers are collecting data and materials which are in development (Li, 2007). The flexibility of the research strategy enables the interviewees the opportunity to provide feedback, so that researchers can make proper use of any information, while also considering the realities and needs of the interviewees (Li, 2007).

(3) The collection and analysis of data.

Grounded theory emphasizes theory development, with continuous interaction of data collection and analysis. The research does not start from the establishment of a theory to verification, but from researching a phenomenon and slowly forming a theory. The nature of data collection in grounded theory can be described as microscopic, developing, in context, grounded, vague, ambiguous, informal, and interactive. There is a mutualistic influence between theory, data, and analysis (Charmaz, 2008, pp397-402).

(4) The richness of concepts and construction theory.

Grounded theory challenges existing theories with the unique method of generalizing and gradually constructing concepts with data and materials. This enables the establishment of theories that correspond to data, so as to realize the contact and relation between the micro and macro fields (Charmaz, 2008, pp397-402).

4.4 The analytical process of grounded theory.

The core of the grounded theory method is the process of data and materials collection and analysis, which includes both the theoretical deduction and the theory summarization (Weng, Xu & Huang, 2000, pp12-15). There is not a significant difference in the data and materials collection between other qualitative research methods and the grounded theory method. Strauss has called the data analysis by grounded theory "coding," which refers to the process of decomposition and identification of data collected or translated, then the conceptualization of phenomenon, and finally the abstraction, enhancement, and consolidation of concepts into categories (Weng, Xu & Huang, 2000, pp12-15). The process should be based on data and materials from reality, should define the scope and categories of the data, and then identify the nature and dimensions of these categories. The complicated nature and relationship among these categories are the conclusion and result of study. This means the grounded theory method aims to describe the nature and significance of the phenomenon from the theoretical level, in order to establish the theory suitable to data and information, and finally draw a fairly standard grounded theory research process through the summarization of a variety of literature, as shown in Diagram 4 (Pandit, 1996):
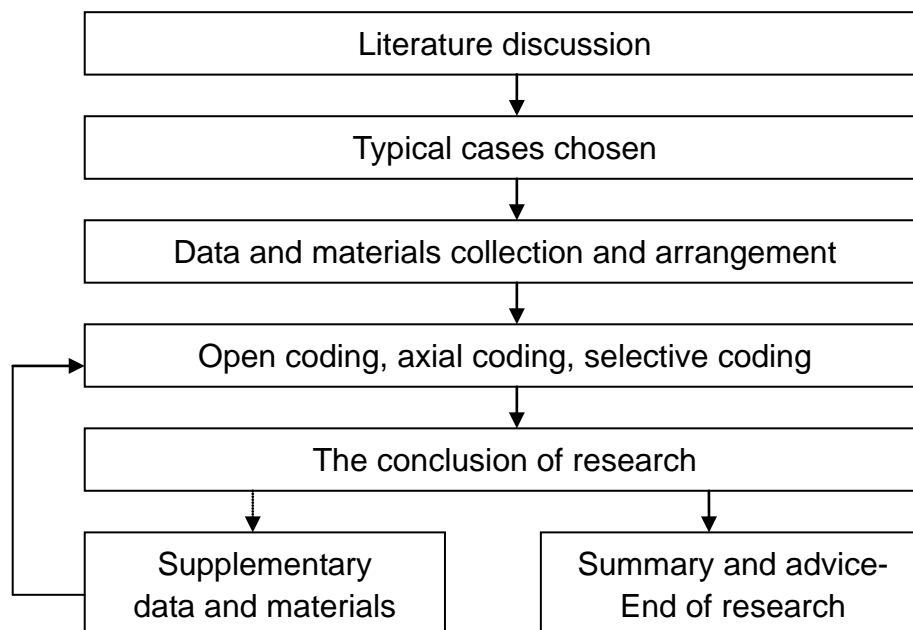
Diagram 6: The general analytical process of the grounded theory method

There are the following main steps in a grounded theory study:

(1) Question formulation.
Grounded theory is very suitable for the study of a phenomenon or problem closely related to the behavior of certain people. The method should result in a theory to explain the reason, process, and mechanism for the phenomenon or problem. We could solve all these problems and questions with the grounded theory method (Weng, Xu & Huang, 2000, pp12-15).

(2) Theoretical sampling.
Theoretical sampling refers to the selection of subjects or interviewees who can provide help with the theoretical construction. Typically, these are individuals who understand the nature of the problem best and are able to provide in-depth and complete data and materials (Weng, Xu & Huang, 2000, pp12-15). During the interviews, researchers can guide narrators to express their insights, feelings, and understanding of the situation clearly and freely in the form of telling stories (Alheit, 2008).

(3) Interview recording.
The interview content is the important, first-hand research material and should be treated with seriousness and care. Researchers should transcribe the contents verbatim, which are the original source files of grounded theory analysis (Weng, Xu & Huang, 2000, pp12-15). In addition, every interview or contact with the narrators should also be recorded, which is to help researchers think about the key points, significance, and value of the interviews, and use this to judge the research direction at all times (Weng, Xu & Huang, 2000, pp12-15).

(4) Data segmentation and naming.
The interview manuscript or document files should be reviewed line-by-line. The principle of segmentation means each section with a few sentences having a similar meaning should be grouped. After the segmenting, researchers must give each section a specific but concise name to represent the segment information. It is best to start with a verb in data naming in order to present the ideas and behavior of the interviewees clearly and powerfully (Alheit, 2008).

(5) Creation of conceptual categories.
At this time, researchers ought to sort out several major conceptual categories from the interview materials, so as to be able to generalize the data provided by the interviewees. An indication that the category is representative is when all the segmented data within it have the same or similar meanings. The researchers should make clear definition to the type of this concept, without

creating too many specifically conceptual categories. However, if there are too much conceptual categories, researchers should try to merger the similar types together (Alheit, 2008).

(6) Data comparison.
Researchers should continuously compare new segmented data with the existing conceptual categories in order to classify them in the relevant category (Weng, Xu & Huang, 2000, pp12-15). However, researchers should consider adding a new conceptual category when the existing categories could not cover the items of new data and materials. Researchers should adjusting the direction of the sampling or interviews when some kinds of data are weak or lack, or deviating from certain categories (Weng, Xu & Huang, 2000, pp12-15).

(7) Memorandum creation.
The ideas, inspirations, and significance of the concepts should always be recorded and made into analysis memorandum by researchers in order to track their own conceptual development and find connections in the development of data, materials, concepts, and theories (Weng, Xu & Huang, 2000, pp12-15). Corbin and Strauss maintain that "writing theoretical memos is an integral part of doing grounded theory. Since the analyst cannot readily keep track of all the categories, properties, hypotheses, and generative questions that evolve from the analytical process, there must be a system for doing so... Memos are not simply 'ideas.' They are involved in the formulation and revision of theory during the research process" (1990, p10).

(8) Theories expanding.
The conceptual categories formed from data are to be transformed into theoretical constructs, and the theoretical framework is to be given in the final stage. Researchers can organize these important conceptual categories and finish the construction of the theoretical framework with help of several methods (Alheit, 2008). Each concept, step, or theoretical element must have support and corroboration from data, while researchers also need to use creativity to link these data with the concepts and make them into a systematic statement with explanatory power (Alheit, 2008).

Although scholars have grouped grounded theory research methods into these eight major steps, it is not a linear process, but rather an iterative process that works backgrounds and forwards as the research progresses (Pandit, 1996). The grounded theory method requires a high level of written expression, materials integration, and organizational skill. The time and effort that go into grounded theory research is considerable, so patience and passion are required for the research process (Weng, Xu & Huang, 2000, pp12-15).

4.5 Analysis techniques and examples of grounded theory.

The data and materials analysis of grounded theory can be divided into three main steps: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded theory'). Although these are three separate stages in form, the actual analytical process requires establishment of connections and comparisons between them.

4.5.1 The open coding.

Open coding refers to the gradual conceptualization and categorization of the data and records obtained in the research process. Open coding aims to identify the phenomenon, define concepts, look for categories, and deal with the problem of convergence. The procedures of open coding are phenomenon labeling and conceptualization, category discovery, categories naming, and finally category development in terms of their properties and dimensions. This ensures the refining operations from concepts to categories are more scientific and appropriate, and are described as follows (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded theory'):

The first step of open coding is to label different phenomenon and situations. The concept is the basic unit of analysis in grounded theory. Therefore the first priority is to transfer data into a concept in the analysis stage, in order to resolve the observed phenomena. Next, the concepts are given names that represent the phenomenon to which they refer. This step can be achieved with questioning (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded theory').

The second step is to divide and create categories based on the character and features of different concepts. During the whole process of study, there will be a dozen or even hundreds of concepts, which are complex and disordered when they are researched separately. There is a need to classify the similar concepts into categories. When various different concepts are classified by their nature and features into categories with various connotations, the process is called categorization. The categorization is temporary at this time, and may be modified as the research progresses (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded theory').

The third step is to name and summarize different categories. The name of the category should be higher and more abstract than the concept to which it refers. Each category should be conceptually named after its discovery. The way of choosing the category name is up to the researchers; however, the name usually has a logical relationship with the data it represents, so that people can think of the concept it depicts when they see this name (Li, 2007). The name could also be a quotation of names in the academic literature, which has two advantages. Not only is the researcher able to select a readily available name, but it may also aid in the further development of important concepts. However, the disadvantage lies in the potential for misunderstanding

by readers who mistake the concept of the current categories for the conventional meaning. In addition, this may stunt the creation of new ideas (Li, 2007).

As the naming of concepts and categories mentioned here have multiple sources, it is important that the essence of a phenomenon be reflected and explained truly and accurately in the name. In addition, the named concepts and categories may be subject to change in order to find concepts and categories that best reflect the nature of all data and materials. In this way, there must be a lot of working back and forth between the data, concepts, and categories (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded theory').

The fourth step is the explanation of category properties and dimensions. The properties of categories are constituted by a number of qualities or characteristics. It is also necessary to distinguish the orientation of its properties, which represents the different positions of properties in a continuous series. Open coding could assist researchers with confirming the orientation and properties of these categories.

After the first level analysis with open coding, the obtained concept and categories have replaced the content of most of the first-hand data and information successively and temporarily. The refining, simplifying and understanding of data and materials are also gradually progressing, thereby the task of analyzing the large, complex dataset is simplifying into examining and investigating these concepts, especially the various relationships and links between these categories. The subsequent analysis of grounded theory research cannot be carried out without the conceptualization and categorization of the research data (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded theory').

4.5.2 The axial coding.
Once researchers have used open coding to decompose the data into abstracted and refined categories, these categories are still fairly independent units, without in-depth discussions on the relationships between them. As it is a necessary precondition for conclusion of the relationship construction, each separated category should be linked and re-integrated, both of which rely on the canonical model tool in the axial coding stage (Hu, 1996, pp144-149)

In the process of axial coding, one must establish the "main categories" and "vice categories" (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded theory'). The vice categories refer to the casual conditions, context, action-interaction strategies and consequence of the observed phenomenon. Although the conditions, context, strategies, and results also belong to categories, they are associated with a "main category" and applied to help with understanding the main category, therefore they are called vice categories (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded theory').

The canonical model has constructed the close relationship between the categories, and made researchers understand the main categories more comprehensively and accurately. There may be more than one main category depending on the complexity of the phenomenon, but it will be meaningless if there are too many. A category, which sheds light on the interpretations of the main category and reflects the relationships among categories, can be placed repeatedly in different locations of the different canonical models (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded theory'). Thus, a certain category may play a different role in the canonical models of different main categories. For example, a certain category could be the causal condition in the analysis of the first main category, but become the result in the analysis of the second main category (Fei, 2008).

Similar to the open coding technique, interviewing, asking questions, and making comparisons are also the main tools for axial coding. However, the process is becoming more complex with each step, as multi-dimensional analytical work is implemented simultaneously in this coding process. Firstly, one must construct the hypothetical relationship between the main and vice categories based on their properties. Secondly, one must seek actual data to support this hypothetical relationship. Thirdly, one must continue investigating the properties of the main and vice categories to determine their position from the actual case. Finally, one must compare the similarities and differences of cases in their respective main and vice categories (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded theory').

This is the verification process which tests hypotheses of the relationship between main and vice categories with data and materials. Some counter-examples might be discovered in the data collection process, which will enables researchers to understand the diversity of phenomenon; therefore the theory constructed must be more changeable and flexible. This coding process has made use of inductive and deductive thinking methods (Li, 2007). Researchers will also discover that events which represent the properties of phenomenon appearing with a certain pattern, so researchers could at this stage pay special attention to these patterns, and then analyze and compare them. These analytical results will be of assistance in the next stage of the selective coding (Li, 2007).

After the axial coding, the thematic concept of the researching phenomenon will be become clear; however, the in-depth selective coding needs to be conducted with the core categories for theory establishment.

4.5.3 The selective coding.
With the process of constant comparison of raw data, concepts, categories, and especially the relationship among these categories, the grounded theory

analysis has come into the selective coding stage. The aim of this third stage is to select the core categories, seek connections between the core and other categories systematically, and then verify the relationships between them, as well as supplement the categories that are deficient in comprehensive conceptualization (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded theory'). The data integration of selective coding process is similar to axial coding, but the former deals with a more abstract analysis level (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded theory'). The main tasks of this process includes the identification of the "core categories," which are capable of commanding all other areas; the development of the story series with brief descriptions of all phenomena with the assistance of the data, their categories, and relationships; and finally continuing with the development of categories in order to make them more subtle and complete (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded theory').

When researchers constantly are deeply enveloped in the data with theoretical thinking, coding, and written commentary, they will gradually find the core categories, around which all other categories move and integrate. Glaser has pointed out that the core categories must have the "central" feature, meaning they are associated with most other categories and features, appear in the data and materials continually so as to become a stable feature, and have obvious and meaningful links with many other categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Over time as continuous comparisons are made, the names of the core categories should become increasingly abstract and inclusive (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded theory').

Like other stages of the ground theory method, the steps in the selective coding process are not carried out in an easily distinguished linear order, but more often move back and forth as the research progresses (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded theory').

Firstly, we should make clear the storyline. Each narration is a conceptualized story, which abstracts the originally descriptive narration into the conceptual narration. The two basic strategies, "constant comparison" and "asking questions," must be used for clues to the story line (Chen, 2001). The name of the core categories can be a noun, adjective plus gerund, or gerund plus noun, but should always be able to describe the story it represents.

Secondly, we should connect the core and vice categories with the canonical model. It is important to link the vice categories with other vice categories, as well as connect the core and vice categories processed by the canonical model based on conditions, context, strategies, and consequence. Each category should be defined within the canonical model. The relationships between each category should be arranged according to an appropriate rule, and the order of them should be analyzed, which will become the analytical

version of the whole story in order to aptly reflect the plot of the story (Li, 2007). The logic and sequence of the narrative story enable researchers to place the categories contained in the story clearly and simply.

Thirdly, researchers have to link various categories with different levels. This means we could identify the relationship between properties and levels of different categories with repeating occurrence. After the identification of these relationships, the theory will have specificity with data collection (Chen, 2001). Then researchers can classify and gather them together according to the placement of various categories and discover patterns and relationships. The main methods are still comparison, asking questions, and even using assumption strategies. In this way, a prototype of the theory will be achieved.

Fourth, we should confirm the relationship of categories according to data and materials. The completed theory needs to be verified with the collected data. Researchers should record the theory in their notes with diagrams or texts, and then clarify clearly the different relationships of categories in different contexts (Chen, 2001). Two parts are to be verifies at this stage: whether the relationship between the categories exists, and the different aspects of these relationships in various contexts.

Fifth, the categories should be enriched. Researchers should go back to the original constructed categories and do some reworking after the confirmation of the theory has finished so that the theory has conceptual richness and accuracy (Chen, 2001). In other words, researchers should return to the actual scenes to collect data that fills the theory's leakage or gaps, when certain categories of theory have not yet been well-developed or are lacking sufficient data evidence (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded theory').

Sixth, we must always take memorandum during the researching process. The construction of grounded theory is an accumulation process from the initial stage of writing memorandum continuous to the thesis writing (Chen, 2001). The memorandum could be freely written by researchers for their own references, which reflect the thinking track and construction process of the theory creation. So in this way, memorandum is the foundation and blueprint for later essay writing. The connotation and extension of the theory are determined through the identification of concepts and the discrimination of categories, so as to make clear and lively interview explanations and instructions for the constructed theories, and present the theory construction to readers with well-arranged and distinct levels (Chen, 2001).

These three coding methods appear to have linearity, but in fact, they are all linked with each other. This means the formation of selective coding is usually following the formation of axial coding. Selective coding always aims at

confirming the story line, developing the context types, and theory construction based on different context types. The various clues for selective coding can found in open coding or axial coding. Therefore researchers can carry out the selective coding after the formation of axial coding, with the obtained documents or the experiences from the coding process itself (Hu, 1996, p155).

4.6 The summarization of the grounded theory research method.

Glaser and Strauss have published a total of four classic treatises on grounded theory, which has been regarded as a mature qualitative research methodology. The book 'The discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative research' published by Glaser and Strauss in 1967 first proposed the concept of grounded theory. In 1978, Glazer published 'Theoretical sensitivity,' emphasizing that the purpose of the grounded theory is the construction of theory, and researchers must develop a theoretical sensitivity, remain vigilant to the previous data and documents, as well as the theory constructed by themselves at present in order to discover and develop theories from researching activities (Li, 2007). 'Qualitative analysis for social scientists' published by Strauss in 1987 has more detailed and systematic explanation of grounded theory. In 1990, the 'Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques' published by Strauss & Corbin made in-depth and meticulous explanation and instructions on qualitative research steps, means, strategies, and skills (Li, 2007). Currently, none of these four books have Chinese versions; therefore, there is lack of complete and systematic research monographs on grounded theory in China.

Grounded theory emphasizes that theory established on the basis of real-life experiences can gain real vitality, and advices researchers to avoid theoretical prediction. Rather they should start with interview data which can be reduced, transformed, and abstracted, so as to construct the core concepts as well as the categories of the relationship among concepts, and thus create a theory which comes from the true social lives of the interviewees, but can be applied to the broader population and society (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded theory'). Charmaz pointed out in 2007 that the power of the grounded theory is that it has provided the tools to understand the empirical world. Researchers can use these tools to form a set of more open grounded theory practice, while emphasizing the features of constructivism from the positivist stance. The grounded theory method is implemented as inspiring and suggestive method (Charmaz, 2008).

The in-depth interviews describe a social phenomenon, analyze social problems, and report the aspirations of individuals and groups by making clear

the lifestyle and life experiences of a particular social group by conversations with interviewees and narrators (Li, 2007). The concrete interviewing and analyzing process includes subject sampling, conducting interviews, interview transcription, interview coding, interview analysis, memorandum writing, and thesis writing. The advantages of the in-depth interviews lies in its flexibility of form, and the profound and detailed research methodology that can result from this (Li, 2007). Therefore, the detailed analysis method outlined above is the way of carrying out in-depth interviews flexibly and effectively with implementation of grounded theory, so as to construct theories systematically on the basis of the interviews. As pointed out previously, there is a lack of introduction, descriptions, and examples of grounded theory in China (Li, 2007). This dissertation attempts to combine the in-depth interviews, summarize the effective ways and means of grounded theory research method, and promote the further development of grounded theory and in-depth interview study in China with this specific guiding grounded theory example.

The analysis of axial and selective coding reflects the embryonic form of conclusions, but the relationships and categories during the theory construction have yet to be verified by applying all data and materials. The process of theory construction is to maintain the interaction between data and theories, to ensure the data from the real-world are continuously transformed into a more highly abstracted concept, and to construct relationships among concepts until theoretical saturation occurs (Li, 2007). The generation of theory requires the connection of the core categories with categories, especially the main categories, using the canonical model, and the verification of these connection relations with data (Li, 2007). Researches need to collect and supplement the related data and materials, examine the accuracy of the three coding analysis processes, and adjust the relationships of categories again when they are not satisfied with the systematic relationship of the categories or there is logical fuzziness of one aspect in the whole system.

Multiple case studies directed at new phenomenon or new fields should be carried out in order to make the conclusions of the grounded theory research more convincing. This research process should refer to the following suggestions: Firstly, researchers should carry out comparisons among the conclusions of a number of cases, in order to achieve diversified conclusions and a better understanding of the theoretical connotation of a unique phenomenon. Secondly, conduct independent coding analysis on each selected case around the researching theme and draw conclusions from it, which may be more unique. Finally, classify and integrate the main, core, and other categories refined from multiple cases (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded theory').

Generally speaking, the grounded theory research method is an effective analytical technique for research areas lacking theories and explanatory power

for phenomenon. This method can help researchers abandon the literature deductive mode and abstract the basic theory of this researching field from the phenomenon with an inductive method, which gradually realizes the effective joining of the abstracted and existing theories in the process of creating and improving the theoretical system (Alheit, 1999, 'Grounded theory').

5 Research Method

5.1 Biographical research method

Reasonable research methods are the necessary means to achieve correct and scientific results. During the research process, the choice and use of methods are actually a dialectical and flexible procedure. The choice of method depends on not only the research objects, but also on the purpose. J·H·Kwabena Nketia advises that method of choice depends on the research objectives and issues. At the same time, the selection and application of different methods are also subject to the limitations in personal capabilities, environment and conditions of researchers (Nketia, 1992, p58).

It is widely believed that research methods should be selected and adopted in accordance with the scope of the study and the characteristics of the objects, and must be regulated and restricted for research purposes in the human sciences. Any research method following a single pattern will constrain the achievements of researchers and only lead to undesirable result. In this sense, the study method is an important way to obtain the researching purpose with special procedures and rules (Grebe, 1994, p285). The following will set the characteristics of the object as a starting point to explore the possibilities, as well as the basic characteristics, of research methods for specific individual study, such as the biographical research method.

5.1.1 The theoretical introduction of the biographical research method.
(1) The establishment of the biographical research method.
The related literature on "life history" and "biography" include associated concepts including autobiography, life course research, life history, life stories, oral history, life biography, life history, and life course (Sun & Li, 2003). The German sociologist dictionary describes biography research as several researching theories with similar methods grouped together, whose research data and materials include files, narration, and statistical data on population. These life histories or life stories are essentially regarded as real social materials that are reconstructed via social language and interpretations (Endruweit & Trommsdorff, 2014, pp68-70). There are scholars classifying all related concepts into the research field of biographical method and regarding them as a collection of concepts.

The biographical research is a research method with emphasis on the life course, including the life process from birth to death of individuals, or just a certain period (Sun & Li, 2003). Biographical research is also a reflection of subjective feelings and perceptions during life events, and the way the sequence of events have affected the individual's values, behaviors, and life.

It can be said that the biographical research can highlight the individual uniqueness from the life story and data of narrators (Sun & Li, 2003; Alheit, 2009, pp116-120).

Taking the application of pedagogy as an example, it can be summarized by four researching orientations, including: 1) Professional educational research, in which teachers and officers in schools are research objects in order to understand and analyze the background of the development of individual knowledge and collective knowledge and to promote the improvements of teaching. 2) Research on educational history, which can be carried out to obtain clues about the development history of specific schools and educational policies. 3) Research targeting disadvantaged groups in educational activities, to highlight the voices and ideas of the disadvantaged groups. 4) Research on the cultural and social change. Although there is a trend of biographies getting published, there are still few researches applying this method (Wang, 2000, pp295-297).

The 'Researching methods and methodology of life biographical research in pedagogy' published by German scholar Winfried Marotzki in 1999, proposed that the significance of human behavior, which has a close relationship with the surroundings and situations, has been given by the human himself, and is recorded in his historical experience. Marotzki believed that the oral biography in pedagogy could be used to explain the relevant meaning of the individual's daily life, based on which the individual learning and education course can be discussed. At the same time, the intricate pathway of the construction of the life order in the rapid developing modern or postmodern society could be understood (Marotzki, 1999/2001, p3). In addition, the 'Biography and Education Sciences' reported by Rainer Kokemohr proposed the aim of biographical research is to learn more about new concepts of individual development, as well as the perspectives of people on benefiting from the new world view and dealing with new problems successfully (Kokemohr, 2001, p25-27).

The life history and biography research attaches great importance on the contents and meanings of the life experience. It emphasizes individual's social background and cultural contexts in the living places. The application of educational scenes emphasizing interactive activities can not only provide the researchers with a further understanding of the case and objectives, but also help to promote the establishment of local academic theories.

(2) The historical development of biographical research method.
The biographical research method has existed for some time in the study of historical sociology. In the research fields of history and sociology, this was once a new research model, which combined sociological theory and

methods with the traditional methods and ideas of historians, and adopted a refreshing writing form. This even led to the appearance of another interdisciplinary discipline called historical sociology (Elliott, 1999, p118; Alheit & Dausien 2009).

There are two main purposes of historical sociology, including connection and reconstruction, which means to attempt to rebuild the experiences in the passed times. The concepts of reconstruction and connection in the historical sociology are a mutually interdependent and interactive process. Without connection, reconstruction will only produce a series of ambiguous fragments (Elliott, 1999, p119). The dialectical thinking should be implemented to reflect the endless interaction between the facts and their meanings, composition and significance, and deconstruction and reconstruction of the social experience (Elliott, 1999, p120). The specific mode of operation which can realize this purpose is to use the biographical research method.

History is able to help us establish these structures, changes, and events and reproduce them in texts. Biographical study makes it possible to achieve these goals. "Biography" has a long history both in the Western countries and in China. In the Qin Dynasty of China, biography has been an important historical notation style, while in the West, the term biography has been used since 1660 in the United Kingdom. In both China and in the West, the term biography always inextricably relates to personal life experiences (Liang, 2009).

According to the definition in "Cihai," the only comprehensive Chinese dictionary, biography refers to "the text recording personal stories" (Xia, 1999). The origination and prevalence of biography as a research method began with scholars, such as Raphael Samuel, Paul Thompson, and Trevor Lummis. In addition, other scholars found the value of the orientation of individual life history studies, such as William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, who were making efforts to develop "oral history" in the West in recent years (Elliott, 1999, p121). In the past, scholars were seeking the law of cultural development and cultural changes under the guidance of the grand theory. However, the results were always unsatisfactory, and even the researchers were at a loss in the face of complex or quite authoritative theories and definitions. Therefore, researchers and scholars should examine the cultural change process on a microscopic level, in order to explore new research methods, rather than comment on culture in a grand theoretical framework (Pan, 2005, pp257-260). The biographical research method has also been introduced and experimented with on the basis of this kind of awareness.

(3) The meaning of the biographical research method.
Past studies have paid more attention to culture itself and devoted a great deal

of enthusiasm to the regularity of cultural patterns (Xiang, 2007). When we are seeking the diachronic development of a certain kind of culture, however, the single written description seems to be inadequate and insufficient. People cannot understand fresh life experiences from a theory about cultural behavior, which is lacking in expression or feelings. Therefore, in the current era, with the coexistence of multiple ideas and methods, it is necessary to undergo reflection and experimentation for anthropology as a whole, in order to learn from the thinking and research methods of a variety of social sciences and humanities (Liang, 2009). The biographical research method is the result of using methods from the disciplines of historical sociology and literature for reference, based on the experimental ethnography.

The so-called biographical research method is a literary form adopting biography as the research material, which describes individual experiences, functions, and contributions during the life course. It aims to explore the relationships and linkages of personal behaviors with family, social groups, public behaviors, social environment, and social changes. Biography also investigates the individual's role in the spread, development, and creation of social life and folk culture. It can be called a kind of psychology complementary research method, which involves collecting related biographical data to do research and investigation on the psychological and behavioral characteristics. This is mostly used in the study of personality psychology, developmental psychology, psychological diagnosis, and psychiatry (Xiang, 2007).

There are many different types of biography, such as autobiography, the biography of individual's life and experiences described by others, the individual biography specifically accounting for a person's life experience, overall biography describing the life story of several people, and the primitive biography based on first-hand information (Mu & Ding, 2007). In addition, there is research biography written according to secondary sources, historical biographies, and literature biographies. Most of the biographies take social life as background, and describe the individual's life course and behaviors in different environments. Biographies typically record people's name, gender, birth and death, historical background, place of origin, family, marriage, education level, values, behavior, achievements, interpersonal relationships, hobbies, specialties, leisure activities, diseases, and societal situations. These may all be significant for the understanding of the psychological and behavioral characteristics of individuals and research objects (Mu & Ding, 2007). The authenticity of this information must be seriously examined due to differences between biography writers and their writing purpose, use of information, description and stylistic form, and openness of the material (Mu & Ding, 2007).

(4) The types of biographical research method.

There are many types of biographical research, including autobiography, biography, life history, oral history, and narrative inquiry. The research materials involved in biographical research are life experiences, self-thought and imagination, stories, discourse, and writings. According to different explanations and definitions by researchers, biographical research can be a textual research; or a gathering process which summarizing the subjective significance deriving from individuals' life experience in order to search for the authenticity; or a tool which is used to explain interviewees; or a kind of self-analysis (Sun & Li, 2003). Therefore, a clear goal of research and type of biographical research should be determined before beginning the research.

5.1.2 The reason of using narration contents in biographical research.
From the narration, we want to know more about the narrator's thinking and inner life based on his or her learning and living experiences, rather than the accumulation of the daily matters only (Liang, 2009, pp16-19). In other words, when the narrator merely tells stories without any consideration of his or her own thoughts on them, then the narrations are not so meaningful for research. However, narration tends to express, intentionally or unintentionally, the narrator's own feeling or emotions towards life events. Therefore, during the narration, the researcher should pay more attention to the narrator's thoughts and consideration than the concrete content.

Life experiences are caused by both inner and outer factors, which effect the opinions and thoughts of individuals, and result in different responses to such exterior factors. These exterior factors and background are quite important for us to analyze the reason and cause of special thinking and behaviors of individuals. Such living experiences are perceived, remembered, and finally narrated by individuals (Alheit, 1999, p711; Schütze 1981/1983/1984; Alheit & Schütze, 2010). This is a complex process, during which the real outer factors have been reflected upon and expressed, such as social reality or relationships among people. The method of such reflection is not reproducing the outer factors in one's own mind, but involves processing the outer information and factors according to one's own knowledge and form of thinking. This processing style differs from person to person, as each individual has a special knowledge system and behavioral pattern according to their gender, age, educational background, social status, economic situation, characters, and habits (Liang, 2009, 16-19). We could divide narrators into different groups with the same or opposite thoughts or behavioral patterns, and then analyze different narrators based on their similarities and specialties. By investigating the reasons and backgrounds for such similarities and specialties, we can make clear the reactions of individuals to exterior factors and the mechanisms with which outer factors effect people. This is the basic methodological principle of this research (Liang, 2009, pp16-19).

(1) The general features of the biographical research method.

The biographical research method has obvious advantages in attaching importance to the role and function of personal history, as well as placing individuals in cultural groups in the social development process because of its historical architecture, sociological background, and cultural anthropological purpose. It regards the individual's behavior as the focal point, and make surveys about individuals' daily performance and activities in cultural history (Kokemohr, 2001, pp25-30).

Compared with other types of research methods, biographical research method has the following features:

A) It can be used to trace the relationship between the main processes of social change with the real-life experiences of particular social groups. Although the commonly used sociological approaches, such as official census, polls, surveys, and questionnaires, can provide useful information, they do not give insight into the true and moving life experience, nor reveal the most essential driving forces of the society and even the world. Biographical research can realize these aims (Liang, 2009, pp16-19).

B) Biographical method and the materials it collects can allow us to go beyond general information and fragment evidence. This method performs diachronic exploration of the complex social lives of interviewees by means of the historical research method, leading researchers closer to the facts of interest (Liu, 1993, 7-12; Kokemohr, 2001, pp25-30).

C) A lot of research information typically has individualistic features and subjective tendencies. However, the biographical materials can help us to overcome this problem, as they are able to expose many interrelated phenomenon, such as an individual's living environment, education, family, marriage, career, and success in the community (Liang, 2009, pp16-17). It can lead us to question the individualistic methodology used in previous studies, when we could make a comprehensive reflection on individuals' life history (Strauss, 1995, pp5-10).

D) The biographical research approach forces treatment of the research objects with dialectical understanding. From the detailed descriptions by research subjects, we can not only hear the narrators recalling the facts of their life, but also the significance of these events or stories (Sun & Li, 2003, pp25-30). We can understand their various ideologies and values in guiding their actions, as well as social and personal psychological factors affecting their behaviors. Personal behavior actually represents the values of a group or a class, known as the "collective" values, because the individual behavior cannot be separated from the surrounding social environment (Sun & Li,

2003, pp25-30). Therefore, the individual cases can be applied to understand universal qualities.

E) Biography research can also enable us to understand the various ways culture shapes individual behavior, and to explore various rules and linkages of how individual behaviors and heritage, no matter substantial or spiritual, are passed down to the next generation (Sun & Li, 2003, pp25-30). At the same time, the biographical research also traces the major social changes that affect individuals' lives, such as major historical events (Alheit, 2003, pp379-380).

It can be seen that the biographical research is a holistic concept. This is not to say that it attempts to create a macro theory, but it attempts to achieve the overall understanding of the specific life experiences of a specific person. The basis of this understanding is that individuals make up society, while society simultaneously affects individuals.

(2) The basic two narration forms.
As summarized by Peter Alheit, the narration form and style can be divided into two groups: "memorial schemes" and "interpretive schemes" (Alheit, 1989, pp123-147).

"Memorial schemes" refers to when the narrator just narrates the story and experiences sequentially. In other words, the narration begins from childhood and continues with the story up until the narration moment. For example, the narrator might start with "when I was a child and learning in the kindergarten..." This narration style focuses on details of the normal and traditional lifestyle (Alheit, 1989, pp123-147). A short-coming of this narration model can be demonstrated by an example for the interviews conduction in this dissertation. Narrators would often start the life story with learning experiences in schools, without attention to part-time learning or continuing education. These forms were seen by individuals as not quite "formal" or traditional; therefore, during the narration, description of their further or continuing learning would be lacking. However, after specific prompting, it was revealed that quite a lot of such learning experiences occurred throughout the lifetime. From this behavior, we can see that on the one hand, the continuing or further learning has not been given much attention or importance. However, it is also clear that initial narration style restricted the description of some real life experiences (Alheit, 1989, pp123-147).

The second narration form is called "interpretive schemes," which focuses on the individual's thoughts and comments in reaction to life events. The narration style of these schemes is analyzing and commenting on the concrete matters, based on the detailed narration events. However, the comments themselves

can sometimes replace the life experiences, which are the source of narration and our research materials. Therefore, such narrations can become quite subjective with feelings and thoughts, and neglect the importance of the concrete events (Alheit, 1989, pp123-147).

During interviews of this dissertation, the two narrations styles were often mixed by the narrator. When we could not get meaningful information from the narration, then a questioning phase could help us to make clear the details or thoughts by narrators. Targeted questions can be useful and necessary for the whole interview (Alheit, 1989, pp123-147). However, such questions are a supplementary method that may be necessary at the end of each narration, and should be limited to targeted questions relating to the narration contents.

(3) The scope of biographical inside views.
The narrations used as material for research can be seen as one of the most useful, real, convincing, and important methods of investigating the inner thoughts as well as life and learning experiences of narrators. However, there is still doubt in the reliability of such narration contents (Pan, 2005, pp243-245). To counter this opinion, it seems that there is no more real method to look into the narrators' inner thinking and reflection on past learning experiences than through their own narration of events. There is no possibility of recording each moment of individuals' lives and learning processes, especially when the research requires narrators from different industries, ages, genders, and nations (Sun & Li, 2003, pp25-30). Taken in this sense, the most effective and economical way of doing the research is based on the narrations and expressions of the narrators.

There will be some discrepancies between the narration and the real learning experiences, as past years seem to may be quite fuzzy or unpleasant to recall; however, the narration is just according to the time sequence of events, which could be arranged clearly by a chronologist (Xiang, 2007). The narrators have their own talking styles, which could be regarded as another material for researching, as the differences in narrating forms could also reflect the different thoughts, customs, and conditions among groups. The narrators are irreplaceable in the research process, as they are the individuals who made choices and decisions; therefore, their own narrations about their thoughts, feelings, reasons, results, and circumstances are the most convincing and vivid source of information (Xiang, 2007, pp47-48). No other individuals could know more about the narrator's learning and living experiences.

During the narration, the researcher's role is as a listener who may make affirmative comments as necessary, but otherwise does not make any interruptions during the narration process in order to guarantee the reality, completeness, and integrity of narrations. The authenticity of narrative content

can only be assured through narration without modification and characterization (Wang, 2000, pp265-270). Forced or directed narration caused by suggestions or continuing questions from the researchers is disruptive to the process. The environment of the narration and comfort of the narrator are quite important for achieving a smooth and complete narration.

Based on the narrations, we understand the relationships between the learning and living events with external factors, such as social, teaching, family, or peers influences. According to the sequence of stories and events in conjunction with the sequence of external factors, we can draw reasonable and convincing conclusions about the influences of external factors on learning and living experiences (Liang, 2009, 18-19). This is the general idea and theory of the research work of this dissertation.

5.1.3 The practical use of biographical research
(1) The narrative issues.
Rather than an authentic record of facts, narrative is a record of complex ideas, trifles, and experiences in life (Mu & Ding, 2007). Riessman proposed that the forms of "tell" contain two levels of context and significance, which means individuals become autobiographers by narrating personal life stories through language, the content of which is not only a statement of the past life, but also the expression of personal understanding and the explanation of the significance of these events or actions (Riessman, 1993, p17). Scholars have different views on the narrative forms. Waletzky and Young believed that the narration should be carried out in chronological sequence, while Michaels advocated that the narration should be presented in thematic sequence (Riessman, 1993, p17). Kokemohr proposed that the researchers have to attempt to understand the meanings of narrative words expressed in the narrative contents, which was regarded as the main expression of constructing a particular society and world, such as the way of constructing, maintaining, understanding, and accepting the social concepts by individuals (Kokemohr, 2001, p25).

Overall, the "narration" can be regarded as a presentation with cognitive form and personal experience, and allows investigators to enter the experiences of interviewees by understanding the narrative connotations (Schütze, 1983/2001b, pp285-287). As a path of biographical research, the materials of personal life experience, in oral or written form, will enable researchers to make clear the social significance of the interactions of individuals with the social and cultural contexts over time.

(2) The narrative interview.
As for understanding the significance of narration, the German sociologist Fritz Schütze proposed that the life history can be described as an ordered stack

composed of a combination of large and small structures of sequential course and experiences. Throughout life, the significant life style and habits will change, as well as their overall meanings. Based on this argument, an appropriate research method has been sought to reproduce the transformative course of habits and thoughts. The "narrative interview method" developed in 1977 has become widely used in the German biographical research program (Schütze, 1983/2001b; Marotzki, 1999/2001c, p5).

The "narrative interview" is a data collection method exploring the individual life experiences through materials from a narration (Flick, 1998, p98). Schütze himself defined it as "a kind of social scientific method for collecting data, and also an impromptu narration which concentrate and detail all kinds of procedure of individual events and experience by the narrators within the researching context and themes (Schütze, 1987, p49).

When the narration begins, the narrators are invited to talk about their own life experiences (Flick, 1998, pp204-205). The linkage and relations of important events in the narrators' life process will unfold gradually as the narrators choose and describe life stories. This kind of interview, which has the features of improvisation and impromptu expression, is different from the question-and-answer interview mode, which requires the narrators to prepare for a narrative structure in advance or worry about the standard templates which are used by interviewees. In contrast, the narrative interview begins after a brief discussion of starting questions and guidance from the interviewer. Then the narrators themselves can make a decision on the contents and means of narrating, and talk about anything according to their own interests. Narrators will be not be restricted or interrupted by the interviewers, even if the narrative theme deviates from that which was originally discussed. The narrative interview method of life biography, designed by Fritz Schütze in 1987, is divided into three main stages with associated tasks for the interviewers, which are described as follows:

A) The preparation and invitation stage for the narrators by the interviewers.
The interviewer should pay much attention to the place and time of the interview. The place should be convenient for the narrator to reach. The time of interview should be determined by the interviewers and narrator together; however, the needs of the narrator should take priority. The place should be quiet and comfortable for communication. The interviewer should prepare the recording equipment in advance if it is not possible to transcribe the conversation (Schütze, 1987, 353; Flick, 1998, pp204-207).

B) The introduction stage by the interviewer.
The interviewer should introduce him or herself to the narrator clearly and sincerely with his or her name, identity, working or studying department, the

career or major, the main task of studying or working, and the main purpose of carrying out such an interview. The interviewer should emphasize that all the data from the interview are anonymous, that the interviewees can say anything they want, and will not be interrupted (Flick, 1998, pp204-207). The interviewer should not limit the themes of narration, but should communicate to the interviewee that all the life stories or experiences are interesting and should be shared without any worry or fear. The interviewer should also ask the narrator if there is any questions, and if necessary, get some information about the narrator's name, identity, educational background, family status, working situation and so on.

C) The promotion of self-life biography narration by the narrator.
This stage starts with a brief question by the interviewer. Unlike traditional Q & A interview, the narrator begins his or her narration following the guiding question by the interviewer. Therefore, the starting question is very important. The question should have a deliberate design, aimed at a specific topic or certain period of personal biography. An unclear or vague guiding question will lead to unproductive narrative response (Flick, 1998, pp204-207). It has to be confirmed before the start of an interview that the starting question corresponds to the core concerns of the research theme, and clearly requests that the interviewees illustrate all the important processes and contents in detail.

The interviewer is an active listener who should stay focused on the narrative story and try to understand it. The interviewer should never interrupt, intervene, or make a subjective evaluation of the narrative content. However, the interviewer should make timely and appropriate responses, such as supporting gesture or a simple sound as response, to encourage the narrator to continue until the end of the story telling. There should be an obvious ending when the narrator finishes, such as "I think I've finished" or "Maybe that is all," to let the interviewer know that the main narration has come to an end. This is also a signal for the interviewer to come to the next stage of the process.

D) The Q & A stage, which enables expansion of the narrative potential of the narrator.
This stage has the function of asking and proving some hypothesis carefully. The starting question can be an extension of the story details from the main narrative stage, such inquiring about the definition of terms that were used (Sun & Li, 2003), vague and unclear opinions or ideas that were expressed, or fuzzy contradictions in the narration (Sun & Li, 2003). Therefore, the interviewer must keenly perceive which narrative content can be expanded, and extract narrative fragments from the first stage with open-ended questions, such as, "Can you give me more description of this problem?"

E) The theoretical phase, which prompts the narrator to make an assessment of his or her own life biography.

In this stage, the narrator is regarded as the expert or theorist about him or herself, and will be expected to express assessments and ideas based on his or her own understanding and abstract concepts (Sun & Li, 2003). The questions raised by researcher ought to have the capacity to inspire the narrator to give theoretically or figuratively an assessment of the event climax, a particular life stage, or the scenarios and social background of events.

(3) An example of interview course.

This section will provide an example of the narrative interview course from this dissertation. The first part of this section will describe the procedure of research data collection and actual interview experience, and the second section will describe the transcription of data to text. True names have been omitted in this section to maintain the anonymity of interviewees.

A) The narrative interview procedure.

I made a phone call to Mr. Tao on the afternoon of July 27th, 2012, and gave a brief description of the purpose and content of my dissertation. I then invited Mr. Tao to take part in an interview for a case study. After a discussion about the content, purpose, form, and security of the interview, Mr. Tao cheerfully accepted this invitation. We finalized the interview date, time, and location for August 2^{nd} at 14:00 in my home. In order to help Mr. Tao understand the interview process, I sent an email 2 days prior to the interview detailing the interview content, structure, recording procedure, and environment details.

On the interview day, I prepared the interview environment by gathering tea, cookies, flowers, pen, paper, and a recorder prior to Mr. Tao's arrival. After Mr. Toa arrived, we had a short chat before the interview because I found that he seemed slightly uneasy. I said with a smile; "I am here today only listening to the interesting stories happened to you, and you could just try to take it easy and talk about some things you feel very interesting or impressed in your life, just as a talk with your old friend." I hoped Mr. Tao could have a dialogue with me in a relaxed way, free from constraints. Then, I briefly introduced my PhD work, the purpose of this interview with him, and emphasized his anonymity. I mentioned the possibilities of some questions after the narration. I said to him, "I am looking forward to hearing something about your whole and true life experience. You can tell me whatever you want. The interview is just for providing some useful information for my academic research, so there will not be any commercial purposes. I guarantee the narrative content will only be reported anonymously, so you can release yourself and open your mind. I will not interrupt you in the whole process of your talking. And maybe after your talking I will ask you a few questions about the content you have said." I finished my introduction with the inquiry, "Now, do you have any questions for

me?" With his answer "No," I asked, "so, can we begin?" This began the narrative section of the interview, which lasted from 14:25 to 14:54 with his statement of "That is all."

There is a brief interruption in his narration from a 3 minute phone call, after which he had obviously lost his place in the story and asked me what he had been talking about just before the phone call. I immediately solved the problem by replaying a short fragment of the recording, after which he could remember all the details of the original story context. This unexpected interruption highlighted the importance of quiet and undistracted environment for a successful interview.

Once the narration began again, Mr. Tao only made small movements and sitting gestures. He was sometimes excited or sometimes calm according to the level of tension in his narration content.

During the Q & A stage of the interview, I put forward a number of questions, such as, "what factors influenced you most in the entire learning process, do you think?" and some other questions about his narration, which he answered after a moment of thought. The interview process ended at 15:03.

From the whole narration process, it can be found that the story telling is an intermediary, which conveys ideas from narrators to the listeners. The basic assumption of the narrative interview is that the oral data from narrative's speech is a representation of the life history and experience; therefore the style of narrator's expressions, ideas, speech, and the environment constructed by the narrator and interviewer together, as well as the relationship between the interviewer and narrator before the narration starts, have affected the content and quality of narration. The relationship between Mr. Tao and I was established as I discussed with him some questions about German language, and then formed the relationship of teacher and student with an interactive studying process. Due to the establishment of this relationship, Mr. Tao was clearer and more detailed in his narration about his growth process and life experiences, and even shared his deep aspirations during the narration. Since there is age gap between us, he always tried to explain the historical context in his early childhood. In addition, the establishment of a positive interaction and interview space contributed to the smooth progress of the interview. The interview ended in a harmonious way. After the interview, I have repeatedly thanked Mr. Tao for his assistance.

B) The transcription of interview content.
The contents of narrative interviews are collected with the help of a recorder. Later, the recorders are transcribed into a verbatim text. The text, besides being the main research content of study, is also used to understand the

prevailing circumstances of interview. The following section describes the transcription rules:

Firstly, the recordings are transcribed into text with a computer, not only typing the words spoken, but also the time of each paragraph or chapter and even the line number displayed by the computer operating programs. This allows for the analysis of the narration content by citing the original phrases in the text will a number line and direction quotations (Zhang, 2002). There are inevitably expletive modal words such as "ah," and "eh," or habitual terms, such as "then," "it means," or "I mean that," as well as some features of local dialects and emotional reactions, such as crying, laughing, or silence for a moment. These words and expressions are replaced in English with English grammar and spelling rules as accurately as possible, so that readers can understand them more easily.

Secondly, the data and materials of narrative interviews must be processed efficiently and quickly after collection and transcription, while the materials is still fresh and profound in the mind of the interviewer. This enables the interviewer to identify the narrator's tone and intonation more clearly, so that the unknown content or vague language can be reduced and even eliminated (Zhang, 2002). In addition, the transcription from spoken language into text data has inherent difficulties and obstacles; therefore, there will always need to be amendment of the transcribed text during the process of transcription as the researcher hears it multiple times. Repeated listening is important for finding errors or omissions in the transcription. Researchers need to transcribe the text in detail as carefully as possible, so as to contribute to the continued text analysis (Sun & Li, 2003).

(4) The role of the researchers during the research process.
The researcher should have the following role from the start to finish of the research process:

Firstly, the researcher should be a person seeking answers. As a sociological researcher, he or she should have a curious mind about each thought and opinion of individuals in order to form a better understanding of society and the world (Pan, 2005, pp257-260). Secondly, the researcher should also be a learner, meaning he or she must learn from others about different lifestyles and experiences which he or she has never experienced. The researcher must also learn how to carry out an interview efficiently and smoothly. Thirdly, he or she should be a thinker, who can deeply consider each word or expression of the narrator. The researcher should never be distracted because he or she must give positive response and encouragement with gestures and modal words, showing great interests in the narrator's content (Pan, 2005, pp257-260).

The narrative text acquired from the interviews is regarded as the basic data with "social authenticity" by Schütze. This data is the means of rebuilding the activities of individuals and their meanings (Schütze, 1987, p14). Scholars have suggested a number of different strategies for narrative text analysis. One of the effective analyzing methods is the grounded theory, as was previously discussed.

(5) The basic steps for the interview evaluation process.
The following five steps are the main and basic steps for the whole practical researching process (Alheit, 1999):

A) Preliminary sampling
There were 20 Chinese and 20 German narration interviews selected as the research materials, although more interviews were conducted but not selected. The basis of the selection was age, gender, nationality, career, learning background, place, and so on. Attempts were made that each social group in each country, as well as the whole national character, could be generally and basically described by the sample group. Interviews lasted from 45 minutes to about 4 hours, and more than three quarters of the material could be well transcribed. Before each interview, I conducted background research on the narrators. During the interview, I explained the research objectives and assured interviewees of the confidentiality agreement.

I would not put pressures on the narrator to discuss concrete themes, but just let them talk freely about something they found interesting in their life. In this first stage, I was merely a listener. After their narration, I would ask questions regarding my themes of interest. During the research in China, there were quite a lot of difficulties because not many people wanted to talk about their own life or learning experiences for many complex reasons. Therefore, the assurance of confidentiality seemed to be more important than any other factors. The Chinese narrators also preferred to talk with a familiar person, such as a friend. In other words, the personal and emotional relationships played an important role in the Chinese interviews.

B) Formal text analysis, with formatting and biographical impression.
After the interviews and selection of narration content, all the narrations should be analyzed and explained. The key points in the narration, such as the narrator's feelings on certain matters which lead to a specific outcome, should be given great attention. Then the essence of analysis and explanation can be written down in a form with narrators' name and background. After this formatting process, we had the "biographical impressions" of each narrator, which helped us classify each narrator into different groups.

C) Theoretical sampling.

After the general analysis and group classification, I still needed to confirm the actual reason and cause of certain learning behaviors and thoughts by narrators. The inner contents and connotations of such narrations would have to be found in this step (Mu & Ding, 2007). According to the theoretical sampling, I have found out the learning motivations and influential factors were coming from parents, relatives, individual thoughts, social matters, schools, teachers, peers, laws, regulations, economic situation, job markets, educational institutions, learning materials, learning environment, educational cultures, traditions, and so on. Not all factors influence narrators equally, and there is also relationship among such factors.

D) Construction of influential factor types.

Each narration's content was classified into four major influential factors, including family, individual, social, and schools, teachers, and peers.

E) Case presentations and documents interpretation.

Each constructed and classified type would not be wholly demonstrated with each narration content and analysis, but just the main contents which could embody the general thoughts and opinions by narrators on lifelong learning notions and behaviors. This is the principle of economization of the research. For each type, there was an "anchor" narration, which was chosen to represent the whole type with main segments and detailed analysis. The chosen principle is based on the representative points in the narration segments. Based on the "anchor" narration, we found one character of each main segment which could be found in other narrations' contents. Then, such character could be separated, summarized, and concluded as a "core category" (Alheit et al., 1999, pp711-722), which represents the main similarities of other narrations in that type. After finding all the core categories, each main segment of the other narration contents in the same type could be selected and classified into different core categories and certified for the authenticity and universality of such core categories under each type. All the core categories in the same type could stand for the whole features and characteristics of such type for further research steps, such as comparisons.

In this research, the general steps of processing and selecting cases and narrative material is represented in the following diagram:
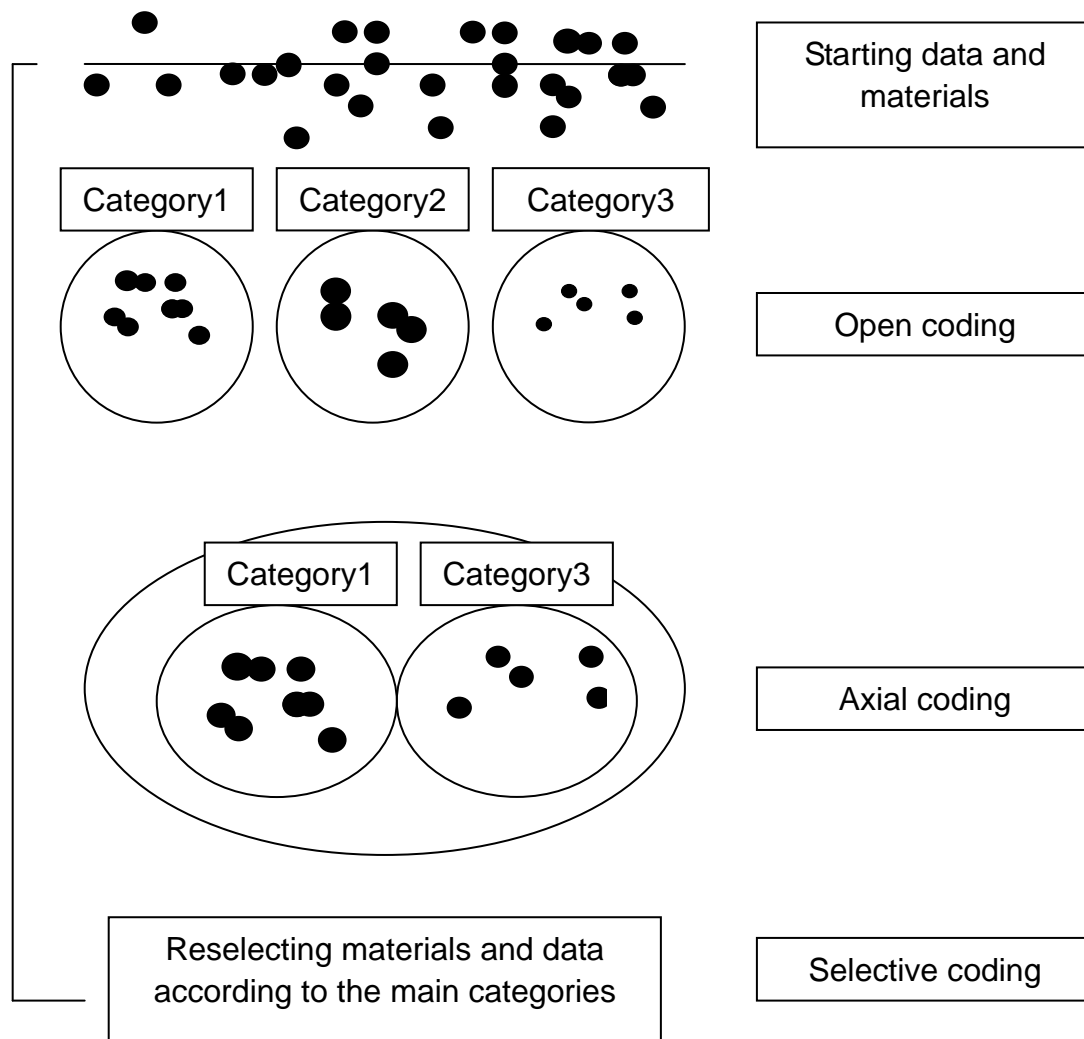
Diagram 7: The coding process (Hu, 1996, pp153-157)

From the above steps, we can find that based on the methodology of grounded theory, the first phase of processing these disorganized and abundant materials from the narrative interviews is to classify them into different categories. According to by Nohl, the orientation framework, in which a topic is elaborated, has to be constructed and clarified with the typical example and representative model (2010, pp211-212). He also mentioned that "in such a way, interview A was possible to be clearly distinguished from the orientation frameworks in interviews B, C and D. The contrasting orientation frameworks of interviews B, C, D, etc. were above all relevant as 'non-A' orientation frameworks" (Nohl, 2010, pp211-212). This means that various interviews with different typical characters and contents should be attached a different label and meaning of their own, as they become the contrasting orientation frameworks (Nohl, 2010, pp211-212). Thus, the general frameworks and types with different characters and features could be clarified and divided, and finally the orientation frameworks can be "reconstructed" in an abstracted way (Nohl, 2010, p212).

In this sense, the open coding can be theoretically finished with labeling separated narrative content with an obvious and different personality and character. However, the different categories do not have such clear or specific boundaries that they limit each category into one area without any contact or linkage with others. As Nohl has mentioned, "Orientation framework A, which up to this point was only observed in interview A, can now be identified in interviews Y and X too and thus be detached from single case A" (Nohl, 2010, p212). This means the different narrative contents may also have the same core or essence, such as that narrator A has the similar attitudes on learning environment as narrator Y. Therefore, the next step is to classify categories into different groups according to the step of axial coding by the methodology of grounded theory.

In this research, I found the similarities in separated narrative content because narrators always focused on the educational motivations, influential factors from parents, individual thoughts, social matters, schools, teachers, peers, laws, regulations, learning environment and so on. However, some factors have affected learning much more than others. Moreover, there are always some factors which have occupied the macroscopic status, dominating other factors and in each narrative content. After sorting out the main factors and categories with similarities and influencing index, four major influential factors were identified as the representative learning motivations and influential factors on the lifelong learning process and behaviors. These include family factors, individual factors, social factors, and schools, teachers and peers factors. These factors include most, but not all, of the signification motivations influencing the whole learning process for German and Chinese narrators.

According to Nohl, "generalization mainly means the capacity of a type to be generalized" based on the main idea of Documentary Method (Nohl, 2010, p214). This means the continual overlapping by other types again and again could only prove that the feature of the categories could be impossible or actually existing, because "a type formation capable of being generalized requires that it can be confirmed in the overlapping or specification by other types and thus be made visible again and again in an increasingly contoured manner and on increasingly abstract levels" (Bohnsack, 2007, p249). From this sense, the core narrative content could be found as the main example for the whole type with different characters and features, as it may represent or stand for the most obvious and remarkable characteristic for the whole group. Therefore, it could be set up as an anchor case for the whole group of categories. As Nohl mentioned, "Generalization is not possible unless it can be shown how type A is overlapped by type X, i.e. unless the limits of a type can be specified" (Nohl, 2010, p214). Thus, there should also be different narrative contents which can support or confirm the main points which have been shown

or performed by the anchor case. In my research, for each anchor case, I have also found 4 supporting narrative cases, from which we can find similar attitudes, ideas, experiences, thoughts, and backgrounds as the matters which have been shown from the anchor case. The supporting cases would not be as representative in containing all the characters or features of influential factors as the anchor case. However, the main aim of citing the supporting cases here is to verify that the main contents and categories which have been embodied by the anchor case have also generalization, as different narrative contents and interviews have shown the similarities and even intercommunity as the anchor case. Until now, we can find that the features concluded as the core categories, which have been summarized from the anchor case, have the legitimacy to convince others to believe in the categories with generalization. This is also the form of "overlapping" (Nohl, 2010, p214), which means supporting and verify the generalization or effectiveness of the contents in the anchor case. This step could be regarded as the phase of selective coding, which has highlighted the importance of the anchor case, as well as confirmed the main categories of the different types embodied in various motivations. The general structure for the demonstration of various cases in different groups with various categories can be found as follows:
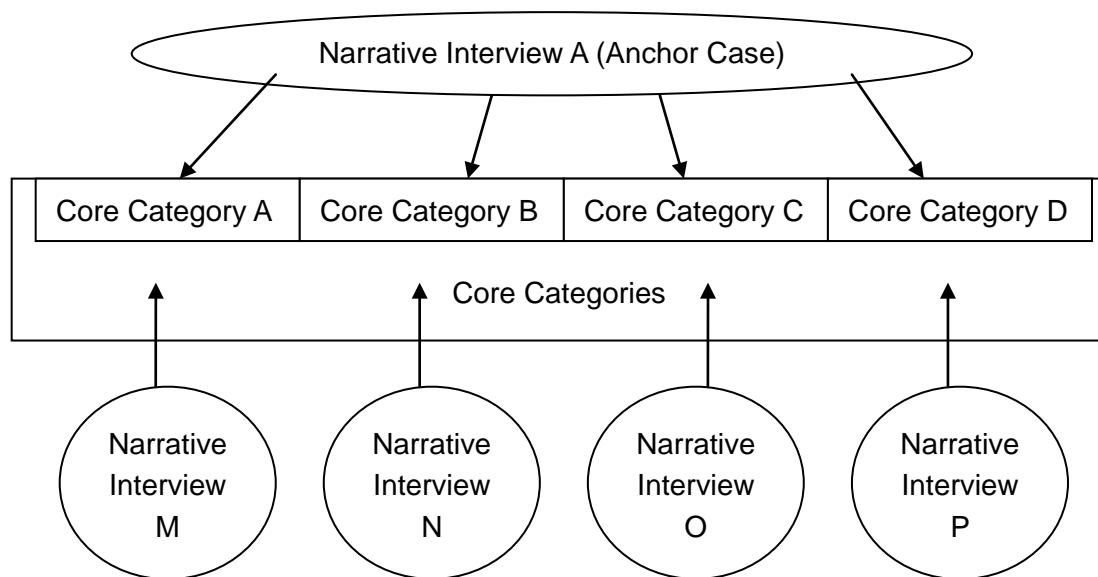
Diagram 8: The demonstration of various cases with various categories

(6) The comparison method between micro, meso, and macro-levels.
The idea of a particular 'thinking space' was motivation to research not only the individual and separated narrations, but also the historical background of the interviewees. My idea was not to identify distinct variables creating those differences, but rather to find patterns, relational structures, and configurations, explaining those subtle distinctions (Alheit, 2012, p81).

The development of the 'thinking space' has already been suggested by the Norwegian comparatist Stein Rokkan in an often-cited study. He found that it is not enough, for example, to isolate the behavior of a group of people at micro-level, and make international comparisons based on this. Moreover, it depends on identifying the institutional parameters at the meso-level in which concrete people act. Furthermore, it is important to account for national mentalities or characteristic economic developments at the macro-level that may give a specific tone to the behavior of social actors (Alheit, 2009, p118). In summary, the description of phenomena on the micro-level has to factor in the influences of the meso and macro-levels. This can already be considered an interpretative act (Alheit, 2012, p81).

The macro level in this dissertation refers to the history, law, and economy in Germany and China. Such factors are the macroscopic elements in a country that could play a directing or supervising role in education and individual learning behavior (Alheit, 2009, p118). Therefore, the first comparison begins with the differences in such macro-level factors. The meso-level refers to the differences between educational institutions, such as schools, universities, colleges, teaching or counseling organizations, educational official departments, etc. in China and Germany (Alheit, 2012, p81). These organizations and institutions carry out educational orders from the macro-level to micro-level. This level can influence the concrete and daily learning and education activities of individuals, while also influencing the policies created by the macro-level. The micro-level in this dissertation refers to the learning-teaching practices between students and teachers, including their relationships, as well as the overall "educational culture." The content and character of this level is embodied by the concrete narrations and learning experiences by students.

Based on the macro, meso, and micro-level comparisons between China and Germany, we can get a general impression of the lifelong learning and educational differences between these two countries. However, they are just the background reasons for individual learning experiences. Therefore, the next step is to investigate the reason and background of each core category of influential factors on the narrators' learning and life. In other words, each core category could identify the relations with the macro, meso, and micro-levels (Alheit, 2009, p123). Then, the last step is to make comparisons of such relations between China and Germany, and get conclusions and the suggestions for each country in order to improve the lifelong learning situation.

5.2 Other research methods

In this study, I will mainly use qualitative methods, including literature research method, biographical analysis, and the comparative research method; and quantitative methods, including interview surveys and the case study method. These methods are described as follows:

(1) Literature Research Method
The literature study method is needed to fully and correctly understand lifelong learning, such as the historical and current status and problems (Xiang, 2007). During my graduate studies, I have gathered the German and Chinese literature on lifelong learning with the help of libraries, archives, museums, educational institutions, academic conferences, personal contacts, and online resources. The aim is to have a comprehensive understanding and rigorous analysis of the issue, and in addition, put forward my own views and suggestions on current research trends and problems to be solved. In addition, this research should shed light on the direction of lifelong learning development in China.

(2) Comparative Research Method
After the theory preparation and data collection, I will conduct a comparative study in the following aspects of lifelong learning between China and Germany: comparison of research background, theory, origin, process, practice problems, difficulties and achievements; specific environment and practical background; research emphases and trends in the past 20 years; the current social impact and significance after the lifelong learning program have been carried out; opinions, attitudes, and expectations of the populations of different ages and classes; and finally, impacts and roles of governments, experts, educators and others etc. (Yu, 2012). From the comparative study, I hope to form suitable methods for the development of the Chinese lifelong learning system.

(3) Interviews Survey
In the process of studying the lifelong learning system in Germany and China, it is necessary to use interviews and questionnaires to discover social opinions and learn about experiences (Xiang, 2007). The research plans to interview German and Chinese government staff or educational policy makers, experts in lifelong or adult learning theory, educators, and teachers for the contents of the origin, process, and problems of the policy making, and the difficulties, solutions, practical advice, and successful experiences of the policy implementation in both countries. This research will also investigate the need for improvement of the Chinese lifelong learning system.

(4) Case Study Method
While researching the German lifelong learning system from the macro-scale, I

will also apply the case study method from the micro-scale by researching different German organizations, institutions, or schools which are successfully implementing lifelong learning. In a long term, field and continual surveys are needed, with static and dynamic analysis such as observation, interviews, collecting documents, tests, questionnaires, pictures, and data focused on the planning, implementation, and conduct in the past and present of organizations. This will summarize the whole process of development to create a case report (Xiang, 2007). The purpose is to provide specific advice and guidance for the development of the Chinese lifelong learning system (Xiang, 2007).

6 The motivations and influential factors for learning activities.

6.1 The influential factors on learning activities according to Chinese interviewees.

According to the narrations collected in China in this research process, most Chinese interviewees have experienced a holistic learning process from childhood to adulthood. This typically included family education in their early years, then attending school, which included various educational levels, followed by participation in some social activities or obtaining a job. Alongside this education process, there were always individual thoughts about the life path concerning personal development and demand. This research found that there are four main factors affecting learning motivation, style, and aim, as well as the overall life path for each individual. These factors include family, school, social, and individual factors. For the 20 interviewees, the details of these influential factors vary from individual to individual. Therefore, in this part, the impacts and reflections of these factors on interviewees will be discussed.

With systematic analysis of the narration content, each factor has specific and general features and connotations as follows:

(1) Family factors: The family influences on interviewees are mainly derived from parents, who are not only responsible for material support to the children's learning activities, but also care about the children's whole life process, such as their career, marriage, and future. From the narrations, most interviewees have been influenced by their parents or family members greatest during the pre-schools periods through graduation from university. It can be seen in each narration that family influences have always affected the whole life process. The family influences may not be the most important factor in the process of lifelong learning, but it is an indispensable influence in each individual's life, with explicit or recessive effects. These factors include formal and informal education, advice from parents and other family members, as well as influence by personal example. This means that the educational and social backgrounds of family members influence the individual's perception of their own life path. There can also be influences from the spouse and children.

(2) School factors: Many interviewees start their narration from elementary school years, despite the fact that some of the interviewees are very old nowadays. This means early education left a deep impression. They continue their talk with the process of their promotion from one school to another. Therefore, for many Chinese interviewees, the school development track is the

most important and meaningful in the early years of their life. This factor also includes the influences from teachers, classmates, educational policies in school, educational departments, the change of educational environment from school to school, the school activities attended by students, examinations, and learning contents. This factor contains all the main factors relevant in schools, except the individuals' inner thoughts or reflections during school years.

(3) Social factors: The social factors refer to government policies, social values, social background, traditions, trends, fashions, morality, and national or regional circumstance. In this dissertation, the educational policies and supervision from the central, provincial, and local government, as well as the general educational level of the whole nation, have been attached great importance. The general social background at a given time can be so influential that a whole generation often has similar learning background to one another.

(4) Individual factors: These factors include individual reflections, considerations, attitudes, activities, determinations, ideas, wills, and methods, which all respond to the outer pressures, changes, and conditions in the other three external factors described above. Individual factors are expressed in the form of comments or thoughts in these narrations. The individual factors are unique to each person; however, they are greatly influenced by the outer circumstance, such as social conditions, family, and school factors.

These four types of factors will be cited and discussed in detail as they related to the narrations collected in this research.

6.1.1 Family factors.
Biography and background of the core characteristics for family factors: Pen
The interviewee, Pen, was born in Zhengzhou city in 1983. His parents were ordinary workers in factories. Therefore, the financial resources for the interviewee's education were not as great as many other students around him. In 1990, the interviewee started elementary school. Although he studied hard and was dedicated, his scores and performances in class were not outstanding. His teachers treated him as an equal to other students in the school years. During junior middle school, from 1996 to 1999, he learned to play a musical instrument and participated in some competitions and recitals, although he was not awarded any famous titles or ranking during these competitions. He continued to make a great learning effort in junior middle school, but his scores in the senior middle school entrance examination were not good enough to enter an excellent senior middle school in his city. Instead, he came to a normal senior middle school to continue his education. During his senior school years, his scores worsened. He chose art as the subject of his

examinations for college entrance. Art was a popular choice for students who were not confident going into the college entrance examinations. This strategy was called a "shortcut" at that time. His scores in the college entrance examinations were also not good enough for entering an excellent university. Instead, he attended a normal university in his province from 2002 to 2006. However, the tuition fees were much higher in his music and arts major than in other subjects.

After his graduation from university in 2006, he did not find a stable job immediately, so he found part-time jobs to make a living. From 2006 to 2011, his time was mostly spent teaching and working in private schools or tutorial classes, which were different with the official schools. These schools were looked down upon by the official schools and other educational institutions, and the salary was much lower than teachers in official schools. During these five years, he got married and had a son. His wife was an ordinary worker in a small factory. The costs of raising his son were barely affordable, such as the fees for early education, food, and clothes for his son. In 2012, he cooperated with a friend to create a private school. Now he is busy with running his school and giving lessons to the students. Today he can earn much more than previously, but his life is consumed by business and teaching tasks, and sometimes he has to travel to other cities on business for a long time. Since his graduation to present day, he has not attended any classes in society or schools.

The core paragraphs and analysis of Pen's narration:
There are four selected core passages from the narration by Pen. The function of the analysis after each original narration passages is to describe the core categories of the family influences on the interviewee's learning and living activities, as well as to examine the effectiveness and reliability of the interview materials.

(1) My mother always tells me that…I should learn very well in the school, and not let her and my father worry about my study…and only study can change my fate, and if I do not learn hard, I will lead a poor life in my adulthood…
We came to a relative…He told us…I could hold that chance, because…maybe I could not have much success on the cultural subjects…I could turn to the…which I liked very much…the music market, eh, he said, was much more flourished, eh, in a few years…

(1) The interviewee began with his mother's advice to him, which showed that he had been influenced a great deal by his family. The word "always" showed that his mother advised him the importance of learning in school continuously. However, the aim and value of learning which had been instilled in the interviewee's mind was all about the pragmatic goals (i.e. "change fate" and

"not lead a poor life in adulthood"), so we can see that from the childhood of the interviewee, he received the social and pragmatic learning aim from his family. Also, we should note that his mother told him that "only" study can change fate, which limited the path forward in the interviewee's life. From this segment, we can also find that this is a second hand material, which shows that the parents were eager for quick results from their son's learning and success. The parents put a great deal of pressure on his learning. To his family, the meaning of learning was to achieve a better future and substantial life. So the aim of learning for him from his childhood was just to have a better life after his graduation.

The decision of his learning direction was made and effected by his parents and his relatives. In the opinion of his relative, the main purpose for his change of major was not the interest he had, but was based on the music market after his graduation from university. So the aim of his learning in the viewpoint of his family was still career.

(2) I really did not that time…I just save every cent in the university…
They felt not patient about my future…so they just told me to…a job, even it was not so good…they did not…want me to just stay at home… I could not get the chance, not because…I had not learnt…carefully, but, you know. I had not…such strong background…I did not, not even dream to be an official worker or teacher…in a small department of government.

From this segment we could find that the interviewee had much financial pressure from his family. This pressure was not applied by himself, but rather by his parents who wanted to see his success. The word "really" showed that the interviewee felt upset and nervous about the financial pressure from his parents, but the parents "persuaded him," which meant that the parents were willing to invest a big sum of money for their son to pursue higher education. In return, the interviewee decided to "earn more money" for his parents, so the aim of his learning in university was mainly for more money and to satisfy the financial pressure from his family. Therefore, we can see that the factors affecting the direction and purpose of his learning were mainly coming from the exterior, such as the family background, the financial pressure, and the demand of his parents. The parents told him truthfully why they would invest in his learning: they would like their son to earn more income from his education and major, and in turn, help the family financially.

The interviewee mentioned the pressure on him from his parents again, so he had fear or worry about his parents' demand. However, his parents did not pay much attention to the problems he faced, but just demanded results. His words "felt not patient about" and "a job, even not good" show his parents were too urgently demanding quick success of their son. This kind of family education is

unique among these interviews, and this is an extreme example of parental pressures on the child for more money and social status. The interviewee suspected the reason why he "could not get the chance" to have a job might be perhaps that he had "not learnt carefully." He had spent a lot of time in university only to earn "a little money." He mentioned his disadvantage in job hunting, saying he had "not such strong background," by which he was complaining about the social system of job hunting. Therefore, he blamed himself and the social phenomenon for his failure to find a proper job, without any complaint about his parents or family education. At last he said he had not "even dream to be an official worker or teacher," which showed that he had a low aim or goal for his future job. The reason for this was his careless learning in university and the family education which demanded quick success from him. We could say that his parents were too urgent on his performance and success in society. The family education was too utilitarianism. The reason for his failure in his job hunting was attributed to objective matters and the social environment, but not his learning behavior. He did not dream to be a very successful man in the society, but to accept reality and become a normal worker.

(3) The salaries before were not enough for my wife, my son and myself…My parents…could help me with my financial problems…I should learn to live by myself…I just afforded much more lessons… I could experience the difficulty of establishing a school…
My parents influenced me the most during the whole course of my learning… they just told me to work and learn harder and harder…when I could not get good scores in my school…they…would say that that was my own reason...I would have more and more pressure…on learning…
My music knowledge was much better…than most of the classmates in my art class. So I would…thank my parents…they gave me…not only the support for the mental, but…also supported me about the financial things…

Until his period of working, he needed financial help from his family. That is the reality of many young men nowadays in China. Most people in society worry about the living standard and try their best to improve the financial matters of the family firstly and urgently, rather than focus on learning experiences and knowledge. From Pen's experience, we can see the difficulty he faced trying to conduct business in the society, which was the result of his education.

His parents did not care about the reason for his failure at school and did not help him with his learning problem. They just told him to solve the problems by himself, which they believed was caused by him. So the family education did not assume the corresponding responsibility. He thought the support from his parents was very important for his learning and growth. Of course, his parents did their best to finance him, but they did not give him much advice on his

learning problems, which would be much more important than the financial support.

(4) I did not…think that lifelong learning is…useful for the society…everyone is wondering how to earn money as much as possible…no one want to know much more…about knowledge or…just spend much money and time on learning. I do not think that is…the necessary thing, or the first thing which the people…in China, should consider…

His perspective on lifelong learning is different from many others during this research. We can see main purpose in his life was earning more money (i.e. "how to earn money as much as possible"), and he believed the lifelong learning "was not useful for the society" because he thought learning would "spend much money and time" on "not necessary thing." He had made such a clear declaration based on his own experiences in his life. We can find that he had little attention on the function of learning in his life, as he did not enjoy the process and did not learn well or carefully in his school years. It should be noted that he used the subjects "everyone" and "no one" to explain his opinion on learning, which meant he believed that all others would have the same opinion as him on the topic of lifelong learning. Therefore, we can say that he did not understand or appreciate the function and purpose of lifelong learning. He believes learning was useless, and earning money was the "first thing for Chinese people." He did not appear aware of new ideas and considerations in modern society.

His opinion was based on the theory of utilitarianism. He could not accept the idea of learning for enriching the knowledge and experience of a normal man. He just believed that we should spend every minute earning money and status, rather than intangible accomplishments in our daily life.

Summary:
The family influences played an important role in the whole learning process and even the period after schooling years. From the beginning, the interviewee described much about his family situation and background of his parents in order to show his learning and living environment was not as perfect as others. Each step of his schooling years was affected or determined by his parents, who wanted to realize their own dreams or ideals through the interviewee's efforts and performance. Therefore, in the whole passage, there are more contents about the second-hand concerns of his parents and relatives, than first-hand concerns of the interviewee.

The interviewee admits that his learning motivation is to relieve the financial burden of his family. He does not want to add any financial pressures on his parents, which can been verified by a lot of details and expressed attitudes in

the passage, such as his feeling about his parents' paying for his music course, and the description of his own determination for learning. These examples explain that he has a psychological financial burden, so his ultimate aim and motivation of learning and even working are to alleviate this burden. Thus, we can say that the family financial situation and condition have influenced the interviewee's views on his learning and life much more than other aspects.

There is also a passage which describes his life marriage and having a son. He does not mention much about his feeling towards having a family, but stresses more his financial support for the family and the education responsibilities for his son. Therefore, the primary thought in his life is not his own learning or improvement, but supporting his family. This also coincides with the Chinese traditional thinking, which emphasizes that responsibility to the family is more important than the individual.

At the end of this passage, he denied the function or importance of learning in his life and work. This is also a reflection and result of his family education by his parents and his family condition, which make him neglect the importance of learning for his life in the future, and instead focus on the benefits from working. However, this narration also revealed the truth that he is still not satisfied with his living condition and needs much more money. The key focus which runs through his life is money, which can be used to improve his living condition and circumstance. Other factors are not important for him.

From his narration, we can deduce that his parents did not receive complete education themselves, and wanted to pass their dreams and ideals to their children. They want to lead a better life vicariously through the success and progress of their children. In other words, they do not care much about the feelings of their son, but hope to influence his decisions to reflect their own ideals.

Core categories:
The influences and impacts on Pen's learning style and activities can be seen from the above original passages and analysis. Therefore, several core categories can be drawn from this part:

(1) Learning and other decision made by parents instead of children themselves.
Parents or relatives of the family would like to make decisions for their children through suggestions and orders, regardless of their children's age or the importance of the decision for their children's fate.

(2) Financial and educational background of parents.
The financial and educational background of parents can influence the child's

direction, aim, habit, motivation, and feelings towards education.

(3) Little learning time and few learning opportunities for the breadwinner.
After a person gets married and becomes the breadwinner of the family, the main focus is supporting the family. This uses up all spare time of the individual, which could otherwise be used for learning or reading. The breadwinner's attitude towards life and work must be pragmatic.

(4) Expectation from parents for quick success.
Parents expect or are eager for quick success and profits from their children's education. Their children could inherit this view from their parents when they grow up.

The supporting narrative content for the core category "Learning and other decision made by parents instead of children themselves:"
An example for this core category can be found from the narration by Yin, who is already a doctoral candidate now although he is still quite young.

(1) Yin: My parents did not scold me or asked me to get good scores for them…They just told me to work harder. And anything else they could do for me.

(1) This is different from the situation of many other students nowadays in China, because most parents ask their children to aim for higher and higher scores in the class. Many students get bored or sick of learning. Yin was very lucky to have such wise parents. She learned by herself and was influenced very little by her parents. Her parents also gave her some suggestions on her choice of major, career, future, and other important matters which could change her fate:

(2) Yin: My father told me that, as I was so young, I should learn as much as possible…find a much better job….So I just followed the advice of my father and applied for the doctor entrance examination

(2) Every important step or choice of the interviewee would be influenced by the parents. Actually, she did not really want to get the doctor degree. Her father had made the choice for her, so she spent many years in the university. If there was no pressure on her or advice from her father, then she may not have gone forward with her education.

From the above narration and analysis, we can see that each step of her learning and decisions were influenced by the opinions of her parents, especially her father. She also admitted this, but she had another understanding of this kind of "suggestion" and "help:"

(3) Yin: my parents have influenced me a lot… I am too young … I just ask them for advice and most of time I just follow their opinion…My parents have helped me a lot in the way of learning… from my graduation from the university and from I get the doctor degree, I would like to make decisions by myself… Sometimes my mother hit me if I was not obedient…my father could always give me the best and most useful advice.

(3) She believes that the most important factor which influenced her was her family. The reason for her parents to make decisions for her is that she was too young to make some decisions herself. This is always the situation in China. No matter how much the children dislike or hate it, the parents decide and expect the children to comply. The children could always have their motivation to learn effectively and successfully, but they lose their self-determination and freedom to decide what and how to learn. So many of them are at a loss upon entering society, and do not know if it is still necessary for them to keep learning.

No matter how old a person is, his or her decisions throughout life can be influenced by the family members more or less. This can be seen from the narration content by Yu, a grandma of more than 90 years old. She has a traditional family with several children. The following passage shows that her decision-making was also affected by her husband, who was the patriarch in the family.

(4) Yu: I had two chances to learn…. I really wanted to go with them, but at the time my husband forbade me to join them…he would never agree the decision

(4) This is based on the traditional thinking of men about women's education. The saying, "The woman who has not knowledge is morality" had been handed down by each generation, so it was very hard to change men's thinking. Her husband represented a typical male attitude on their wife's learning. As a result, the number of illiterate Chinese women is greater than that of men.

The supporting narrative contents for "Financial and educational background or condition of parents":
The financial and educational background of parents directly affects the family education level and values of their children. These views can also be passed down to their offspring. These influences are demonstrated in the interviews of Chi, Yu, and Fu.

(1) Chi: My father died very early as I was a child…my mother brought me up by herself… I had to do everything and finish every job by myself…rely on myself… my mother said, "I want you to live up to my expectations and live up

by yourself…I will not help you…unless the matter you really could not deal with by yourself."

The interviewee began his narration by describing his special family circumstance, which shows he cares a lot about his family background when talking about himself. He did not tell me the exact time when his father died, he just said "very early," which means he did not receive a father's love and education in his childhood. He mentioned that his mother raised him "by herself" to describe the difficulty in his family during his early years. Coming from this family background, he "had to do everything" and relied on no one but himself. He used the words "had to" when he narrated his early work, to show that he had no choice. He could not rely on anyone else, and was compelled to finish all his work by himself.

His mother's method of upbringing was quite different from other Chinese parents, as she did "not help" him and asked her son to "live up by" himself. In a single parent family, the offspring mature more quickly than the ones from complete families. After so many years, the interviewee could still remember what his mother said, so this must have left a great impression on him. His mother did encourage him to ask for help if there was really something he "could not deal with by himself." This shows his mother still loved and cared about her son. A child in a single-parent family will have a different character from others. He has a great deal of independence and had to learn much by himself. He had to learn how to deal with matters by himself rather than calling his parents for help.

In this circumstance of imperfect or incomplete family, the role of the single parent is very important in the child's development. The interviewee's mother afforded the complete responsibility for family education:

(2) Chi: She was proud of her son... I admired her very much… no one, yes, no one dared to refer to the thing about my father on my face

Compared with the attitude and treatment from his classmates and teachers, his mother was "proud of" him and supported his son strongly. The interviewee could feel that when he was helpless, his mother could be with him and gave him encouragement. He "admired her" for this "very much," which means he was eager for such support during that period and his mother influenced him a lot. He used the words "dare" and "yes" to express the firm and strong feeling of safety and encouragement from his mother. From this excerpt, we can see that he cared much about the discussion and views from the outside to his family situation, that he has a very stressful relationship with his classmates. However, the family relation between the son and mother was very harmonious.

The other interviewees, Yu and Fu, have also been influenced greatly by their families:

(3) Yu: I had so many children, and I had to do my job, so I had not much time for them or administrate their study at all.

(3) From this segment, she is describing her family situation as far as the education of her children. We can see that the family education was deficient for her children (i.e. "had to do my job" and "not much time for them"). There was no regulation for her children at home. Also, we can see that the reason for this deficiency of family education was also that there were too many children. She mentioned her inability to "administrate their study," which shows that in her opinion, the family education should be about monitoring the children's homework and study with "administration," which seems simple and autocratic.

At that time, each family would have more than 3 children on average, so the parents would not have enough time or energy for each child. Children's self learning behaviors could only rely on self awareness and consciousness.

(4) Fu: If my family, eh, and I had enough money…maybe, my parents would spare more money for us brothers and sisters to enter schools…Maybe the situation of my life will be not like this.

(4) This segment shows his lost opportunities, focusing on the money, family background, and the chance of learning in his childhood. He still has the dream of learning well in his early years. He reminisces that if he could have had a better family background and more money, maybe his situation would be completely different. It is worth noting that he changed the subject in his first sentence from "we" to "I," which shows that he was eager to obtain money by himself and hoped to change his family's situation by himself.

He attributes his illiteracy to his poor family background, which was the reason for his dropping out of school. However, his opinion of learning should not be neglected in this analysis of behavior. He thought learning was not useful for changing the status of the family.

The supporting narrative contents for "Little learning time and few learning chances for the breadwinner":
For individuals whose family background is not good or has financial problems, will focus on earning money and improving the family's financial condition. This was demonstrated by narrations from Chi, Fu and Yu:

(1) Chi: After the days of university...I did not choose to continue my learning…I did not want to be a graduate student…to earn money earlier was much more urgent than to be a, just a graduate student and learn for about 2 or 3 years…I just wanted to earn money to show my filial piety to my mother, because, you know, my family was not very rich at that time.

(1) The family background had affected him very much as he considered his choices after graduation according to the family economic situation. He might have wanted to get a master's degree or continue to learn something useful for himself, but the wish to earn more money for the family made him get into the workforce as early as possible. He gave up the chance to learn, which represents the termination of the systematic learning experience for a Chinese student. Even if he wanted to learn during his work, he could not have such a chance to learn again in school for a long time without other social obligations. So opportunities are rare people who are over 30 years old to continue learning in the university.

As Chi was born in a poor, single-parent family, it is not strange for him to have such views from his childhood. However, there are also some people who just did not have any interest in learning, but rather wanted to earn more money for the family. This view can be shown in the interview with Fu:

(2) Fu: (I) wanted to study for one year or two…help our parents to earn more money…for our family, and to have enough to eat and drink… I have studied in a primary school for…about 3 years…did not like school at all…The classmates and the teachers around me did not like me at all…I did not like them at all, either.

(2) The most urgent matter facing the family was not learning or knowledge. After all, they believed the knowledge of their children could not solve the problems of affording food and clothing. The children in the poor family could do nothing but help the parents earn money as early as possible. This is the main reason for the children in the past years not learning at school. The environment at school was beneficial for his growth, and this was also a reason for his dislike of learning.

The last generation, who experienced poverty and starvation, had a strong understanding of the importance of earning money and improving living condition. So for them, the most important task is not learning, but spending most of their time working and earning money, as demonstrated in the interview with Yu:

(3) Yu: Much poor and I had no time with other things, but just did housework and gave birth to and fed my children… there are a few people who want to

learn or their families were rich enough for them to learn. But most of women of my era had not such a chance to study in school.

(3) Based on her family situation, she knew that there was "not a chance to study in school," which meant that the main obstacle for her learning was the financial problem and her family background in that era. From the phrase "gave birth to and fed my children," we can see that even though the family was quite poor, she did not give up the opportunity to have children. Maybe she did not consider whether she had the ability to afford their education in school. She also mentioned that educated people were those who "their families were rich enough for them to learn," suggesting that she envious and that she had hoped to learn like wealthier people. She believed the deciding factor for receiving an education was the family background and financial situation.

As a mother and member of the family who should be responsible for the food and clothing, she could spare no time for learning at this period. The traditional thinking about women's education still existed until a few years later after the establishment of the PRC. Therefore, women at that time did not consider learning as necessary as or more important than working for the family.

(4) Yu: My family and the society (were the most important factors influencing my decision to learn or not to learn). My husband was the most important factor which blocked my learning steps…I really had not such free time in learning...there were so many children in my family who were waiting for me to feed…I just did the housework and always earned some money to feed the family by myself.

(4) She concluded the reason for her inability to learn was the "family and society," which meant that she had to obey her husband's orders. Her husband "blocked her learning steps." The social background was too terrible for even a man to make a normal living, let alone to support her own education, so the main task for her was to "do housework and earn some money to feed the family." Therefore, the family and social factors were the main factors which "blocked her way of learning." She also mentioned "feed the family by myself," which means there was a lack of help from her husband in supporting her family. Her work was the only source of income in the whole family, so she was much busier than anyone else.

The family and social factors hindered her learning. She had not enough time for learning, and the traditional thinking influenced her family so much that her husband would not dare to let her learn.

The supporting narrative contents for "Expectation from parents on the

success of their children":

The parents want their children to accomplish the dreams and ideals which they themselves could not, or did not, fulfill in their own lives. This category explains how children are forced to follow the aim or direction of their parents. Interviews with Yin, Yu and Fu support this point:

(1) Fu: If I wanted him to enter a senior middle school, then the school may be a normal…or a very bad one. Then, at the time I had nothing to say, as I was such illiteracy. I…could not do anything to help him.

(1) He felt shameful and helpless on the matter of his son's education. He had done some self-reflection, and knew that the bad scores of his son were more or less caused by his illiteracy and the family background. He may have felt more regret about his own learning experiences.

(2) Fu: For me, it is enough if I can just support my son to learn as long as he can and…we can just eat enough in our daily lives.

(2) The only thing he felt he could do was to guarantee the material needs for his son, such as eating. When he was young, he never had enough to eat which was very painful (i.e. "not to resist out hunger"), so his thought of helping and supporting his son was so that they could "eat enough."

His hope today for learning is for his son's education. The fundamental requirement for his life is still not learning, but providing food and clothing.

(3) Yu: So I always warn my children, when they could not learn at their youth, they would suffer more at their old… they did not hear me, and they just played at their youth. So they wasted their time.

(3) The way of her family education was to "warn the children" that if they did not learn when they were young, they would suffer more when they were older. As for her, she did not have much time with her children, let alone the family education, so she had the thought that this warning was enough for her children. However, all of the family education content seemed feeble and futile to her children, and this was only a homiletic education, without any explanation or example for her children. Therefore, it was not surprising to see that her children "did not hear me…played…wasted their time". To a certain extent, the family education is more important than other kinds of education for the individual development. However, the children in her family did not have enough family education. This is also because the interviewee herself did not have any family education, so she did not have experience giving family education to her children.

She had educated her offspring based on her personal experience. We can see that she regretted her lack of education and was not satisfied with the past years. The period when her children grew up was during the Cultural Revolution, and most children at that time thought only about playing rather than learning.

(4) Yu: The society advocated the youth to learn and work in the countryside, so some of them just lived in the countryside for years. When they came back, they had missed the best years for learning, and they could not have the chance to study at higher school at all. Now they knew how they were stupid at that time, but it was too late… She would tell them (my grandson) to learn hard at school

(4) In this segment she criticized the policy in that era for the youth. From her narration, we can see that she knew the importance of the learning period. She believed that the teenage years are a precious time for learning (i.e. "they had missed the best years for learning"). She believed they would "not have the chance to study at higher school at all," which meant that she did attach great important learning in adult life. She used "stupid" and "too late" to describe the ones who could not learn well in their youth, and showed regret for their missing this precious time for education.

The next generation was also delayed and hindered in their education by the political movement. This time, the effect of social factors was more obvious than the family and individual factors.

6.1.2 School factors.
Biography and background of the core characteristics for school factors: Feng.
The interviewee was born in Henan province in 1980. His parents were ordinary workers in factories, but his family financial condition was medium class so he did not worry about financial problems during his learning period in his early years. He attended the elementary school near his home from 1986 to 1992. During the elementary school years, he performed well in his class and his scores were always top-ranking. Therefore, he was one of the most popular students of the teachers in his class. After elementary school, he entered the junior middle school which was also near his home. During the three years of junior middle school from 1992 to 1995, he continued to perform better than his classmates, and also undertook the responsibility of supervising the class as an assistant of his teachers. Later, from 1995 to 1998, he studied in an excellent senior middle school which was a little farther away from his home. The reason for entering this school was his excellent scores in the entrance examination of senior middle school. However, during the three years in the senior middle school, he could not achieve high scores, although he was

still an assistant of his teachers. His scores in the college entrance examinations were not good enough for his entry into a key university in China, so in 1998, he went to an ordinary university in Peking for higher education.

During his years in university in Peking from 1998 to 2002, he was busy with plenty of activities in the university and the work in student organizations, such as the broadcasting station and the student union. He did not like his major much, which was randomly chosen, and he was without complete understanding of the content of his major. Therefore, he did not perform well in his major. He failed two of his courses as a freshman, but in his second year, he made greater efforts and achieved success in his major. However, he still did not like his major at all, so he began self-learning about his own interests during his leisure time after his class. Meanwhile, he also undertook his work in various student organizations, and volunteered as an English teacher for pupils from poor families.

Before graduation from his university, he had many choices for careers with companies or official institutions, but he did not choose to work as soon as graduating from university. Instead, he chose to participate in the entrance examinations for MA organized by a top university in Peking. He registered for a major which was totally different from his major in the university, but was interesting to him. In 2002, he failed this entrance examination, and began part-time job as an English teacher in his hometown for one year. The wage paid for his teaching was not good, which motivated him to look for another means of earning his life. In 2003, he again prepared for the entrance examination of the MA, and participated in the examinations organized by a local university in his city. This time he succeeded in passing the examinations, and got the chance to study in the local university for a master's degree from 2003 to 2006. During these three years, he did well in his study and was paid nicely for his good performances in university. He did work in student organizations, but had a part-time job as an English teacher in a private school for these three years. His salary was much higher due to his better educational background.

After his graduation from the university as a master's student in 2006, he participated in the entrance examinations for a Ph.D. organized by a Guangzhou University. However, he did not get high enough scores. He once again prepared for this examination for a whole year, and in the middle of 2007, he participated in the examination once again. This time, he got high enough scores for his entrance to the university for his doctor degree. He studied as a doctoral student from 2008 until now in Guangzhou University. Nowadays, he is faced with graduation from his university, but has no idea about what to do next in life.

The core paragraphs and analysis of Feng's narration

(1) I felt…they were not so terrible and…even some of them (my classmates) were very friendly to me just from I became the class representative for the subject of Chinese…

There were not important schools or normal school as the situation, now. So, we, the most of my friends…did not care the schools they entered, but we just wanted to stay with the classmates of the primary schools…

(1) From his narration, we can find that his personal character changed with the words "not so," as he has found that the environment of learning in the class was proper and comfortable for him. However, before that the word "so," he has implied that he imagined the situation in school would not be as pleasant as the reality. The classmates are important factors for the growth of students in their school time, as the friendships among students can influence each individual's opinions and thoughts in a group or a class. Therefore, each student in a class has to participate in the collective activities and makes friends with each other. The interviewee used "not terrible" and "friendly" here to show that he had different thoughts about his friendships during his school years. At the beginning he felt "terrible" and could not deal with interacting with his classmates. However, later, he found they were "friendly," although it was still just "some of them," so the interviewee's attitude to friendships in school had changed.

He used a comparison between past schools years with the present day situation, to explain the main factors of how most of his friends chose their schools. Then, the friendship in the lass was much more important than being enrolled in a reputed school. This shows that there were few influences of external social factor on the choice of educational environment. At that time, there was not so much contrast between students in the level of schools which they entered. Rather, the relationships between students were very precious for them, and this was the important factor for a student's decision on in which class to attend.

(2) I did not know how I got such great courage, that I, really, I stood up and demanded to be a class representative of the Chinese subject, although it was not so important among all the, the class leaders. Just from then, I felt I was very important in the class…I felt I was much more important than the monitor…

(2) When he got to the new school, his concern was not for the learning content or his classmates, but his "demanding to be a class representative," which was the same job he had did in his primary school. He used "really" here to ensure that it actually happened, although he knew that it was a little surprising. He described his actions as "stood up and demanded," which

shows that he has a deep memory of this experience and it was very significant to him. He hoped this job would once again change his status in the school, as it had in primary school.

He used comparison twice to contrast his job with those of others. He drew the conclusion that he was much more important than the monitor, which meant that he felt quite self-confident during that period. Therefore, this job was a very important factor which influenced him much during his school years. The experience as a class representative was precious for a student who had been shy at first, in order to help him learn better communication skills.

(3) (I am) very proud of myself. But after a little time, ah, I felt that was not true, as I found more and more students, they were much stronger than me…much more excellent students…from each side of the city… began to feel very worried…about the future of mine in the senior middle school…
I really worked very hard in the senior middle school, but, ah, I do not know why my scores were, always, and, eh, not very good in the class, so after two semesters I was not the monitor in the class…for my poor scores…
I did not want to go to the very normal university which admitted me as a student then because of my low scores. I, I at that time, really wanted to go back to the senior school for another year.

(3) The first and most serious problem he met in the senior middle school was the stronger students who could do better than him. His self-confidence was threatened by the reality. There was a negative effect of the changing of the environment on his learning experience. With lowed self-confidence, he had trouble adapting himself to the new environment.

Although he had made every effort to learn, he did not get the ideal results as he had wished. Other blow to him self-confidence was the recalling of his monitor position. This affects his courage and energy to study hard in the class.

The reasons for his dismay towards attending normal university are complex, but one reason was that he felt shameful about his performance on the exams. Until now, he still could not understand the true meaning of his learning behavior, but the objective factors were influencing his learning behavior too much.

(4) The learning in the university was not very good, as I chose a major I did not like at all…I was a man should learn liberal arts, but at last, I chose the technical major for the four years in the university as a dippy man…So until now I still feel…very regret about this decision…Maybe I just thought, that major was very easy for me…who knows, the major was…so hard for me!

I really worked very hard in the next year (in the university)…the result in the next year was much better than the first year…I felt very comfortable in my major, because I liked to write articles for the literal arts major…the years, ah, for the graduate students in the university was…very easy, and very successful…I really...like the major and the atmosphere in my university…

(4) Feng, like many other students, chose the wrong major before entering university. The main reason for that is that the content of the major is not spread to the students and parents in time before they have to decide. Therefore, many students choose their major when they are unaware of its content. In addition, more and more parents decide the major for their children, typically selecting a major which is popular at present time and profitable. The result is that many students do not like the major after they really understand it and realize their future profession after graduation.

This segment of the narration was very intense, with words such as "very" and "really." The comparison of his first year and the second year showed he could adapt himself to the environment gradually, and he had a good mindset. He used "comfortable" to describe his major, which meant he could do well in his major. Therefore, the choice of an adaptable major or job was very important for him. This entire segment gave praise to his major and the environment of his university. He found he could learn successfully firstly, because he had chosen and adapted to the right major for him, and secondly, he could have a good mindset about his environment and learning circumstance in his life. Both of these show how his inner character influenced his educational experience. This also shows that the major and interests are important for the learning behavior and performance of a student.

(5) We feel that we are much stupid that we spend such plenty of time on learning, learning, and just learning… When we get out of the university…I could not imagine…we could have just the same competitive power as the students who have…just have begun their working experience, or…the career as early as possible…
I just want to graduate as early as possible and I really do not want to learn the text books and do the research about…the things which could not help me with my working in the future…

(5) This shows his misunderstanding of learning and doing research as a doctoral student. The substantial problems are the main matters he considers now. Because of this, he will not spend as much time on learning and research, but thinking more over the future and his work after graduation.

This shows a large change in his attitude towards learning in the university. At first, he liked learning and felt the major "very easy and very comfortable," but

now he said he wanted to graduate and did not "want to learn," with strong emotional words such as "as early as possible." This shows that he did not have any interest in learning anymore. The reason for his dislike of learning is his thought that the learning content and research could not help him with work, which has now been regarded as much more important than his learning in university. Now we can find that his aim of learning was really for his future in the society and career, so this is also an example of pragmatic attitude toward learning.

Summary:

The interviewee begins his narration from his learning experiences in his early years. He also stressed that he is a doctor, which shows that he is proud of this title. Therefore, we find that the learning activities and success mean too much for him. Then, he tells a story describing the attitude of his teacher towards him and his feeling about his relationships with his classmates, who both influence him very much. For example, he "felt very disappointed" when he "could not found" his friends in his new class in the junior middle school. In other words, he attached great importance to the people around him in his educational environment.

According to the narration from his junior middle school, we can see that he has concern for "undertaking a duty" in his class, such as being the "class leader" and organizing class activities. From these roles, he obtained a feeling of superiority and pride, which in return promoted his performance in learning and his confidence in his class. However, there were also pressures from his learning performances, which fluctuated over time, from excellent performance in his elementary school and junior middle school, to terrible in his senior middle school, to normal performance in university. Therefore, we can say that the pressures on his performances in schools accompanied him throughout his education.

At first, he does not like his major because he does not know what the major is about when he chooses it. However, he focuses on describing his gains and happiness with life during university, without any words about his performances or learning content of his major. We can say that he has gained life experiences and skills from his university life, outside of just pure scientific knowledge.

At the end of his narration, he talks about his own view and opinion about learning for so many years in school. He expresses "regret" because he feels that he could not "compete with" other colleagues who have already worked for years and accumulated much more experience. In general, he felt his learning in school was kind of a waste of time and money. This opinion is related to his own life and working experiences and the influences from his learning in

school. Therefore, there is necessity to explore the reason and background of his views and thoughts on lifelong learning.

Core categories:
(1) The influences from teachers and classmates in school education.

As the Chinese students pass most of their youth from morning till evening in school, teachers and students have close relationships. No one could live or study alone by him or herself in such a close circle of peers, so students must interact and connect with others. Day to day interactions with classmates influence the individual's learning aim, method, and habit while in school. From the core paragraphs of Feng's narration, we can find that these influences are exerted especially in the early school years, such as elementary school and middle school, because students themselves have not formed a complete and mature opinion about their own learning yet. This category contains each aspect affecting students' normal studying and learning activities in schools, such as teachers' attitudes, methods, content, classmates' opinions, and relationships with classmates, as well as the policies and supervision by schools and official education departments.

(2) Participating in school activities and undertaking administrative positions in school.

School is the first place where most children connect and communicate with strangers and try to understand the simple school society formed by classmates and teachers. Therefore, school activities and responsibilities in administrative positions in a school could promote students' growth, such as gaining the ability to organize and manage. This is also an important learning activity for many students in schools and universities, besides learning cultural knowledge in the classrooms only.

(3) The pressures of competing with classmates for higher scores and excellent performance in school.

For most Chinese students, the learning aim is higher scores and excellent performances, which are the ultimate criteria for judging learning ability in school. Students do not only care about their own scores and performance, but also like comparing scores with others. Teachers to parents also regard high scores and good performances in school as the standard of a "good student," so this kind of belief becomes the guiding ideology for students in school. The goal of outcompeting one's classmates poses lots of pressures on the normal learning activities of students, who are afraid of disappointing teachers and parents. As a result, their learning behavior becomes more and more pragmatic.

(4) The individual growth and attitude change in university and choice of major.

The period of learning in university is necessary and important for many

Chinese youth nowadays, as the gross enrollment rate in university is more 30% of all young people. University life is the most proximal stage to the real social life. Therefore, the learning and living in university is the key period for the formation and development of one's social views, ideals, career choice, learning motivations, and plans after graduation and even in the whole life. Thus, learning and living in this period affect the rest of the individual's life.

(5) The individual judgment and understanding about the efficiency of school learning.

After many years of school learning, students have different opinions about learning efficiency and the meaning of learning activities in school and society. They have formed various views on learning after graduation from school and university. Therefore, the investigation and analysis of individuals' attitudes on learning after graduation are necessary for the research on lifelong learning. Many people give up opportunities and lose interest in learning as soon as they graduate from school or universities. They may believe that the learning content in school is out of date, or they feel disconnected with society after a long time of learning in school or university.

The supporting narrative contents for "The influences from teachers and classmates in school education:"

Most interviewees during this research began their narration from childhood, as well as the life and experiences in school. The significant factors in these experiences are teachers and classmates, which have constituted the main structures and conducted activities for the interviewees Yi, Chen, and Ruo as follows:

(1) Yi: Suddenly, felt relaxed, I felt, the teachers were not like, ah, elementary school to be so strict, there were more naughty students in the junior middle school…the classes in my junior middle school had more chaos and disorder

(1) When he comes into the junior middle school, the first feeling is about the change in supervising style by the teachers. He pays more attention to the teachers' supervising style in a learning environment than to himself. Because the supervising was "suddenly relaxed," he finds the amount of "naughty" students is more than in his elementary school, and the students make the learning situation in his class "more chaos and disorder." He may feel unsatisfied with the educational environment.

(2) Yi: But later there came a new head teacher in my grade 3, on whom I have particularly deep impact. He was called Li. Until now I still remember that he was a bald man.

(2) This segment and the next are all about his new head teacher of his last

year in the senior middle school. He says he had a "particularly deep impact" on him, and he could recall his name and distinguishing features after so many years, which means the teacher made a lasting impression. Here, the character of "bald" is not always a good feature for a Chinese man, and sometimes this character stands for a kind of cruel or brutal figure, such as the criminals in jails who have to get a close shaved haircut. The interviewee stresses here that the teacher is bald, which may mean that he is sometimes afraid of his teacher.

The interviewee Chen has also many memories and experiences in his school years with his classmates and teachers, who have influenced his thoughts and performance in school a lot.

(3) Chen: During the four years, I have always played together with my friends and that was imaginable in my school years, and I was not allowed to go out to play with my friends for more than 2 hours then, but, it is a heaven for enter the university.

(3) The interviewee used such an obvious contrast to explain his situation between university and at home. He enjoyed free time in his life, and did not want to be restricted by his parents. His family also influenced him a lot since they were very strict with his free time ("not allowed for more than 2 hours"). He was forced to stay at home and maybe finish his homework alone without any contact with his friends. Under such family education, he could not dare to think about freely playing with his friends in his spare time. Therefore, his youth was a period without much free time. He used the word "heaven" to describe his university life, which means he really enjoyed it and finally felt free after a long controlled period.

As his experiences of the primary and middle schools are almost the similar as others, his feeling of these experiences does not show great differences as others. He experienced a lot in the university, and from his narration we can see that it was the first time he learned to communicate with others and many other skills. He thought the university was like a small society. It seems that the influence from his university period was much greater than earlier periods. University education seems to greatly influence the individual's view of lifelong learning.

Ruo, a girl who is now in her first year of university, narrated about most of her educational life, especially her own feelings and thoughts on her experiences in her school and university. She has been in touch with her teachers and classmates quite frequently in her daily life.

(4) Ruo: A very annoying matter…the head teacher…did not pay any attention

on our class…just took care of her own salary in the school,…most of the students did not want to learn, I remembered her name until now, Miss Zhang, she was not worth being called as "Teacher," because she did not really take care of the class.

(4) The teachers in the schools nowadays do not only care about the scores of the students, but they have many other tasks to do during the teaching and working period. So the teaching quality has not improved, or has even declined because of these kinds of teachers. Teachers in this period could influence the whole learning period of a student. Therefore, the effects of a teacher should not be neglected in the senior middle school.

Unlike the interviewees above, Shui denied the influence on his learning thoughts and methods from his teachers or classmates:

(5) Shui: (My classmates) have not such influences to me, because we have different developing road and different ways of life. Now I have not seen them fluently. But in the school years, we always talk about something we like and to encourage each other to, to, en, to strive to the top. They can just excite me to climb to the top.

(5) At first he denied the influences from his classmates, as they had "different developing road and ways of life." However, at the end of this segment, he also said "they can just excite me," which meant that he saw his classmates as his opponents and also a kind of motivation for his success in class. There was still some influence from his classmates and friends without his attention. During his school years, he acknowledged that they had to "encourage each other to…strive to the top," which meant that he had good friendships with his classmates. However, he also said "not see them fluently," which implies that there is not much contact between him and his friends from school years. Therefore, we can say that the friendship and influences from his friends mostly stopped after his school years. The relation between him and his friends was very weak.

The main effects of his friends and classmates at this period were just to excite, encourage, and empower him to reach the top of the society. So the relationship between the friends was substantial and utilitarian, not as it had been for his parents.

The supporting narrative contents for "Participating in school activities and undertaking administrative positions in school":
As the monitor in junior and senior middle school, the interviewee Yi has many experiences with school activities. These activities and administrative positions all exerted influence on his learning performance and thoughts in his daily life.

(1) Yi: I did not feel like so much to participate in collective activities in the university period, because I had participated in these activities at my senior middle school too much. So when I came into the University, I just decided to do some things what I liked to. Then at that time I began to learn Kung Fu. I liked Kung Fu from my childhood, and had a Kung Fu Dream from then. I liked watching Jackie Chan movies during my childhood.

(1) The interviewee uses "too much" to describe the school activities and the reason why he does not want to participate in any collective activities anymore. This means he had his own initiative and the right of choice in whether he wanted to take on supervising duties. His time was used to "do the things what I liked to," such as Kung fu. He finds himself free in university, as he has a right to choose his schedule according to his own habits and hobbies, rather than be compelled by external factors.

For the interviewee Chen, he describes much about his life and activities in his university years with his friends, and these activities have also changed his learning thoughts and behaviors.

(2) Chen: I did learn some useful knowledge, but most of knowledge I have learnt was not useful to me and for the rest of my life… most of us just spent a lot of time making friends or falling in love with others… fashion to learn in the small "society", but not to learn only.

(2) He emphasized that he has really learned "some useful knowledge," but then contradicts himself by saying the knowledge he learned was not useful for "the rest of his life," which means he did not learn for utilitarian purposes or for a career after his graduation. He did not mention anything about his learning motivation. He explained he spent time "making friends or falling in love with others," which should be considered learning social skills he had been missing. He used "fashion" to describe this kind of learning, so the friends around him may also learn the same things as him. It is also a kind of influence from his friends and the surroundings of his learning habit and content.

The life in the university has taught him how to adapt to society and communicate with others. However, the knowledge he has learned was not useful for him. Therefore, we should pay attention to the educational system and problems in the Chinese universities nowadays. This is also a reflection that time was mostly spent socializing with others, rather than learning. He did not focus on the importance of learning very much, but just learned social lesson from the "small society" on campus.

As for Ruo, she can clearly remember participating in school activities:

(3) Ruo: I am always the important member who could, eh, play the instrument in front of the audients…I had such a little satisfied about the experience and time which I had spent on the music instruments learning.

(3) This demonstrates the reason why there are more and more children learning instruments as early as possible: the children who could play well were praised and proud of their achievements. Therefore, the children will not complain about the hard time they spent on learning to play an instrument.

(4) Ruo: The school life in the junior middle school was very boring… the life style in the senior middle school, was, en, really very quickly, and much more quickly than the junior middle school.

(4) The life in junior, and even senior middle school, is very similar. So there is a problem that the students are all taught and brought up in the same way, and the specializations of the students are hidden.

As the life in the senior middle school is short and students only aim to enter a good university after graduation, the time passes very quickly in this period.

The supporting narrative contents for "The pressures of competing with classmates for higher scores and excellent performance in school:"

The narrations about pressures from scores or performances in class are focused in the period of junior and senior middle school. In contrast, when students come into university, there is pressure for high marks in their learning process. Therefore, this category exerts effects on learning in the early years for many interviewees:

(1) Yi: I was not go out drinking, ah, then I said goodbye with my girlfriend, then I put my heart at my study. Then my score in the entrance examination test for the senior middle school was quite poor, and then I was admitted to one of senior middle school in our city, and also I had applied for several schools in Tianjin, but I was not admitted to these schools as my bad scores. Then my foundation and basic knowledge were actually quite poor. After all, I have just prepared the exams quite shortly and tiredly. I could only answer some easy questions on my paper and would not answer the hard ones. So I just reviewed the basic things.

(1) The influences from his poor scores are so great that he gives up his "bad" habits immediately after the reaction of his teachers and father. Therefore, he seems to be still a child who needs regulation and direction from the adults.

The word "ah" when he talks about his love for his girlfriend shows that he feels emotional and helpless that he had to give up this relationship. At least he finds learning at this stage is much more important than falling in love.

Although he has made his effort, his scores on the final exam during his junior middle school years are not good enough for him to be admitted by the ideal senior schools. The reason he suggests is he cannot deal with the hard questions and his basic knowledge is very poor. He uses "shortly and tiredly" to describe his preparation of his exams, which means he feels the time is not enough for his preparation. During this period, he is really working hard, but the motivation of his endeavor is just because he faces important exams during his junior middle school. His motivation comes from external pressures on him.

Chen describes the situation and scene of his classmates preparing for examinations in university. This is also a motivation for most learning in university.

(2) Chen: Some ones with not so much good luck had the exams more than 5 times, and until the graduation they had not got the certification…They both would affect the job searching.

(2) This segment described the difficulty of the exams through the extreme examples of others. The interviewee used "good luck" here to describe the main factor influencing success on examinations, rather than the efforts in learning. Therefore, there may be a mindset that they could pass the exams just with good luck, and few students are really working hard and learning for the examinations. The mention of "job searching" means the main motivation of passing exams and learning was just to get a better job.

Students who wasted too much time on entertainment would feel regret about their behavior in the university. Therefore, the learning behavior should be executed throughout all university years, and should not be neglected due to the temptation for of social activities or the entertainment.

Ruo's narration speaks about the external pressures on her learning, such as her parents and the aim of her continuing learning in the future.

(3) Ruo: I spent time in the class, that was just for the scores,…I really hated the class like that,…was really very boring, all the contents which the teachers taught were about the examinations... I always took part in the music instruments classes when I was very young, maybe 5 or 6 years old. That time, I had no way but to learn after school, all because of my parents, who wanted me to be a pianist, or a violinist.

(3) The school's contents are focused on the examinations and do not care about the needs of the children. Therefore, the students did not find interest or pleasure in class. The learning effectiveness could not be very good in this situation. In addition, playing music instruments was the idea of her parents, rather than coming from her own will. So the learning effectiveness and aim could not be very good for the growth of a child.

Shui's situation is the same as Ruo's on the aspect of sources of learning pressures.

(4) Shui: The family is just looking forward to seeing our scores after school. They, en, they do not care about other things…My mother always cares about my eating, my cleaning, and the most worry she has on me is my score. But she and my father never, they never ask my mood and thinking after school. Sometimes I feel very upset or depressed, but they just ask me, en, ask me about my scores and the performance at school.

(4) This describes the traditional Chinese family. The parents cared a lot about the scores and performance of their children at school. However, they did not try to have more deep communication with their children about learning or feelings at school. One reason for this is that the parents are very busy with their jobs and they do not have time to discuss the internal mood of the children. They believe their tasks for the growth of a child is keep them fed and safe. The other reason is that more and more parents just care about the scores of the children at school, as they believe that only the best scores could help the children to have a bright future, earn more money, or have a high social status. So the communication between the parents and children in Chinese family is never enough for the healthy growth of the children.

The supporting narrative contents for "The individual growth and attitude change in university and choice of major:"
The four interviewees, Yi, Chen, Ruo and Shui, have all been greatly influenced during their school life, and some of them are now being affected in university. For them, the life in university has been regarded as a kind of semi-social life experience before they work in the real society. Therefore, the life and growth in this period can greatly change their attitude and opinions on learning and even the future.

(1) Yi: In fact, I felt my university period was the most successful period which I have passed, because besides learning I just strengthened my body health, besides strengthening my body health I just learnt, and the scores did not slim down…

(1) The tone of speaking here was very brisk and lively. He valued the university period as the "most successful period" because of his health and scores. The standard at this period for being successful is very simple and easily satisfied. We see that he is quite happy with his experience in the university. The phrase "the scores did not slim down" shows that he was afraid his scores would fall. This obsession with scores can be seen as a influence from pressures he faced in senior middle school.

(2) Yi: Also, if I am interested in something, I will go to learn, when nothing more suitable for me, I will go to pursue a Ph.D. degree. In fact, it does not matter, and maybe when I find a suitable job, and I would not intent to go on reading.

(2) The premise of working for a Ph.D. is that there is "nothing more suitable for me" or not a "suitable job," which means that he does not really have an interest in pursuing a doctor degree. The learning motivation will be if he is "interested in something," so his interests can control his learning behaviors. His phrase "in fact, it does not matter" shows that he does not care much about his learning at all. From this narrative, we can see that currently, learning is not necessary for the rest of his life. Now the most important matter for him is the future and working to make a living.

Chen has made many statements about his experiences in university and also admitted that the life in university has changed him a lot.

(3) Chen: My major was math education…I just did not worry about the future and the job for me…most of my classmates all had the same thoughts as me... played day after day.

(3) *Chen:* He mentioned his major, which was not so important in his mind. The attitude of "not worry about the future and the job" means that he was not concerned about his future after his graduation. He had no motivation with his major during his university years. He said "most of" his classmates "had the same thoughts," which means that the others around him did not care about learning in the university. The result was "play day after day" without consideration for other things. This is a typical university lifestyle nowadays, especially when the future has been scheduled and planed by external factors, such as policies, parents, or schools. In this case, there is little motivation for individuals to learn rather than play. In addition, the environment around the students is very important for their development, as many of them would follow the crowd.

Ruo and Shui narrate much about the process of their major selection and their feelings about university life:

(4) Ruo: At first I did not really want to study in this university, because, I really felt that, it was so poor and disappointing…if I could be much more hard working in the senior middle school, I would not have such a situation.

(4) The prestige of a university has been regarded as the most important factor for evaluating a university, rather than the quality of the teaching and research. Therefore, the students are heading to the first top universities without concern about whether the university or major is a good fit for them. This makes the universities more and more polarized from each other, such that the best universities get better, and the worst universities get worse.

(5) Ruo: The industry, and my major, chemistry had developed much better in Germany than the other countries in the world. And, I had heard that, the welfare system, eh, that was very good in Europe,

(5) The reason for her willingness to learn in Germany is not because she really knows the conditions or the atmosphere of learning in that country, but because of descriptions by others of the material conditions there. Therefore, the learning factors for studying abroad mainly depend on the external conditions.

(6) Shui: My learning is very, en, very simple... This is a normal and arranged way for us, we have, have not choice….

(6) He thought that his learning experiences were arranged and could not be changed by himself. He could only learn according to the arrangement of the system, and had no other choices. It also meant that he was not satisfied with the current educational system, but had no ideas about the meaning of his learning.

The supporting narrative contents for "The individual judgment and understanding about the efficiency of school learning:"
At the end of each narration from Yi, Shui, Chen and Ruo, there are always some comments or sentiments about their learning experiences or processes in school and university. Although some of them feel that learning in university is useful and meaningful, such as Yi and Chen, there are also other interviewees who believe that the learning and life experiences in university are of little use for their future in the job market, such as Shui. The details of their narrations are as follows:

(1) Yi: (The one who learn everyday at school) should have output for the society, contribute something for our society, this is more or less the balance of payments and acquirement. What the community has given him should be

equal to his contribution for the social.

(1) From this segment, we can see that he does not quite agree with learning only at school, but not working in the society. He believes that people in society should "contribute" some "outputs for the society," and this is the principle of "balance." So he does not think of this problem from the individual perspective, but from the viewpoint of society as a whole. We can see that he does not let self-interest, greed, and instant gratification take precedence over the society's long-term needs.

(2) Chen: (I) want to learn something which I really like and am interested in when I am free, but it is just a dream, because we could not have just a plenty of free time for learning freely… there is a strict regulation for us teachers, and each semester the pupils in the class should have better scores than other students in other classes, then the teacher could get bonus for the higher teaching level

(2) He wishes to learn something he likes, but the greatest difficulty for the realization of his "dream" is the shortage of time. This is the most common excuse for not learning after work. The causes for his lack of time come from the "regulations" of his work, the heavy teaching tasks for him, and his "bonus" for his work. All these aspects are related to his work and salary. Therefore, the most important obstacle for his learning is also social factors.

He just had the dream of learning something he liked, but the reality has forced him to do and learn the things he did not like, just for money. The teachers put high pressure on the students for good scores just because the teacher want more bonus money. Therefore, the aim of learning is fundamentally based on money and honor.

(3) Ruo: I will. I will of course learn something useful for my major and my job. The knowledge will be out of date very quickly nowadays… so I should learn forever…if there is little time for me, I would spent it, eh, for my study and learning.

(3) She acknowledged that "the knowledge will be out of date very quickly," which meant that she did not want to be out of date in society. This is a social factor which had influenced her determination to "learn forever" and "learn something useful for my major and job." The learning aim and purpose for her is personal utility, which she believes should last her whole lifetime. However, this type of learning is not related to interests or hobbies.

(4) Shui: I have not skipped a grade since I have not so high IQ and I am not an opportunistic… because the scores are not good enough, (I have) paid, the

thing so called, in China so called "Sponsorship fee" for the school.

(4) He summarized his failure and his unsatisfied learning experience, but he did not mention the reasons for his learning efforts. The fees for education in China are of different kinds. Many students who could not have good scores in the final exams of each stage of the school years had to donate a fee for the schools so that they could have the chance to sit in the classroom with others who had better scores. This practice was motivated by parents who believed that only if the children could be enrolled in a good school would their child have a bright future.

(5) Shui: It is the era of knowledge economy, I feel that, en, in the early years, it is said, time is money, but now this kind of saying is not popular among people, but another has been more spread "Information is life."

(5) He had attached great importance to information nowadays in the society. He believes that social experiences and activities should be much important than other skills and capabilities, such as the private time which could be used freely.

6.1.3 Social factors.
Biography and background of the core characteristics for social factors: Shu.
The interviewee, Shu, was born in Zhengzhou city in 1957. Her father was an ordinary worker in a factory and her mother was doing some part-time jobs and housework. She has 2 brothers and 2 sisters in her family, but the family financial situation was not very good in her childhood, so the children in her family did not get much attention from their parents. In 1961, the interviewee started elementary school, but her scores were not good, which was criticized by her parents and teachers. Despite this, she was able to enter the junior and senior middle school from 1967 to 1973, as the educational policies regulated that students could continue learning no matter how bad or good their performances in schools.

From 1973 to 1978, the interviewee obeyed the policies and regulations from the central government for students and cultural persons to "work and learn in the countryside." During the five years, she worked as a farmer, without any chance of obtaining regular education. This whole generation has suffered the same influences from the political movement in China. After working and learning in the countryside, she returned to her hometown and was assigned to a factory to be a textile worker.

She worked in the factory from 1979 until 2002. During these 23 years of work, she did not attend any classes, nor did she undergo self-learning. However,

her working skill was always improving by means of daily work and professional education in learning groups organized by her factory. The main tasks during these years for her were housework and factory work, which took up most of her time. She has been praised as an advanced worker in her factory many times because of her perfect performance. When she was 28 years old, she had her son. From then on, she had to take care of the child and the housework by herself, as her husband was always on business trips. At first, the textile factory was economically beneficial in the country. However, with the policy of reform in 1979, the textile factory could earn less than before. The interviewee could not get paid well after that. In 2002, her factory went out of business, and she was forced to leave her position and look for another job. In 2004, she got a job in a garments factory to do quality testing, which was not hard but still well paid. The reason she was able to obtain such a position was because of her experience and achievements in her former factory. In 2012, she retired from the factory and now helps her parents at home.

After her graduation from the senior middle school, she did not have any formal or regular learning experiences. However, she accumulated much professional working experience in the factories. Her son is 29 years old now, and working in a private company. Her husband will retire from work in two years. All her family members, such as brothers and sisters, are ordinary workers in factory or companies.

The core paragraphs and analysis of Shu's narration:
(1) The Cultural Revolution began, then, the society was very chaotic...there were no people who still wished to learn hard... I just had even not any demand of learning…We students just had to help with digging tunnels and doing air defense then…had no time on learning…
There were many people who just broke things and arts, and robbed others, and everyday just paraded in the street…When the Chairman Mao published a saying at night, we had just to parade in the street at the same time at night…And we just learnt, at the same time we made the revolution.

(1) The society at that time was very chaotic, so the environment was not proper or impossible for the students to learn at a school without distraction. The main tasks at that period were just helping the country to establish the industry factories and perform political movements. So most of students at that time could not have much energy or time on learning, and the teacher at that time had no chance of teaching in the classroom without distraction.

From this segment, we can feel that she was deeply affected by the Cultural Revolution. All these years later, she described the situation vividly and with detail. The verbs "broke, "robbed" and "paraded" show the disorder in the society then. We can feel that she was worried about this revolution. The

phrase "had just to" shows that she felt helpless. The task of self-protection was the most important matter, so no one was focused on learning at school.

(2) I had been assigned to the area of Zhoukou, which was the poorest area in the whole province…farmed with farmers in the field… I just learnt…how to pick and bake the tobacco leaf and how to grow sweet potatoes, and how to farm the field and so on…much farming knowledge…
That time had given me much education, and I had learnt to bear the difficult conditions. So, even how hard and difficult the days are nowadays, I never feel very hard and always tell me that I could bear and stand it…the most valuable thing the experience in the countryside had given to me.

(2) She was compelled to work and learn in the countryside, which meant her cultural knowledge at school was interrupted. The things she learned in the countryside were related to agriculture. For most people, the opportunity for school learning was lost, which was caused by the political movement and the social situation.

She used "education" to describe her years there, which meant she felt she learned something from her life in the countryside. The most important thing she learned was "to bear the difficult conditions." The effect of such learning was that other challenges "never feel very hard and could bare and stand it." Thus, we can say that she learned from her own life experiences in the society. She assessed her life in the countryside as "the most valuable experience." During this narration segment, she did not mention her culture learning in the countryside, so we can guess that she did not learn anything in this area at this period in her life.

But she had also learned much from the experiences in the countryside, which changed her character and tolerance.

(3) In the factory, I just learnt how to make clothes…much of knowledge of clothes…I had not learnt anything about cultural knowledge… When I had free time after work, I always read some magazines at home or did some housework for the family…
I just want to do the work as long as possible and just learn more and more things from the people around me… we should learn as we live, just learn…whatever you do, you should learn…learn the things you do not know.

(3)The knowledge she had learnt after entering the society and working in a factory was all focused on professional skills. She had no chance of learning outside of work, besides what she could find in the news stories from the magazines.

She was good at learning from the others and enjoyed communicating with others, which was a type of social learning. However, she was not able to learn from books and classes. She had a good understanding about lifelong learning, just as most interviewees in this research, but it was a theoretical understanding. Few people could realize lifelong learning in the daily life.

(4) As for us, we had not done well about lifelong learning, so I always regret for the days which I had wasted. But that was the time that I could not find it back…I just want to hold the chance now to do learn more and to make up the shortage of my learning…
A woman…should do housework for a family and afford most things of bringing up the child…we had just been educated not to do the illegal or immoral things in the society…
I will enhance my learning, and to improve my knowledge structure. I want to read more and more books, and to learn more news from the TV. When I have free time, I would like to discuss some knowledge questions with my colleagues….

(4) She felt regret for the days she thought she had wasted. She understood the meaning and importance of learning now, and wished she hadn't missed the opportunity for learning in the past. She also said that it was too late for her to learn any knowledge now, as the objective and subjective conditions were not proper for her to learn.

The narration about the education related to her family responsibility shows that she has been influenced a lot by social conventions. The word "should" implies that she is regarded as the one who has the responsibility with housework and "bringing up the child," while she does not mention anything about the responsibility for her husband in her family. Therefore, from this narration, we can see there are unequal responsibilities for the parents in the family. From this point of view, it is believed that a woman's learning is not important in a family, especially for a woman who has children. However, she did get a family education from her childhood "not to do the illegal or immoral things in the society," which shows that the criteria and standards for woman in the Chinese society is to obey the social rules.

The main source of her knowledge was from books and TV. Also she attached great importance to her contact with colleagues. She did not mention any form of official classes or learning methods in which she would like to take part.

Summary:
The interviewee begins with her narration from childhood and the learning in kindergarten, which implies that her early learning years made a deep impression on her. She does not mention too much about her performance in

her elementary school, and describes her scores as "just so-so." This shows that she cares not much about her learning content or a strong interest in learning in her younger years.

In the second part, she describes the situation, scenes, and her own experiences during the Cultural Revolution, from which we can find that she has been influenced a lot by this political movement. We find that her learning process has been interrupted and neglected during this revolution, which is characteristic of most people in her generation.

She emphasizes her living conditions and experiences in the rural areas, and that her character has been changed by these living experiences. She admits that she has learned how to live in a tough environment. This is also a kind of lifelong learning which comes from real living circumstance. During this time, she does not learn much scientific knowledge, except the agricultural knowledge in the field. Therefore, the whole generation faces the same problem as her, as they lack normal education in school during this time. Thus, at the end of the narration, the interviewee says that she feels the whole generation has wasted their precious time with useless matters rather than education.

In the third part, the interviewee talks about her own jobs and family. These concerns have greatly influenced her daily life and used up her leisure time that could otherwise have been spent learning about some interesting topics. From this part, we can see that there are always some social or unofficial rules which are restrictive to people, especially women, in their social life. This is a reason why many Chinese women have insufficient education in schools or on their own. However, the interviewee also mentions that she has learned much information from her work in the factory. She and other workers formed a social group. The amount of knowledge she gained in the factory was little and limited; therefore, we can say that the learning in this period for the interviewee was incomplete and fragmented. However, the interviewee could learn something, little by little, in her daily working life. This is also a kind of "situated learning" in her work environment with her colleagues. This term means that "almost any job-related skill can be taught by practicing the skill…Situated learning allows employees to immediately apply what they've learned in the context of performing job-related tasks. Learning occurs among peers who perform the same function" (Halverson, 2009).

In the end, the interviewee expresses her aspirations of learning once she realized the importance of knowledge nowadays. This is also a kind of reflection on the functions and role of learning in the social life. She also expresses regret about her wasted time without learning.

In her narration, she uses only simple words, which shows that she has not been well educated in school and has not achieved a high cultural level. However, after so many years working in society, her individual learning motivations have been stimulated by the social reality around her.

Core categories:
(1) The influences of changing social rules and government policies on individual learning habits and opportunities.
Each generation in China lives with unique social rules and government policies, which change from time to time and influence the educational field a lot in both formal and informal education areas. All the policies in China stem from the central government in China, and could affect individual learning motivations, methods, and thoughts tremendously. The last generation has suffered greatly from the Cultural Revolution and the learning process has been affected. The current generation's learning process has been influenced by the educational policies from the central and local education departments. Besides the educational policies, other rules, laws, and policies can also exert effects, such as economic policies, employment policies, or poverty relief policies.

(2) The restrictions or promotions of learning by social conditions or individual social experiences.
In China, the differences in living standards among districts and regions are very obvious, and the learning and daily life of each individual can be affected by the local material conditions in general. The material conditions refer to educational resources, economic conditions, social education degree, the general and popular thoughts on learning and education, etc. These kinds of impacts can be regarded as external influences which affect with each individual's inner thoughts and opinions on learning and education. The person who lives in a developed district must have different thoughts on learning from the ones who come from developing districts.

The personal social living experiences can also inspire to individual's thoughts and opinions on learning. These kinds of experiences, which are based on real social experiences in society, are different from the living experiences in schools or universities which represent restricted areas. Therefore, individuals can learn different social and practical knowledge from experiencing something first-hand, rather than learning the content from a textbooks or teacher.

(3) The effects of working in society on learning.
After graduation from school, the most important matter for a person is his or her job in the society. The time for work will take up most of one's daily life after graduation. Therefore, the research on lifelong learning should concentrate on

the effects of jobs on lifelong learning. The learning activities while working take place in two ways. One is learning during the working hours, and the other is the learning after work. For most Chinese people, the learning during working hours is always for improvement of skills and professional knowledge. After work, few people are eager for more knowledge without a certain pragmatic aim. However, the learning during working hours always happens in small groups with colleagues together. The learning content contains professional knowledge, as well all other subjects, such as news, social information, household life, etc.

(4) Reflection on the function and role of learning in the social life.
In the end of each narration, there is always a reflection on the meaning of learning and plans for future based on the thoughts about the role of learning in the social life. The main factor motivating learning after school years comes from pressures from work or opportunities for promotions or living standard improvement. There are also comments on the function of learning to meet social needs. Therefore, this can be regarded as a learning attitude based on social orientation.

The supporting narrative contents for "The influences of changing social rules and government policies on individual learning habits and opportunities:"
The last generation has suffered much from the Cultural Revolution in China, and learning activities has been influenced a great deal by these social events. This is shown in the narrations with Gong and Wei:

(1) Gong: (When I) thought back of the years of the "Cultural Revolution", I felt I did not waste the time…

(1) The interviewee felt he did a lot during that time, because he had access to books and an individual learning motivation. However, most people in that period were affected by the political movement. They spent their time on trivial things and regretted their lost time.

(2) Wei: I did not have the chance to enter the university, because at that time all the students who wanted to enter the university should be recommended by the organization of the local government or department…But I had no background at that time, so I was not recommended by anyone, therefore I came back home.

(2) The education system had hindered his learning path. We can see that his learning experiences were much harder and more tortuous than nowadays. His firm belief in education was based on his enjoyment of learning and his habit of reading.

At the time, the whole generation was influenced by the existing social or educational rules and regulations, which restricted the educational opportunities for different individuals. This was experienced by Rui and Jian:

(3) Rui: Work for a long period, and then, the social position and status could be changed and the learning effects would be disappeared. learning experiences are a little, not too much important for own life

(3) She believed that learning effects are temporary rather than long-lasting. So in her view, learning is just for obtaining a good choice of work or promotion.

(4) Jian: After school, we have found that we have little experience about the real life in the society, and we have been separated from the society for a long time, then we catch up with others who maybe come out of schools earlier than us.

(4) Jian found that school teaching was not very useful for life in the society. The knowledge learned in school is disjointed from reality. Most of the graduates could not adapt themselves for a long time after graduation.

The supporting narrative contents for "The restrictions or promotions of learning by social conditions or individual social experiences:"
For this category, the interviewee Gong has many feeling and experiences of tough circumstance during his education. Although the social conditions were difficult, he still insisted on learning with his friends, and they formed the learning environment themselves.

(1) Gong: I believe that the college students do not have better understanding of the society than us… We firstly had read a "community college"…and then we entered the formal university. I was made to be such a person just from this precisely experience.

(1) Different generations have different understanding of the time they are in. But Gong, he could understand the society more clearly and profoundly as he has experienced a lot of political movements and affairs in the Chinese history

He learned at first from the society and his circle of friends, and then he got the normal education experience. So he learned much more than the others. That is to say, a man should not only learn something from the class or a book, but he should also learn social knowledge from the real society.

As for the interviewee Wei, who was born in the countryside, he emphasized

his difficulties with his learning due to the financial circumstances in his family and the society. Also, he makes a comparison of his own experiences with the current youth, in order to show his appreciation of the learning opportunities in his own life.

(2) Wei: I was born in a poor countryside…our family had not much money…at that time eating was the biggest problem…So we had not much money free for the children in our family to learn in schools.

(2) The interviewee began his narration with his family background, which has left a great impression on his life. The words "poor," "countryside," and "not much money" show that his family background was not good for him or his learning condition. As the "biggest problem" was eating, learning or other cultural activities were not taken into consideration. "Not much money free" implied that all his brothers and sister had seldom the chance to "learn in school." His family background shows that he did not have a strong foundation in learning at school because the family could not afford the fees.

The interviewee Rui talks about how her learning process was influenced by social factors. She also gives the second-hand perspective of her classmates, and youth in general, about the job market and work opportunities for youth.

(3) Rui: The society, the young people always feel that the chance for them, for them to get a proper job, en, is not very fair…the children could have the position in the, en, the factories or the bureau which their parents are working at…. my career should be like this, as I had not such parents who had either money or power in the society.

(3) There are more and more young people who believe they cannot get a proper and comfortable job after graduation. She is complaining about the situation in society, which is also the worry of the young men. As the job market is not fair to everyone, the willingness to learn in the school and pursue lifelong learning for promotion will be reduced, whereas the willingness to get a better job with other methods would be more popular among the young men.

The interviewee, Jian, had good educational and financial circumstance from birth. He was born in the capital. Therefore, he believes that he is more superior to others and luckier. Social influences were the most noticeable factor in his learning process.

(4) Jian: But at that time, all of the classmates in my class did not care much about the entering of university…As for the students in Beijing, we could make much less effort and then, get into a more excellent university…. Most of my classmates had one or two hobbies at that time and we had all spent much

time on that.

(4) All the friends around him had similar thinking. Coming from his circumstances, he did not have to make an effort, but instead followed the others to pursue hobbies or fall in love. So since they were not concerned about examinations, they had no motivation. They just believed that their better education would help them gain admittance to an excellent university.

The supporting narrative contents for "The effects on learning by social work or job":
The interviewees Rui and Jian mentioned their own working experiences and the relationship between their jobs and learning motivations:

(1) Rui: I feel that, how can I say, I always feel that, I had no time for other things, even little for my learning and thinking, as I had to travel to the other city for different projects…until now I am just working for the job which I do not want to do any more.

(1) Now she has the feeling of the importance of time and she complains about her shortage of her time. The most important thing she wants is to learn something more. The work can be less than ideal for a person who chose a job which is quite different from his or her major at school.

(2) Rui: The first job would affect their mood and initiative in the following working experiences. So, the first job, I also agree, that is very important for the whole working life of a man.

(2) She thinks that a person can learn a lot from the first job, which could determine working experiences and choices after that. So she should have learned a lot from her first job.

(3) Jian: I felt my life was very substantial…I really studied very hard, because I cherished the chance to be a student very much after so many years of working… my dissertation when I applied for the degree was identified as outstanding. So I felt very proud of that

(3) He used the word "substantial" to describe his life nowadays. Maybe he felt unsatisfied with his social life, but he could not go back to the ideal years when he was still in university. He remembered and yearned for years in the university, and he hoped that he could have a chance to study in the university once again.

Comparing the current time and the period he spent in the university, we see that he really paid attention to his learning and valued it much higher than he

did years ago. That means that he really knew the importance of learning in his life and the precious time he wasted in university.

The supporting narrative contents for "The reflection of learning functions and roles in the social life:"
During the whole learning process and experiences of the interviewee Wie, he has made clear the meanings and importance and function of learning in his life. As a professor who teaches youth nowadays, he also has reflections and sentiments on the functions of learning for the people in the present era:

(1) Wei: A classmate did not want to enter the senior school, because he and his family all thought that learning was not useful for his life…preferred to help his parents with farming than reading books in senior school.

(1) This was a normal phenomenon and choice for most students at that time, as they believed that learning and reading books were useless to supporting the family. They would drop out of school as early as possible to earn money with manual labor in the field or factory. The origin of this thinking came from poor families.

The interviewee Rui talks a lot about her own thoughts on her learning process and feeling about the importance of learning for her work and daily life. Based on her own working experiences, she feels "regret" of not learning well in schools:

(2) Rui: They were very, very regretted that they did not, learn well when they were at school, or else they could get a much better job after graduation. However, there is no use to feel regretting about the, the, en, the early days.

(2) The choice of major depends on the need for a job ultimately, not on the hobbies or interests. So the learning in school was very practical. That is also the reason why not so many students choose the literature subjects, which could not offer a good job after graduation.

(3) Rui: The ones who could learn better than others, could have a better or a higher starting point… learning experiences…not too much, just useful for the starting point and the status when I came to the employment market.

(3) The effect of learning in her eyes was to help with working experience and work promotion. That means she is also very utilitarian about learning. The main purpose of learning could be seen as an instrument for working and earning money after graduation.

The interviewees Gong and Jian hold the opposite opinions on lifelong learning.

Although they both start with the learning functions and contributions for the society and individual, they have developed different thoughts on the learning plan and aspirations in the future, as follows:

(4) Gong: Lifelong learning is a new concept in the field of education researching… For me, I will certainly learn during my whole life! So I just see lifelong learning as a maxim for myself. (Laugh) And of course I will teach my grandson to have a good habit to learn forever just from his childhood

(4) His concept of lifelong learning is not very theoretical, so it means that he does not have much professional knowledge about it. From all of his learning experience, it is not surprising to hear his opinion of lifelong learning. His special circumstances and the family background have made him a learner forever. He will also educate his offspring to learn for their whole life, and this will be a good trend.

(5) Jian: We pursue for money, for social status and other material things in our daily life…I have just read an article several days ago, which said that the generation of our period has lost self…

(5) He had confessed the aim of his life as "money, social status, and other material things," but also he described his generation as "lost self," which shows that he was clear about their situation and the effects of pursuing such material things in their life. The problem was that he could not give up these material things such as money or social status. The word "generation" shows that he knew his thinking was not unique, but also possessed by the others around him of the same age and condition. We should take these social effects and circumstances into consideration when we talked about the learning attitude of this generation.

6.1.4 Individual factors.
Biography and background of the core characteristics for individual factors: Xin.
The interviewee, Xin, was born in Xinyang city in 1972. In 1978, she went to elementary school and in 1984 she entered junior middle school. Her performance in school was not very excellent as her scores in math and other scientific subjects were always quite low in her class. However, her liberal art subjects, especially her Chinese, were quite good among her classmates. During her senior school years from 1987 to 1990, she began writing articles and submitted them for publication. She was succeeded with getting her articles published when she was just 18 years old, and it seemed too early for a youth to obtain such achievements. In 1990, her mother died and she lived with her father only.

From her childhood, the financial situation of her family was not very good. Her family was worse-off than the families of her classmates because her parents were both ordinary workers. The income from the factory fell year by year, so many workers were not paid well, although they worked very hard. Her father even got laid-off from his factory in 1998. In 1990, she took part in the college entrance examination, but did not performance well and her scores were not enough for entering a university. Therefore, from 1991 to 1995, she enrolled in a college to study international trade. During her university years, she also did so-so in her major, and seldom took part in school activities with her friends or classmates. In 1995, she graduated from the college, and looked for a job. She met a lot of difficulties with job hunting, so she did not find a job during the first year after her graduation. From the second year, she began working, but changed her jobs frequently. Between1996 to 2002, she changed her jobs for 6 times and still did not find a favorite position. In 2002, she began to work as an office manager in a foreign trade and economic cooperation company in Zhengzhou. Finally, she did not want to leave this job. This job required her to travel to different places and countries in the world, which was her pleasure since travel was of interest to her. During her spare time, she liked watching TV and reading novels, but did not participate in any tutorial class or schools. She was not married up until the time of the interview, but always has parties with her friends and colleagues after work. From the year 1996, she began living alone in Zhengzhou city, and her father is still living in his hometown in Xinyang city.

The core paragraphs and analysis of Xin's narration:
(1) I felt very surprised and moved. And from then, I had a dream, that I would try my best to improve the living standard of my family…
The aim of my life at that time was to be a rich woman, maybe the richest in the world… And buy all the best things for my parents…

(1) From a young age, she would had the dream to "improve the living standard of my family" which meant that she had been influenced by her family condition and social factors a lot. "Try my best" showed her determination, so all of her activities, including her learning and other social behaviors, should also be influenced and affected by her dream at this time. The words "surprised and moved" showed that she was an emotional person.

Some Chinese children have this same dream to earn as much money as possible to repay the help of their parents. Therefore, this idea often influences learning behavior.

The word "rich" has been mentioned many times in her narration about this period, which showed her eagerness for more money and the improvement of her family condition. The aim of being the "richest in the world" was just a

child's dream, but it reflected her wish of being rich in her childhood. "All the best things for my parents" showed that she wanted to show her filial piety to her parents by offering them the material things which her family lacked. Thus, in this period, the material things were her main aim and goal of her life.

(2) The only thing I could remember that period, eh, that was my Chinese scores. I was really very proud of those scores and articles I had written and published… I was willing to be a literary youth, so I applied for the literature major in the university.
In the university, I really had nothing to do, the life was very boring, and I usually play truant to stay in the library to read books which I liked…

(2) She had a talent for the subjects of Chinese and literature, and she was proud of her scores and her publications. So she would have more ideas and hopes on these subjects, and the major she chose may relate to this subject. That is the direct result of her enjoyment in these school years.

When she could not have her ideal major, then she lost her enthusiasm for learning, so she did not pass her college years in a meaningful way. However, she was lucky to have the habit of reading in the library to develop her interests.

(3) From this job, I had travel to several foreign countries, maybe 7 or 8… I felt I was very busy but happy with my work. My friends always admire my job now, which makes me very happy and satisfied…

(3) She described her work as "busy but happy," "happy and satisfied," and that she is admired by her friends. Therefore, she enjoys her job very much. The reason for her interest in this job was the ability to "travel to several foreign countries," which means that she likes traveling very much. Also, she reflection about the reaction of her friends to her job, which shows that she cared a lot about their opinions. She must also be influenced a lot by her friends and social factors.

Although this is not her ideal job, but has had the chance to travel to different countries all over the world. Through these travels, she has learned a lot, so she does not feel the job is boring or bad. This means that each job has its advantages and disadvantages, and there is always something useful to learn from one's job.

(4) I did not like study at all, but I just liked…I got the highest mark of Chinese in my class… they were really published. So that was the most satisfied moment…
I am fond of reading novels and articles…my mother liked TV play very much,

so I usually watched TV with her and from my childhood…I am familiar with most of the new movies and TV programs…

(4) From this narration, it is clear that she loves reading and writing articles. Therefore, the learning of these subjects would be much more effective, because she is not bored. The most encouraging thing for her was that her article was published, and from this we also could find that she has a talent for writing articles.

Her mother has influenced her by introducing the hobby of watching TV. From this behavior, we see that she enjoys staying at home and does not like to pursue outdoor activities.

(5) As I feel that my life is good enough for me to stay still, and I do not want to do any changes. (To learn anymore)… My boss has not asked us to improve the knowledge or to learn further…
I do not have the worries about my work, or the hopes to have further studies. That is not necessary for me…

(5) As a Chinese woman, she has not much hope for promotion in her company. Therefore, she does not need to learn much because her work requirements are not changing over time. Learning has been regarded as useless in this period. Her environment is pushing her to learn in the daily life.

She mentioned here that she does "not hope to have further studies" because she has "not worries about her work". Therefore, in her opinion, the main reason for learning or further studies is to find or maintain a position at work. The phrase she used to describe her studies is "not necessary," which means that she did not want to have any unnecessary work in her daily life. The standard for a "necessity" was determined by her work and financial issues.

When the job is stable, the workers will not be concerned about their jobs. The result is that the learning behaviors have been disregarded by them as they feel that learning is useless. When they hope to learn because they feel their job is suddenly unstable, and then it is too late for them to have learning habits.

Summary:
The interviewee, Xin, begins her narrations with the introduction of her family background, which "was not very good," and she felt a sense of "shame." Thus we can deduce that she cares a lot about the material conditions and living standard in her family. Based on her own thoughts on her family background, she made the decision to "improve the living standard" of the family and "to be a rich woman," so the earliest dream in her life was to pursue material things to gain a better life for her parents. Therefore, the external factors, such as the

material conditions and financial problems in her family, have influenced her views and thoughts a lot during her early years.

According to the second part of the narration, we can find that she mentions a lot about her own character and personality during her school and university years. As she was very introverted during her school years, she formed the habit of reading and writing articles and dairies in her spare time. From this work, she could find happiness and fulfillment, which was not the case for her school work and learning content in class. Therefore, her individual characteristics have played an important role in the learning process. There was also a change in her personality to become "outgoing and optimistic," which has affected her success, performance, and achievements in her own learning behaviors.

Then, she described her feelings of worry and fear based on the current social and living situation, such as worries about job hunting, the financial situation of her own family, as well as the pressures to get married from her family members. From these aspects, we can find that she has many pressures in her daily life, and these will force her to rethink and consider her own way of life. Some of these pressures will motivate her learning activities. Although these fears and worries root in the social and external factors, the inner thinking, feelings, and views are somewhat unique for each person. Therefore, it is necessary to do research on the inner thoughts and feelings about the external factors to see how they affect individual learning behavior.

One of her hobbies is watching TV with her mother, but she expressed "regret for the long time of watching TV only" and "forget to do the important things." We can say that she lacked self-control in her habits. These hobbies will influence her own learning motivation and activities a lot in her life because they consumer her spare time. Some good hobbies, like reading and writing, will promote her learning activities, but some of them could block the learning process or possibilities. The formation of these time-consuming hobbies should be give attention, which in this case was due to the influence of her mother.

In the end of the narration, the interviewee talks about her thoughts and plans for her future. According to her description about her work nowadays, we can find that she does not worry since she feels her work is steady and her position is firm. In other words, she does not have any pressures in her life or work at the moment. Therefore, she does not need to worry about self-improvement, such as learning in her spare time, but just thinks about "watching movies" or "travel around the world." She does not seem to have a clear plan or scheme for her future.

Core categories:

(1) The individual's views, feelings, and opinions about learning based on the family and social background from childhood.

The period of childhood can influence the view and plan of an individual for the whole life. From the early years, children always have a specific understanding or feelings about their circumstances, such as the family financial condition, the social circumstance, their parents' abilities to deal with problems, the gap of wealth between classmates and themselves, and their popularity in the society. Although these views and feeling are based on outer factors, such as family, society, or school, they spur inner thoughts by the individuals. The most critical issue during the childhood of all the interviewees is the family financial condition and problems. Many interviewees lead a poor or normal life in their childhood, so they look forward to "earning more money" to improve their living standard. Therefore, there are a lot of considerations about the material conditions and problems from the early years of these interviewees. All these thoughts and views will influence the learning attitude, aim, method, and process.

(2) The individual's innate character and personality, which is subject to change.

The individual's innate character and personality play an important role in the learning and living style and achievements. For example, the learning aim and style of an outgoing person and an introvert person would be much different, and their learning achievements could also be totally different. It is necessary to research the reason and formation process of such characteristics, which could be influenced by the daily life or material conditions. It is also important to analyze the development of character and personalities with the evaluation of outer conditions and factors. The change in character and personality will affect the daily life and work, as well as the learning mood and motivation, which will in turn affect the view on lifelong learning.

(3) The feeling of worry and fear based on the current living situation.

From the living pressures and conditions, interviewees in this research have more or less worry and fear about their own living status and their financial situation. These fears and worries will exert impacts on their learning aim and purpose in the future and during their working period. Some people have developed the idea of only learning for promotion at work and earning more money. This thinking relates back to their financial fears and worries about their future. These feelings of insecurity may motivate ordinary people to enhance their capabilities and expand their knowledge by learning. However, there is also the outcome that people could not dare to spend time learning because of their immediate pressures and burdens from the family and society. In other words, when there are too many pressures which the individuals cannot bear, then they lose their motivation and interest in learning. Therefore,

we must understand if the interviewees are experiencing acceptable pressures during their daily life.

(4) The individual's hobbies and their formation process.
The individual's hobbies can influence the daily habit and life style. With a virtuous hobby, an individual can develop a good habit which is in accordance with the social norms and improves the living standard. For example, the interviewee Xin has developed a hobby of reading and writing to divert herself from loneliness and depression. The good habits or hobbies will directly or indirectly promote the learning behaviors, motivations, activities, and enthusiasm. It is also necessary to explore the reasons for the formation of such hobbies from the outer factors. Therefore, we can understand the circumstances which could motivate a good hobby for individuals and the hobby can result in learning in the daily life.

(5) The thoughts and plan for learning in the future.
In the end of each narration, there is always a part talking about one's feeling and thoughts about the future, such as plans, perspective on work, family status, and desire to continue learning. These views and opinions change according to the surrounding conditions. In other words, the thoughts and plan for learning will not be all consistent throughout one's life or between individuals. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the reasons for certain views and summarize the main factors which influence the future plans.

The supporting narrative contents for "The individual's views, feelings, and opinions about learning based on the family and social background from childhood:"
The interviewees Bo, Chang, and Shi, who have a great deal of social and family experiences because of their old age, have more feeling and views on learning aims, methods, conditions, and importance:

(1) Bo: When a man had not knowledge, that was very terrible…he could not move any step in the society…When a man had no culture, then that was very terrible…

(1) He knows the importance of learning from the stand point of usefulness in the society. His narration is different with other interviewees because most others started with their own life or learning experiences, while he began with a kind of summary or warning of lessons learned in his life.

He had really deep impression about the effect of learning or culture, because he mentioned it a second time in his narration. He did not give many specific details or examples, so this also can be seen as a general summary of his life experiences.

(2) Bo: I did learn hard. But I had not any aim, just learnt as a normal thing…no extra learning… the scores were not very good, as the middle in the class…

(2) From this we can see that he did not learn very much during his childhood, and he did not have good scores. However, he did try hard, which contrasted with his low success. He also stressed his learning "had not any aim," so he wanted to express that learning was not very important in his early years.

(3) Chang: my parents, eh, they could not help me at all with my study, but they could just try their best to earn much more money, for the family…when I grew up, then, I would try my own best to earn much more money and, then to give them a better life during their old age.

(3) This episode is about his family's influence on him. The words "try their best" shows he could feel his parents' effort for his future. This resulted in his aim to "give them a better life during their old age" to return their kindness. This is a common dream for many Chinese children: to repay their parents for all their help in childhood. This is also a driving force for most Chinese people to learn and work in society.

As the Chinese parents from older times were not very literate and knowledgeable, most of them could not help their children with their studies. The only thing they could do was to give the child the best living standard possible.

(4) Yue: I realized that I should learn and work hard by myself to get more and be successful in the world…got better scores in my class than other classmates.

(4) The motivation of his learning at that time was to study hard and achieve better scores than his classmates. He clearly compared himself with his friends and classmates. He may have not known main reason for his personal learning behavior.

(5) Shi: I just worked harder and recited the content of the examination from morning till evening… I felt very disappointed that the teachers and professors for the masters did not have much time for us, and they just told us something to read or learn, and just gave us 2 lessons of them each every week, and that was all…I realized that as a master, I should learn by myself.

(5) Now he could focus on learning as he had a stable belief and aim for his learning. The teaching system in this period for graduate students was not to teach them much in the class, but to ask them to learn more after class. He

learned how to do research by himself gradually in this process.

The supporting narrative contents for "The individual's innate character and personality, which is subject to change:"

Chang and Shi have expressed their own characters and personalities in the narration clearly. Also, from the segments of narration, we can see change in their characters and personalities, which have been influenced a lot by the social and school factors.

(1) Chang: I had to follow the orders and instructions from the society and the government…I could just follow the society in my whole life,…the greater influence on me…the regulation published and executed by the government….involuntarily

(1) The interviewee used "had to" and "involuntarily" to express that he was forced to follow and obey the orders and plans of the government. This can be seen as an absolute external influence on his learning and living behavior.

During the learning and working period, the government always plays an important role in the individual's life, such as the regulation and policies that can determine a person's fate. Therefore, learning has lost its active power to the regulations of the government.

(2) Shi: This reading experience has also induced my desire to write articles… I had not much experience about the real life; I had stopped writing after several passages…. I tried to write an article on dissatisfaction about the Hong Kong colonial life…to my surprise, it was published. So from then, eh, I began to write more articles for the newspapers and magazines,

(2) His reading experiences promoted his writing and other hobbies that are a form of lifelong learning. His writing requires inspiration from real life experiences. Therefore, he should learn more from daily life, rather than just from books. His desire to write has been stimulated by his success in publishing articles. This shows that learning activities need some encouragements from the outside.

(3) Shi: I regarded my experience as a practice, which, eh, I thought, should be considered an end of my "translator" dream… I learnt by myself in the college at daytime, and attended classes in the school at night

(3) When he found that he could not get excellent works as a translator, he gave up immediately on this dream. This shows a certain understanding of himself. He had always hoped to learn more and more, so enjoyment of learning motivated him to learn from day until night.

(4) Yue: In the university, I felt very happy and free to do something I liked...I felt very happy and satisfied with helping them and teaching them...I just thought that this was just an experience of learning...learnt how to help others and how to teach in a class...learnt how to be more merciful to the poor...had really grown up

(4) He found meaningful work during the university period, which was the foundation for his learning. From his experiences as a volunteer in the organization, he had learned communication skills. This is a kind of spontaneous lifelong learning that he was happy and willing to perform.

The supporting narrative contents for "The thoughts and plan for learning in the future:"
The four interviewees belonging to this category all expressed their feeling of worry and fear about their living standard, working positions, salaries, and opportunities of promotion. All these factors are based on the current social and living situation. This shows that there was a necessity for them to learn under such social circumstance.

(1) Yue: I was not very clever, or maybe I was not interested in the subjects I was learning really, so I could not get the top in each exam, then I really felt very depressed and disappointed, so I just learnt smoking with my friends at one time.

(1) When the result of learning was not ideal, psychological problems appeared as he did not know how to deal with the problems he had faced. The main reason for his depression was his performance in learning, which he had no methods for dealing with. His parents and teachers urged him to learn better and get good scores. Therefore, his smoking behavior was not surprising as his scores at school were the only way people evaluated him.

(2) Yue: I felt very excited after smoking and I could start with my learning very quickly and efficiently. So I just had this habit until now...I sometimes thought that, if I was not really depressed at that time, I would not have this bad habit.

(2) The purpose of his smoking was also partly for his learning efficiency. The parents and teachers should not only care about the scores of the students at school, they should also make it possible for the students to develop their hobbies and interests. When the students did not like learning or rebelled in their childhood, the attitude toward lifelong learning would be negative later.

(3) Chang: I could not have the chance to be promoted in my company...I was just the assistant engineer until recently

(3) The word "just" is used here to express his disappointment and dissatisfaction with his job. However, he could not change the situation because of his out-of-date professional knowledge. If he could not improve his skills through learning, then the company would not pay much attention to him.

(4) Shi: I have to learn more and more knowledge when it was needed for my job… I realized that the knowledge is just on the paper and is not useful in the practice. I have to realize my wish in the reality and to do something tangibly. So that is the real thing for the students.

(4) He used "have to" to describe his learning motivation which showed that he did not want to learn from his own heart, but had no choice. Learning was "needed for his job," so the motivation came from an eternal factor. His understanding of knowledge was just "on the paper and not useful in the practice," which meant that his ultimate aim of learning was for practical purposes. He has a pragmatic attitude towards learning.

The motivation for his learning behavior after graduation was all about his work and pursuing material things. He did not think that the knowledge taught at school could be useful in reality. He became as a pragmatist after so many years of learning and working in society.

The supporting narrative contents for "The individual's hobbies and their formation process:"
From the narration of Chang and Shi, we can find that the hobbies during their free time were reading books or learning something of interest. They do not mention that their hobbies were stopped by social and financial pressure, thus it can be deduced that the formation and development of hobbies have been self-motivated by a desire to learn.

(1) Chang: Work in the company, I had, really, then, I got no time for the dream…how could I find any time for the hobby? Then, I just lost this hobby

(1) The interviewee has used a question sentence here to show his confused feeling about his hobby. He emphasized his tone with the word "really" to try to be convincing and show that his feelings were strong and true. He uses the word "lost" to express his disappointment and depression when he had to give up his hobby.

There was no free time for him to develop his own hobby because of work, although he still had a dream of realizing his hobby or developing his talent. Most Chinese workers do not have time for learning once they start work because free time is limited.

(2) Shi: We did not choose the books which were good for us or not, but we just read whatever books we had, (smile) so the reading at that time was just careless, and the most disadvantage was we had not any instruction on the content and methods of our reading.

(2) He was really fond of reading, which was the only pleasure for him at that time. From his reading, he could learn much more than the others, who did not pay attention to reading and learning in that environment.

(3) Shi: There was no one hoping to stay in the college to have the boring lifestyle…I had better participate in the higher school examinations… During my university life, I had spent most of my time on the self study in the library. I felt that the society was such a great place for the youth to develop their capability

(3) He always felt bored about the normal lifestyle in college. Therefore, his character determined his learning experiences, which were much more free and self-directed. He had spent much of his life in schools and colleges, so he had little experience in real society. He gradually realized that the learning from the society was also very important for him.

(4) Shi: I listened to the classes taught by famous professors day and night, and I was busy with the ordinary things of the magazine… The university should carry out the revolution activities under the instruction of the government, I had thought it over for a long time, and, at last, eh, I decided to continue my self-study again…No one taught me, and then I taught myself.

(4) His college life was very rich in learning experience at that period. The schools could not provide normal education under the extreme political environment, so during this period, he self-directed his learning so that he did not waste time.

The supporting narrative contents for "The thoughts and plan for learning in the future:"

The interviewee Bo talked a lot about his aim and hope for learning in the future. His learning motivation is based on regret about not learning much during university, and he wants to make up for that. The other interviewees shared in this category do not mention much about their thoughts or plan for learning in the future, so there are not so many Chinese people who have clear plans or expectations about learning in their future.

(1) Bo: Just take use of each minute to read and just remember the content of the books. There is much knowledge in the books and it is impossible that

everything is to be taught by teachers… learn the advantages of others and offset the disadvantages of ourselves. Learn the good experience from others.

(1) The form of lifelong learning he could think about is the school learning. He also considers reading to be very important and necessary for the self-directed lifelong learning. He also mentions wisely using his time so he can spend it on learning more knowledge. This is an obvious contrast with past years, as he did not use his precious youth efficiently.

He paid much attention on the social knowledge learning, which means that while working in society for years, he has realized the importance of social knowledge. He has also noticed that for other people, learning can help them overcome their disadvantages.

(2) Chang: If I could have another chance, to learn something when I was young, then, I tell you the truth, I would learn heart and soul with my studying!... I really feel that learning is so important

(2) He has said with special emphasis (i.e. "heart and soul") that if he was given "another chance," he would be more determined in his learning. Now he could "feel that learning is so important," therefore he regretted his wasted time in the past. He used the phrase "I tell you the truth," to express his true thinking that he really wanted to have another chance to learn. After so many years working and living in the society, he could finally see the necessity of learning.

He could find the importance of learning once he had a job in society and new knowledge was urgently needed by the job. However, sometimes it is too late to pursue education, so children should know the importance of learning when they were young.

(3) Chang: The whole life is accompanied with it, and, the living standard, you could only change it by your study, and you scores, then, you could get a good job after your graduation.

(3) The phrase "whole life" expressed awareness of the lifelong learning concept. However, the main aim of learning and studying was still for "changing of living standard." Education is always a utility tool in his life. The ideal living conditions come from "learning," "scores," and then "a good job after graduation." Each step of learning has its own aim and meaning, which are all related to the practical use in society. Here he did not mention any time knowledge was useful in the workplace, just that "scores" and "degrees" were important results of learning to help one get further in life.

6.2 The influential factors on learning activities according to German interviewees.

According to the narration contents collected in Germany during this research, most German interviewees have experienced a complete learning process from their childhood to adulthood, including family education in their early years, then attending to various levels of schools, before finally obtaining a job or participating in social activities in society. Alongside this process, there are always individual thoughts or reflections about the individual life path concerning personal development and pressures. Once again, there are mainly four factors affecting learning motivation, style, and aim for each individual, which include family, school, social and individual factors. For the different interviewees, these factors vary in their extent of influence. This section will discuss the impacts of these factors on the interviewees in detail.

With systematic analysis of the narrations content, both general and specific features of each factor can be described:

(1) Family factors: The family influences are generally small for learners during the whole education process, as parents tend to respect the independence and autonomy of learning by their children. There are no definite suggestions or expectations of the children's learning results or achievements by German parents. However, many interviewees respected or even adored their parents, especially the father's achievements or career. Therefore, from the learning behaviors and thoughts by the next generation, we can always find a kind of intergenerational inheritance from the parents. The learning levels of the parents are often quite high, as some of parents had obtained university degrees. Therefore the learning process of the parents is an example for the children. There is not only independence for children in their learning idea or thoughts, but also from financial support: many German students choose to support themselves without help from family. In some cases though, the parents do offer sufficient support for their children. Family factors include formal and informal family education, respect for the independence of children, personal examples set by the parents, and educational and social backgrounds of parents and other family members.

(2) School and peers factors: Most narrators did not give detailed accounts of their learning years and process from elementary school until university. Therefore, for many German interviewees, the school development track is not attached great importance in the early years of their life. There are also little narrations showing the importance and authority of teachers during the school years. The task of making friends and getting along with peers and colleagues is one of the important influential factors for their learning process. Good

friends could play an important role in the interviewees learning and even life process. School and peer factors include the influences from teachers, classmates, peers, educational policies, educational departments, the change of educational environment from school to school, educational activities or groups, examinations, and learning content. This factor contains all the influences in schools besides individual inner thoughts and reflections.

(3) Social factors: This refers to the policies and laws made by government, national or regional circumstances, social background, traditions, values, trends, morality, and attitude from members in the society. In this dissertation, the concern for social benefit and career, as well as the social and political problems, are the main influential factors for German learners. Social factors that were less important include educational policies and supervision from the central, provincial, and local government, as well as the general educational level of the whole nation. These factors were stable; therefore the learning process from generation to generation seems quite consistent. There is no obvious gap from graduation to career, as there is a good combination between learning and working in society. The temptations from social factors such as money or social position are not always the important motivations for one's learning; however, the self-promotion and knowledge requirements for jobs do drive the German interviewees to continue their learning after graduation. Some other social factors include requirements of jobs, social benefits, sufficient social and educational resources guaranteeing each individual's right to learn in the modern era, discussions on social issues or problems, as well as the communication with others in the society.

(4) Individual factors: These factors include individual reflections, considerations, attitudes, motivations, activities, and methods as the most important aspects of the German learning process. From the narrations, each interviewee demonstrates his or her own interests and hobbies, as well as their desire for knowledge during their learning process. When interviewees face problems or questions in their learning and living process, their preferable way of dealing with such matters is to seek counsel from professional counseling services, rather than parents or friends. This is also an example of independent learning. The individual factors vary from person to person, with different individual learning methods, forms, and aims.

These four factors will be cited and discussed in detail with interview content and analysis.

6.2.1 Family factors.
Biography and background of the core characteristics for family factors: Mr. Mueller
Mr. Mueller was born in Köln, Germany in 1929. His elementary learning was

carried out during the Second World War, which was a hard time for him and his family. After senior middle school, he attended the college where he studied law. His main learning subjects were the European law system, human rights, and citizens' rights. As the degree lasted quite a long time and his family could not afford his learning fees, he quit college without a degree. Then he worked for a law institution until his recent retirement. Today he is a member of an organization for old people.

His parents were well-educated. His mother could read and write, so she had attended at least elementary school. His father could read and write, and also did some special research. He did these tasks alone, and even passed the entrance examination for college. Therefore, the interviewee's learning has been somewhat inherited from his father's learning process. Not only his habits, but also his learning interests are similar to his father's. He still reads the newspaper and books daily.

The core paragraphs and analysis of Mueller's narration:
(1) So, eh, from my childhood, I was taught to make my own decisions, and, eh, choices by my own thoughts and, eh, ideas, although some of which were not quite correct, or proper, I still felt, eh, for me, that was the best and excellent choice I had made, and I would never feel regret about the decisions which I had made.
So, eh, this was the early family education for me. And, eh, when I grew older, my parents, eh, they did not interfere with my affairs, but just let me do things with my own willing. So, until now, my family education was just as the same as my parents, and, eh, I thought that was quite efficient and good, eh, for the growth of my children...

(1) In his family education, the interviewee "was taught to make my own decisions" by his "own thoughts" from childhood. According to this narration, we can see that the important education from parents to children in Germany is not only the cultural education, but also the learning habits and ways of dealing with one's own life matters. Taken in this sense, the family education for German children seems to be quite comprehensive.

This segment also describes the attitude from his parents about his decision-making. They wanted him to make decision for himself, so that he would take responsibility for his actions. The interviewee could be "never feel regret about the decisions which he had made," even if they were "not quite correct or proper." This is also a learning process for the interviewee, as he had to learn to make his own decisions by himself without interference from others. Thus, he also learned to endure the results of these decisions. This kind of learning seems informal; however, it embodies the importance of family education on the whole development of a child. It also shows the difference in

family education mode and purpose between Germany and China.

He has concluded his family education narration by saying that his parents "just let me do things with my own willing," which means that his learning was an independent activity and experience. This is not only a family education form, but also a reflection of the national character, which influence the individual education, living habits, learning forms, and each aspect in daily life.

The interviewee demonstrates that this kind of family education is inherited from one generation to the next (i.e. "same as my parents"). The ultimate reason for inheriting his family's learning habits was that the interviewee believed this kind of education was "quite efficient and good, eh, for the growth of my children."

(2) So, I thought eh, my learning habit and, eh, learning interest had also been inherited from my father, who did not tell me how to learn especially, but, eh, during the daily learning and reading, I felt that I was more and more similar with his learning form and style...
And when I am really quite tired with such learning, sometimes, yes, normal ones could of course have such feeling, I would do some walking, eh, and this method was taught by my father, who liked walking after his long time reading...
So, this is also a suggestion from my father to me, and I feel that is quite efficient...

(2) The interviewee himself also knows that his "learning habit and, eh, learning interest" had been influenced, even "inherited," from his father. The essence of learning by children, such as learning interest, motivation, methods, habits, and forms, have been passed down from generation to generation in Germany. The method of teaching the offspring is by parent example.

Not only the great matters in his life, such as "most important things... principles," but also the tiny matters, such as going for a walk after reading, are all learned from his father. However, the interviewee is not dependent one on his father. On the contrary, his learning and living determinations are made by himself. He has merely inherited his father's habits and living principles, without any reliance on his father's help. This kind of family education was evaluated by the interviewee as "quite efficient."

(3) My parents, eh, during my learning years, they did not have much time supervising my learning, or pay attention to my learning performance, then. Eh, that was because, then my family condition was not quite good, and, eh, they had to consider about their jobs, and the matter of earning money for our life, therefore, my learning things seemed to be a subordinate matter in our daily life. And, my learning scores were not too bad; therefore, they thought there

was no necessity to care about my learning...

(3) The main task for his parents in this period was to "earning money for our life" because the material basis for living seemed to be much more important than anything else. Therefore, the learning behavior by the interviewee seemed to be "a subordinate matter." From the narration, we can feel that the interviewee is quite lost in this learning environment, with insufficient care from his parents. This means that the parents' attitude has a vital effect on the children's learning behavior. It also shows that the interviewee cares a lot about his parents' attitude on his education. Although the learning situation and environment was not ideal, the interviewee could still get "not too bad" grades, which implies that he had a talent for learning and enjoyed learning.

(4) I have begun with my learning, my elementary learning during, eh, the Second World War, and that was about 1930s. That was really a hard time, eh, not only for me, but also for my family...
However, eh, I did not graduate, or get the diploma from my college then. Of course the family financial situation and condition was one of the reasons, because, eh, then my family could not afford the money for my learning for so many years, even until my graduation, but just could afford me, eh, the first few years learning.

(4) From the beginning, the interviewee did not make any comments on his learning feelings, but just described his learning environment, especially the family condition. This means that the outer factors and conditions were quite more important to his learning during his early years. He uses "really a hard time" to describe the difficulties, which were "not only for" him, but also "for his family." He relates his own fate and feelings with that of his family. Therefore, under such conditions, his learning behaviors must have been influenced or affected.

When he talks about the reasons that he did "not graduate, or get the diploma," the most important cause is "the family financial situation and condition." He could not get financial support from his family for his "learning for so many years," but just "the first few years." Therefore, the interviewee's learning was ended by the insufficient material conditions in his family. In his narration, he uses the words "of course," meaning he believes that the family situation was undoubtedly the reason for his interruption of learning.

Summary:
The interviewee is on the older side; therefore, from his narration we can see has somewhat of a traditional habit, process, and view on learning. His learning interests, hobbits, habits, and even views are inherited to a certain extent from his father. His father seems to have been a rare intellectual in his

day, and kept good learning and reading habits. The interviewee's interest in history and other literary subjects were inspired by his father's enlightenment, which exerted a kind of subtle and unconscious influence on his children. Taken in this sense, the father did not painstakingly educate his children or interfere with his children's learning and living, but he set a good example for his children about the role of education in one's life.

According to the narration, the interviewee does not feel that his independence, freedom in decision-making, or learning process have been violated by his family. The daily family education for the interviewee did not consist of concrete knowledge or thoughts, but just the behaviors and principles for a citizen in society. The interviewee has criticized the learning behaviors of others nowadays, based on his own thoughts on learning inherited from his family.

Core categories:
(1) The attitude of family members towards children's learning.
From the narrations by many German interviewees, we can find a common feature: they always deny that their learning has been influenced by family factors, such as the parents' orders or opinions. They say that the learning decisions and determinations are more based on their own thoughts and ideas. In other words, there is seldom interference from parents on children's learning behaviors. Parents merely offer suggestions based on their own personal living and learning experiences, without pressure or obvious expectations on the learning achievements of their children. Therefore, the narrators' attitude towards their own learning always seems to be quite self-assured with personal ideas, plans, determinations and opinions.

(2) The imitation of learning habits of parents and family members by children.
A learning motivation for some interviewees' seems to be an adoration for their parents' or family members' learning achievements and success. This example from their families influences the interviewees' learning thoughts and habits from their childhood. Some aspects of their learning are a kind of familial inheritance from generation to generation, with the similar learning interests and concerns. This kind of imitation does not occur intentionally, but more subconsciously, with daily living and learning together. This imitation does not only influence the learning habits and interest, but also the career choices and decisions.

(3) The family circumstances influence material support for children's education.
The direct material guarantee during each learner's education in Germany is the family financial situation, which seems different for different generations. The family circumstances during and after the Second World War were quite

adverse for children's education. During these difficult times, families were more concerned with surviving and eating than education, as demonstrated by the interviewees Mueller and Mann. For the children living in the current era, such as interviewees Brand and Tina, they have not worries about financial support for their education, which can be provided by their parents or society. Therefore, the learning situations and seem quite different among generations. The attitudes from parents on children's learning behaviors and wishes are influenced quite a lot by the family's financial situation. The family situations are also a reflection of social background and circumstance.

(4) Family education background and parents' educational level.

The family education contents and forms were always impressive for each interviewee, as they could remember their family education during their early years quite clearly and in detail. Proper family education could form better learning habits and positive attitudes towards learning in the future, as is demonstrated by interviewees Tina, Brand, and Mueller. The ones who did not get enough proper family education, such as Mann, would be affected by such influences during their whole learning process and their learning path seemed to be more difficult.

The supporting narrative contents for "The attitude of family members towards children's learning:"

Tina's narration is focusing on her free and unlimited learning choices and decisions, which have been formed and trained from her childhood:

(1) Tina: But they (parents) did not intervene with my learning process or blame me. They just supported me to continue with my learning.

(1) This narration describes that the attitude of her parents on her failure or errors in her learning and living activities. There was no family violence in her family and the family education was always gentle and peaceful. The main education methods by her parents were to "not intervene" and "supported me," which means that she could do things she wanted or wished with support from her parents. This is segment of her narration suggests that she was free with her own learning choices in her life.

Brand's parents, especially his father, did not interfere with his interests or career choice, but just gave him suggestions from personal experience:

(2) Brand: And, I had discussed with my father about my profession, and, my father thought, if I could make a decision, then he would respect and agree with it, but, eh, he also told me that, eh, to be a politician, that was not easy for a man, I would have many difficulties in the learning road and being a successful politician.

(2) We can see that the interviewee wanted to decide his major and career with his father, who did not give him a direct answer, just advice and warning. The phrase "would respect and agree with" shows that his father did not want to interfere much with the decision of his son. He wanted his son to make this important decision in life on him own. From the advice, the father shared experiences from his own career and wanted to help his son make an educated choice.

(3) Brand: Because I could just hold on my own opinions and declare it to anyone else, and I could debate with others for my opinions, and that is very interesting itself. I like debating and discussion.

(3) Brand's hobby and specialty was debating, which meant that he liked to express himself in front of others. He was aware of his own character, so wanted to develop it and choose a career as a politician. He said he could "hold on my own opinion," which shows that he could be a stickler and made decisions by himself. We can see that he made the decision on his career and major by himself. His father influenced this process by encouraging him to make the decision by himself.

As the family situation was quite poor for her learning, Mann's learning opportunities had been interfered with and limited a lot by her parents, or rather by her family financial situation. However, she also had her own opinions with her learning and career choices, as her parents did not interfere with those too much:

(4) Mann: Then, when I could have 1 and a half year in the school, I would graduate from the senior middle school. I thought, "Oh, I hope to pass the examination". However, then, nowadays, when a student could not afford such fees or expenditures, the official organization would give help...Then, I could of course continue my learning in the senior middle school.

(4) From the narration, we can find that the interviewee was willing to learn further (i.e. "Oh, I hope to pass the examination") which means she had interest in her learning content. However, the financial problems in her family were an obstacle for her learning wish. The interviewee did not want to give up her chance to learn, even under such circumstance. This shows that she was firm in her desire and right to learn.

Finally, the social factors played a part to improve the family situation, and therefore, the interviewee could "continue my learning in the senior middle school." The interviewee's learning process was always accompanied by her family financial situation, which changed with the era and the social policies.

Her narration was mainly talking about her family situation and the parents' attitude toward her learning. Therefore we can see that family factors were always central in her learning process.

The supporting narrative contents for "The imitation of learning habits of parents and family members by children:"

From Brand's narration, we can see he adores his father quite a lot. Therefore, his career choice is as the same as his father's:

(1) Brand: And, then, I came into the University, and, I chose the major as politics, actually speaking, I, eh, I wanted to be a politician when I finished my university learning, so I, eh, I had this dream from my childhood, as my father was a politician for about, eh, 20 years, and, from my childhood I had always found that he, eh, then, he was very busy with the political things and matters, so, I really felt that my father was very cool and, great, so I admired him then very much…

(1) He talked a lot about his major choice, which seemed very important in university and even in his life. The words "actually speaking" show that he began with his true story here. He had the "dream" of being a "politician from my childhood." This was notably different from many Chinese interviewees, who did not talk much about their dreams from childhood. The dream of being a politician had been influenced by his father's career. There was a kind of worship or respect for his father, because he regarded his father as "cool and great." He yearned for his father's working situation and status. From this aspect, we can see that the interviewee had been influenced and affected by his father very much.

Tina's learning is influenced by the suggestions and education of her uncle, for whom she has great respect:

(2) Tina: My school life has been influenced by the social circumstance, my parents, my uncle…I have 2 uncles, one of which have accepted much more education than my father, and, he was more aware of the importance of learning, family, relationship between people and so on than my parents.

(2) When she talked about her "school life" in this segment, she mentioned her "2 uncles," which shows that she has also been influenced by other family members in her learning process. She used a comparison here to show that she cared a lot about the educational background of the people around her (i.e. "uncle…accepted much more education than my father"). From this aspect, we can see that she felt her own learning process had been influenced by the educational background of family members. She believed the reason her uncle received more education was that he was "more aware of the importance of

learning…than my parents." We can see that she put a lot of emphasis on the educational and cultural level of a person, and she admired the ones who had more knowledge than the other people around her. The influence from her uncle was to inspire interest in learning, emphasize the importance of learning, and stimulate a lifelong learning motivation.

From this segment, there was no source of pressures on her learning determinations or decisions by her family. The influences from her family members, either her parents or her uncle, focus on the spiritual aspects and the interviewee's habits and character by describing their life experience and thoughts.

Mann's husband has influenced and changed her learning plan and path quite a lot and instructed her to study more efficiently. From her narration, we can feel that she was pleased to follow her husband's suggestions and instructions:

(3) Mann: He (husband) said also, I should not spend the whole 5 years to learn the professional knowledge just in school, but I had to know much about the general knowledge which would be needed in the society, eh, later after my graduation, and, eh, my learning in the university was not only for the scores, or being approved by professors, I had to improve my own capability, and be much cleverer.

(3) Her husband considered more about the career and life "in the society," which means that her husband thinks more about the future. On the contrary, the interviewee was more inclined to "learn the professional knowledge just in school," which means that she was not so ambitious with her life and learning. Taken in this sense, the opinion by her husband seems quite practical and effective for the interviewee's future. All in all, it seems the interviewee was quite convinced with her husband's opinion. Therefore the family factors in this period, especially from her husband, were the main factor affecting the interviewee's life and learning, such as learning aim, form and future.

The supporting narrative contents for "The family circumstances influence material support for children's education:"
As Mann was born during the Second World War, her learning process was influenced a lot by her family situation, especially the financial situation:

(1) Mann: I was born during the Second World War, and, eh, my father was in the war, my mother was in home...But in 1944, we have heard that my father was lost in the Soviet Union, then, eh, my mother had to take care of us, the two girls in the house.

(1) From the beginning of her narration, she talks about lots of her family situation, which was poor during her childhood. During the Second World War, a lot of German families lost relatives, and this had a great influence on education for children. Mann lost her father at an early age, so her remaining family members were "mother...two girls," so her mother had to support the whole family.

Tina's family situation influenced her views on family relationships, which was even her chosen research topic. She lived and learned independently from her family quite early; therefore, the family's financial situation did not affect her learning as much.

(2) *Tina: My topic of my doctor dissertation is education ascending methods and research, which is doing research on family relationship and biographical research on family sorts in different areas*

(2) The topic of her dissertation relates to "family relationship" and "family sorts in different areas," which shows that she paid a lot of attention to family relationships. This also shows that she wanted to know more about family relationships in her research, so her family must have exerted influence on her learning experiences.

(3) *Tina: And, of course, this subject all relates to family research, and I am also interested in family relationship researching.*

(3) Both of her narrations here shows that she has been influenced by family a lot, and this kind of affection has been reflected in her own research interest.

The career choices of family members have influenced the career choice by the interviewee Brand:

(4) *Brand: I have never thought of being a teacher as them, because there were too many teachers in my family, right? (Laugh) And, I felt that being a teacher, that was, eh, a little boring for me, and I could not feel any challenge for teaching day after day, the same content, the same place, the same students, and, that was not my dream at all. But I really feel it would be much more excited to stand on the platform, and face the citizens, and debate with others for my dreams and ideals. That would be much better for my life.*

(4) He made a joke about being a teacher, from which we can feel that he did not think it was a proper career for him. There was no need in his family for a teacher any more. This was also a criterion for his major choosing. He could not bear the "boring days" of being a teacher, because he felt "not any challenge for teaching day after day." In the above segment, he mentioned

being a politician, which meant he could "argue" or "debate" with others, and "convince" others. He obviously prefers an exciting and challenging lifestyle. He has awareness of his own interests and talents, which he feels should be aligned with his career.

The supporting narrative contents for "Family education background and parents' educational level:"

Tina emphasized her parents' educational background and reading habits, which she inherited:

(1) Tina: My family, eh, for me, I have got a typical educational promotion during my whole learning process, as my parents have graduated from the elementary school, which is equal to the, eh, secondary school nowadays…eh, of course they have got the diplomas.

(1) She introduced her family background not from the financial or social aspect, but from the educational background of her parents. Her parents had "graduated from elementary school," and she wanted to show that she had a positive influence from her parents. This also shows that she cared about the educational background of her family, which could help her own learning process.

She also explained the educational level of her parents as "secondary school nowadays" and "of course…diplomas" to show that she admired and respected her parents' educational background and achievements quite much. She knew her parents' educational backgrounds clearly and well. Therefore, in her opinion, the educational background could influence and affect the children quite a lot.

There is a comparison of family education in Mann's narration, as she did not get appropriate family education from her parents, who had a low level of education; however, her children have been influenced positively by her own example, as she has received higher education:

(2) Mann: Then, each time when I wanted to talk with him, my stepfather about this matter, I would feel feared, and, eh, worried. I waited, and waited, and always observed his expression. But I dared not always to talk about this topic with him. During that period, I was learning quite hard, and, eh, just hoping to have a better and better score in my examinations, then, I could get a good chance to be enrolled in the senior middle school.

(2) The main obstacle of her dream of learning in the "senior middle school" was the opinion of her "stepfather." Here she has described her own nervous thoughts about this matter, such as "feel feared...worried...waited, and waited,"

all of which show that she wanted to "talk about this topic with" her stepfather. However, she "dared not" to tell him such a matter because of her poor family situation and status. From the detailed narration and description, we can see that the family influences on her learning were so great that she was determined to ask for her stepfather's opinion. This also illustrates the irreplaceable roll and position of her stepfather in her family. This was a traditional German family situation with the traditional thinking on girls' education. Such thinking affected the interviewee's learning opportunities and situation quite a lot.

As to the interviewee herself, she would like to struggle for her own aim to "be enrolled in the senior middle school" to "learn quite hard." From this narration, we can see that the interviewee was quite firm with her dream of learning in the senior middle school, even though her family situation was so poor and the learning opportunities for her were so few.

Brand's mother's hobby influenced his learning:

(3) Brand: And for me, I like playing piano and tennis in my spare time. Playing piano, that is because my mother likes it very much! And when she plays, I feel very happiness and comfortable, so, when I was still in the elementary school, I had great interest in playing piano, and, I have to know something about the instruments, as a politician, you have to know something popular more or less.

(3) His hobby has been influenced by his mother a lot; however, his hobby of "playing piano" was also based on his own feelings of "happiness and comfortable" when his mother plays. So this was also an inner factor which motivated his learning piano. He also expressed his own interest in playing piano. In addition, there was a pragmatic reason for his learning piano playing (i.e. "as a politician...know something popular more or less"), which shows that he wanted to learn instruments with the aim of being a qualified politician in the future.

6.2.2 School and peer factors.
Biography and background of the core characteristics for school and peer factors: George
Mr. George was born in 1953, in Paderborn, Germany. He grew up in a traditional catholic school, where the courses and regulations were quite strict, but the teacher was kind. In his childhood learning in school, the main learning content was drawing pictures, telling stories, playing games, reading books, and so on. During his learning in elementary and secondary school, the political circumstance exerted great influences on individuals living in the society.. Then, during the university years, he has participated in the political activities, such as the student union and organizations.

He worked as a teacher in 1989. During the working years, he accumulated a lot of teaching experience. After many years of working as a teacher, there was a chance for him to become staff in a foundation, which has a political background. Then, during his working there, he had chances to continue learning and make business trips to Central America for more than 5 years. He also learned in a vocational school more knowledge about teaching. Today, he is still an employee in this German foundation.

The core paragraphs and analysis of George' narration:
(1) From these courses, I have found a fact, that, eh, although most people believe the individuals could learn by himself, and the most important factor of learning is himself, I still believe, the learning is partly, or mostly dependent on the quality of teaching, say, the teachers' capability on teaching, but, eh, not on the quality or fame of a school. When a student, he is quite clever, but when there is not a teacher who could help him and regulate him efficiently, then, the student could not get succeed.

(1) This is his understanding and thinking after taking part in "these courses," which are all about educational matters and teaching skills. He believes that the "the most important factor" is not the individual, but "mostly dependent on the quality of teaching." In other words, he values the role of "teachers' capability on teaching" quite highly. For the explanation of this notion, he makes an obvious comparison to show the general thinking about the factors which have influenced learning greatly. This opinion could be formed and influenced by his learning and experience in his teaching courses, as well as the extreme example that even a smart student "could not get succeed" without a teacher to "regulate him efficiently." From this narration, we can find that he thinks a teacher could influence mostly the efficiency of a student's learning. Although this opinion is quite one-sided, ignoring the function of an individual's effort in the learning process, he has pointed out what he believes is the key factor in the learning process. This also confirms his reason for being a teacher and his motivation to continue learning teaching skills in further educational classes.

However, he denies the role of "quality or fame of a school" in the learning achievements of a student. This implies that he only considers the effects of teachers on students' learning achievements. From this segment, we can find that the role of teachers for each one's learning seems to be universal, which promotes his self-esteem about his career as a teacher.

(2) Therefore, the political major and knowledge should be learnt by each one in the country more or less, not for the, eh, only political thinking, or knowledge about the politics, but also a kind of training of their thinking and, eh, mind. For

the need, eh, of living better in the reality, I think, it is necessary for each one to learn some knowledge or, eh, something about this major...

Eh, about the adult learning and educational system, I think nowadays, these learning seems not quite ideal, or, eh, not quite good in Germany. The university learning, and teaching, eh, of courses, including the practical learning, they are all quite qualified, but, eh, the results of such learning seem to be not quite ideal, and, eh, some graduates could not find a good job, in the society.

(2) After the statement of the importance of "political major and knowledge," he suggests people should learn knowledge and their major as "a kind of training of their thinking...mind." Taken in this sense, his main purpose of learning is not to have a clearer view about the political matters and problems, but to train his own "mind and thinking." From this segment, we can see that he does not care much about the learning of concrete or practical knowledge (such as "political thinking, or knowledge about the politics"), but focuses more on the improvement of his spirituality. When he says "for the need...living better in the reality," he reveals that his learning is also for pragmatic aim and the ultimate learning purpose is for the better living standard.

His criticism on the educational environment in Germany is also about the "learning, and teaching" and "practical learning" which all belong to the normal curriculum in schools. Therefore, his standpoint is always on the schools' environment, and this situation implies that he has been influenced quite a lot by the schools. He uses "not quite ideal" and "not quite good" to describe the "adult learning and educational system" in Germany, which shows his dissatisfaction for the education situation nowadays. The reason for this dissatisfaction is the lower employments rates for graduates ("some graduates could not find a good job"). Therefore, he concludes that "the results of such learning seem to be not quite ideal." We can see that he cares much about the results of learning for each student, and the ideal achievement of a learning activity is to "find a good job" after graduation. Taken in this sense, the ultimate aim and purpose of learning in his opinion is for a "better living in the reality." Therefore, his learning aim is for a better life, for the improvement of his mentality, and for the social benefits.

(3) Therefore, eh, for us, then, the learning was quite interesting, for example, in our classes, we could draw pictures, and, eh, tell stories, and make up stories, play games, read books, analyze the learning contents, and so on; so, I would say, the learning and life during that period, was quite memorable...

(3) This is the description of his learning content in his school. From this segment we can see he could remember clearly the early years of school life, which has made a deep impression and great influence on him. He evaluates

his learning content as "interesting," and the tone his narration shows that he enjoyed the activities very much. The activities are of various kinds, which not only include the reading books and analyzing learning content, which are the main learning forms in Chinese schools, but also a lot of activities which require problem solving and practical capabilities, such as "draw pictures, tell stories, make up stories, play games." From these activities, students could learn how to cooperate with others in finishing a task and also the skill of self-presentation. From this narration we can see that he was satisfied with the learning in school. At the end of this segment, he uses "quite memorable" to assess the "learning and life" his school years, which confirms that he could have been influenced and affected by his school life and style a lot.

(4) During the whole university learning, sometimes I had the chances to do practices and, eh, took part in social activities. So, during those years, I have accumulated certain practical experiences. For example, I have taken part in a course for one year, and worked with many other students in the, eh, psychological major and, eh, practices, and done some public benefit activities. Eh, during those years, yes, I have also taken part in such as geographical practices, eh, many other practices activities. Besides the practical activities and learning, I have also taken part in many other political activities, which were also quite intensive during my learning years.

(4) This segment is talking about his activities in the university. Unlike the narration above, this segment has shown his participation in "practices," which refer to mainly the "social activities," in his university. Taken in this sense, we know that he did not only learn knowledge from textbooks, but also did a lot of practical activities during his university years. He feels that he has "accumulated certain practical experiences," in which he "worked with many other students", "some public benefit activities", "geographical practices" and "other political activities", which all relate to the social matters and communication skills. However, from his narration, we can find that his practical activities are mainly concerning his major or social benefits. He does not mention his motivation for participating in such activities, but from his tone it seems that he is quite satisfied and willing to do such activities with others during his university years. Especially, he has mentioned he had "taken part in many other political activities" which belong to the political education. Until now, he still cared a lot about the political activities and matters around him, and was willing to take part in such kinds of activities during his learning period. This implies that the political activities and matters in university and schools have influenced his life quite a lot and taken up a main position in his life.

Summary:
The interviewee had a special learning environment from his childhood, as the school he attended had a religious and political background. This is also a

feature of many schools during the earlier years in western countries. Such schools have influences on students' thoughts and opinions on the world from their childhood. Therefore, this is also the motivation for his practices relating to political issues. Taken in this sense, the learning experiences during his early years gave him a lot of impressions and thoughts on political and religious matters, which are reflected in his job and practices.

In the narration, he also emphasizes the importance of his teachers on him, as the teaching method in his school was always "activities-oriented." He could learn by playing and doing, and thus he estimates his learning environment was "free and open," meaning he could learn by himself and enjoy the learning environment. This comfortable learning experience was also a kind of motivation for his choice to become a teacher after his graduation.

In the latter part of the narration, he just focuses on the learning and teaching situation nowadays, and discusses the learning problems existing among students. From these sentences, we can see that he just attaches great importance on the role of teachers in the learning process for each student. He believes individuals cannot "get success" if there is no proper teaching and guidance by teachers. From his criticisms of the self-learning scene nowadays, we can see that he is not quite satisfied with such modern learning methods, but rather cherishes the memory of learning with teachers in classrooms. He believes that he has gained a lot from his teachers during his school years. This is a typical learning influence by teachers and school environment.

Core categories:
(1) The role and function of teachers in the learning process.
When many interviewees recall their learning days, they express their grateful feelings for the help from teachers, who are regarded as the decisive factor for individual's learning achievements. Moreover, the jobs and learning habits, as well as views on the world, have been influenced by teachers during their school years. Therefore, their lifelong learning notion has also been influenced by teachers a lot. The teaching methods, attitudes towards students, professional knowledge, counseling of the students, and even the teachers' ethics are all important factors and the criteria for evaluating teacher performance and importance to German learners. However, none of German interviewees talk about pressures or discipline by teachers. In other words, the learning decisions and motivations are always in the hands of learners themselves. The functions and effects of teachers in the learning process are as helpers and instructors without any authority of influencing or affecting each individual's learning wish, purpose, process, or content.

(2) The thoughts and criticisms of the school system and educational philosophy.

As for the interviewees whose careers relate to educational system, they have many thoughts and criticisms of the current German educational system. Their focuses are mostly on the disadvantages and deficiencies of the current educational system and school management, which seem to be inattentive and uncontrolled. The older interviewees are more inclined to compare the current educational system with the system in their day, and come to the conclusion that the current educational system and management are not as good as before. Therefore, the learning performances, habits, and achievements are also not as good as that of the previous generation, especially the lifelong learning notions. This kind of evaluation of the native educational system shows that the Germans are more likely to find out the reasons for problems in their learning process, with a critical spirit. Such criticisms are more focused on the general educational circumstances, without irrational complains. In this way, at the end of each narration, there will always be some suggestions and advice for the improvement of educational system in order to adapt to the development and requirements of individuals.

(3) The atmosphere and circumstances constructed by classmates and friends.
One of the important factors influencing several interviewees' learning process is the environment constructed by friends and classmates in a classroom. This influences individuals' learning habits, thoughts, dependence, expectations, and achievements. There is also an assimilation phenomenon existing in the learning process in a classroom, as learners are gathered to learn together and each one could affect others in a certain way. From the narration contents during this research, we can find that these kinds of influences are quite obvious and severe to several interviewees.

(4) The features of schools and the performances during school years.
The features of schools, such as a religious or political affiliation, will directly influence the learning thoughts and habits from the beginning of school years for individuals, such as the interviewee George. The performance of learners in school years, such as the emphasis on scores or examinations, will affect learning motivation, learning habits, and views towards lifelong learning.

The supporting narrative contents for "The role and function of teachers in the learning process:"
The interviewee Raabe has been influenced a lot by teachers during his whole learning process. Such influences were his motivation for becoming a teacher; therefore, in his mind, the role of teachers and professors in the learning process is of great importance:

(1) Raabe: But, I mean, the idea or, eh, the thoughts passed down to students from teachers, eh, during the teaching process, are much more important than

only passing down, or, eh, teaching knowledge… Therefore, I think the teaching idea is important for the development of each student during the learning period.

(1) He has made a comparison of the importance of "idea... and thoughts" and "knowledge" students could learn from their teachers. His conclusion is that the former is "much more important." From this narration, we can see that the interviewee still focuses on education until now. He believes the learning content from teachers should not only be knowledge, but also the "ideas and thoughts" which influence students' character, hobbies, interests, and even views in the future. Therefore, he feels the learning in schools could construct one's character and thoughts. In this sense, the effects of school education and teachers are tremendous.

As a teacher in schools, Uttmann is very aware of the importance and daily work of teachers for the learning process of students. We can see that she is not only proud of her career, but also attaches great importance to her job:

(2) Uttmann: As to me, I like teaching and, eh, the working in school quite much. I was, eh, now am still a teacher, although I just teach German in the private class now, however, I am very happy to see that students could learn something, or more from me.

(2) Her job has brought her happiness and satisfaction, because she "like teaching... and working in school quite much." Her career goal is "to see that students could learn something" from her. Thus, we can see that her work is based on her own interests and ideals. From several of the interviews among all the interviewees in China and Germany, we can find a major difference in career view: the Germans choose their jobs according to their own interests and hobbies, no matter how insignificant the job, and do the work with happiness and sufficiency, without too much concern for material matters. In contrast, many Chinese people always consider the gains and benefits from their job, and then weigh each job according to the material basis. Such difference reflects a fundamental contrast in values. Therefore, the learning aim and purpose would certainly be different between the people in these two countries.

During her learning process, Mann has been helped a lot by her teacher who not only helped her when she struggled for learning opportunities, but also helped construct her learning aim:

(3) Mann: My teacher had also asked me, what I wanted to do when I grew up. I thought over, and, eh, I said, I wanted to be a teacher in kindergarten, or, work in India, for the poor, and the disabled ones, because that time I was just

reading a book which described the situation in India, and I thought I could do more for the people in that country.

(3) The interviewee's working dream was based on her "reading a book which described the situation in India," from which we can see that the learning experience from the book influenced her opinion quite a lot. The guidance from her teacher was also an important factor influencing her, because the interviewee was asked by her teacher to think about her own future.

From her career goal, we can see that the interviewee had a public spirit which was for "the poor and the disabled ones" and to "do more for the people in that country." We can find that her living and learning environment from childhood was simple and poor, which made her to think about helping others in the same situation. This was also an influence from her living environment on her future career aim. However, her wish to "be a teacher in kindergarten" was similar to many other women in the period, as it was the ideal job for many women in the society. It also means that the interviewee was fond of the jobs in schools and willing to be a worker in the educational field. As she herself did not get a high-quality education in her early life, she was more aware of the importance for others to get a proper education. Therefore, from her narration about her own future and dream job, we can see that the family and social factors have always influenced her mind and life.

The supporting narrative contents for "The thoughts and criticisms of the school system and educational philosophy:"
As a professor teaching in university, the interviewee Penck has many thoughts and criticisms on the disadvantages and defects of the higher educational system:

(1) Penck: And, the other most obvious feature of the learning that period, was when a person wanted to finish his master or doctor degree, then it was not problem for him to learn longer than today. So, there were always quite a lot of interesting people, who wanted to learn for a long time, just for more knowledge and research chances, such as me.

(1) He has made a comparison in this segment to show the difference in length of schooling nowadays and in the earlier period. From his narration, we can find that he agrees and approves of the educational system in the early years, which permitted students who "wanted to finish his master or doctor degree" "to learn longer than today." Therefore, he had the chance to learn 11 years in his university as he wished. He assessed this as the "most obvious feature of the learning," which shows that he values this feature very highly. We can see that he yearns for free learning without any time restriction on the length of schooling. It is obvious that he is not quite satisfied with the schooling system

nowadays, which has reduced and restricted the length of schooling for each student.

At the end of this segment, he also uses himself as an example to show the "interesting people" who want to "learn for a long time." For them, the learning aim is more pure and non-pragmatic. This is also an obvious comparison to the dominant learning aim nowadays, which is to gain money and work after graduation. His attitude shows a strong contrast to the learning motivation of the Chinese interviewees.

Raabe is mainly praising the German educational system and philosophy, which seem to allow learners freedom to learn without restrictions or limitations:

(2) Raabe: I would suggest that, eh, the teachers' further education should be enhanced, therefore, students could get creative thoughts, individual thoughts, and, eh, independent thought, eh, with the training by such teachers, who have been trained in the further education institutions…teachers should learn also how to give a better lecture and class in their daily teaching period, that is also, eh, quite important for them.

(2) In this segment the interviewee still mentions the importance of teachers in the learning activities. He believes that each student's learning efficiency and achievements are largely influenced by the teaching quality and capability. Therefore, he makes the suggestion that "the teachers' further education should be enhanced." From this narration and discussion, we can find that he believes the individual learning has been influenced and even determined much by the teachers' performance and quality in the classroom.

With better teaching quality, teachers could enable each student to have "creative thoughts, individual thoughts, and... independent thought," therefore, the "further education" for teachers is essential in the opinion of the interviewee. The interviewee cares a lot about the further education for each teacher, which means that he believes that better student achievements could be obtained with the help of effective teaching. This is a comment on learning with the "teacher determinism."

The thoughts on the educational system by Uttmann is based on her own teaching experiences in schools; therefore, her comments and criticisms are more on the learning performances and problems faced by students in the daily learning process, which seems to be quite real:

(3) Uttmann: Especially for the foreign people, who come to Germany without quite good professional skills or, eh, knowledge eh, on the reading and

understating this language, and, eh, their children could not learn well this language of course. Then, I find that is not good.

(3) Her comment about the learning situation of "foreign people" is based on their basic learning skills, such as "reading and understating this language" and the family education for their next generation. In her mind, the learning should be constructed on the basis of the fundamental understanding of the language, which she is teaching as a career. The current situation appears to be that the foreign students and workers have the same problems in their learning as the native learners, who could not master the basic knowledge of language during their education. From her narration, we can see that the learning situation of foreign students and workers in Germany is not so optimistic, because of the difficulty of learning fundamental knowledge. Therefore, continuing education and lifelong learning is also quite necessary for this group of people.

The supporting narrative contents for "The atmosphere and circumstances constructed by classmates and friends:"
The interviewee William has had a special family circumstance from his childhood; therefore, his learning process was quite dependent on his friends and colleagues. Sometimes he would like to compare his learning performances with the friends or colleagues around him:

(1) William: My best friend is Peter, and we met each other in a football game in the college, and, eh, he had the same hobbies as me, as we both loved football games and taking photos very much. Therefore, we always got together to play and chat.

(1) His best friend had the "same hobbies" as him, which may be the reason he could get along well with Peter. They met at a "football game" which seemed to be a popular game among boys. From this segment, we can also deduce that many German boys made friends during football games. The basis of his friendship is sharing the "same hobbies," such as "football games" and "taking photos;" therefore, his friends should have some characteristics with him in common.

(2) William: During my working period, eh, there were also some kind and nice colleagues who were quite friendly to me.

(2) In this new "working period" of his life, he described "kind and nice colleagues" who were also his friends. Therefore, throughout life, he cared a lot about his friends and the people around him. He assessed his colleagues as "quite friendly," which means that he was satisfied with his friendships during his working years.

The learning circumstance around Raabe was quite positive during his school years, as he was always praised by his teachers and admired by his classmates for his good marks. Therefore, such circumstance stimulated his learning motivations further:

(3) Raabe: Therefore, they always admired me much just due to my knowledge on history. And, eh, in this occasion, I would feel that it is really worth of learning such a subject in my life, because I could feel pride from learning it…

(3) The attitude from his classmates to his "knowledge on history" was that he was "always admired," which gave the interviewee a positive feeling about his knowledge of history. The interviewee could find meaning and worth in "learning such a subject" under such circumstances. Therefore, his learning motivation is partly based on the outer factors' of admiration and affirmation from others. His learning is partly dependent on the people around him, such as his classmates and his teachers.

The learning circumstance narrated by Uttmann are not relating to her own learning process or experiences, but the situations and scenes she has seen and found among the students she has taught.

(4) Uttmann: As I was working, and, eh, in a vocational school, there were quite a lot of young people learning there, for the professional knowledge for their job, and their work. There, I taught German language, eh, yes, most of my students were from foreign countries.

(4) This is the description of her working place and situation in "a vocational school" with "quite a lot of young people." Therefore, the main place in her life is still a school, so her life has always related to education quite a lot. School life has always influenced her a great deal. She has "taught German language", so as a native speaker, this job would be not too hard for her and her learning during her work would be limited. The students are "most...from foreign countries," which implies that she could have more contact and knowledge about foreign language and customs, which have been introduced by her students.

The learning of such foreign students is for "the professional knowledge for their job and their work," which means the learning motivation in the "vocational school" is job-oriented. Their learning contents were still the basic and fundamental knowledge, such as language. Therefore, we can see that the learning carried out by foreign students and even workers in Germany will be mostly for job preparation.

Brand has been influenced by his classmates during his learning years, as his learning interest and career choices were all affected by such experience:

(5) Brand: And, I have to say, I had never found that I had any gift or talent on politics, but, from then, I had just a little care about my performances in the public occasions and dealing with public affairs. And, I really felt that I was fond of dealing with political affairs and issues, and I always listened to the political programs from TV and radio, and gradually, I could have my own thinking and ideas about the public and political issues, therefore, I always took part in the political associations in schools and university, even now in the foundation. So I had this politician dream from very early. And I really, eh, have the confidence to fulfill it when I finish my doctor degree.

(5) This is the whole process of his interest and education in politics developing. He used "never found that" to show that he was not aware of his talent before his friend told him. However, after hearing his friend's advice, he began to "little care about performances in the public occasions," which showed that he began to focus on politics gradually, and this interest in politics grew stronger and stronger.

During this process, all his action meant he was learning constantly. In the end, he said "have the confidence to fulfill it when I finish my doctor degree," which implies that he did not have confidence with this major or career before he studied politics for many years. Now he will try his best with his dream of being a politician. This dream was to be realized after obtaining his doctor degree, but he did not mention much about his plan of becoming a politician after graduation.

The supporting narrative contents for "The features of schools and the performances during school years:"
As a student who had good performance in his school years, the interviewee Raabe attributed the reason to his teachers:

(1) Raabe: During my learning period, my scores and notes were always very good, because…eh, my teachers were quite good at teaching, they were all responsible for our learning, and the teaching methods were all interesting and vivid, so, eh, I could learn well just in the class, and make clear all the learning knowledge just according to the lectures given by my teachers and professors…

(1) This segment shows that the interviewee has attributed his achievements to the performance of his teachers during his learning period. He gave quite a lot of praise to his teachers, such as that they were "quite good," "responsible

for," and "all interesting and vivid." These descriptions are about the status and character of his teachers. This is an ideal image of teachers depicted by the interviewee.

At the end of this segment the interviewee also stresses that he could "learn well just in the class…according to the lectures given by my teachers and professors," which means the effective learning is because of the teaching. The teaching model in the classroom is wholly accepted and adapted by the interviewee. Therefore, we can say that the interviewee's learning is partly dependent on the effectiveness of the teaching in his class and influenced a lot by the quality of teaching in the class.

The main learning process Uttmann has experienced is the further and vocational learning organized by her schools, which seems to be not quite meaningful or useful to her:

(2) Uttmann: However, eh, I did not think I could get more from such short-term training. For the other jobs, or, eh, careers, the time and learning contents would be quite different, managers, professional workers, such as engineers, who would have more and more training chances to learn, because the knowledge for them is always new. But, eh, for teachers in schools, the knowledge which they need is always the same, without any change for years...

(2) In her mind, she does not consider it useful for her to participate in such "vocational education" such as "short-term training" because the learning contents are not changing for teachers. However, she also makes a comparison of herself with "managers, professional workers, such as engineers" who require always "new knowledge" for their jobs. Taken in this sense, the effects and function of further learning and vocational training vary from career to career. In her opinion, there is no need for those in careers with unchanging knowledge to take part in the professional further training.

6.2.3 Social factors.
Biography and background of the core characteristics for social factors: Roth

The interviewee, Roth, was born in a middle city, Germany in 1967, and is now a worker in the city hospital and doctor student in the medical college of University located in the city. After the graduation examination in his senior middle school, he began with the Information major, which encompasses radio television technology, information data, and office software.

After his graduation from senior middle school, he chose to be a volunteer as a commentator in a Norway museum for years. There, he learned English for a

year and then could give speeches for visitors in English. His main task in the museum was to explain and demonstrate the history and origins of different art. After the volunteer job, he applied for a job in a medical organization, working with professional medical tasks. During this job, he began to feel that he lacked professional medical knowledge; therefore, he had the idea to study again in school. He chose to learn in evening school in the same city, at the suggestion of his family. After graduation, he participated in the examinations for college entrance and passed, allowing him to attend University as a Medicine Science Major. Today, he is still a student of medicine science and doing part-time work as a nursing assistant.

The core paragraphs and analysis of Roth's narration:
(1) The most important thing is, I do not afford the volunteer work for money, and just for my habit, and the public welfare of course, you know, public welfare should be always concerned by the whole public and all the citizens, so, I hope I could do my favor for the public and society…
I chose the topics and subject which I would still study in the university also, but we do not always choose the major based on the job market or the favor of enterprises. Of course, as a German he could make his choice on the major which he would study, eh, oh, based on the job market, and, get a good job after, eh, graduation,

(1) His aim of doing volunteer work "was not for money," but just for his "habit," so he would like to choose the job which could make him comfortable and happy, no matter how he was paid. Therefore, he had a unique working perspective, which was different from many others. He regarded the volunteer job as "pubic welfare" and should be done by "the whole public and all the citizens," so his motivation for doing volunteer work was his social morality, which had been formed from his childhood. From this segment, we can sense that he cared more about his social obligation than his own benefit or profit from his job.

Here he made a comparison to show his reason of choosing his major was not the same as for many others. He did not choose his major according to the "job market or the favor of the enterprises," but rather his learning was a continuing course which was based on his own interest. However, he did not oppose the pragmatic way of choosing a major.

(2) Being volunteers are the most popular in Germany, and we could afford the volunteer job from the time we were quite young, as we were recruited in the army, and I began with the volunteer work very early, as 14 years old, and, so I continued with the volunteer job until now, of course in my country.

(2) He explained the reason why he wanted to be a volunteer in this segment.

The words "most popular in Germany" show that he was influenced by the popular thinking in the society. He mentioned he began with volunteer work at the age of 14, which implies that he had a habit of doing volunteer job from his teenager years. This was also a kind of learning experience for him. However, the last sentence showed that he wanted to stress the place of the volunteer job as "of course in my country," which shows that volunteer work should be limited to one's own country in his opinion.

(3) The evening school, oh, the evening school system was found after the Second World War, and people came home after the war, but they could get very little chance of being taught, so the government helped them with constituting the evening schools, because during the day time, most of the citizens had to go to work and the only chance for them with learning, was only in the evening… And the time for the evening school was, eh, from 6 pm to 10 pm in the evening and, from Monday to Saturday, normal 6 days in a week and all in the evenings…

When you wanted to have the entrance examination for a university, then, you have to prove you are capable with a scientific and logical thinking, so you can get the prove from the evening school, and that is also the reason for my attending the evening school. And, you could learn anything you want to continue in the university.

There was a disadvantage when you had your decision on taking part in the evening school, as you had no much spare time in your weekend, because every evening you had to go to the evening school, and weekend, sleeping. (Laugh)…

(3) This was a segment explaining "evening school" according to his understanding. From this segment, we can feel that he was good and fond of explaining things to others. The details about evening school were clearly explained, even the time and duration of learning in the evening school. This implies that he had personal experience in the evening school. At first, the main purpose of evening school was to make up for the lack of knowledge in the war time, but now, it aimed at continuing education after work. Another reason for participating in evening school was "to have the entrance examination for a university," to enable advanced learning in university. However, what was more important was "to prove" the capability with a "scientific and logical thinking." Thus, the learning in evening school was not purely for knowledge, but also for certification or proof for the entrance into a university. This was also a kind of learning with a pragmatic purpose. The "disadvantage" was stated by in a funny tone, which showed that he did not really dislike evening school. He said "no much spare time in weekend" showed that he had this experience himself, and he had given up much of his free time for learning. This also showed that he had determination in learning in this period.

(4) So, all in all, that was a great experience. And, also, I could also learn something, for example, the history, eh, the historical things and stories for myself, and of course, I could learn much more than the pupils. So I always found that was very meaningful.
But there was a good chance for me to exercise my English, and, now my English is excellent, and that time, I could speak English and, tell stories in English, so I have spoken English for years during my volunteer job. So my English got into the advanced level, and, that could be seen as a great treasure for my volunteer working experience during those years.

(4) For his own benefit, he felt that he could "learn something" from this volunteer experience, such as "history or historical thing and stories." This implies that he also regarded this job as a learning process, which also belongs to lifelong learning. He evaluated this experience as "very meaningful," which shows that he felt learning during work was useful to him. The word "always" meant that he held such an opinion in his mind for a long time. For him, learning while working was an excellent situation. He was also forming his own "confidence and enthusiasm" in front of a lot of tourists. Thus, he experienced a lot from this job. Besides these advantages, he also mentioned the disadvantages, such as "feel worse…boring" when he "work for the job for years." Therefore, this job had also this dual feature for him.

He did not only learn more English, but he also became a more capable public speaker from this job. He mentioned that he could "feel relax with making jokes," which implies that he could feel comfortable and free with this job.

Summary:
The interviewee experienced a lot of jobs before he decided to study further in the university. His learning was quite rational and purposeful, with clear motivation. Based on his individual needs and job requirements, he started his learning again after so many years working in the society. He does not mention much about his earlier learning experiences, but focuses on his learning nowadays, such as in the university and evening school. He gives concrete examples and shares his feelings, which implies that he is quite clear about what he is learning and his ultimate aim of such learning. This is quite self-motivating learning. His learning is not for material or pragmatic aim, but just for his interests and career goals.

He mentions a lot about his job situation and the daily scene of his working place, which shows that he cherishes such work experiences quite a lot. The vivid description shows us his character in his life and learning, such as learning for interest, hobby, public welfare, and career ideals, without any consideration of money or other material things. Therefore, his learning and

working notion could be regarded as pure and based on his own interest and needs.

His career can be seen as a driving force for his learning, such as the first volunteer job helped his English language learning, and his career has made him aware of his lack of medical knowledge. Therefore, his learning and work are complementary and reinforcing each other. According to the above analysis, we can see that his learning is influenced quite a lot by the social factors, such as his jobs requirements and career ideals.

Core categories:

(1) Non-utilitarian learning motivations coming from job requirements and demand for self-improvement.

One of the important social activities for most German interviewees is their jobs, which make them aware of their shortage of professional knowledge. This motivates them to seek vocational learning to fulfill this shortage. There are also some interviewees choosing to continue learning in order to improve their skills while living in society. On the contrary, there are few interviewees whose learning motivations are based on seeking money or social status, but some of them are worried about job hunting after graduation. The application of learning is for the improvement of their jobs and working efficiency. There are no social pressures on each individual's learning behaviors.

(2) Consideration of social benefits, serving the public welfare, and individual views on social factors.

Many interviewees have a strong sense of social responsibility during their learning and working periods. Therefore, one of their learning aims is for the sake of society. Most German interviewees have such service awareness while working and living in society. In other words, the learning and working are not only for individuals themselves, but also for the whole nation. This kind of social service is also regarded as a kind of learning for many Germans during or after their learning years, so is attached great importance and respect by German society. Meanwhile, the social factors are viewed by various learners in different ways; therefore, the influences of such factors on the learning behaviors are expressed in different aspects. The general social circumstance and atmosphere, such as social capital and "culture capital," will influence the learning thoughts and beliefs deeply (Alheit, 1999).

(3) Concern for social problems and enthusiasm to improve such situations.

Each German interviewee has a common characteristic of great concern for social problems, as they like to discuss such matters and think solutions. This concern is mostly relating to own experiences or majors, and therefore, the topics the interviewees want to talk are different important issues in the society. When they talk about such matters, they will connect these matters with

learning, intentionally or unintentionally, as each matter could have relationship with education in their mind. They believe learning is always a good way for solving social problems. Although the German society is highly developed, there are still many complaints about the social circumstances.

(4) Practical experiences gained from social experiences and jobs and the social conditions for individual learning.

The social experiences and jobs are also regarded as a form of learning, as interviewees could learn professional and practical knowledge from daily work and practice. The relationships and communication with others in society are also a kind of learning, which could help individuals lead a better social life. The knowledge learned in universities and schools could become useful during work; therefore, when individuals could not deal with the social or working problems, the best and most convenient way is to seek continuing education. The German social conditions and learning circumstance have been quite stable since the Second World War; therefore, the learning situations for individuals are also quite consistent, with fixed educational policies and systems. The social resources for learning and education are plentiful, and the learning conditions for youth nowadays are quite excellent without many worries about the financial support for lifelong learning.

The supporting narrative contents for "Non-utilitarian learning motivations coming from job requirements and demand for self-improvement:"

For the interviewee Fock, he has narrated about his job and daily work, which seem to influence his learning motivation and interest quite a lot. From his narration, we can see that his lifelong learning aims to improve his performance at work.

(1) Fock: So, before each interview, or, eh, report, I have to find out more materials, and documents, about the topic, therefore, I could finish my job more fluently. Otherwise, I could not do my job well, without any learning of the professional knowledge. You know, the job as a journalist, has increasingly demanding and requirements for the knowledge and professional capacity...

(1) In this segment, he focuses on describing the usage of knowledge and learning for his job. The end materials which he has learned before the interviews and his work could make his job progress "more fluently." Therefore, we can see that his learning timing is always before each interview, and this kind of learning is temporary for his job. In order to "do job well," he requires the "learning of the professional knowledge," which could help him with his job achievements. Here, he emphasizes the requirements of his "job as a journalist" again, as "increasingly demanding and requirements for the knowledge and professional capacity," which implies that his learning is

job-oriented. However, the learning for his job is a long-term learning behavior, which he has to insist on for his job improvement.

The interviewee Alf also has similar working and learning experiences, both of which seem related to each other quite closely:

(2) Alf: After I got a job, the situation was different. I had to work for my family, say, eh, to earn money, and what is more important was, eh, the working contents were the interesting topics which I had learnt and would like to learn in the future. In this stage, I had the choice, to choose, the interesting and, eh, the topics which I wanted to do in different universities. Therefore, eh, my learning until this period is just for my job, and such as the social factors, and matters, which I always pay much attention to.

(2) He also has individual problems and difficulties with his life and learning, such as his family. He says he "had to work" to "earn money" for the family. Therefore, motivation for working is partly money, which is a pragmatic aim. However, "what is more important" in his view is "the interesting topics... would like to learn in the future". Therefore, his learning is based on the material needs, as well as his own individual interest.

His statement that he "had the choice" shows that he could decide his own learning major based on his interest. Therefore, he has freewill in his learning behavior. From the end of this segment, we can find that the main aim and purpose of his learning is to get a job; therefore, his learning has been motivated a lot by social factors.

His learning aim is also related to his dissatisfaction with his working situation; therefore, his working environment and situation are also influential factors for his learning.

(2) Rolf: Therefore, the utmost thing with lifelong learning research, I think, eh, is to make clear the students' main learning reason and motivation…but, eh, the general learning reason and motivation will head to the better life condition and promotion of social status, I believe

(2) He uses "utmost" to describe the importance of making clear the "main learning reason and motivation" in doing research. From the above narration and this segment, we can see that he cares most about learning motivation during the whole learning process. In his opinion, the "learning reason and motivation" should be for "better life condition and promotion of social status," which belong to material condition and social factors. The last words "I believe" show that he has a firm belief in what he is saying. Therefore, the material living condition and social status are always the chief factors which guide his

activities, such as learning, in his life.

As for the interviewee Stein, his main future concern is the job market for his major. Therefore, his learning has the aim of getting qualified for an ideal job after graduation.

(3) Stein: Eh, then, I will, eh, look for a job after I get the lawyer card after the examinations. Yes, working is always the way to change the society.

(3) In this segment he mentions "job" and "working," which he believes are quite important. The stop in his narration as "eh, then" shows that he has considered his aspiration "after the examinations" for a short while, but at last he has decided to "look for a job." The reason for his eagerness to work is his ambition to "change the society," which he thinks is "always" achieved through work. Therefore, both his learning in his major and his motivation for working upon graduation are caused and influenced by the social factors and his own social aspirations.

The reading and learning content of interviewee Penck are focused on professional knowledge about his major. Therefore, such learning becomes his interest.

(4) Penck: Moreover, the other important factor for my subject choosing is the need of my job or work in the future. Every time when I was tired with my learning, I would think about the requirement of my future job, then, I told myself that I had to finish doing research or learning the materials after all, so this is also another learning motivation for me...

(4) From this segment we can see that his learning is not always successful and meeting his own interests. However, he insists on his learning because of his "need of my job or work in the future," which also belongs to the social factors influencing his learning motivation. He uses "every time" to show that "the need of my job or work in the future" is always the driving force for his learning when he "was tired with learning." We can also find the interviewee had a "tired" feeling about his learning sometimes, although this subject was chosen by himself.

He uses self-motivation to drive his learning passion and interest (i.e. "told myself"). Taken in this sense, he has been not influenced by people except for himself. The incentive for his learning is "the requirement of future job," which belongs wholly to his plan for his social life and future. Therefore, his consideration about social life and job has influenced his learning plan and driving force quite a lot.

The supporting narrative contents for "Consideration of social benefits, serving the public welfare, and individual views on social factors:"

From Stein's narration, we can see he wants to study law in order to help others and deal with social problems with his professional law knowledge. Therefore, his learning behavior is social benefit oriented learning.

(1) Stein: The whole regulations and laws which I am learning now are really interesting, and I have quite a lot of energy to learn them well, because I can find explanations or knowledge which could help me with understanding the whole society much better.

(1) He feels that "the whole" learning contents are "really interesting" and he has "a lot of energy to learn them well," which shows that he likes all the contents which he learns. The word "energy" shows that he has enough learning motivation, which stems from his thirst for knowledge to "understand the whole society much better." Therefore, primarily he wants to learn legal knowledge for improvement of his worldview. The words "find explanations and knowledge" indicates that he still feels that he lacks professional legal knowledge in understanding and explaining the world and society. Therefore, his ultimate learning aim is still the social matters and his learning is still influenced by social factors.

(2) Stein: Then, eh, maybe I will not only pay attention to lawyer jobs, but also some others, such as politicians, or eh, legal advisor, or social activities. Yes, eh, something like that, and my aim and direction will be the humanist major...

(2) From this segment we can find that his dream and aspiration is not only limited to the legal field, but he also has interest in "politicians" or "social activities," which also belong to the social service and jobs. He uses "maybe" to show his uncertainty with his future, which means that the next dream are just his plan and expectation. At last, he concludes his working area as the general "humanist major," which means that he would like to do jobs or develop his career only in humanist fields. It can be said that his major and mentality of choosing career are both based on social factors and fields.

Alf is more concerned with the social conditions and relationships among people in the society:

(3) Alf: In my major, you know, the main learning and researching contents are the historical events, and, some of them are just the relationship among people, therefore, the social factors are always the most important elements, eh, in our learning and researching. Of course, the learning and researching, eh, I do not think they are just according to the social factors, but the social influences are always the most important ones in my major.

(3) In this segment he demonstrates the importance of "social factors" in his major and his learning, as "always the most important elements." Therefore, his major is based on social factors which could exert quite a lot of influences on his learning achievements and contents. The main relationship between the social factors and his major is from his "learning and researching contents," to "the historical events," to "relationship among people," and finally to "the social factors." In other words, the "social factors" are the ultimate and fundamental factors and source of his learning and major in this derivation process.

In these segments, including his narration above, he is always emphasizing the importance of social factors in his major and learning process, which means that in his mind, the social factors are always the first consideration in his learning behaviors.

Fock's job is relating to the social benefits and interests so much that his learning is also based on the social benefits and factors.

(4) Fock: Eh, for the social factors, and eh, environment, I would say, yes, because the latest news and information from the society, political, medical, social, economic, and, eh, cultural news, and so on, should always be concerned by me, as a journalist.

(4) In this segment, he ever declares his main learning and concerning contents, such as "social factors...environment" and "latest news and information from the society, political, medical, social, economic...cultural news," each of which is relating to the social factors and knowledge. Therefore we can say that his learning is connecting quite closely with the social factors, which could influence his learning contents and interests quite a bit. In this segment, he also refers to "social" and "society" three times, which implies that he always talks about social matters in his daily talking and interviewing.

At the end of the segment, he emphasizes his status as "a journalist" once again. The nature of this job requires him to be quite familiar with the social matters and knowledge in his mind, so he could make use of it in the proper occasion.

The interviewee Rolf has his own opinion on the learning behaviors influenced by social factors; therefore, he has put forward his learning thoughts and ideas based on the social influences.

(5) Rolf: I think, eh, in this society, each one should have a clear and firm learning aim, and this aim could be all for ones promotion on his position, or his demand of improving his own capability or skill, or, eh, just want to be much

richer in the future.

(5) He mentions the "learning aim" should be "firm and clear." However later, the learning aims which he lists all belong to the social demand or needs by individuals, such as "promotion on position," "improving own capability or skill," or "much richer in the future." From this, we can also find that he also had such needs before he took part in further vocational courses. Therefore, in his mind, the material need and demand should be the valid motivation or "learning aim" for each to make the decision on further learning after getting a job.

The supporting narrative contents for "Concern for social problems and enthusiasm to improve such situations:"
As a professor, the interviewee Alf has many thoughts on the social problems and matters, which are also his learning and researching focus.

(1) Alf: Therefore, eh, always I would explain the current situation and problems we have been facing with the professional knowledge and history knowledge. Such as the natural crisis the humans have been facing, I can also explain the reason with historical knowledge and event...

(1) His main research focus is the relationship and combination of the current social problems with his professional knowledge learned in his major. Taken in this sense, his main task during his daily work is the researching social problems, and then to "explain the current situation and problems" with his "professional" and "history knowledge." Therefore, his research is based on social reality and the "current situation," which require his professional knowledge. It also means that the social problems are the source of his learning and original research materials. Therefore, we can say that his research has been influenced and affected quite a lot by the social matters and problems.

Fock has a wish of changing the situation and dealing with social problems with his learning and knowledge.

(2) Fock: But, eh, from learning, we can be much aware of the reason and methods of dealing with such problems. I have also written several books, and, eh, each book is written with the knowledge which I have learnt or accumulated, eh, from the daily learning, some of newspapers, of TV programs, or, eh, of the interviews, and, eh, conferences.

(2) The main use of knowledge and learning for him is to become "much aware of the reason and methods of dealing with such problems." Therefore, his learning is also for his social problems and life, and this kind of learning is purposeful with clear and definite aims. He also talks about his books, which

have collected materials from his knowledge and research learning. The source of such materials is "newspapers, TV programs, interviews...conferences." Therefore, his learning contents and sources are focusing on the social and communication material, and this implies that the social and communication factors have influenced his learning content, as well as his learning methods.

Rolf has made many comments on hot social issues and the gender discrimination in the learning process, which means that his learning and attention to the learning process is more about social matters, which influence his learning thoughts a lot.

(3) Rolf: For most students nowadays, they care much more about their learning scores, eh, and performances on examinations, but little on the practice in the society, for example, more and more students would rather stay in their rooms, eh, than to do some practical or voluntary jobs for others.

(3) He changes his focus to students' learning nowadays, which lacks "practice in the society." According to his opinion, the learning activities carried out by students should be combined with "social practice" and "practical or voluntary jobs for others." The reason for the lack of such social activities and voluntary jobs is that students "care much more about their learning scores." Therefore, in his mind, he cares a lot about the social living and working experience from an early age for each individual. This is also a reflection of his emphasis on social factors and the educational function of social activities. The words "for others" show that he pays attention to the social benefits and would like to contribute to the social welfare. This is also a reflection of his social morality and spirit of social service.

As his major concerned social problems, interviewee Stein is also quite interested in the social matters and news. This concern is embodied in his learning materials everyday:

(4) Stein: And for a lawyer, his working place could be much flexible, such as companies, government, and other important department, or just a legal advisor for other big companies, political parties, so the working area for a lawyer would be much wide in the future, and, eh, now it is also quite wide.

(4) He introduces the working place for a lawyer in the future, which implies that he is ready for the "flexible" working environment. From this segment, we can see that he does not care much about his working place, but all the places relate to social departments. He also has listed many jobs for a lawyer, and each job seems quite honorable in society, such as working in "companies" or "government." The word "wide" shows it is also an advantage for learning in

the law science major, as one could change his or her working place and access broad development opportunities. Therefore, this can also be regarded as a social factor which offers lawyers "wide" and "flexible" working environments, chances, and fields.

The supporting narrative contents for "Practical experiences gained from social experiences and jobs and the social conditions for individual learning:"
Rolf's narration demonstrates the German social support system, especially financial support for individuals so that their education is sufficient. In addition, in his mind, knowledge should come from the daily working and practicing process.

(1) Rolf: And there is an obvious advantage of further education in Germany, as students can learn directly in school for further education without any worry about financial problem. The country will afford a part of fees and expenditures of, eh, the operation of vocational school, as well as the companies, which will afford a part, yes, a part of the fees and training fees. Then, the worker in a professional working position could pay little for his training in the vocational school.

(1) The "obvious advantage of further education in Germany" is that each individual can be "without any worry about financial problem" in vocational or further education school. This is a reflection of support from government, companies, enterprises, and individuals on further education. In other words, the whole society has strongly supported people in their attempts at further learning, and also constructed the learning atmosphere for each individual in the society. Therefore, the learning activity could become much easier for each individual who wants to improve his or her professional knowledge or capability in a further education school. This is the financial basis for prosperous further education in Germany.

The interviewee mentions "worker in a professional working position could pay little for his training in the vocational school," which means although individuals such as workers have to pay something for this kind of learning experience, the amount of fees will be quite little. Therefore, the social educational system advocates for further and professional knowledge learning.

Alf has had an impressive education with traveling experience, which has changed his learning orientation and interest. He also has opinions on the learning situation of youth nowadays, with respect to learning from practicing and working.

(2) Alf: Therefore, eh, but you know, there are quite a lot of foundations

nowadays, which offer scholarships to many students, German, or not German, such as you, a foreigner. But, eh these foundations and the new scholarship system has been founded just after our period.

(2) He has made a comparison about the financial support situation, showing the different between his generation and the generation today. He wants to express the difficult situation and financial influences on his generation. Therefore, we can see that he cares a lot about the social and material foundations for his learning. From this segment, he also wants to show the social circumstance for one's learning, not only for the Germans, but also for foreigners, which is much better today than in his period from the financial development perspective.

Alf's learning experiences from working and practicing are quite abundant. Stein's learning is also influenced by his practical experiences; however, as he has not graduated, his learning activities are occurring in the university rather than the society.

(3) Stein: They (my parents) advised me to do some practical job in the society during my learning in schools, and they believed that the practical jobs could improve my learning efficiency and the knowledge application.

(3) The suggestion to "do some practical job in the society" shows that his parents cared much about the social and practical experience in one's life. The aim of doing "practical jobs" is to "improve learning efficiency and knowledge application," which means that his parents believed that social practical jobs will contribute to one's learning and ability. Therefore, we can find that the last generation thought more of the social experience and practical process for youth. The social factor plays an important role in the mind of the last generation.

(4) Stein: Eh, for me, I think there is always good chance and, eh, premise for me to learn such a major, and the society could ensure the learning right for me, eh, therefore, I could learn as I want…

(4) Here he mentions the "learning right" which the society "could ensure." The expressions, such as "always" and "good chance", show that he feels free and unrestrained with his own education and choice of major. The last sentence, "learn as I want," implies that he can learn any major he desires, and will not be interrupted or obstructed by other factors. This is a reflection of social functions on learning and education for each individual in a society, which protect and ensure the learning right of each person. Therefore, his learning has also been influenced by such a social system, which guarantees his right to learn.

As a professor working in a university, the interviewee Penck has many academic and social chances and experiences which help him master the latest news and information about his major:

(5) Penck: I had not communicated with many other people in the reality, but only did my own research by myself. Therefore, I always felt that there was no way for me to get a fixed position in a company, or a, eh, such as university.

(5) During his learning in the university, he did not care much about his future job, which contrasts with the current thoughts of students learning in the universities. His main task in his learning years in the university was his "own research" by himself. Therefore, he only paid attention to his learning without any distraction.

As he did not care much about his job, or make much communication "with many other people in the reality," he dared not dream of a "fixed position in a company." This is also a social situation which shows most students learning in university did not learn about their majors from their hearts, but always were willing to do communications and preparations "in the reality" for a better chance of getting a job after graduation. However, this situation is also the same nowadays. Therefore, we can say that learning in university is always relating to the situation in reality, and the social factors in reality are always influencing the learning effects and achievements for each student learning in universities.

(6) Penck: I can still communicate with many other persons during these activities and in the space of the, eh, internet. From these communications, I can exchange my opinions and ideas with them. I think this is the main learning form and style nowadays for me. Other learning forms, or eh, styles are not needed by me now...

(6) Besides reading "the latest news" and learning "information" by himself, he could also learn in the form of "communications" and "opinions and ideas exchange" with others. From this segment, we can see that his learning method and form is not limited to the traditional style, but is more free and unlimited according to his needs and interest. The communications with others about his major and professional knowledge could also be seen as a kind of social activity, which means the social influences, such as people's opinions and ideas, always exert an effect on his own opinions. Therefore, such learning form could be largely influenced by social opinions and ideas conveyed by the "communications with others." At the end of this narration, he says that he does not need "other learning forms or styles", which implies that he wants to be simple with his learning form and is quite satisfied with his

learning form and learning content already.

6.2.4 Individual factors.
Biography and background of the core characteristics for individual factors: Christ.
Christ was born in 1984 in Bayreuth, Germany. His parents were normal workers in the local factories. He finished his graduation examination after secondary school, and then he went into the university where he always participated in the courses and read books in his own home, as well as carried out some practical activities in society with his classmates. After his graduation with a bachelor's degree, he began the master study in another university and now is earning his doctorate.

At first, he was admitted into a junior high school ("Realschule") and learned there. During his learning years, he studied hard, so his scores were always quite good in his class. Then, after that he participated in the graduation examination, which required a hard working period with intensive learning, he came into the secondary school ("Gymnasium"). He is quite interested in political and social knowledge, so he chose to study politics in his university years. He read political news and information from newspapers and books each day.

The supporting narrative content for the core paragraphs and analysis of Christ's narration:
(1) I have also my own hobby and interest in my leisure time of course. When I have enough free time, then, I would like to drink beer with my friends, who have also the same interests with me, on political issues. Then, eh, watching movies, and, eh, internet surfing are also my hobbies, but the main content of my internet surfing is browsing the website about a interesting political theme, eh, in which I have interest and curiosity, then, maybe I would spend much time with reading a newspaper or a book about such a theme. Eh, I would like to get directly with the political issue and information from newspaper and books.
They never tell me to learn this or that, or, not to learn this or that, so, eh, my learning process and experiences are all independent from my parents' influences and effects. Then, eh, I could make my decisions freely and independently…

(1) From this segment, we can see that he also has quite a lot of leisure time for his own hobbies and interests. In his free time he likes to "drink beer with friends," "watch movies," "internet surfing," "reading a newspaper," and "read a books," which are all indoor activities, moderately revolving around the "political issues" or "political themes." Therefore, his interests also relate to his major. The main methods for acquiring information on "political issues and

information" are "books and newspaper" and the "internet". From this narration, we can see that he still prefers the traditional media and materials to modern tools during his learning. Here he uses "curiosity" to describe his learning motivation.

The reason the interviewee "could make my decisions freely and independently" is his parents "never" intervened with his "learning process and experiences." Therefore, the interviewee could enjoy the "independent" learning process and experiences. From this segment, we can also find the parents' influence on children's learning in Germany is also great, but these influences are more a loose management on their children. Under such living circumstances, the German children have more freedom and free will with their learning decisions.

(2) When I could learn something new and make something clear, then, this is the pleasant time and period for me. And, my pleasure often comes from my learning the interesting things and solving puzzle with knowledge which I have learned…
I have to say the most important factor influencing my learning behaviors is my own interest. This means, when I could have interest in my major, and feel I could do well in my major, then, that is the best situation. When there is no pleasure during my learning process, then, I would feel it is quite difficult for me to learn any more.
Eh, informal learning, such as reading newspapers, or magazines, and, the internet surfing for political issues and materials, eh, of course, I will insist on such kinds of learning behaviors, and eh, they are not all for my career, but most of them for my own hobbies and interests. Yes, the individual interests are the most important factors during the learning period, I think.

(2) He uses "the pleasant time and period" to describe his mood when he could "learn something new and make something clear." He has thirst for knowledge, which is based on unknown things and something "new." Therefore, the basic principle for his learning motivation is his curiosity and interest in "new" and "interesting" learning content. He is also interested in "solving puzzle with knowledge which I have learned," which means that he is fond of using his knowledge in reality to solve problems he has faced. Therefore, his learning is also somewhat practical.

This is the second time he has emphasized that his "learning behaviors" are based on his "own interest." He says it is "the most important factor" to imply the degree of importance of his interest in learning. The sentence which describes his major implies that the chief premise for his learning is his "interest in his major." He uses "the best situation" to explain his ideal learning form, which should be following with his own interest. At the end of this

segment, he also stresses the importance of having "pleasure" during his learning process. If he could not feel pleasant, then he would regard the learning as "difficult" for him. Therefore, we can say that his learning is typically influenced by his individual thoughts and feelings.

This is the second time he has mentioned "informal learning," which shows his plan to continue learning after his graduation and getting a job. The contents of "informal learning" cover mostly his hobbies and interests in his daily life; therefore, he has the decision to "insist on such kinds of learning behaviors." From this aspect we can find that his learning in the future would be still more related to his individual hobbies and interests in his life. His learning contents would be much more about his major, such as political news and issues. At the end of his narration, he admits that "individual interests are the most important factors during the learning period," which means that his learning behaviors and activities have been influenced mostly by his individual factors, such as his character, hobbies, and interests.

(3) During my learning years there, I felt quite interested with my learning content, and, eh, then, I was quite hard with my learning content, then, my scores were always quite good in my class... The tasks for a man who is hoping to get into the secondary school are quite much, and he has to afford such an intensive learning and living rhythm…
Eh, for me, the most important thing now is to look for a good chance and position in the government for me, and, eh, to work for the society with my knowledge and learning experiences…

(3) The interviewee began with his narration by talking about his own "interest" in his "learning content," which means he cares a lot about his own feelings when he carries out his learning. The word "hard" shows his level of effort when studying. Therefore, from the first two sentences, we can see that the interviewee has paid a lot of attention to his learning, so he could have the "quite good" scores. During this segment, we can find that he likes using the adjective "quite" to express his own strong emotion when he talks about his learning experiences.

The second part of this segment is about his thought on the "task for getting into the secondary school." This task is regarded as difficult, because he believes that the one should undergo "an intensive learning and living rhythm" while studying. Since the learning for secondary school is "intensive," one should have more encouragement and endurance with such learning. From this part we, can see that the interviewee has his own understanding and experiences with his learning.

He uses the phrase "the most important thing" to describe his job hunting "in

the government," from which we can find he cares a lot about his working position after his graduation. He has a clear understanding about his own life in his future. Therefore, he could arrange his life with his own plan and ideas. The word "good" shows he has a hopeful expectation for his work in the government. The working aim and goal in his opinion is "for the society;" therefore, he already has his own working ideas and thoughts before he got a job. This kind of working idea and wish shows that he has a good sense of social morality. He believes the use of his "knowledge and learning experiences" should be to serve the society. From this aspect, we can see that he has his individual working and learning aims in his mind already. Therefore, his learning has been mostly influenced by his individual character and thoughts.

(4) Then, the most important thing in school is only to learn the things which belong to your hobbies and could arouse your interest, and learn them well…For a job, I think, I will automatically get a job after my graduation because of my perfect performance on my learning when I am really hard working with my major…

(4) The main task for his learning period in his opinion is to "learn the things which belong to your hobbies and could arouse your interest;" therefore, we can say that his learning mainly focuses on his individual interest and needs from his learning content. The word "only" shows he does not want to do any other work during his learning period, but "only" concentrates on his learning in those years. The learning result should be to "learn them well," which means his aim of learning is to have good scores and performance in his subjects. The words "automatically" and "of course" show his confidence in his future job.

His qualification for getting a job is his "perfect performance on learning;" therefore, he does not care much about his job hunting in the future, but just cares about his own learning results and performance. This is a kind of individual awareness on his learning, without many influences from the society or worry about the future. The method of getting "perfect performance" is to "really hard working with major," which shows that he has a motivated learning aim. He is not susceptible to influences or pressures, but just has his own awareness of the importance of learning for his life.

Summary:
In the whole narration, the word mentioned most is "interest," which seems to be the principal reason and motivation for the interviewee's learning activities. He mentions many times that his learning hobbies, pleasures, and behaviors are based on his own interest. If he could not find any interest or curiosity during his learning process, then he would rather give up such learning.

Therefore, we can say that he is a typical student who learns with his individual interests, so that all the determinations on learning and other matters in his life would obey his mind and thoughts.

He also talks about the influences from his parents and peers on his learning and life; however, these outer influences seem small, as they are only some suggestions and advice. The interviewee does not care much about his future job either. Therefore, during his whole learning process, he does not want to be affected by outer factors, but only focusing on pure learning.

In his narration, we can also find some reflective thoughts on his learning and life, which implies that he would like to examine his learning and living process to get inspiration from the results. The feature of his learning according to interest and curiosity is also a general feature for many German learners, who would never learn because of pressures or enforcement from outer factors.

Core categories:
(1) Self-confidence enables independent decision-making with regards to learning.
The German interviewees have a common feature in their learning process that there is little interference from parents or outer factors influencing their learning decisions; therefore, individuals must take responsibility for their own learning performance, and have their own thoughts about their learning methods, aims, meaning, and focus. The support for such independence comes from the learner's self-confidence, which has been trained from childhood, without restrictions from parents or other factors. When the German learners talk about their learning experiences and plans, they always take a standpoint from their own interests and considerations, without attention to other factors or others' opinions. Thus, such learning seems to be quite free and self-determined.

(2) The individual interests are the main learning motivation.
All the interviewees have the same motive of learning for pleasure, without pragmatic aims or purposes from society or family pressures. Different interviewees have various learning interests and reasons for learning. These interests are the motivation to drive them to learn in the daily life, in school, or at home. Based on their own learning interests, they have their own thoughts and considerations on their learning contents. Therefore, they have independent thoughts and ideas about their professional knowledge, and this is the source of their independent and critical academic thoughts.

(3) Thirst for knowledge with consideration to future work.
Most German interviewees are willing to learn more and more during and after their schools years, not only for their own interests, but also for the

requirements of future careers and social needs. Such thirst for knowledge is based on the individual's understanding of their own situation and learning performance, without outer pressures or interference. There is always a strong will for learning by German interviewees, especially when they consider lifelong learning with a positive and non-utilitarian view. This is in obvious contrast to the Chinese interviewees, who had a negative or pragmatic attitude towards learning, especially lifelong learning.

(4) The concrete plan for future career and learning behaviors.
When talking about the future working or learning plan, many interviewees have their own clear and concrete arrangement without hesitation. Some of such plans are made from childhood and held until adulthood, which give them a clear expectation after they come into the society. Therefore, the authority of learning and career arrangement is held by learners themselves in Germany, without radical changes during their life or interference from their parents. Such choices and decisions are always quite steady during their whole life. When the German interviewees are not quite sure of some problems in their life, they would not to learn the solutions from their parents, who will not help them either. Instead, they turn to professional or experienced people for help. This shows that they are quite familiar with problem solving independently from their parents.

The supporting narrative contents for "Self-confidence enables independent decision-making with regards to learning:"
Hanna's parents respected her choices not only in learning matters, but also in her own living matters.

(1) Hanna: I am now living with my parents, but, eh, I have to take care of my own things and matters by myself, without my parents' help…Therefore, I have formed a habit of doing all my things individually, and do not wait for other's help to me.

(1) In her daily living situation, she can "take care of own things and matters" by herself, which shows that she can independently care for herself. This is also a reflection of her family education, which encouraged her to be independent; therefore, she had "formed a habit of doing all her things individually." This is also a learning process, which teaches her "not wait for other's help." The German family education content is essentially different with the Chinese, who always worry about their children being hurt or frustrated in society. Therefore, the Chinese parents will always do housework or social work for their children. This can be reflected by the difference in choice on major and career by interviewees from these two countries.

(2) Hanna: I also made change of their (parents) learning method, as some of

them are not proper or suitable for me. Eh, I could not remember the years, but, eh, almost when I came to the secondary school, they did not mention too much about my learning, as I could learn well myself…

(2) As for her learning method, she does not imitate her parents. She adjusted her methods to be "proper and suitable" for her. This is a learning process for her, as she had to make use of help and experience from outside. This also shows that her actions are based on her own needs and thoughts, and she refuses the help which she considers not "proper for" her. The description of her parents' attitude on her learning (i.e. "not mention too much") means that her parents are quite secure about the interviewee's capability according to her learning behaviors and achievements. This is also a reflection of the family education, which allows the children to have enough freedom to develop his or her own interests without too many restrictions.

The decision-making by Josepha was very independent, as it the case for many other interviewees in this research:

(3) Josepha: Of course not affected by my parents or anyone else, they are all made by me own. Actually, my parents never influence my choices or decisions on my way of learning and even the jobs in the future. They have just offered my some advice, and information on my choices, but they never talk much on my choices or the decisions on the subjects or career I will choose.

(3) In this segment she talked about the family influences on her decision-making. She thought her parents "never talk much on my choices or the decisions on the subjects or career" but just "offered some advice and information," which implies that there was little influences from her parents on her decisions. The use of the words "of course" shows she believed it was perfectly justified that her decisions should be "made by my own" and the "parents should never influence" the children's choice.

The interviewee Jolanthe is an obvious representative of self-determined learning mode:

(4) Jolanthe: Eh, for the whole learning period, eh, during my learning in the university, I would say, there was no pressure or, eh, requirements from my family, or the society...

(4) She denied the "pressure or, eh, requirements from my family, or the society" flatly, which means that she believes all her learning was free from the authority of her family and society. However, in this segment she did not mention the influences from her school during her earlier years, which might have influenced her on her learning contents which she was not quite willing to

learn. From this segment, we can say that her learning process was always independent from her parents and social pressures. Generally speaking, the German interviewees always have such feelings as they have been let free from social and family influences on their learning and living matters.

There is no interference from Jordan' parents on his learning process. His learning process is dependent on his own thoughts and decisions:

(5) Jordan: I would say this may be a talent… Therefore, I felt that I could do well in the field of finance and economics.

(5) He assessed his performance in math as "a talent," which shows his pride and superiority in math. From this segment, we can see that his career is based on finding his talent. His feelings upon finding his talent relates to his subjective opinions and thoughts, which can be seen as individual factors influencing his own learning and career choices. We can also find the word "felt" in this segment, which shows he had strong emotion and belief in his own capability of self-assessment.

(6) Jordan: My parents did not intervene with my choice of major or career much, and they also supported my decision of studying in the economics high school and the dream of working in a bank.

(6) He mentioned his parents' attitude and opinions on his choice of career. From this segment we can find that his independent character has been formed with the help of his family education. His parents' decision does "not intervene with my choice" and "supported my decision…and dream…" show his parents let him be free with his own opinions and dreams without obvious restriction or suppression. What is more, his parents supported and encouraged his plan positively. From his narration, we can suppose that his parents also did not intervene with his private plans in his daily life. Therefore, this confirms again that he could make his decisions with his own will, without consideration of other outer factors.

(7) Jordan: They were both farmers in my hometown, and, eh, they also educated me to work with my own interest and, they told me that I would be a good economist in the future as they believed.

(7) He narrated his parents' background as "farmers" to show that they could not help with his learning and career matters. The only suggestion they could give was "to work with own interest." Under this circumstance, the interviewee developed his own character and style of making plans according to his own interests or talents. In other words, the influences from his parents on his learning and life experiences were quite limited. Finally, he narrated that his

parents had the belief that he could "be a good economist," which encouraged the interviewee to insist on his own dream and work for his plan. This is also a method of family education.

Due to a special family structure, the interviewee Kreis has made her learning decisions and choices from her childhood; therefore, her learning process is all self- determined and without restrictions.

(8) Kreis: Then, eh, with this self-conscious about my own personality, I could only choose the major which needs more my own thinking, and ideas, that is why I chose my major such as philosophy, eh, based on my own personality and hobby, eh, yes…

(8) This is an expression about the criteria for choosing her major. She knows her "personality" quite well, so she made her choice according to this consciousness. The reason for her choosing the philosophy major is she could have "more own thinking, and ideas." This is consistent with the narration above, which shows that she could only learn knowledge which calls for her individual and independent thinking. Finally, she adds the phrase, "based on my own personality and hobby" to show all her choices are based on her individual interests. This is a reflection of the type of her learning, which is influenced and determined quite a lot by herself.

The supporting narrative contents for "The individual interests are the main learning motivation:"
From the narration, we can see that Kreis has an obvious learning habit and strict system which helps her to select the learning contents she likes. Her learning methods are based on her own thoughts and hobbies:

(1) Kreis: During my learning period, my parent, eh, my mother could not take care of my learning much, because she had to work all the time…For me, I always learn something which I am interested in, so, when I am interested in something, then, learn something, and engage in something, therefore, I would spend most of my time in doing these things which I am fond of desperately. I cannot do anything else, during doing these things.

(1) This is a segment which narrates the influences from her parents on her learning; however, we cannot find much influence because her mother was quite busy with work and could not "take care of my learning much." Therefore, her learning was done by herself. This is part of the reason why her learning decisions are always made according to her personality, character, and needs without any influence from outer factors. The phrase "all the time" shows that she has not had abundant family education from her childhood.

Just according to the free learning circumstances, she could "learn something" which she was "interested in." Thus, her learning habits have been formed from childhood by herself. She could learn anything she wants without limitation. At the end of the segment, she emphasizes her preference for interesting learning contents, with the expression "spend most of time in doing" and "cannot do anything else during doing these things." From this narration, we find that she can really concentrate on the learning in which she is interested.

The interviewee Hanna has made quite a lot of descriptions of her interests and hobbies, as well as her pleasure from the learning process.

(2) Hanna: I have spent much time with learning and reading, and I could always feel pleasant in this learning process, just because I have such a learning habit, and, eh, the interest in learning.

(2) This is a second segment which highlights her pleasure for reading and learning and "interest in learning" again. In this segment she speaks four times of "learning," which shows that she has a really profound feeling with her learning. She does not mention much about her school learning; however, she almost equates learning with reading, because in her narration, the words are always used together. Therefore, we can say that her learning happens very often alone, and her preferred learning form is reading. She uses "a learning habit" and "interest in learning" to show learning is an indispensable thing in her life.

From the narration content, we can see that Josepha has quite a lot of interest in language and geography science; therefore, her learning motivation is based on her interests and hobbies.

(3) Josepha: As I really fond of language learning, so I have learn Chinese in my spare time, and, actually speaking, Chinese is the most difficult language I have learnt, and, really, at first, I wanted to give it up…was the hardest time for me to learn a foreign language. (smile), but, as I was really interested in the Chinese culture, and I have a dream of travel to China, so I insisted on Chinese learning, and I told myself, I could learn it well, and my teacher also encouraged me as he thought I had the talent of learning Chinese.

(3) Her reason and motivations of learning Chinese was that she was "fond of" Chinese, "interested in Chinese culture," and had "a dream of travel to China," which all belong to her own interests and dream. Her time learning Chinese seemed to be "the most difficult" and "the hardest time," and she "wanted to give it up," but the motivation to support her learning was her own interest and her dream of "travel to China." She does not outer factors or influences from

family or society.

(4) Josepha: My speech partner, he said that I could stay in China without any difficulties as I could communicate with the Chinese people normally. (smile), but, eh, at first, I learnt Chinese just because I liked learning language, but now, for a long time I have not used this language, and, always, I felt that I have forgotten them all, and, now, I could not remember many Chinese words, but, last year I could write a Chinese article…

(4) This was the first time she used the second hand episode to describe her learning activities. This segment was also about the evaluation of her learning result. The goal she wanted to reach was to "communicate normally" with native speakers, but she did not mention anything about certification or examinations here. Her aim of Chinese learning was not because of material or social reasons, but just because she "liked learning language." She used a comparison of "last year and now" to show that she "have forgotten them all," which showed that she felt pity about not continuing her learning. Thus, she wanted to express her feeling that learning should not be stopped or interrupted in the middle of the whole process, but should be continued.

(5) Josepha: And I am also very interested in the geographical researching and learning. Eh, when I was very young, I could remember the places and countries in the map, eh, very clearly, and my geography teachers always praised me as a talent girl who could do good job in the geographical researching,

(5) This segment explains the way her interest formed in geography: from her own talent in "remember the places and countries in the map," but also because of praise from teachers. Therefore, the influences on her interest came from both the inner and outer factors. She mentioned her memory of places and countries "very clearly" to show that she had confidence with geography. The words "always praised me" showed that she was recognized by her teachers many times, which gave her more confidence with her learning.

Jolanthe had a family education which trained her to learn according to her own interest and thoughts; therefore, her learning is based mostly on her interests.

(6) Jolanthe: My learning was all based on my own interest, and, eh curiosity of some knowledge which I wanted to know, but, also I have been influenced by my family education, which told me when I was interested in something, or knowledge in my life, then, go and learn them by myself.

(6) In this segment, she talks about her learning as "all based on my own interest." The word "all" shows that her learning was just an absolutely self-motivated behavior, without other influence. This shows her learning was quite independent and self-determined. This seems to be a universal phenomenon among German interviewees.

The reason for the interviewee's thoughts and preferences in decision-making by herself was "influenced by my family education," which trained her to be independent. Therefore, the interviewee could make her own learning decisions from her childhood without the help or interference from her parents or family. This is typical of German family education. Therefore, we can clearly find the difference between the German family education, which trains children to be more and more independent, and the Chinese family education, which requires children to obey the orders from family.

When Jordan could learn interesting subjects or play his favorite games, then he could do them well. In contrast, the subjects he did not like would be not performed well.

(7) Jordan: From my childhood, I felt that although my performances in many subjects were not quite well, I could do well in math, and always I felt interested in math questions…

(7) The interviewee began his narration from his own life experience and his own interests and talent. He used "felt" twice in this segment, which must mean he cared a lot about his own private feelings. In other words, individual factors should be the main factors in his learning process and life experiences.

The supporting narrative contents for "Thirst for knowledge with consideration to future work:"
Josepha's learning agenda seems quite full with learning courses and contents, which are all planed according to her own willingness and interest.

(1) Josepha: I have the chance to travel into France, until then, I could feel that, eh, my French was not too bad, and I could speak and communicate with the French fluently, without difficulties. So, I found more confident about my French learning.

(1) She talked about her French learning, which showed that she was really interested in it. The function of this segment was to show the process of building her "confidence about French learning." For her, speaking practice was more important and useful than books alone. When she had the chance to "communicate with French fluently," she could feel "without difficulties…more confident." This shows that without actual experience talking with native

speakers, she did not have much confidence in her daily learning.

(2) Josepha: In the classes, I was not the most active one, but, eh, I could understand the content of the classes wholly, and I could exercise French with the partner from France after each class, and then, I could improve my French much fast.

(2) Here she used the self-assessment again to show weaknesses with learning (i.e. "not the most active one"), but that she was hard working in her class and spare time (i.e. "exercise with partner from France after each class"). The word "each" implies that she had perseverance with her learning. It also shows that she had found a learning method which was proper for her to "improve much fast." Her narration was always about her own feeling and experiences in her life, as most sentences began with "I."

(3) Josepha: I will always learn, and may learn during my whole life, because, eh, I feel that I like learning, and when I could have time to learn, I will devote myself into learning, and without any distractions…but there is a problem that, I have not so much time with learning, so, (smile), you see, there is always a book in my bag, and, today, (taking out a book from her bag), you see, this is a French novel, and I planned to read during the train time…

(3) The reason for her to "learn during the whole life" is because she "like learning," especially "without distractions," which implies she will learn her interests and hobbies with higher efficiency. The first sentence shows that she decided to learn throughout life. However, she also mentioned the problem of "not so much time." Unlike many Chinese interviewees, she decided to take advantage of every minute to learn (i.e. "read during the train time"), which shows her habit of saving every second in her life to learn, rather than complaining about the shortage of time. Her smile here shows her pride in her habit of saving time. The example she cited here ("always a book in my bag"), shows that she had always prepared something to read.

(4) Josepha: I could understand the meaning and content of this book, so, I have to use my dictionary all the time… But the most important thing is I could learn a lot new words and, eh, the thinking of the writer during my reading, although the reading process is a bit longer and harder.

(4) She used "have to" to express her feeling about reading such a difficult book, but she just kept on reading because she could "learn a lot new words." What is more, her aim of reading was to learn the "thinking of the writer," which shows that she did not have social or material aims during her reading. Reading was just for her own learning.

(5) Hanna: I spent most of my time on learning, eh, of course not on holidays or vacations, but during the semester, I would rather study in the library than go outside for playing or touring, and, eh, then, I participate in the social and school organizations, eh, this will take up a little time, but, not too much. I have my own schedule for my daily life, and would not waste much time on other things, except learning.

(5) This segment describes her focus on learning. Although she does not mention the learning form in her daily life, we can assume she carries out most of her learning as reading because she is always "in the library." She says she "spent most of time" on learning, which shows that her life is simple with only the task of learning. Compared with other social or school activities, such as "go outside for playing or touring," she would rather "study," which means that she is hard working in her daily life. She would not like to spend much time with other things, which she evaluated is a "waste time."

The interviewee Jolanthe is interested in communicating with others, especially with the foreign or unknown individuals; therefore, her focus is on language learning in order to have more skills in communicating.

(6) Jolanthe: Actually speaking, my learning of foreign language is not always focusing on the language itself, but more on communication with the foreigners, such as facial expressions, tone, intonation and, eh, body language, because I find that is much more interesting than the language itself.

(6) In this segment, she talks about communication skills, such as "facial expressions, tone, intonation and, eh, body language," which seems to be the practical skills for communication with others. Therefore, the original interest for her language learning is not for the pure language, but for the skills of "communicating with the foreigners." Therefore, we can see that she has a learning motivation, and all her learning is to achieve this aim. During her learning process, her own determination seems to be more important than any other factors.

Jordan has a clear career aim after his learning in school; therefore, his learning interests are just based on such aim:

(7) Jordan: I felt the reason (for my good performance in learning) was, eh, I really knew what I needed and wanted in the economics high school, and I could only do my interested subjects there.

(7) The reason for his "good performance" in his economics high school was because of his needs and interests. This shows he had not only a concrete aim or purpose in learning, but also a clear understanding of his own talent and

interest. Therefore, his learning efficiency would be much higher than other students, who then did not have a clear learning aim. He used "really knew" to show his strong emotion with his own learning aim and the work he could do in the school.

(8) Jordan: Then, eh, I just applied for a class in a further educational high school, and learnt more knowledge about finance and economics after my work…That was quite a hard time for me…I really worked hard on my finical learning, as I held my belief that I could finish the course and be a clerk in a bank…

(8) In his narration, he usually used "I" to begin his sentences, in order to express his opinions or views. This implies that he was self-centered and emphasized his own feeling with his social activities.

He described his learning during his further education as "quite a hard time" for him. The reason was that he "worked hard on financial learning." It means that he did not want to learn financial knowledge well in this period, but his learning motivation was just to "finish the course and be a clerk in a bank." Therefore, his learning was supported by his firm career dream of being a clerk. He used "held the belief" to show that he was quite constant in his career plan.

Kreis has her pure motivation for learning her major, which has directed her life and learning process:

(9) Kreis: Actually speaking, I love challenges, and, eh, conquering each difficulty in my life. Just getting, eh, better and better, I like this feeling. And, eh, this is maybe my learning motivation.

(9) This is a narration about her character. She "love challenges," from which she has developed a fond habit of "conquering each difficulty." For a girl, it is unusual for her to be fond of challenges. However, the lack of care and family education from her childhood has trained her to be independent and support herself. Therefore, her character and habit of only choosing learning contents which interest her are based on this factor. The requirements for her to "conquer each difficulty" in her life are her own flexible ideas from her learning experiences; therefore, this is also a reason for her interest in subjects which need her individual ideas, without lots of memorization.

Her learning motivation in the segment is to "conquer each difficulty," in order to see her life "getting better and better." This is an individual learning aim which benefits mostly herself.

Brand also considers his future career when he chooses his major of interest:

(10) Brand: The reason I chose the Chinese topics, eh, as most of my German classmates and colleagues, we were very interested in the developing country, and the developing speed of China, is amazing, so, you cannot ignore this country, and the relationship between China and Europe, for example, Germany, I dare to say, would be more and more important for the European diplomatic policies in the future, so, now, I could do research in this relationship on this country, and then, in the future, I could do more for the diplomatic policies in Germany. And I believe that my major and interesting researching field would be much useful in the future too…

(10) In this segment, he mentioned the reasons for choosing the Chinese topic as his research field with many professional ideas and thoughts. Thus, we can see that he has already been professional with his major and good at analyzing and convincing people to believe that he had chosen the most proper topic. The ultimate reason for studying the relationship between China and Europe was to "be much useful in the future" and "do more for the diplomatic policies in Germany," so he just wanted to make his research useful for the society. He was not concerned with material aims, such as money or fame. This is different from the Chinese interviewees, who stated that they undertook a career for more money or social status. Thus, this is a difference between people's career choices in these two countries.

The supporting narrative contents for "The concrete plan for future career and learning behaviors:"
Jolanthe's future plan is based on her traveling experience and learning major:

(1) Jolanthe: During my study, I think my learning is too busy, which seems to be a difficulty for me, because I always want to finish many tasks in a short term, that's means, eh, I would arrange many things in a time, to finish. But, eh, such learning is not for my obligation or required courses, but just for my interest, and my wish, some of them are just optional courses...

(1) Although she felt her "learning is too busy," her learning schedule was made by herself. This implies that she would like to finish her learning as soon as possible and learn as much knowledge as possible during her time in the university. Her choice of such learning style was based on her own interest and character, not from the outer influences or pressures on her. We can find that she likes to do her learning this way, although sometimes she feels difficulty with her schedule.

Her choice of courses was not based on the arrangement of the university, but on her own interests, as she chose some subjects which "are just optional courses." This shows her satisfaction with self-determined learning in

university. Therefore, the ideal learning form and style for her seems to be independent learning without restrictions from outer factors.

(2) Jolanthe: I could not say this or that is my learning purpose, but, eh, I think the learning aim and motivation would change with my experiences and thoughts, such as during my travel, I have changed my mind of learning over and over again, and, eh, each time I felt that I was growing up, and my learning became more explicit and meaningful...

(2) From her saying, we can find that she has an own ideas on the "learning purpose" and "learning aim and motivation." Due to her traveling and language learning experiences, she thought her learning motivation "changed my mind of learning over and over again." In her mind, the learning, along with the motivation of learning, should be always in a dynamic and improving process. As a result of her travel, the interviewee she could always relate her life experiences with her learning thoughts and feelings in order to come to a conclusion. Therefore, her learning experiences seem to be quite vivid and practical, rather than only occurring in a classroom.

The interviewee Kreis talks about her future plan based on her own learning experiences and understanding of her major, as well as her wish to help more people with her professional knowledge.

(3) Kreis: For my future, eh, for me, I like learning my major, but I do not consider much about the future, or my career, but, this is an interesting topic for me to think about. Eh, then, I would like to be a philosophy professor, and, I think this career is not quite useful, because I could help few people, eh, with profound thinking, and, eh, the special knowledge learning, but the usage will be limited to a small range, eh, however, there is also a possibility that when you can do your job well, then the professor could be famous easily…

(3) This segment is about her thoughts about her future work after her graduation. From her narration, we can find that she does not care much about her job, because the most important thing for her in the current period is her education. According to her consideration, she does not evaluate her major very highly. On the contrary, she says the major is "not quite useful" as it has only "limited in a range," which could not influence many people in the society. From this, we can find that she has an objective evaluation of her major. However, her wish of being "a philosophy professor" shows that she has thoughts about her own job after her graduation. This work is based on her clear understanding about her major; therefore, she relies on her own thoughts and ideas, which are not dependent on influences from outer factors.

Jordan has set up his own future plan from childhood, which he wants to keep

during his whole life:

(4) Jordan: When I entered the economics high school, I had made a decision that I would be a clerk in a bank in the future…

(4) He used "made a decision" to show he had such a career plan from when he entered his "economics high school." Not all people could make such a career decision as this interviewee. Many interviewees just get ideas about their career after graduation from university. Therefore, the interviewee could be seen as a man with the capability of arranging his own life. This career wish to "be a clerk in a bank in the future" echoes his learning in the economics high school, and is a further development of his hope and wish from childhood.

For her future and job, the interviewee Hanna has a clear and rational plan:

(5) Hanna: For my major, I do not want to choose the majors which relate to my parents' majors, because, eh, I always feel that their majors or, eh, careers are boring for me.

(5) This is a segment detailing her independence. From the words "do not want to," we can sense strong emotion of her wish to be independent from others. The reason for her not choosing a major like her parents is her thought that "their majors or careers are boring" to her. Therefore, she has her own clear ideas about her own major and career. She wants to choose her major by herself. From this segment, we can also find her choices on her major and future have not been influenced by her parents at all. The word "boring" shows that the criteria for her choice of major are based on her interest. Therefore, she has a standard to evaluate a major in her mind.

(6) Hanna: Therefore, I decide to choose the finance major in this university, and, eh, for me, the reason to choose this major is that I think I could do well in the major which relates to money, (laugh) eh, really, during my childhood, I had special interest in math, and counting, so, the primary major I could think about is finance…

(6) Her choice on the major "finance" is due to her thought that she "could do well in the major which relates to money" and her "special interest in math and counting." For her, the major related to money can stimulate her interest, and this is the main reason for her choosing the finance major. From this segment, we can also find that she has self-confidence with the finance major because she said "I could do well in the major." Therefore, her choice for the finance major is based on her own talent and her interest, without any consideration about other factors. She also uses "the primary major" to show her determination to study this major.

(7) Hanna: Eh, maybe, but, eh, I like to learn myself, and read by myself better, and, after the graduation from university, then, I would not like to learn still in a classroom, then, I would rather learn with computer and internet.

(7) This is her narration about her learning form and content. It is her preference to learn and read by herself. These kinds of learning are always influenced by individual factors. She makes a pause when she talks about her learning in the future ("Eh, maybe, but, eh"), which shows her uncertainty in talking about this issue. Therefore, she is not quite sure about her learning situation in the future. The last sentence shows her learning tools are the "computer and internet," which means that she would like to use the new learning methods and resources.

(8) Hanna: I do not think there is a necessity to learn just in a fixed time and place, but learning could be much flexible, and when I want to learn, I could read or learn each time and everywhere… I think I have the learning habit in my life, and each day I would like to read for a while, and, eh, therefore, eh, in my daily life, I will always learn, without any interruption, yes, learning is a part of my life.

(8) She discusses her own opinion on the learning time and place in this segment, from which we can see that her ideal learning should be unlimited and free. She has formed a learning habit of reading at any time or place; therefore, she is adaptable in her learning style. She has concluded that "learning is a part of her life." Until now, her consideration about her learning still focuses on her reading each day, which means the main form of learning for her is just reading.

Although she doesn't talk much about her future plan, Josepha has also designed and planed for her future with her learning basis.

(9) Josepha: I thought that I could learn the language which would be more helpful for my job and work in the future, after all, I felt when I could learn a foreign language, then I could communicate with others without obstacles and, then, eh, I could learn more about the customs and the interesting things in the other countries, so, eh, you know, I liked French very much, and I had many interests in it, so I would like to learn French in the first years in my university.

(9) The aim of learning language also is for "my job and work in the future," but she did not mean that this was the main and only reason for her learning. She regarded language also as a tool to "communicate with others without obstacles," which was not only her interest, but also a qualification for her work. She mentioned "learn more about the customs and interesting things in the

other countries," which meant that she wanted to learn more local knowledge based on her language skills. Thus, her language learning seemed to be much more meaningful to her life and her learning behaviors in the future. From the last sentence, we can see that she felt emotional about learning French and liked France very much.

6.3 Conclusions and comparisons of the influential factors.

From the above analysis of the Chinese and German narration contents, there is still lack of intuitive distinction between these two countries on the issue of lifelong learning. Here we will implement the use of 'clusters' in diagrams, where relative fuzziness is desirable, and the influential factors can be identified clearly.

(1) The x-coordinate in the cluster system
Based on the narration contents, we can see that each interviewee focused on two aspects of learning process, including learning motivations and influential factors. Both are the main elements affecting the interviewees' learning behaviors and efficiencies. Thus, these two aspects are the main x-coordinates of the diagrams. We have also found from the narration contents that learning motivations mainly consist of two aspects, including "individuals' interests and hobbies" and "social utilitarianism," such as money, fame, and social position. As for the influential factors, there are four core categories, including (1) individual themselves, (2) family, (3) society, and (4) schools, teachers, and peers. However, the proportional significances of these four factors are different based on the narration contents. For example, more German interviewees believe that they rely on the individual influences in their learning, whereas Chinese interviewees feel the other influential factors are more important in their learning process. Moreover, we can divide the individual influences as the inner driving force and the other three factors as outer driving forces which put pressure on the interviewees' learning behaviors.

However, this does not mean the different influential factors are separate, without any overlapping connection or similarities. Some features of various influential factors could also be found from different categories. For example, we can also find the individual character and instinctive thoughts in decision-making depend not only on individual factors, but also social factors, which have stimulated the rebellious spirit of individuals because of pressures or authoritarianism. Under these circumstances, one's own characters, attitude, and ideas about learning and even living can be altered, and the final behaviors can show the individuals distinction. From the objective factors which can exert influences on learning attitudes, we find the individual and social latitude are the opposing forces in the whole learning process.

Therefore, we can set "individual" and "social" as the ends of x-coordinate of the diagram. The "individual" indicator includes the motivations and influential factors based on the individuals' instinct. According to the explanations by K.C. Williams and C.C. Williams, the intrinsic motivational factors can include "involvement (the desire to be involved), curiosity (find out more about their interests), challenge (figuring out the complexity of a topic), and social interaction (creating social bonds)" (Williams & Williams, 2011, p2). Therefore, the intrinsic motivation are more "enthusiastic, self driven, challenging and feel pleasure in their studies" (Afzal, 2010, p80). However, the "social" indicator generally means the extrinsic motivational factors which include "compliance (to meet another's expectation, to do what one is told); recognition (to be publicly acknowledged); competition; and work avoidance (avoid more work than necessary)" (Williams & Williams, 2011, p2). The individuals with extrinsic motivation try to force themselves to concentrate on academic assignments, feel compelled to learn, and always put minimal efforts to achieve maximum achievements (Afzal, 2010, p80).

(2) The y-coordinate in the cluster system
We must also take the concrete influences from external environment on individuals' learning process and performances into consideration. We can find that the origins and impacts are different from each angle. Some of these factors and elements in individuals' learning process are very central, and therefore could exert greater impacts and functions than others. When we analyze these factors and elements in an abstract way, we can find that they can be divided into two types: "authoritarian" and "autonomous."

"Authoritarian" refers to the political situation, such as "limited, not responsible, political pluralism, constraints on political institutions and groups, with formally ill-defined executive power, often shifting or vague" (Shorten, 2012, p256). Based on Baumrind's conceptualizations, we can find that "authoritarian" comprises high demands and firm enforcement without democratic give-and-take and parental support or warmth (1971). In contrast, "authoritative" comprises high demands and firm enforcement with both democratic give and-take as well as fostering the child's independence and parental support.

In each aspect of the social life, we can also find the authoritarian's influence from details. In this research, we can see that several narrators have expressed their learning experiences with certain external pressures which have gone against the instinct or willingness of individuals. Some narrators, such as the Chinese interviewee Pen, expressed learning and working pressure from parental suggestions and orders, as well as motivations of working for money based on the pressures from supporting a family. The

influences from the external environment have unimaginable functions on individuals' learning and even living attitudes because "the adolescents' adjustment varies as a function of their parents' style (e.g., authoritative, authoritarian)" (Steinberg et al., 1994, p754). In this way, we cannot ignore the real reasons for individuals' learning behaviors, such as positive or negative views on his own lifelong learning process and plans. However, the authoritarian type does not definitely indicate negative aspect, as "adolescents, like their younger counterparts, can benefit from authoritative parenting" (Steinberg, et al., 1994, p755). However, there is also research indicating that "children who are raised in authoritative homes score higher than their peers from authoritarian, indulgent, or neglectful homes on a wide variety of measures of competence, achievement, social development, self-perceptions, and mental health" (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Moreover, Asians had the highest rate of authoritarian parenting style, but they also had the highest grade-point averages (Chao, 1994, pp1111-1112). Therefore, we cannot simply assume such authoritarian factors will inevitably cause negative influences; however, we can only analyze their characters and properties in our research relating to daily lifelong learning.

In this research, we can summarize and classify all the pressures and compelling force from external environment into authoritative aspects as an abstract compilation. Compared with the social influential factors themselves, the authoritarian elements are more than just an isolated factor influencing learning, but also the main effects and concrete influences on individuals' learning views, attitudes, aims, motivations, activities, and so on.

According to the normal explanation, "autonomous" means one who gives oneself one's own law, which is a concept found in moral, political, and bioethical philosophy (Bastable, 2012, pp10-23). "Autonomous" also means the capacity of a rational individual to make an informed, un-coerced decision (Bastable, 2012, pp10-23). In moral and political philosophy, autonomy is often used as the basis for determining moral responsibility and accountability for one's actions (Akrivopoulou, 2015, p129). From these notions, we can find that the autonomous attitude and behaviors towards living and learning in daily life always have free, un-coerced, and unfettered characteristics. Therefore, the autonomous activities in learning are lead mainly by individual thoughts, knowledge, experiences, and opinions, which all belong to the inner instinct. Therefore, the autonomous learning forms are contrary to the authoritarian forms.

In the research, many narrators expressed their learning process are individually influenced. This means their learning attitudes and behaviors have been determined independently, without external influences from others. We can use the notions of controlled and autonomous motivations to classify these

thoughts on learning. While controlled motivation is induced by external factors, autonomous motivation comes from within a person (Kunz, 2015, p28). As autonomous motivation is of specific relevance to creative and knowledge-intensive processes, it is of high importance to organizational success (Kunz, 2015, p28). Autonomous motivation has been linked to the internal thoughts and views, without much attention to external factors. Therefore it is "characterized by a feeling of being able to choose and thus behaving in a self-determined way" (Gagne and Deci, 2005, pp331–336). In contrast, controlled motivation has been influenced by external pressures which have compelled people to behave in a specific way; hence, "the acting person perceives the locus of causality regarding his or her activity as external to him-or herself" (Gagne and Deci, 2005, pp331-336).

We cannot separate the autonomous and controlled motivations simply based on the extrinsic and intrinsic sources of such influences. According to the definitions by Gagne and Deci, "intrinsic motivation is inherently autonomous, as the acting person perceives the locus of causality regarding the performed task to be internal; however, the extrinsic motivation, in contrast, requires an instrumentality between the activity and some separable consequences such as tangible or verbal rewards" (Gagne and Deci, 2005, p331). However, "extrinsic motivation can be located on a continuum between autonomous and controlled, depending on the perceived locus of causality" (Kunz, 2015, p28). Therefore, the motivations cannot be classified into extrinsic and intrinsic characters simply. Rather, we can use "autonomous" and "authoritarian" in expressing the different situations and categories of motivations.

The autonomous and authoritarian factors and motivations could not be valued as simply good or bad, as each motivation has various effects to different people. However, research has shown that the "objective and precise performance assessment of the ones, who are low in autonomous motivation, is superior to performance evaluation that also contains imprecise subjective components…In the case of people high in autonomous motivation, the opposite holds true" (Kunz, 2015, pp28-30). Moreover, as defined by SDT, "people with a low level of autonomous motivation concerning a specific task do not care much about that task as such…In contrast, people with a high level of autonomous motivation actually care about the task; that is, it is of personal relevance to them" (Deci and Ryan, 2000, pp227–268). Therefore, people may perform learning activities with higher efficiencies or driving forces if they have autonomous motivations for learning.

Concerning the research, we can set the "autonomous" and "authoritarian" motivations on the y-coordinate to explain and describe the deeper and more profound reasons for different aspects of extrinsic and intrinsic factors.

(3) The relationships and differences between the x- and y-coordinate

Different from the individual or social influential factors on the x-coordinate, the autonomous and authoritarian motivations on the y-coordinate always imply the deeper and essential thoughts by narrators on their learning behaviors and process. The individual or social influential factors can only describe the objective factors which can influence the learning behaviors of each individual's learning process; however, they do not directly influence the learning and living process by individuals in a concrete way. On the y-coordinate, we can find the deeper motivations from extrinsic and intrinsic factors on learning performance and behaviors, and these factors have the decisive and foremost effects on narrators' learning behaviors and determinations. However, this does not mean that we should neglect the objective factors from extrinsic and external environment, which have constructed an important and complete picture of the various conditions for one's learning. In this way, we need to analyze the different motivations from the outer and inner environment, with sufficient consideration to the extrinsic and intrinsic factors, as well as the direct and indirect functions on the learning performance, thoughts, and behaviors.

(4) The description of the diagram with "Ideal type"

From the empirical research so far, we cannot make out the general types for each person or group. Each has its own character and features, although some of them have the same living and learning background in the society. We can use the "ideal type" to describe general types and features of different categories with the typical or extreme manifestations and performances.

As one of the most important contributions of Weber to sociology in the modern era, we can see that the "Ideal type" is a methodological tool that looks at reality objectively. "The Ideal types are nothing to do with values. Its function as a research tool is for classification and comparison" (Priyadarshini, n.d.). As mentioned by Weber, "The Ideal typical concept will develop our skill in imputation in research. It is not a description of reality but it aims to give unambiguous means of expression to such a description" (Weber, 1904). Therefore, when we use the ideal type to describe and demonstrate the different types and categories of influential factors and motivations in this research. We have not set concrete or specific examples as the standard ones in the diagram; however, we have regarded the examples and cases as a whole in the general research field and extracted the abstract notions by labeling them with the x and y axes based on the different character of each narration, supported by each experience during their learning process. Just as explained by Priyadarshini, "Ideal types are not formed out of a nexus of purely conceptual thought, but are created, modified and sharpened through the empirical analysis of concrete problems" (Priyadarshini, n.d.). Therefore, the ideal type is not used to describe the concrete scenes of the empirical

research results or conclusions, but to describe abstract notions with explanations of each model and type as a kind of "measuring instrument" formed by different features of influential factors based on the narrations gathered for this research. The following diagram can clearly demonstrate such relations and features of each type:
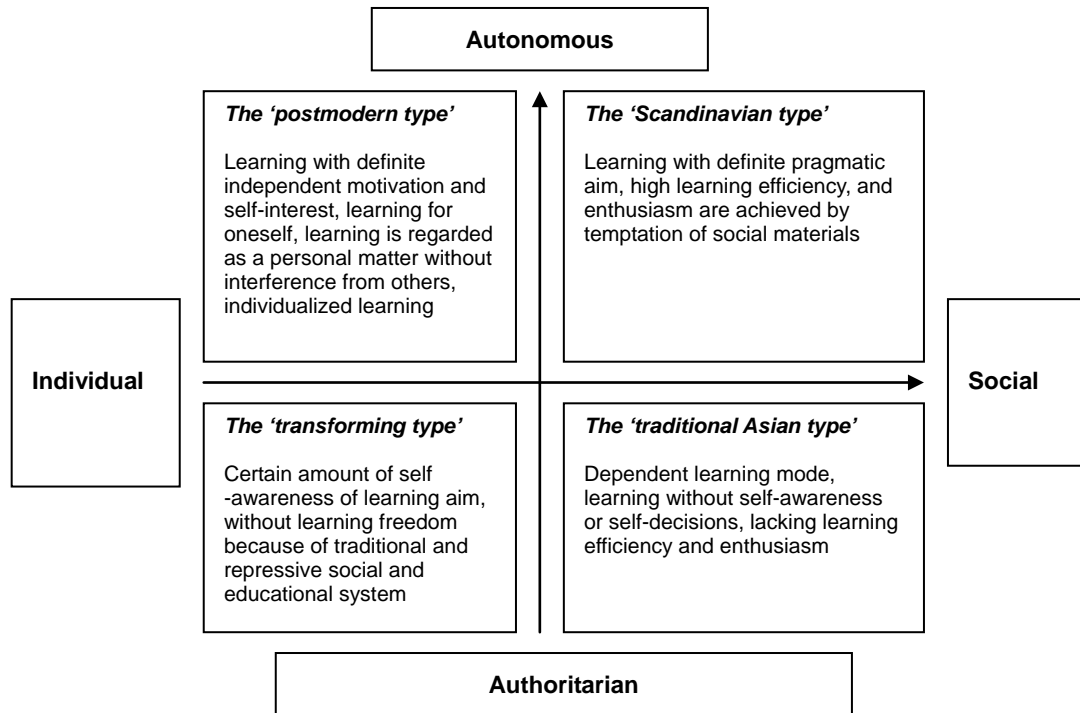

Diagram 9: The "Ideal type" of this research

According to summary and abstraction of each learning mode and frequency of key words in the narration, we can conclude the features and traits of each quadrant as:

A) The "postmodern type:" Learning with definite independent motivation and self- interest, learning for oneself, learning that is regarded as a personal matter without interference from others; a kind of individual learning. The learning purpose is for self- promotion. Therefore the learning motivation is based on individual demands and willingness. In this type, insisting on the primacy of individual rights in the abstract has always been supported and verified by the independent learning choices and determinations without any extrinsic influences. This type may also result in the reflection of individualism in the field of lifelong learning. This type has also been labeled as "post-industrial" or "reflective modernity" (Beck, et al., 2003, pp1-2). Economic globalization and modern transmission of knowledge have set higher and higher demands for "individual strategies of social and professional learning" (Alheit, 2013). "Human capital" has been valued highly with the realistic functions in the social background for this type. "This, undoubtedly, prevents

restrictive frameworks and increases individual flexibility," and therefore, the learning decisions and choices have been given freedom; however, the functions and effects of learning, especially lifelong learning "cannot be marketed in the short term," but rather with a "devaluation" in the social views and perspectives (Alheit, 2013b). Along with the free learning features, the societies with these kinds of learning attitudes evidently tend to more or less "neo-liberal" solutions (Alheit, 2013b).

B) The "Scandinavian type:" Learning with definite pragmatic aim. High learning efficiency and enthusiasm are achieved by temptation of social materials. This type has also demonstrated "social utilitarianism" as one of the most important influential factors during the whole lifelong learning process; however, the driving force from extrinsic temptations and pressures have stimulated the learning motivations to have the endogenous characteristics. In other words, the intrinsic requirements and willingness for learning, influenced by extrinsic factors, have always promoted one's learning progress. In this type, the utilizable individual qualification, known as "human capital," and the social requirements and pressures have organically unified and integrated. The reason this type has not transformed to the neo-liberal style is based on the "long tradition of reformist social movements in the society" (Alheit, 2013b).

C) The "transforming type:" There is a certain amount of self-awareness of learning aim, however this type is without learning freedom because of a traditional and repressive social and educational system. Family, schools and teachers, society, and peers have still played important or even pivotal roles in individuals' learning process. The character of this type shows both contradiction and mutualism, which have been constructed by the extrinsic and intrinsic factors. This type has been played a prominent function during the adolescence of many narrators, who do not have independent capability in their learning or other aspects of life. This type often exists for a shorter period of one's learning process, as this contradictory status has always been inclined to become either the 'postmodern type' or the 'traditional Asian type' which have more distinct subjects as the dominant influential factors in lifelong learning. The transforming process in this type could be regarded as a kind of transition to modernity according to the efforts of "resistance against the restrictive system, and this type can be always found in the 'transitional countries' (particularly the developmental 'tiger states' of East Asia or Brazil)" (Alheit, 2013b).

D) The "traditional Asian type:" Dependent learning mode, learning without self- awareness or self-made decisions. This type rarely is characterized by high learning efficiency or enthusiasm. The influential factors are mostly originating from family, schools and teachers, society, and peers; therefore, the learning motivations also seem pragmatic. The learning decisions, as well as

determinations in the whole life, have been influenced and even determined by the extrinsic factors. The intrinsic thoughts and views towards learning and other matters in one's life have been oppressed and instead rely on the outer factors. Therefore, the learning seems to be dependent on the outer environment. This type is quite similar to the "Restriction-Social Cohesion" type by Alheit in his lecture of "Between Cultures." He stated that this type "does not yet represent any 'social capital' in a modern sense. This type is to be found historically in pre-modern communities, but interestingly enough also in the former state socialist systems" (Alheit, 2013b).

(5) The cluster diagram of each educational mentality

Each narration can be regarded as a unit, which contains the different learning motivations and influential factors. We can mark these main features and general influential factor groups relating to learning motivations and influential factors of narrations according to the x- and y-coordinate with points on the diagram, then link them with curves and colors, and finally create a cluster picture (Alheit, 2013). The following cluster results were found based on the German and Chinese narrations:

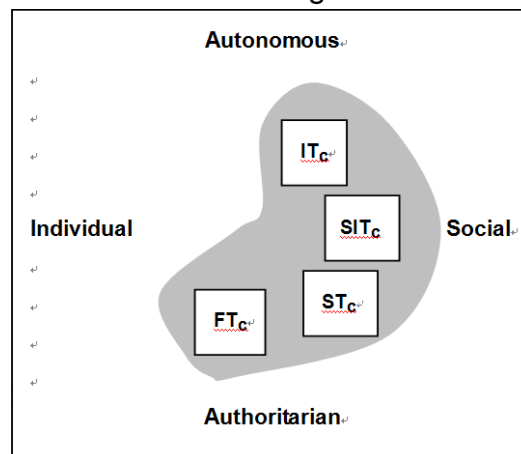A) The cluster diagram of Chinese learning and educational mentality[1]:

Diagram 10: Chinese educational mentality

B) The cluster diagram of German learning and educational mentality:

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[1] The Capital symbol as "IT" represents individual factors, "ST" means the social factors, "SIT" means the schools, peers and teachers factors, and "FT" represents the family factors.
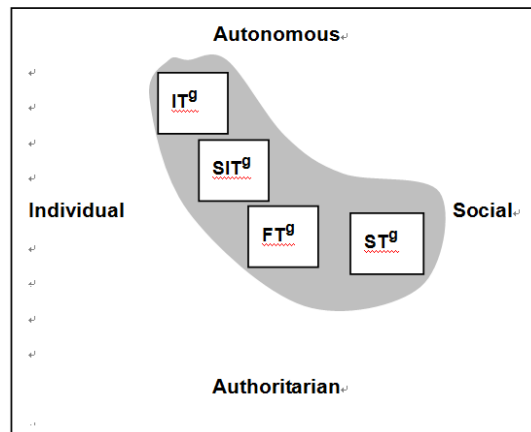
Diagram 11: German educational mentality

Theoretically, the Asian students have different performances and models in the authoritative styles. This can be confirmed by Chao's research results, which state "Asian student sample rated their parents higher on the authoritarian style (i.e., reflecting unquestioning obedience to parents) and lower on the more 'optimal' authoritative style (i.e., reflecting parental expectations for mature behavior and encouragement of open two-way communications between parents and children), the opposite of the European-American student sample" (Chao, 1994, pp1111-1112). Chao has also mentioned that the "Chinese were significantly higher than European-Americans on the standard measures for parental control and authoritarian parenting style, but not for authoritative parenting style. It was also significantly higher on Chinese child-rearing ideology items" (Chao, 1994, pp1116). In this dissertation research, we can also find the evidence from the cluster diagrams to confirm that the Chinese narrators experienced the authoritarian style to a greater extent than the German narrators, which has formed from the external elements which exert objective pressures on every aspect of individuals' learning process.

Based on the diagram and the cluster pictures of German and Chinese lifelong learning motivations and influential factors, we can see that the difference in learning conditions, notions, and feelings between these countries is tremendous. The Chinese interviewees care more about social utilitarianism in their learning process, and are more inclined to be influenced by extrinsic factors. Therefore, the learning mode features dependency. The general features of the Chinese lifelong learning influential factors and motivations approach the "traditional Asian type," while also relating to the "Scandinavian type" and "transforming Type" slightly. If the type experienced transformation, we predict it would become to the "Scandinavian type" or "transforming Type," with autonomous features in the learning process. It would be difficult for this type to transform from "traditional Asian type" directly to the "post-modern type" unless there is a sudden social mutation which could drive the learning

views to change along with the change of ideology.

However, the German learning situation is just the opposite, as the learning process is more independent, with self-made decisions and self-fulfilling wishes, and a lack of extrinsic factors, such as the pursuit of money, fame, and social position. Based on the highly developed social, technical, economic, political, and cultural structure, we can find that the German influential factors and motivations belong to the "postmodern type." This means that human capital has been paid sufficient attention, without forceful or compulsory pressures from the extrinsic environment. Although the learning process seems to be very free, the lifelong learning activities are not immediately repaid by the market. However, the need for learning, as well as lifelong learning, has stemmed from the rapid development of technology, culture, and modern industry, as well as the learning concepts of people in the society along with the social changes. There is also a trend towards a "neo-liberal" style for this type, which is a reflection of individualism in the field of lifelong learning, without restriction of one's lifelong learning behaviors, and an expansion of learning features to each aspect in society.

(6) Summary
The results of this simple typology are of eminent use in developing measures and models for a qualitative comparison of lifelong learning influential factors and motivations based on different social backgrounds of modern societies (Alheit, 2013b). According to the comparison of typical narrative contents, we have discovered subtle distinctions within the ideal types of distinct and individual influential factors and motivations for lifelong learning. This also requires more systematic research on the concrete and detailed materials to make complete analysis. However, we have already formed the specific "figuration" (i.e. the subtle logic of the cohesion of characteristics) that Elias' and Bourdieu's analyses deal with (Alheit, 2013b).

7 The analysis of influential factors on lifelong learning in China and Germany

According to the narrative contents and the broader analysis in the last chapter, it is obvious that there are many differences in lifelong learning conditions in China and Germany. Based on the macro, meso, and micro-level analysis discussed previously (Alheit, 2009, pp116-128), including history, economy, law, institutions, educational practices, and general educational cultures in each country, the research should do more to connect the concrete narrative contents and individual lifelong learning situations with the analysis at three scales in each country. In this way, the background of lifelong learning influential factors, such as individual, family, society, school, peer, and teachers, can be investigated and combined with the real and vivid living conditions. The following analysis investigates more deeply the influential factors for lifelong learning effectiveness, choices, decisions, and conditions.

7.1 The reasons and backgrounds of family influential factors

7.1.1 The reasons and backgrounds of family influential factors in China
(1) Learning and other decision made by parents instead of children.
This is the reflection of the traditional Chinese family influences and relationships on learning behaviors. It is also a result of the traditional Chinese educational culture acting on the ordinary people's learning matters.

From ancient times, the family is the most important unit in the daily life for the Chinese, who have to obey the orders from parents or elder relatives (Zhou, 2013). This is the fundamental filial obedience, which is regarded as the traditional virtue for the Chinese nation. However, when such filial obedience becomes an authority and interference in the daily life, such as affecting learning choices and attitudes for children, we can see that learning rights by ordinary people have been deprived by such authority. Learning choices are made by others without independent minds or ideas. In this sense, the traditional family relationships have gone beyond their proper scope, to affect and intervene with the basic rights of the next generation (Zhou, 2013). Taken in this sense, it is not strange that in many Chinese families, the learning choices have been influenced or even made by parents or others relatives instead of the learners themselves. In the current society, there is still such conservative family educational form which orders children to obey the orders from elders, who are always playing the indisputable role of authority in a family.

The conservative Chinese educational cultures have restricted the individuals' creative thoughts related to learning, and therefore, the lifelong learning

thoughts have been limited by this cultures a lot (Chen, 2007, pp18-19). In China, the main education culture has originated from the family education; therefore, the learning in the family is the main learning form during the childhood of each Chinese person. Under such circumstances, learning seems to be part of the daily living matters in a family. An individual's learning seems to be not an individual matter, but the matter shared and discussed by the whole family. In this sense, the learning is not determined by individuals independently, but is discussed by the whole family (Song, Zhang & Wang, 2014). Moreover, parents or relatives of the family would like to make decisions for their children, or give instructive suggestions or orders, regardless of the importance of the decisions to their children's fate or their children's age. Under such circumstances, the new learning forms are not always be accepted by all family members. If the view on lifelong learning is not positive across the whole family, engagement in lifelong learning for many Chinese seems to be quite difficult. This is also an important reason for the lower enthusiasm or initiative by Chinese youth for lifelong learning (Song, Zhang & Wang, 2014).

(2) Financial and educational background of parents.
This factor is mainly affected by the historical, educational, organizational, and economic situations in China.

Firstly, throughout Chinese history, the main source of the financial support for learning has been always from family, such as the income of parents. Therefore, a main task for parents and family members is working for income to afford the learning fees of their offspring. In this way, there is always no doubt about the validity or rationality of such financial support from family members on an individuals' learning process (Song, Zhang & Wang, 2014). There is also another belief that when children get such financial support from family, the educational rights and authority have to be transferred from individuals themselves to the main funding bodies. In this way, the learning behaviors and thoughts have to be developed under the influence of the parents. Generation after generation, the learning ideas have formed an old and fixed style, without many changes. Therefore, the opinions of older generations are always present in the current attitude toward lifelong learning.

Secondly, the educational institutions and organizations in China do not care much about the financial conditions for most learners pursuing lifelong and continuing learning after leaving school or university. In other words, such learning behaviors have not been supported by the aids of society or educational organizations (Song, Zhang & Wang, 2014). The main aim of establishing such educational organizations and institutions are for the profits of educational fees paid by learners; therefore, the learners who could not afford the tuition fees will not have the continuing or lifelong learning chances after compulsory education regulated by the government. Under such

educational circumstances, the learning motivation and enthusiasm is not enhanced (Song, Zhang & Wang, 2014).

The economic situation in China is still somewhat traditional and officially regulated, which means only formal, full-time jobs are accepted by society and get proper salary. Other job forms, such as part-time jobs or self-employed businesses are not given attention (Chen, 2014). Therefore, the financial support for individuals' learning before attaining an official job in society is only coming from the salary of parents. It is almost impossible for the individuals who want to learn while doing part-time work. Taken in this sense, such dependency on parental economic support for individuals' lifelong and continuing learning is justified and reasonable. However, this is also creates a helplessness for the Chinese youth who want to self-fund their education (Chen, 2014).

(3) Little learning time and few learning chances for the breadwinner.
The time which should or could be spent on learning has been taken up by the social and material matters in life. This situation has been caused by historical, economic, and educational culture in China (Song, Zhang & Wang, 2014) .

From the Chinese history, we can find that Chinese people are more willing to spend their time on matters which could receive rewards quickly. Therefore, time in the daily life is always spent for the benefit and profit maximization. However, the effects of learning behaviors do not show immediate social or economic benefits to the learners or financial supporters (Song, Zhang & Wang, 2014). Therefore, there is little enthusiasm for learning after formal learning in schools. Moreover, each working adult has been regarded as the breadwinner for their family since ancient times, and the main task for him or her after graduation from school or university is not learning, but earning money to support the whole family (Wu & Huang, 2008, pp23-24). Taken in this sense, there is not strong support, or even negative attitudes, towards learning or broadening knowledge during working years.

The reason for the urgent need for money in China is based on the poor economic situation, which has limited the learning chances for individuals during their working years. As there is insufficient financial support for even basic living expenses, there is a strong need for family members to spend their time earning money (Wen, 2014). If there were enough financial support and social security, such as medical guarantee, educational funds for offspring, and old-age pension, then there would be less people striving for money or power in the daily working life. Instead, there would be more attention paid to development of individual qualities through lifelong learning and other learning forms (Wen, 2014).

The general educational culture in China does not emphasize the function of learning for more knowledge or self-improvement, but rather the material and social results of learning, such as improvement of the living standard or social status. Therefore, the main learning motivations are also based on such cultures, and the time expenditure is more inclined towards maximizing utility. In this way, the time spent acquiring pure knowledge seems to be useless (Wen, 2014). Thus, most time is spent on work which could bring individuals more pragmatic results and achievements.

(4) Expectation from parents for quick success.
One main focus in Chinese family education is to train children to be great men and women by learning well in school and having good performance in society. This is demonstrated in the most famous Chinese proverb describing the aim of family education as raising "boys to be successful as dragons and girls as phoenix." This demonstrates that Chinese parents have great expectations for the future prospects of their children (Song, Zhang & Wang, 2014). Under such traditional thoughts, the learning behaviors by individuals are not independent matters which could be determined by children themselves. On the contrary, parents and other family members are more active and willing to participate in children's learning activities in order to help them (Song, Zhang & Wang, 2014). The hopes or expectations that stem from learning activities are not based on the freewill of learners, but more on the expectations of parents or family members. For many centuries, it has been the case that Chinese parents and family members are making learning decisions instead learners themselves (Song, Zhang & Wang, 2014).

The whole Chinese education culture expects quick success and achievements; therefore, the learning behaviors which last for a long period without clear results would be regarded as useless or subordinate (Song, Zhang & Wang, 2014). Under such learning opinions, the learning choices in a family are always focusing on the immediate achievements from children's learning behaviors. Taken in this sense, lifelong learning, which could not give a clear outcome after a long period learning, is not endeared by parents in the traditional Chinese families. Moreover, education for children is always a great matter in the daily life for a family (Song, Zhang & Wang, 2014). Therefore, the educational choices for children should always be careful, even far-sighted, to promote one's future. Taken in this sense, it is not surprisingly that Chinese parents prefer to make educational choices for their children, because they believe the children could not make rational educational choices themselves during their early years.

7.1.2 The reasons and backgrounds for family influential factors in Germany

(1) The attitude from parents and family members on children's learning.

There is seldom interference from parents on children's learning behaviors or process. Instead, family members sometimes offer suggestions based on their own personal living and learning experiences, without pressure or obvious expectations on the learning achievements of children. This attitude from parents and family members on children's learning is based on the German historical situation and overall educational culture (Li & Sun, 2014).

In Germany, when the children are of a certain age, parents believe that children should be in contact with society, without reliance on parents. Children have their own rooms and most parents give great respect to their children's lifestyle and personal privacy (Elliott, 1999, pp44-50). Generally speaking, parents are not allowed to look through their children's private things without the permission from children. With such respect for individual rights, each German parent wants to encourage their children to be independent. There is the principle that every person ought to respect and protect his or her own rights as well as those of others (Li & Sun, 2014).

German children live according to their personal rights and interests (Elliott, 1999, pp44-50). Most German learners deny their learning behavior has been influenced by family factors, such as the parents' orders or opinions. The learning decisions and determinations are more based on their own thoughts and ideas. In other words, the narrators' attitudes towards their learning always seem to be quite self-confident, expressing many personal ideas, plans, determinations, and opinions. In China, parents choose the schools to which children apply and groups in which they participate, even during university years. In contrast, in Germany, these matters are regarded as personal affairs which should not be interfered with by parents. The Germans pay more attention to creating favorable conditions for children's learning, without putting a lot of pressure on their children. They are also very concerned about the children's achievements, without emphasizing their scores specifically (Elliott, 1999, pp44-50).

German parents will not put their own desires above the development of their children, but treat their children's education with a rational attitude. German parents pay more attention to encouraging their children emotionally, and are very concerned with making their children feel loved from an early age (Elliott, 1999, pp44-50). Such love encourages each child to do better. When children have bad behavior or scores, parents will be very careful to investigate the cause, considering the issues actively without putting pressure on children. German parents will not insist on the getting the best scores, achievements, or performances from children, but rather focus on training their children to learn

consciously and with initiative. An example of this is when children do their homework, parents will encourage them to find their own answers, without giving answers to their children (Zhang & Wang, 2004, pp21-23).

In the German law on the educational matters, Article VII, paragraph 6 of the constitution of the federal Germany has made it quite clear that it is forbidden to establish the pre-school, or "Vorschule" in German, to train pupils before their school years (Witzlack, 1973, pp2-3). This is a legal method of maintaining the free and natural development of character and personality from childhood, thus giving more free space for children to think creatively by themselves.

(2) The imitation of learning habits of parents and family members by children. This imitation behavior is generally based on the national educational culture and Germany history.

Throughout history, the Nordic people have suffered a lot, such as during the Franco-German war, and First and Second World Wars. After each war, there was always a reconstruction. During these reconstruction periods, Germans passed down their experiences of bearing hardships and hard work to the next generation, along with their advanced knowledge and skills (Kitchen, 2011).

From the German educational culture, we can see that the rigorous, careful, and independent characteristics have been cultivated by most Germans during their childhood, according to their family education (Elliott, 1999, pp44-50). Germans firstly focus on giving their children a good environment, as well as setting an exemplary example to influence children. They hope to teach their children the true meaning of maturity. Germans emphasize family education is in each aspect of living. Some parts of their learning are a kind of familial inheritance from generation to generation, with the similar learning interest and concerns. This kind of imitation does not occur intentionally, but more unintentionally with daily living and learning together (Zhang & Wang, 2004, pp21-23). This imitation does not only influence the learning habits and interest, but also the working and career choices. This inheritance and idolization of the elder generation is not shared by the Chinese, who must imitate their elder generation sometimes without free choice by following the suggestions and advice from parents or relatives. In Germany, we can see such inheritance occurs in the daily life, as each German child has learned life skills and knowledge unconsciously from their parents. Therefore, children can choose to learn from their parents and relatives or to act on their own. This is a kind of free style of learning and inheritance (Zhang & Wang, 2004, pp21-23).

(3) The family circumstance as material guarantee and factors for children's learning.

When we talk about learning opportunities, there is always a problem for Chinese learners who have to consider the financial situation for their learning fees; however, for the German narrators, we can see few people expressed concern about their financial support in their daily life. Therefore, the learning situation and financial background for Germans have always been sufficient. There are also channels for working part-time to earn money by themselves. This situation in Germany is mainly caused by the German social and educational culture (Roloff & Dorbitz, 2013).

The independent household's education in Germany is also reflected in financial management. After a child is born, parents give their children a bank account in order to allow their kids to learn to sensibly manage their money by themselves in the future (Roloff & Dorbitz, 2013). The family circumstances during and after the Second World War were quite adverse for children's learning process. Children could not get sufficient education as their parents had to worry more about the living and eating matters each day, as demonstrated by narrators Mueller and Mann. For the children living in the current era, such as narrators Brand and Tina, they did not have worries about the material or financial support for their education, which could be dealt with by parents or society. Therefore, the learning situations seem quite different among generations. The attitudes from parents on children's learning behaviors are influenced and restricted quite a lot by the family's financial situation. In turn, the family situations are a reflection of the social circumstances. Despite the generally affluent living standards for German families, children have developed a relatively independent habit from an early age, as most children have experience of working for money during their secondary school years (Ludwig von Friedeburg, 1992). After graduating from high school or at a certain age, children will leave home to create their own way of life according to their own choices.

Germans pay special attention to the cultivation of good qualities in their children. For example, caring for animals is a first lesson for many German children receiving a "good education" (Roloff & Dorbitz, 2013). Many German families ask children to take care of animals, and they learn to take care of themselves in the process.

(4) Family education background and parents' educational level.
From the narrations, we can see that lots of German parents or relatives have been highly educated; therefore, the offspring's learning habits and cognition have also been influenced by parents and relatives because they could instruct offspring with better methods during their learning period. This situation is based on the German history and educational culture (Roloff & Dorbitz, 2013).

During the whole German history, we can find that from generation to

generation, education has been always a social concern. No one went uneducated, even during wartime. For each narrator, the family education contents were always impressive, as narrators could remember their family education during their early years quite clearly and with details (Köller & Baumert, 2002). This education culture has produced many successful German scientists, including 105 Nobel Prize winners (Nobel Prize Facts). Therefore, in German history, the educational matters are always the most important in the social affairs.

The German education culture shows us that knowledge has always been respected in society. The social status of knowledgeable individuals, such as professors or scholars, is quite high in the German society. Taken in this sense, there is always a pursuit for pure knowledge and skills in German society. Most Germans prefer to learn according to their own interests and consideration of the social views towards knowledgeable individual. In this way, it is not surprisingly to see that there are so many people in Germany with high academic degrees and skills (Brockmann, Clarke & Winch, 2011). This education culture is also a factor for lifelong learning thoughts by the modern generation, which always inherit the good tradition from elder generations, who themselves possessed strong educational backgrounds.

7.1.3 The comparison of family influential factors between China and Germany

(1) The difference in influence or attitude from parents on children's learning.
Compared with the attitude from German parents and family members on children's learning, which is to allow free learning choices for children, we can see that most Chinese parents interfere a lot about their children's learning and living matters. The main reason for this is the different educational cultures, social forms among people, and features of relationships between parents and children. The Chinese people always pay a lot of attention to the family relationships. Therefore, during the daily life, the family unit plays the most important role in the social life. Each member in a family should obey the orders made by the head of a family. This is the traditional family cultures, which have been consistent for each period in Chinese history (Zhou, 2013). Under such circumstances, it is not surprisingly that the learning choices have to be made by parents in Chinese families. In addition, children are not regarded as independent individuals before their marriage; therefore, parents and relatives are always feeling worried about the future of their children. Based on their experiences, they always give suggestions to their children to help them with their future. An example of this is Pen's mother always telling him that "he should learn very well in the school, and only study can change his fate, and if he does not learn hard, he will lead a poor life in his adulthood".

In contrast, the German educational culture and law focus on independent

learning and living (Zhang & Duan, 2013, pp9-13). Therefore, during the German history, we can see that Germans are used to learning and living by themselves, without interference by their parents. Once they are 18 years old, their learning and living matters belong to themselves, as parents no longer finance them. In addition, the laws in Germany protect the right to education for children. These ideas can be confirmed by Mueller's narration about his family education as "my parents, eh, they did not interfere with my affairs, but just let me do things with my own willing." Taken in this sense, the learning activities and choices in Germany belong to learners themselves, without any interference from outside. The lifelong learning seems to be also quite independent; therefore, the current lifelong learning activities in Germany seem to be more free and successful than the situation in China.

(2) The difference in expectation from parents on children's learning results.
According to the differences in attitude from parents, we can find that the Chinese parents always exert expectations for quick success and great honors from learning, as this is the main learning motivation in the views of parents. This is also the main expression of Chinese family education. However, the German parents are acting as role models for children, who are willing to imitate the learning habits, and even career paths of parents and family members. This is illustrated by the narrative content of Tina: "For my career plan and choice, I have been influenced by my parents, who thought working as a teacher would be good and, eh, even super for a woman." The reasons behind such differences between Chinese and German parents are mainly due to the historical and economic situations, as well as the different educational cultures. In China, the traditional educational culture and family culture tell Chinese children to obey orders and suggestions from parents (Zhou, 2013, pp3-4). Therefore, the expectations from parents are always the decisive factors on individuals' learning choices and behaviors. In addition, one of the main reasons for raising children is to uphold the honor of ancestors, and in this way, the learning behaviors and choices by individuals are matters to be determined by the family together. The Chinese parents always have great expectations for their offspring's success in the future through learning. In this way, the learning behaviors by Chinese individuals are always with pragmatic purpose, rather than aiming for the pure pursuit of knowledge. This is expressed by the narrator Chi: "I did not want to be a graduate student... (but) to earn money earlier was much more urgent." In contrast, the German parents do not interfere much with offspring's learning behaviors, which have been regarded as personal matters. However, the behaviors and successes of parents in the society could set a good example for offspring. In this way, the learning behaviors of Germans students are influenced indirectly and voluntarily by parents. This is expressed by the narrator Brand: "I could feel that the influences from my parents, that is the greatest to me...I could feel that my father has set a good example to me." There is no expectation from

German parents on their children's future. Parents themselves are more independent with their life and future, and therefore, their life and learning seem to be more self-responsible.

Moreover, the difference in economic situation between the countries is also an important factor. On average, the German families possessed more wealth than Chinese families; therefore, the pursuit of wealth is not so necessary in the German daily life. Chinese families are more likely to be worried about the financial matters which relate to their social insurance and their living standard. Therefore, the pursuit of money is one of the most important motivations for daily learning and working. This is demonstrated by the narrator Pen, who explained that after his graduation from university, "I could…earn much more money for what I learnt in the university." Taken in this sense, the expectations from parents are based on such worries and precautions for future risk.

(3) The differences in material guarantee and family circumstances for children's learning
The economic situations in these countries differ from each other greatly; therefore, the family circumstances are quite different. The per capita disposable income in Germany is about six times higher than that in China (Hu, 2014). Therefore, the financial basis for learning is much higher in Germany than in China, especially for lifelong learning, which is seen as an additional learning behavior by many Chinese. With strong financial support, the German students can learn without anxiety about material matters. However, for many Chinese learners are more concerned about improvement of their living standard and social insurance, such as medical insurance and educational opportunities for the next generation. Therefore the most direct and effective way of realizing the goal of living better and giving their children better opportunities is to earn money during their working period and even through their education. This can be confirmed by the narration from Chi: "I just wanted to earn money to show my filial piety to my mother, because...my family was not very rich at that time." In this way, learning seems to be a tool to realize one's goals in China.

Moreover, the traditional education cultures in both countries are also important. Chinese traditional culture has told people to live and work for family. The social life is always relating a lot to one's family; therefore, the learning seems to be more a group matter. The interviewee Gong illustrated this in saying, "I had to deal with and communicate with a lot of people, to chat with all kinds of people." In contrast, German people do not care much about the family situation when they make choices about learning and advanced studies. Decisions are based more on their own wishes or needs. Moreover, when Germans grow up, they do not have the same pressures faced by Chinese people, such as medical and educational security and insurance, and the

requirement to buy a house for a wedding. As the German interviewee Mann expressed, the social welfare system has guaranteed the learning right of ordinary individuals so that "nowadays, when a student could not afford such fees or expenditures, the official organization would give help." From the research, we can find that many German interviewees have said that their learning motivations are just based on their own needs, without many considerations on other factors. This is also a result of economic difference between these countries.

(4) The difference in educational background of parents.
The educational background of parents in both countries is also a key difference when we discuss the children's learning behaviors and success. From the research, we can see that when parents were better educated and paid, then they exerted proper influences on their children's learning behaviors; however, when parents could not be well-educated during their early years or were not well-paid during their working years, they had more influence and were more likely to express pragmatic ideas on their children's learning and career choices.

The reason for such difference in educational background of parents in both countries has resulted from the historical, educational, and even the economic background in both countries (Chen, 2014). Due to the Cultural Revolution in China, many Chinese people born during 1940's to 70's could not get the proper and timely education, as they have compelled to take part in the revolution for political reasons. Therefore, their educational levels are generally lower than the Chinese born after the end of Cultural Revolution. In contrast, the Germans have received abundant education without interruption, even during the war years. For example, during the Second World War, Germans still had a change to be educated in schools and universities (BMBF, 2012). Therefore, after the war, the reconstruction of Germany could be quite quick and fluid. However, China spent many years with reconstruction.

When parents were more educated, then children received proper family education from parents. German interviewee Tina's narration demonstrates this idea: "from my childhood, I have formed a habit of learning by the influences from my parents, who always liked reading themselves." Another obvious reason for the difference of educational background of parents in both countries is economic, which has determined the possibilities of education in each society. Based on the social principle, the economic base determines the superstructure; therefore, the economic situation is always the decisive factor for the educational opportunities of ordinary people in society (Chen, 2014). Therefore, it is not surprisingly that many Chinese were not able to get good educational resources during their young period. When they grew up, they became parents and desired more from the learning results of their children to

make up for their own regret during their learning period (Zhou, 2013).

7.2 The reasons and backgrounds of school, teacher, and peer influential factors

7.2.1 The reasons and backgrounds of school, teacher, and peer influential factors in China

(1) The influences from teachers and classmates during the whole school time. The dominate role played by teachers in the learning process of Chinese individuals has been formed from the Chinese history, the teaching-learning organizational relationships, and the Chinese education culture (An, 2013, pp193-195).

From the historical process, we can see that knowledge has been passed down mostly in the form of "mouths to ears," meaning teaching behaviors are the main aspect in the whole learning process, as students could learn mainly from the teachers' knowledge storage. In this way, individual learning behaviors have close relationships with the teaching behaviors, methods, and attitudes. Teachers have been regarded as the sole source of learning and knowledge. This is also the reason that the thoughts on lifelong learning in China are always related with the class teaching and teachers' role (An, 2013, pp193-195).

In terms of the teaching-learning organizational relationships, we can see that the teachers' role for students' learning seems to be indispensable. The narrator Yi demonstrated this in saying, "later there came a new head teacher in my grade 3, on whom I have particularly deep impact." Not only the knowledge, but also the learning habits, attitudes, purpose, thoughts, and even plans and expectations in the future could be influenced by teachers' in schools and universities. Schools and universities are the main living and practicing places for most Chinese students during their learning years, even more so than their homes (Chen, 2014). Therefore, under these circumstances, the relationships with teachers are playing an important role in students' learning process. Some narrators felt that their lifelong learning thoughts and their learning motivations have been influenced by their learning experiences during their school years, and mainly by their teachers. The narrator Chen was influenced by his teacher quite a bit: "A very good teacher affected me a lot at that time…told me to do everything I wanted as I was young and not to wait for the time to past." In such teaching and learning relationships and organizational circumstances, the learning behaviors by students have been influenced largely by teachers' attitudes and skills during students' early learning years.

The Chinese educational culture tells the Chinese learners that learning behaviors should obey teachers' orders. This is demonstrated by a proverb which states "one day a teacher, then as a father for the whole life" (An, 2013, pp194). Therefore, teachers' role and status for students are always indisputable in early learning years (Zhang & Zhang, 2005). Taken in this sense, the learning thoughts of students are always subordinate; while teachers are always have the leading role. The contents are mainly focused on examinations, which are demonstrated by Ruo's narration: "the class like that…was really very boring, all the contents which the teachers taught were about the examinations". The lifelong learning ideas by normal citizens in China have also been influenced by this educational culture. Learning attitudes and expectations have been limited by these learning experiences controlled by teachers and their teaching methods.

(2) School activities and school life as a miniature society.
The participation in school activities and undertaking administrative positions are an inevitable process for each Chinese student. Such participation has been affected by the Chinese overall educational culture and the learning-teaching practices.

From the traditional Chinese education culture, we can find that participation in school collective activities has a long history. Friendships during the school years are some of the most important relationships for Chinese people; therefore the school life always plays an important role in the lifelong and continuing learning choices in later life (Ma, 1997). As each student has spent most of their time during school years in class with classmates, the influences from classmates and teachers always can affect the thoughts of students during activities in schools and other parts of life. The ones who undertake administrative positions in classes have special experiences because these roles not only serve other students in classes, but also enhance the social experience (Ding, 2012).

There are many more students nowadays in schools than ever before; therefore, it is always a burden for teachers to administrate a class. Thus, the administrative positions undertaken by students assisting teachers with governing a class are common in schools. School is the first place for most children to connect and communicate with strangers. Students must learn to understand this microcosm of society by interacting with classmates and teachers (An, 2013). Therefore, school activities and administrative responsibilities in a class can promote students' social growth and capabilities of organizing and managing. These activities have trained some students to be quite independent and capable during their schools years (An, 2013). In this way, the teaching-learning practices do not only mean the bidirectional effects of teachers to students, but also students to students. Therefore, the learning

experiences could not only entail scientific learning contents, but also social and other forms of training. Taken in this sense, Chinese students are quite mature after their learning years. When they enter adult society, they can have much more mature thoughts on social matters and living problems. Such experiences help with forming continuing learning and lifelong learning ideas, as such learning process require individuals to accumulate not only academic or scientific knowledge during learning years, but also the social and working experience.

(3) The pressures and performances in school and relationships with classmates.
Based on the Chinese history, learning-teaching practices, and operation of educational organizations, we can find the underlying reasons for the pressure for performance in the modern education system.

Throughout Chinese history, the ones who could get better scores were regarded as excellent and having a promising future, while the ones who could not get high scores would be regarded as futureless. Under such evaluation criteria, the main task of learning is for high scores during the school years (An, 2013, pp193-195). This is the traditional Chinese learning situation, which has until today. With such learning conditions, the main learning motivations in the minds of Chinese learners from their childhood are just for high scores and marks, the function of which they even do not know. This was mentioned by Shui in his narration: "Sometimes I feel very upset or depressed, but they just ask me, en, ask me about my scores and the performance at school." Attempting to prevail over others will pose great pressures on the learning activities of students, who are afraid of teachers' and parents' disappointment with their scores and performances (Song, Zhang & Wang, 2014). Their learning behavior becomes more pragmatic as a result. The narrator Ruo talked about this matter with her frank words, "I spent time in the class, that was just for the scores." When children have grown up, the main consideration for learning matters is also based on the pragmatic aims, such as achievements. Therefore, there will be fewer people willing to pursue lifelong learning when there are little or delayed gains from learning.

The educational institutions only allow high school entrance with high scores in examinations. The higher scores learners achieve in final examinations, the more hopeful chances they have for entering a better school or university (Chen, 2007). Therefore, under such direction, the main aim of learning for ordinary people is just better scores and the chance of entering a better school.

The daily learning activities carried out by students in schools are always affected by teachers and classmates around them. This is described by the

narrator Yi, who challenged his head teacher for a long time and felt "I was very popular among my classmates, but the teacher did so to me." As there are more and more students in a class, and the simple evaluation criteria during the school years is scores, the main means for teachers to assess students are also scores from examinations. Students do not only care about their own scores, but also like comparing scores with others. For example, narrator Chen paid a lot of attention to his classmates during his learning period, and he described "before the two exams, there were quite a lot of students who read books from morning to night." From teachers to parents, they all regard high scores and good performances in school as the standard of a good student, so this kind of belief becomes the guiding ideology for students'. In this way, the competition for better scores and performances among students are drastic, and the thoughts on learning have been distorted during this process (Mi, 2005).

(4) The life in university changes individual learning attitudes.
The reason for the importance of university learning is that students will become more mature, and views on world, values, and life could change during this period.

In China, universities play a great role in the whole education system, as higher education is always regarded as the last education phase for each learner. Therefore, the learning achievements from university seem more important than any other learning phases. The learning and living in university is the key period for the forming one's social views, ideals, learning thoughts, plans, and aims after graduation and even in the whole life. In this sense, universities are always exerting influences on learners, not only on the learning habits, but also on learning wishes, motivations, and thoughts on the meaning of learning after graduation from universities (Ying & Yan, 2008). However, there is little attention from the administrative teachers or leaders of universities on the daily school life of students, who have plenty of free time during the whole four years. Therefore, some of students have wasted their time with playing computer games or falling in love, without establishing an active and positive attitude or understanding of the importance of lifelong learning or continuing learning (Ying & Yan, 2008). After the university years, most students have learned more about relationships, social business, and community matters rather than pure professional academic knowledge. In this way, learning seems to be quite informal, but also quite fruitful, as they have learned much beyond books or classes.

(5) The efficiency of school learning has been valued.
The individual understanding about the efficiency of school learning reflects Chinese learning-teaching practices and educational historical process.

In viewing the learning-teaching practices, we can find the teaching process is bidirectional, as there is not only knowledge transference from teachers to students, but also the rethinking and introspection from students on the teaching process (Zhang & Zhang, 2005). After many years of school learning, students have different opinions on the learning efficiency and meanings of learning activities in schools and society, and they have formed various views on learning after graduation. The judgment and understanding about the efficiency of school learning are always based on the performance and attitude from teachers, because class is the main place for students during school learning, and contact with teachers are the main relationships during this period (Zhang & Zhang, 2005). Therefore, students enjoy evaluating teachers' performances, which could have different meanings for different students. During such evaluation process, there will be ideas about future learning triggered by the attitude and habits of teachers. From the narrations, we can also find that it is quite important for teachers to set a good example for their students in the aspect of lifelong learning attitudes, thoughts, and habits.

As is the traditional learning habit of Chinese learners, most people like to evaluate and measure the learning effects or achievements after a period of learning (Zhou, 2000). However, from such introspections, there will be much negative evaluation by learners for lifelong and continuing education, as there are no direct or immediate learning results or achievements. Many people give up on opportunities and lose interests as soon as they graduate, as they believe that the learning content in school is out of date, or they feel disconnected with society after a long period of learning in school or university (Ding, 2012). Then the learning motivations and enthusiasm decline. In contrast, when a man could find the effectiveness of learning for his job or promotion in the society, then he would insist on learning during his later life (Ding, 2012). We can see that it is a historical custom for Chinese people to evaluate and judge the efficiency of school learning with pragmatic views and thinking.

7.2.2 The reasons and backgrounds of school, teacher, and peer influential factors in Germany

(1) The emphasis on the role and function played by teachers in the learning process.

Although the influences by teachers and professors for students in Germany are only indirect, without compelling them to follow or obey the orders, we can still find from the interviews that there was always an emphasis on the role played by teachers. For example, George mentioned "during my learning in the schools, yes, I found the effects and influences from schools and teachers were quite great on the development of each student." When many narrators recall their learning days, they express their grateful feelings for the help of teachers, who are even regarded as the decisive factors for individual's

learning achievements. Moreover, the jobs and learning habits, as well as views on the world, have been influenced by teachers. Therefore, their lifelong learning ideas have been also influenced by teachers a lot (Köller & Baumert, 2002). Such influences are mainly based on the German law system and teaching-learning practices in Germany.

From the general thoughts and social comments, we can find that teachers are just playing the role of instructors for learning activities in German schools. Therefore, in the daily teaching activities, teachers could not interfere with the individual decisions by students themselves. In the learning life, teachers are just supervisors for students' safety in schools, otherwise there are no extra tasks or responsibilities for them (Zhang & Duan, 2013, pp9-12). From all the narrations, we can see that each narrator has been influenced more or less by their teachers during their learning years; however, when they talk about the process of their decision-making, they believe there was no interference from their teachers. As for Hanna, she thought her own opinion was the decisive factor for her learning: "For me learning and living experience, eh, the most important factor which influences my decisions and choices is, eh, me." Taken in this sense, teachers are more like helpers for students during their daily learning years, without giving direct opinions to students which might disturb the normal and natural thoughts by students themselves.

In the daily teaching-learning practices, we can see that the main learning contents taught by teachers are not only pure academic knowledge or skills, but also the thinking mode and problems solving methods. Therefore, each student could learn not only knowledge, but more practical and useful skills and methods which could be applied in the daily life and the learning in the future. As a teacher, Raabe believes that "my teachers have taught me much more than only knowledge, such as the learning habit, hobbies, eh, characters, personalities." The teaching methods, attitudes towards students, professional knowledge, help in the daily lives of students, and even the teachers' ethics are all the important criteria for evaluating teacher performance and importance to normal students. However, none of German narrators talk about the pressures or enforcement by teachers during their school years. In other words, the learning decisions and motivations are always in the hands of learners themselves. This is described by the narrator Raabe, who mentions her "determination to be a teacher in a school or university after gradation" has been made by herself. Therefore, learning should be also regarded as a personal activity, supported by teachers.

(2) The thoughts and criticisms of school systems and educational philosophy. We can see the habits and customs of criticizing school systems and educational philosophy have social and history roots.

The German history has told us that there is always a rebellious spirit in the national characters; therefore, individuals living in these circumstances are more independent and interested in challenging authority, such as teachers or government (Li & Sun, 2014). In this setting, the learning activities do not always obey teachers or governors in schools, but follow learners' own thoughts and considerations. Moreover, learners have their own judgments on the effectiveness of learning in school. For example, the narrator Penck expressed his feeling about the pressures for professors in universities as "The working situation for a professor in a university is always stressful, because, eh, firstly...this is a dilemma. Secondly, as a professor, he has to confront more and more students nowadays."

The older narrators are more inclined to compare the current educational system, performances, and achievements with their period, and come to the conclusion that the current educational system is not as good as before. Therefore, the learning habits are also not as good as the previous generation, especially the lifelong learning notions and belief. This was discussed by narrator Penck, who expressed concern that "there are fewer and fewer students having interest with these examinations and would not like to choose the subjects like these." This kind of introspection of the native educational system shows that the Germans are more likely to find problems in their learning process with a critical spirit. Such criticisms are more focusing on the general educational circumstances, without expressing irrational complaints. Therefore, at the end of each narration, there will always be some advice for the improvement of the educational system to adapt to the requirements of individuals (He, 2003). These kinds of thoughts and criticisms are a reflection of the critical spirit by the German nation, which has promoted the success of many philosophers in German history. Based on the independent thoughts, Germans have their own judgment on their continuing and lifelong learning behaviors. In this way, the learning behaviors are private, without any extra influences or interferences. This is confirmed by the narrator Raabe, who said "many German children could get individual development, eh, from the kindergarten education," which means the individual education has been offered from a very early period for students in Germany.

We can see that the German educational system, especially the higher educational system, is different from other countries as most German universities are public (Schulz, Li & Du, 2009). In other words, the government and society have offered universities sufficient financial support, including salaries for teaching and research staff, school construction and maintenance, routine administrative expenses, subsidies for students, free Internet access, and books for libraries. However, except the educational laws and policies influencing the general development trends of higher education, the government can seldom determine the internal governance in a university,

such as the election, appointment, or removal of principals and other senior managers in colleges and universities. Principals and deans of each faculty have to be elected by professors themselves, without interference from government. Therefore, principals and professors can do their research without requiring prior approval from superiors. The universities are truly the community of teachers and students.

(3) The atmosphere constructed by classmates and friends.
Although the school period for Germans is not as long as for Chinese students, from the narrations we can see that many people have been influenced by their classmates or friends during the school period. This is demonstrated by William's experience: "During that time, I got support from many friends and classmates." In this way, we can see the atmosphere constructed by classmates and friends originate from the teaching-learning practices in schools and the whole German educational culture.

The teaching form in schools and universities in Germany is always based on the collective activities and discussions. In other words, the learning behaviors are not individual activities, but collective activities which gain the wisdom of crowds and organizations through sufficient discussion (Zhang, 2003, p20). We can find that the homework for most German students are not only focusing on the individual content, but also the practical and group work; therefore, much homework assigned by German teachers is done by students together. In this way, the learning activities always mean not a personal behavior, but a group action, and each individual in this process could be affected and influenced by the discussion (Xu, 2006). Taken in this sense, the learning choices and considerations could be unconsciously affected by classmates in the daily learning period.

The overall education culture shows that the main companions during the learning period for most German students are their classmates in universities and schools; The result is that students' may conform to the learning behaviors, minds, hobbies, and even living mode of colleagues in a class or a learning group. For example, William found his friend "had the same hobbies as me, as we both loved football games and taking photos very much. Therefore, we always got together to play and chat." In this way, the opinions on lifelong and continuing learning could be transferred from one person to another, so that all ultimately share similar opinions on the learning motivations and purpose (Köller & Baumert, 2002). Another example of this is given by the narrator Brand, whose choice of major was influenced by an assessment of him from his best friend: "He could feel that I was fond of political things and affairs, and every time, when there was activity about political or collective issues, I was always the active member and had enthusiasm in taking part in it." Therefore, the educational culture and circumstances can be quite important and playing

significant effects on individuals' learning attitudes.

(4) The type and features of schools and performances during school years.
There are various types of schools, and the features of each are varied. The type and feature of schools, such as a religious or political focus, will directly influence the learning thoughts and habits. Therefore, the learning performances and opinions on schools and colleges differ among students. The reason and background of such variety exist in the teaching-learning practices and the establishment and operation of educational organizations and institutions (Brindley, Walti & Zawacki-Richter, 2004).

There are a total of 376 higher education institutions in Germany, including 102 comprehensive universities, 200 universities of applied science, 53 art schools, and 21 other institutions. There are more than 200 million German students studying in universities and colleges currently. Approximately 1.4 million are studying in comprehensive universities (AHK, 2013). Among all these educational organizations and institutions, we can find that their levels are distinct and clear, with discrete types, classifications, and stratifications. The level of universities can be broadly divided into integrated, polytechnic, or artistic universities and institutions, while the types of higher vocational colleges are also broadly divided into ordinary higher applied professional schools or institutes and public administrative schools and colleges. Each major in universities can be awarded a doctorate degree (Pan, Liu & Horst, 2008). Almost all of the medical professionals are included in the university, thus there are no specialized medical schools in the society, nor professional forestry, geology, agronomy colleges, or large-scale normal universities (Pan, Liu & Horst 2008). Few normal universities have the main task of training teachers for early secondary education, while the academic high school teachers are all coming from universities; therefore, the inheritance of academic thinking could be ensured.

The levels and types of universities have stabilized, as there are few mergers or upgrades among universities. In Germany, no higher applied professional college has upgraded to a university during the recent decades, nor vice versa. Taken in this sense, each college or university can stick to its educational philosophy and cherish their own characteristics and features (Pan, Liu & Horst 2008). When there is occasional combination of universities with the same level, each educational institution and organization can keep the original schooling features and achieve integration between disciplines. Taken in this sense, the schooling system and organizational structures of German educational institutions and organizations are quite stable; therefore, the learning and studying in these organizations is also steady (Song, 2013). In this way, the types and features of schools also play an important role in the learning process for individuals in German schools. From the narrations, we

can see that many people have expressed their focus and concerns on the type and features of schools and universities.

7.2.3 The comparison of school, teacher, and peer influential factors between China and Germany

(1) The difference in role and function played by teachers in the learning process.

The differences in attitude of learners in both countries on the role and function played by teachers in the learning process are mainly based on the learning-teaching practices and the traditional education cultures.

The Chinese education culture has passed down a notion that each teacher seems to be sacred, without any fault. Teachers are even regarded as playing a father-like role during the learning process, and the hallowed status of teachers could not be challenged by students (Gu, 2004). Therefore, each student has to obey the orders issued by his of her teacher. In this way, students have no need to think or plan their learning by themselves, but just obey regulations made by the teachers and schools (Gu, 2004). In contrast, the German education culture have given students great freedom with their own learning behaviors and activities; therefore, during the daily learning period there is seldom enforcement or obvious suggestions from teachers to students (Gu, 2004). Taken in this sense, the role played by teachers in the learning period is insignificant, as many interviewees in the researcher even have not mentioned anything about the influences from teachers on their learning process or lifelong learning choice.

Another factor for such difference is the teaching-learning practices, as the German learning process emphasizes independent learning and thinking; therefore, students have been trained to do self-learning and thinking alone, and teachers assist with inconspicuous suggestions; therefore, narrator George's wish of being a teacher is rooted in his belief that "the circumstance in a school would be quite free and autonomic than any other place, so, I could share and, eh, communication with my students my own thoughts and, eh, ideas." In this way, many German students have formed the learning habits that they are fond of dealing with their problems and matters on their own (Xu, 2006). On the contrary, the Chinese learners have been trained to follows teachers instructions during and even after class; therefore, they have not been trained to take care of their own business alone, but always rely on someone else. In this way, the learning choices are hardly to be made on their own, but more on others' suggestions and instructions (Zhang & Zhang, 2005). These different learning and teaching forms could train students with different learning and even living habits and thoughts. Taken in this sense, the learning-teaching practices have played an important role in the formation of learning habits and notions for students, and their thoughts on lifelong learning

have also been influenced and affected by such learning processes.

(2) The differences in attitude and criticism of the school system and educational philosophy.

Such differences in attitude about the school system and educational philosophy in both countries are based on the historical and economic situation and educational cultures (Sun, 2013). From the aspect of the historical situation, we can find that the Germans always have a critical spirit, with a free and antiauthoritarian tradition. Therefore, the attitude from students towards schools and teaching is more critical from the aspect of the general educational situation, such as educational philosophy (Sun, 2013). In this way, the German interviewees in the research have fewer comments on their individual learning circumstances and schools, but more on the general educational circumstances in the country. For example, the narrator Uttmann stated, "I also found, eh, the educational system in my school was not so well as before." In contrast, the criticisms from Chinese students on the school system expressed their disappointment and dissatisfaction with the effectiveness and functions played by schools and educational organizations in their life, especially in their career after graduation and living in society (Chen, 2007). The reason for this situation is economic satiation and the traditional thoughts on the functions of schools in China. Due to the inferior economic situation in China, the educational conditions and teaching quality of schools could not compare with the developed countries; therefore, the infrastructure, training of teachers, contents, and methods of education are also imperfect. Thus, students feel that the learning in schools is less interesting and even depressing, which can be embodied by Shui's narration as "The educated experience is normal and serious…Every step, ah, I have to obey the rules, the school systems made by them."

Moreover, the educational cultures in each country differ quite a lot, as Germans have more free thoughts and independent educational ideas and criticisms, which have been trained during the learning process; therefore the German students always have criticisms on the general educational conditions, which are not only limited to the scope of schools and district educational situation, but also the overall and general educational circumstances, effectiveness, and educational philosophy in the whole nation. For example, narrator Penck found that in the education system, there was a "total pragmatic view on learning, just a job-oriented learning. Of course, this view is always unfortunate for the development of the nation and science." In contrast, most Chinese students have been trained to obey rules by teachers and schools; therefore, few people have independent and critical minds or ideas about the schools and educational institutions and organizations. This scene can be illustrated by the interview contents of Ruo, who expressed her disgust of learning in class; however, she did not mention her feeling about the general

educational system, "I spent time in the class, that was just for the scores,...I really hated the class like that,...was really very boring." Moreover, as schools are regarded as a place which could pass down knowledge for higher degrees and competitiveness in the future, the pragmatic effectiveness of schools seems to be more important than educational philosophy or other constructions. However, the pragmatic effectiveness of schools for students could only evaluated after students come into society and make use of their degree or knowledge resources. In other words, such evaluation has a hysteresis feature. This is the reason Chinese learners can talk more about their feelings towards their mother schools and educational institutions after a long period from their graduation (Zhang & Zhang, 2005).

(3) The difference in learning atmosphere, requirements, and performances. There are more Chinese interviewees than Germans giving comments on their learning atmosphere and performance in school, which implies that the Chinese students pay more attention to their learning conditions (Wen, 2014). However, this attention is based on the pressures of striving for higher scores, more excellent performance in school, and the comparison with classmates. In other words, many Chinese students have no choice but to study for better scores and performances. Narrator Shui shared his own way of changing his situation: "Because of my poor scores in the class, I joined the examination for art. It is an easier." This difference is mainly caused by the schooling system, educational cultures, and teaching-learning practices.

In the German education culture, learning and teaching aim at self-learning and improvement of qualities by individuals themselves. There are little pressures and comparisons during individual learning process; therefore, narrator Raabe had the feeling "I could really develop my own character and hobbies, and, eh, never feel restricted or, eh, prohibited from my learning interests." The educational resources are equally distributed by the government in each district, and in addition, the educational resources are quite abundant. Therefore, there is good opportunity for each individual to obtain high quality teaching. Therefore, the better performances during school years for them mean having independent learning interests with good learning habits. On the contrary, the Chinese educational resources have a poor economic foundation (Wen, 2014). Moreover, interviewees in the research have told about very diverse learning experiences. This implies that people have different access to learning resources and opportunities. The differences are huge from district to district. In the developed cities in China always have more good educational resources than the poor and undeveloped areas (Chen, 2002). Based on the basic learning experiences, we can see that the lifelong learning attitudes have been influenced a lot, and the learning motivations and aims are also caused by the learning experiences in past years.

(4) The differences in participation and performances in school activities.

The types of school activities and performances by students in each country are quite different. Chinese students prefer to afford the duties and positions in schools and classes, and from such experiences they could satisfy themselves and learn much about the society. They believe that a school could be regarded as a microcosm of society. However, for German students, the participation in school activities is always accompanied with learning behaviors and contents. In other words, the schools activities always aim at enhancing practical experiences beyond the textbooks (Sun, 2013). The school activities German interviewees discussed always related to social and living activities. For example, Uttmann narrated, "for the jobs...careers, the time and learning contents would be quite different, manages, professional workers, such as engineers, who would have more and more training chances to learn." Thus, learning could be combined with practical experiences. Such difference is based on the educational cultures and teaching-learning practices.

From the teaching-learning practices, we can see that the German students are taught from childhood to learn by themselves, and teachers are just acting as advisors, without direct influences on students' behavior; therefore, the learning practices are always done by students alone (Ge, 2010). However, for Chinese students, they are always under the instructions of teachers and schools, without enough freedom in their learning choices. Interviewee Chang expressed this in saying, "I had to follow the orders and instructions from the schools, the society and the government." Moreover, the main tasks for ordinary teachers are passing down knowledge in textbooks; therefore, the learning process seems to be quite confined, with certain aims regulated by governmental educational departments or institutions (Gu, 2004). Under such learning circumstances, the learning behaviors and performances by ordinary students in China are always inclined to textbook learning and recitation. As narrator Shui expressed, "is very, en, very simple...This is a normal and arranged way for us, we have, have not choice."

From the educational cultures, we can find that the Germans students always choose to participate in public benefit activities and voluntary organizations in order to serve society without pragmatic aims. The practices are self-motivated, as the individual thoughts and opinions are always the first consideration for most Germans before they make choices. This can be confirmed by Jordan's narration: "My learning motivation was partly based on my own interests and talent." Moreover, during their learning process, there are no many pressures on their scores or performances from their schools or educational departments. However, for most Chinese students, the learning achievements are always evaluated by their learning scores from examinations or other assessments. In this way, the practical learning, such as social practices and activities, are regarded less important than studying textbooks. Moreover, the learning

behaviors are always regarded as a method for one's promotion and success in society after graduation; therefore, learning has been attached pragmatic aims and motivations (Ma, 1997). In this context, social benefit activities are regarded as wasting time, because they are without immediate gains or achievements. An example of this mindset is when narrator Chang expressed his criteria for choosing his major as "at that time, the engineering was very popular among the students who could choose a major in the university…the engineering students could get a good job and well paid".

7.3 The reasons and backgrounds of social influential factors

7.3.1 The reasons and backgrounds of social influential factors in China

(1) The influences on individuals' learning habits and opportunities through change in existing social rules and government policies.

The Chinese social rules and government policies, which have affected the lifelong learning habits and attitudes a lot, have been restricted by the Chinese historical process, the educational organizations, and the educational culture, as well as the whole educational system

From Chinese history, we can see that a centralization system has been implemented in China for centuries; therefore, social rules and government policies in current and modern periods in China have centralized features. The Cultural Revolution was the most extreme example for such centralization. As all of the management rights belong to the central government in China, each policy from the government could affect individual's learning motivation, method, thoughts, and process tremendously. Besides the educational policies, other rules, laws, and policies can also exert effects on each individual's learning process, such as economic policies, employment policies, or poverty relief policies (Song, Zhang & Wang, 2014). According to the deep research on the change of social rules and government policies, we can find that the political situation and changes in China have great influence on the individual learning thoughts and ideas, including the lifelong learning considerations.

We can also find that most Chinese educational organizations are influenced and restricted by the central governmental policies (Ying & Yan, 2008). Such organizations are the intermediary that implements the macro-level governmental and national laws and the micro-level supplier of education to individuals. Taken in this sense, such organizations have also been affected by the general policies and have exerted their effects on individuals' learning behaviors and considerations on lifelong learning.

The educational culture refers to the traditional thoughts and ideas on formal learning, as well as lifelong learning from generation to generation in China. The culture in China has always been conservative and closed to the outer

society, and has been more influenced by governmental restrictions and investigations (Zhou, 2000). Therefore, individuals' learning behaviors and thoughts have always had conservative influences and individuals' considerations on lifelong learning have also been restricted by such governmental culture. In addition, this means the learning plans and thoughts are very similar across all of society. Therefore, there are not innovative thoughts on lifelong learning, or plans and expectations for lifelong learning in the future of individuals.

(2) The restrictions or promotions of learning opportunities by social conditions or individual social experiences.
The restrictions on learning by social conditions are mainly coming from the current situation of educational organizations and institutions in China, while the individual social experiences influencing lifelong learning thoughts and experiences mainly result from the Chinese educational culture.

The distribution of Chinese educational institutions and organizations is quite imbalanced, as the developed areas possesses much more such organizations and schools than the poorer and undeveloped areas in China; therefore, educational recourses in China are allocated quite unequally. This is also a reason that individuals from different areas in China have different views and opinions on lifelong learning. In China, the differences among districts and areas are very obvious, and the learning and daily life of each individual can be affected by the local material conditions, such as educational resources, economic conditions, social education degree, and the general thoughts on education in the area (Jiang, 2014). There are also many restrictions and limitations on the qualifications for establishing an educational organization in China, as the administrative interventions have quite enormous influences on the daily operation of such organizations and institutions. These kinds of impacts can be regarded as outer influences which exert affects on each individual's inner thoughts on education issues. The people who live in a developed district must have different thoughts on learning from the ones who come from developing districts. Therefore, the further and continuing learning in such organizations and institutions are also limited and restricted indirectly by the governmental and administrative regulations.

Based on the educational culture in China, we can find many clues regarding the limitation of the lifelong learning thoughts by normal Chinese people. The learning aims and purposes are always limited to pragmatic materials for formal learning forms (Ma, 1997). Therefore, the general social thoughts on lifelong and continuing learning are that it is an informal or even abnormal learning form. Under such educational culture, Chinese people have more considerations for material matters and aims, rather than spiritual improvement through lifelong learning. This kind of convergence of attitude has made most

Chinese people have similarly limited opinions on lifelong learning. In this way, the learning experiences have been always similar, and there are fewer and fewer people who dare to challenge this education system. Taken in this sense, the learning attitudes and ideas seem to be without flexibility or creativity in China.

(3) The effects on learning of working in society.

The influences on individuals' learning behaviors are mainly affected by the economic situation in modern-day China and the general Chinese educational culture.

Nowadays in the most areas in China, there is still lack of sufficient economic support to provide the education required by normal workers, who have to work to achieve a basic living standard (Xie & Wu, 2014). Therefore, there is little chance for the investment in lifelong or continuing learning, which are regarded as extra or additional matters in life. The daily work for ordinary Chinese people is the most important matter in their life; therefore, they have to work for years without much rest during their working years. In this way, there is no extra time for learning during their working years (Xie & Wu, 2014).

From the traditional Chinese educational culture, we can see that the main task for a man in the society is to feed his family with income from his job; therefore, the main focus is work, without any distraction on other matters (Gu, 2004). The time for working will take up most of a man's daily life after his graduation. Therefore, the research on lifelong learning should concentrate on the effects of learning on the jobs held by individuals. The sole standard for evaluating a man is whether he is successful or not, based on income or social status after years of working. There is not much concern for the knowledge or educational background of an individual, which are regarded as subordinate or affiliated matters for living (Ding, 2012). For most Chinese people, learning during working hours is always for improvement of working skills and professional knowledge about work. After work, there are few people eager for more knowledge without a pragmatic aim. The learning during working hours always happens in small groups with colleagues together. In light of such views, the general thoughts on learning, especially informal learning or lifelong learning, get little attention from ordinary Chinese people.

(4) The reflection on learning functions in the social life.

The pursuit for money and social status by Chinese individuals has been formed by historical, national, economic, and educational cultural situations.

From traditional Chinese history, there were always maxims about learning aims and motivations, such as "the ones who can learn better could get an official position," which is the sign of higher social status. Along with the

traditional selection of Chinese officers with the "Imperial examinations" for thousand years, we can see that such learning aim to become an officer in the government have been rooted in the minds of most Chinese. In this way, the learning aim and motivation has been influenced a lot by such historical orientation. Such learning thoughts and ideas have been passed down from generation to generation (Ma, 1997). Taken in this sense, it is not surprisingly that most Chinese have such learning aims and thoughts year after year, although the living standard in China has improved quite a lot.

The national economic situation has shown the living standard in China is still not very wealthy; therefore, the pursuit for money and social status is present in every generation (Wen, 2014). There is always a fear of hunger and crisis, thus most Chinese people are more likely to strive for a steady and stable social position after their graduation from universities or schools. Therefore, the best promise and future for many Chinese students is to be an officer in government or a business man. The narrator Shi demonstrates this idea in mentioning, "As my excellent score, I was always asked to do some part time job for the government outside the university."

The educational cultural in China has always manifested a pragmatic character which aims for more material outcomes from learning. Therefore, the general thoughts on learning by ordinary people in China are that the learning process is a method to achieve a better living standard in the future (Zhou, 2000). Therefore, from the beginning of the learning process in primary school, the learning has been attached the expectation of social and material gains (Zhou, 2000). The motivation of learning after school years is always coming from the pressures or expectation for working promotion or living standard improvement. In this way, the learning in China, no matter formal and informal, has pragmatic features with certain material aims.

7.3.2 The reasons and backgrounds of social influential factors in Germany

(1) Non-utility learning motivations coming from the requirements of jobs and demands of self-promotion.

The financial background in Germany supporting the learning opportunities for Germans is always the reason for such a factor, as there is no need to worry about financial problems. Under such circumstances, there are non-utility learning motivations coming from the requirements of jobs and demands of self-promotion (Zhang & Wang, 2004, pp23-24). The German economic situation, the teaching-learning practices, and overall German educational culture are always the background reason for such thoughts.

Due to the powerful economy, Germany can afford the tuition expenses of continuing and lifelong learning for normal people. Even if there is no sufficient

financial support for certain educational forms, there are always plenty of chances for individuals in Germany to apply for scholarships or part-time jobs to earn money by themselves (Li & Sun, 2014). Taken in this sense, the economic background in the whole country is encouraging for the development of lifelong and continuing learning opportunities, and participation in such learning activities by individuals. In contrast, there is always worry about financial support for learning for Chinese people (Li & Sun, 2014). In this way, the learning activities in China have been regarded, not only as a pure activity or behavior in daily life for interests or hobbies, but also as a kind of investment and consumption; therefore, such learning behaviors have pragmatic features and should be regarded as a kind of social behaviors without individuals interests, but more social values and thoughts. From this analysis, we can see that the financial background is always the premise for opportunities in lifelong and continuing learning.

From the teaching-learning practices in Germany, there are seldom influences of social matters or jobs competition on learners during the school years. Learners are only thinking about their own interests and learning content, without many worries about the future or job hunting. Teachers are only affording the tasks and missions to train students with knowledge and school practices, and this is not relating much with social matters, such as jobs hunting (Köller & Baumert, 2002). Therefore, during the school years, students are quite free to enjoy their learning activities. However, after graduation from universities or colleges, graduates have to think about job hunting and money earning. In this way, although the learning period is quite easy and relaxed during the early years, students have to consider their future after their learning years.

The whole educational culture in Germany teaches that the knowledge and culture education is much more important than material matters or social problems. One of the important social activities for most German narrators is their job, which makes them aware of their lack of professional knowledge, and motivates them to have vocational learning to fulfill this shortage (Schulz, Li & Du, 2009). There were few narrators whose learning motivations were based on seeking money or social status, but some worried about job hunting after graduation. The application of knowledge is for the improvement of their jobs and working efficiency. There are no social pressures on each individual's learning behaviors. First of all, universities and schools are independent organizations which do not rely on the social influences or support; therefore, there are not many interferences or influences from schools on learning behaviors or lives of individual students. In this way, the main task for students in schools years is the pursuit of knowledge, which has been regarded as quite important and respected in the society.

(2) Consideration of social benefits, willingness to serve the public welfare, and individual views on social factors.

It is always a habit for Germans to consider social benefits and be willing to serve the public welfare. This habit is based on German historical factors.

During the period of Empires in German history, obedience, discipline, and sacrifice for the country were the patriotic thoughts in minds of Germans (Schulz, Li & Du, 2009); while during the Weimar Republic era, the pursuit of a republic and equality were the core values in the society (Schulz, Li & Du, 2009). After the Second World War, hard work and reconstruction were the main task for Germans. In modern Germany, the pursuit of freedom and emphasis on individuality are the most important principles for most Germans. Taken in this sense, the core values of Germans are concerning social matters and serving society. There is always a sense of social responsibility (Schulz, Li & Du, 2009). Therefore, when German narrators are talking about the influences factors in their learning behaviors and thoughts, there is always a focus on social benefits. This can be reflected by the experiences and choices of narrator Roth, who mentioned "I afford the volunteer work just for my habit, and the public welfare of course...public welfare should be always concerned by the whole public and all the citizens, so, I hope I could do my favor for the public and society." This learning motivation is also an inheritance from generation to generation, as a national spirit and feature.

(3) Concern for social problems with great enthusiasm to improve situations.

This concern is based on the German law system and the educational culture. The German federal Basic Law has protected citizens' rights and authorities to participate in social matters by stating, "Firstly, everyone has the right to express and disseminate freely his ideas with language, writing and drawing, and the rights of acceptance of the general public knowledge source without obstacles or hindered. The freedom of press and broadcast coverage should be protected and censorship must not be set for such cultural business..." (BMJV, 2014). The German Constitution does not only protect the freedom of speech, but also the freedom of thoughts and ideas. In this way, there are no restrictions to prevent actions to fix social problems. On the contrary, there is always encouragement for individuals to participate in social activities and affairs. Each German narrator had great concern for social problems, as they wanted to talk a lot about such matters and think about the way of dealing with the problems. These concerns are mostly relating to their own experiences or majors. When they talk about such matters, they will connect them with education, intentionally or unintentionally, as each matter could have a relationship with learning in their mind. Learning is always a good way for solving social problems in their minds. Therefore, in the German histories, there is always a tradition of discussion and concern for social matters, and this is also a kind of individual learning activity in the society (Ge, 2010).

From the general educational and social culture in Germany, we can see that the greatest value for most Germans is to build a powerful and great country before the World War II and therefore, hard work, dedication, and obedience are the most obvious behavioral values for Germans in the daily life; not only existing in learning, but also in their living attitude. Loyalty to the German state and society is the most important standard of being an eligible citizen. Under such social and living circumstance, obedience and serious working and living attitude are most critical educational goals in Germany (Ge, 2010). In the daily working period, obedience, respect for authority, and emphasis on organization and discipline are the spirit and quality in German society. Most German narrators have such service awareness during their working and living in the society. In other words, the learning and working are not only for individuals themselves, but also for the whole nation. For example, the choice of major for narrator Stein was based on his belief that "this major relates to each right, eh, could deal with lots of matters and problems in the society, and eh, could help people with their daily thing, such as during the traffic accidents." This kind of social service is also regarded as a kind of practice and learning for Germans during or after their learning years; therefore, such kinds of learning and working experiences for social benefits are also attached great importance and respected by the German society (AHK, 2013). Meanwhile, as the social factors are viewed by learners in different ways, the influence of such factors on the learning behaviors are expressed in different aspects. The general social circumstances, such as social and culture capital, will influence the learning thoughts and beliefs deeply (Alheit, 1999, p69). Taken in this sense, the whole national and social culture has educated individuals to dedicate efforts for the collective society; therefore, there is always a lot of focus by normal Germans on the social and governmental affairs, which are regarded as a part of their daily life.

(4) Practical experiences gained from social practices and jobs, and the social conditions for individual's learning.
The learning from social practices and jobs, as well as the social conditions for learning are based on the German teaching-learning practices and the whole educational culture.

From the teaching-learning practices, we can see that from the childhood, the teaching method is always based on individual's own thoughts and freedom, which is reflected in the lack of interference from teachers (Zhang, 2003). Therefore, from the childhood, Germans have learned to do their work by themselves. During their learning in universities and colleges, the homework assigned by teachers is always relating with the social practices which need individual activities and practical attempts in the social conditions. The social practices and jobs are also regarded as another form of learning, as

individuals could learn professional and practical knowledge from daily work (Zhang, 2003). The relationships and communications with others are also a kind of learning, which could help individuals lead a better social life. The knowledge learned in universities and schools could become useful during work; therefore, when individuals could not deal with the social or working problems, the best solution is to seek knowledge with learning further. Therefore, from an early age, Germans have been trained to make use of the social resources to deal with their work. When they need other materials for their learning, such as money or practical experience, the first consideration is not relying on parents or relatives, but self endeavors in society to strive for their own success. Taken in this sense, the learning habit of getting in contact with society and therefore learning from social practices and jobs are originated from childhood.

The general German culture has taught Germans that learning practical skills and knowledge is useful and respected in the society. The students graduating from applied technological universities and colleges are quite successful and earning much more than students graduating from comprehensive universities (Ge, 2010). The German social conditions and learning circumstance are also quite stable, without great volatilities since the Second World War; therefore the learning situations for individuals are also quite consistent, with fixed educational and learning policies and systems. The social resources for learning and education are plentiful, and the learning conditions for youth nowadays are excellent, without many worries about the financial supports for lifelong learning. Therefore, in these circumstances, the learning contents are not only limited to scientific knowledge learned in classrooms, but also focus on the knowledge and skills learned from social practices and activities. In this way, more and more German students care about applied knowledge and skills in society, and can find a good job after their graduation. Taken in this sense, lifelong learning refers much more to the learning activities in society than the pure knowledge learned in classrooms.

7.3.3 The comparison of social influential factors between China and Germany

(1) The different effects on learning from work.

Based on the interviews, we can find that many Germans narrators have few utility learning motivations coming from the requirement of jobs and demands of self-promotion, which could be deduced from their learning aims and the future plans. In contrast, many Chinese narrators have worries about their futures, and mainly pay attention to the material needs and the living standard. Their learning is always aiming to gain some utility. The reason behind such situation originates from the differences in historical, economic, and educational situations.

When we look back at the German history, we can find that there is little change in German social rules and regulations in the recent decades; therefore, the living and learning circumstances are relatively stable. In this way, the learning and working aims in society have formed along with the overall social morality from generation to generation. As we see, there is no need for more substantial living materials in the daily life. The result is that the learning is only relating to one's own thoughts and requirements, such as promotion of one's own capability. Moreover, the economic situation in Germany is also a kind of insurance for realizing of one's learning interests without any worries or considerations of financial conditions. However, when we look back at the Chinese history and economic situation, we can find that there are many wars, political movements, or disasters, especially in the recent history. Therefore, during such changes, the considerations by normal citizens have changed a lot from generation to generation, and the main pursuit and aims of learning and living have varied over time. Nowadays, the cost of living has increased a lot. Housing prices are up and pensions are less than ideal; therefore, there are more pressures on individuals. In this way, the learning has been positioned as more pragmatic than before. The main aim of learning has been changing from improving one's capability to the increasing of one's opportunities in job hunting and salary. The learning motivation is quite different from the German learning aims.

(2) The difference in learning functions based on social situations.
The Chinese and German people have different viewpoints on their social surroundings. The Chinese have more worries about social matters with personal benefits and always prepare for one's own future prospects. In contrast, Germans are concerned more about the public benefits, as well as international matters.

The reason for this difference is the historical situation and educational cultures in each country. In Germany, obedience, discipline, and sacrifice for one's country characterize the spirit passed down from generation to generation without interruption, even through the world wars. Taken in this sense, it is a tradition for Germans to care about social and political matters in their daily learning and living. However, for many Chinese, the main task in daily life is to feed their family, so the central concern is based on the material conditions and political environment in their daily life. The state system is quite different in each country; therefore, the civil rights for individuals in each society are widely different. Based on this background, the Chinese are always inclined to concentrate on their own matters and life. It is also the same with their learning behaviors, as most Chinese learn for oneself with concrete aims based on pragmatic requirements. In this way, the learning seems to be influenced quite a lot by the social pressures and circumstance.

As to the educational cultures, we can find that Chinese have concern for the future and worries about their material conditions. From the interviews contents in this research, we can see that many Chinese have the expressed their worries about their future, which has to be enriched by their hard work in society. In this way, learning has been regarded as a tool for realizing one's living aims and purpose. There is little concern with the social benefits or other matters which seem to be irrelevant in one's own life (Ding, 2012). In contrast, we can see that many German narrators have expressed their concerns with the social matters, which are regarded as obligations for them help improve during their learning, working, and living. Such concern for social benefits and willingness to serve the public welfare are based on the developed economic conditions.

(3) The different attitudes towards and influences from social rules and government policies

Chinese and Germans have different attitudes on social rules and government policies; therefore, the influences from such policies and rule have also played a role in their daily learning activities. A centralization system has been implemented in China for centuries, so the Chinese are more inclined to obey rule from the government and superiors. However, many Germans have a more rebellious spirits and have their own appeals to the society, educational institutions, and even government. In their eyes, the learning behaviors are regarded as an independent behavior without any influences from governmental or educational institution regulations. This difference comes from the historical institutional and cultural education situations in each country.

The Chinese history has told us that the right to manage affairs belongs to the central government. Each policy from the government could affect individual's learning motivation, method, thoughts, or process tremendously. In this way, the only thing citizens could do during their daily learning and working is to obey regulations issued by government or superiors (Ma, 1997). Taken in this sense, there is seldom learning freedom during their working or learning years, as well as lifelong learning opportunities, which has been restricted by governmental or superior orders. Once youth have formed their views and opinions on learning, there is little chance to change them after students grow up. In contrast, Germans have more freedom with their own learning choices, without many limitations from governmental or educational institutions. The German Constitution protects the freedom of speech, thoughts, and ideas, so there are no restrictions concerning action to improve social matters. There is always encouragement for individuals' to participate in social activities, which Germans regard as a part of their daily life.

From the aspect of educational culture, we can see that obedience and serious

working and living attitude are most critical educational goals in Germany. In the daily working period, obedience, respect for authority, and emphasis on organization and discipline are valued by the whole German society. This spirit promotes improvement of social problems with great enthusiasm. In contrast, the Chinese culture is more conservative and closed to the outer society. It is also more influenced by governmental restrictions and investigations. As a result, there are not innovative thoughts and plans for lifelong learning.

(4) The promotion or restriction of learning by social conditions.
Based on different social conditions or individual social experiences, the learning behaviors by Chinese and Germans differed quite a lot. German interviewees have expressed their interest in practical experiences, as well as the enhancement of their learning experience by social practices. However, for many Chinese interviewees, the social conditions are more of a disadvantages for learning, by restricting learning choices and hobbies. Such differences have been caused by the different teaching-learning practices and national educational cultures.

The teaching method in Germany for normal students is always based on learners' own thoughts and free style, with seldom interference from teachers (Köller & Baumert, 2002). On the contrary, the Chinese teaching method is mainly directed by governmental departments or schools; therefore, there is little space for students to develop their own hobbies or interests. In this way, practical experiences seem to be useless in the views of their teachers; therefore, there is lack of practical activities for normal students. Moreover, the further and continuing learning in such organizations and institutions are also limited indirectly by the governmental and administrative orders and regulations. Therefore, the social and educational departments have exerted influences on normal people's learning process. In Germany, schools and the government are always advocating and promoting practical learning and experiences by students during their learning years, and there is also a need by companies for students to acquire the practical capability before they get into society. In this way, the learning in schools is also mixed with practical learning in Germany. From this aspect, we can see that the contents and meanings of learning, especially lifelong learning, differ between Germany and China.

Moreover, when we look back the educational cultures in each country, it is obvious that German culture has taught people that learning of practical skills and knowledge is useful and respected in the society, and the social resources for education are plentiful. The learning conditions for youth nowadays are quite excellent, without many worries about the financial supports for lifelong learning. Taken in this sense, the lifelong learning refers more to the learning activities in society than the pure knowledge learned in classrooms in Germany.

However, for many Chinese, the learning aims and purposes are always limited to pragmatic materials and formal learning (Zhou, 2000). Moreover, the learning performance is regarded as a kind of batch production which could be assessed and evaluated by examinations offered by the government, schools, or educational organizations. In this way, the learning aims and purposes have been compelled to work towards better performances in examinations. Most examinations focus on textbook knowledge, without an effective method of testing practical knowledge. This is the reason that most Chinese students pay attention to the textbook reading and recitation. Such learning orientation is quite pragmatic. Thus, the idea of lifelong learning has also been affected and restricted by such learning processes and assessments.

From the general social situations and restrictions, there are also reasons for such differences. Since the 1970's, there has been slowed birthrate in Germany, resulting in an aging population. Population experts predict that the total German population will fall to around 70.8 million in 2050 from the current 82 million (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2013). More than half of the population will be older than 50 years, and therefore there will be far less young people than today (Wirtschafts- und Handelsabteilung, 2013). Such population structure will lead to a serious shortage of domestic labor resources. As a result, the young labor resources are regarded as especially valuable. In this way, each youth in Germany should be trained as a professional, not only in his or her own working duties, but also in different working areas relating with his or her work. In other words, each individual in the future society should afford much more work than today. Only in this way can the general industrial levels, financial situation, and living standard in Germany be maintained and even developed.

Additionally, another harsh fact faced by the German society is that there are more than 1.3 million youth nowadays who have not passed through any professional examinations. This means that they are not equipped with proper labor skills in order to perform jobs in the industrial and information age. Therefore, they cannot be regarded as valuable labor resources (Wirtschafts- und Handelsabteilung, 2013).

Also since the 1970's, Germany began to expand the foreign immigration to alleviate the shortage of domestic labor. Nowadays, immigrants account for 18% of the total population in Germany (Wirtschafts- und Handelsabteilung, 2013). This immigrant population has complemented the labor resources in Germany; however, on the negative side, it has led to various social conflicts between ethnic groups. In addition, the education level of immigrant populations is lower than the national population. The immigrants groups are relatively lacking in access to education and have unequal educational resources. According to the German official statistics, about 50% of all the

immigrant laborers have never participated in relevant continuing education or vocational training. This situation not only hindered the development of their own employment and social integration, but also significantly restricted the stability and development of German society.

Taken in this sense, the lifelong learning is quite urgent, meaningful, and useful to each German, including immigrants, in order to enhance the quality of laborers and workers.

On this issue, we can find that there is a great difference between Germany and China. The population in China has reached 1.3 billion nowadays. Although the birth rate has declined year by year from 1960's, the growth rate has always been positive. The population growth has been especially large in the recent decades, increasing by about 6 million each year (Chinese government web, 2014). Therefore, there is no worry about the amount of labor. Moreover, the scope of industrial work is limited to the intensive working areas, such as manufacturing industries, which could be classified as low-end and duplicative industries. Therefore, this work requires less skill and more man power. In this way, the importance of education has been neglected intentionally, as the main working tasks require man power and manual labor. The main race in most places is ethnic Han, while other races are minorities living in concentrated areas. This simple race distribution in China has avoided troubles of multiracial disputes. Based on this background, the lifelong and continuing learning for ordinary people in China has been regarded as an extra, dispensable matter which should not be paid much attention or expense.

7.4 The reasons and backgrounds for individual influential factors

7.4.1 The reasons and backgrounds for individual influential factors in China

(1) The individual's views, feelings, and opinions about learning based on the family and social background from the childhood.

This core category is based mainly on the economic and historical realities in different eras in China. Firstly, we can find that the childhood of many Chinese people, especially for the ones living just after the Second World War and civil war, was always quite poor and without sufficient living materials (Chen, 2014). Under such living conditions, the first and foremost consideration is not learning, but seeking material support for living. Many narrators were concerned about earning money in order to improve the living standard from their early years. Therefore, worries have been rooted from their early years and developed with their aging. Moreover, during the development in China,

the economic standard in different families and social groups differs quite obviously, as there is an extreme disparity between the rich and the poor. Therefore, people in different groups and families would have different views on their living conditions, and compare themselves with others, which is a motivation for their learning in the society (Chen, 2014). The most critical issue during the childhood of all the narrators was the family financial condition.

From the historical perspective, we can see that the economic situation and living standard have greatly improved in China from the beginning of the Revolution and Open policy in 1979 (Chen, 2014). The learning considerations of the youth today are quite different from elder generations, who have experienced poverty and war periods. Therefore, the purpose of their lifelong learning seems to be distinct from generation to generation. In recent years, the youth more eagerly pursue material goods and money than the last generation, as the current era is more pragmatic and the importance of money are more obvious for the current generation. Therefore, the social fashion and attitude, as well as the opinions on material conditions and money have always influenced the learning purpose and motivations.

(2) Influences and change in the individual's innate character and personality. Such innate characters and personalities have been influenced by the history and educational culture a lot. From the historical aspect, the Chinese individual characteristics are always developing over time. In the ancient periods, the personal thoughts by Chinese people on learning or adult learning were conservative, and considered adult and lifelong learning useless; however, in the current times, such thoughts and ideas have been changed and are more inclined to the pragmatic uses for further and adult learning (Ding, 2012). Therefore, with the history changes, the thinking on learning behaviors and motivations has also been modified. Although the learning aim and style of an outgoing person versus an introverted person would be very different, there are also a lot of similarities in the national thoughts and ideas on learning. Such thoughts and ideas are based on the personal social and living experiences, which are also aligned with history changes. Taken in this sense, the learning behaviors and thoughts by normal Chinese people are varying from generation to generation; while, the thoughts and ideas on learning within the same generation have no fundamental differences from each other (Ding, 2012).

On the other hand, the personal thoughts, ideas, and habits of learning have also been influenced and formed by the general educational culture. The Chinese educational culture is always based on the traditional obedience of authority and the functional use of learning, as well as the national conservative character (Ding, 2012); therefore, the learning behaviors by individuals are marked by Chinese characters and traditional Chinese thoughts,

such as the conservative opinions on learning, which does not pay much attention to lifelong learning. The changing of characters and personalities based on the national learning and educational culture will affect the daily life and work by citizens, as well as the learning purpose and motivation.

(3) The feeling of worry and fear based on the current social and living situation.

This core category has been influenced mainly by the historical development and economic pressures in China. Accompanied with the Reform and Opening up Policy in China, the living standard and material conditions for normal Chinese people have been increasing year by year; however, the pursuit for the living substances in the daily life have also increased with the development and advancement in the country. Nowadays, in the current society, more and more people are trying to obtain the higher social status and better living conditions than the elder generation. Therefore, the learning behaviors have always been motivated or influenced by such pressures and worries (Xie & Wu, 2014).

Along with such historical development is the change of economic conditions and background in the country, which affects the ordinary individuals who are eager for a better living standard in the future. The view of learning for promotion of their positions and earning more money comes from their fears and worries about the uncertainty in their future, which has been decided by the economic situation and development trend. Taken in this sense, we can say that the economic situation has sometimes been regarded as the most important factor which motivates ordinary people to enhance their capabilities and expand their knowledge by learning (Xie & Wu, 2014). In this way, the learning is not originated from individual hobbies or pursuit for academic promotion or knowledge, but for more wealth and better living situation.

(4) The individual's hobbies and their formation process.

This core category relates to the educational culture and economic and historical conditions. From the aspect of educational culture in China, we can find that the Chinese people are always inheriting the learning hobbies and habits from their elder generation, which has formed their learning culture year by year. There are always similar features of Chinese learning habits, which include qualities such as being assiduous, motivated, and obedient. From such features, we can see that the Chinese people are much more accustomed to the formal education carried out in schools, compared to informal schooling, such as lifelong and adult learning.

The economic conditions are always an important catalyst for hobby formation. Individuals will develop a good habit which is in accordance with the social norms and improves the living standards (Xie & Wu, 2014). In this way, the

individual hobbies and habits have been formed by external factors. As for lifelong learning habits, the economic conditions are always motivations for individual learning hobbies.

Due to historical conditions, each generation has a general and specific learning habit, which differs from generation to generation; however, the national learning habits have always the same core values. In this way, we can see that the learning habits have also the historical background and elements, which have been influenced and transforming with the general historical processes.

(5) The thoughts and plans about one's learning in the future.
From the final words of each narration, we can see that each narrator has their own views and opinions on their future learning plans, which are based on the educational culture and economic conditions. The educational cultures have influenced individual learning thoughts, as many Chinese people have the crowd mentality; therefore, the learning thoughts and behaviors are also a kind of conformity which could be influenced by the opinions and choices around (Zhou, 2000). In China, there are many similarities found in the attitude and opinions on the lifelong learning among ordinary people, such as learning for promotion and better material life in the future. When the learning motivations and purpose have been formed as a group consciousness, individual thoughts on learning have been unified and standardized.

The economic situation and foresight have influenced the plans and thoughts on lifelong learning by Chinese individuals, who care a lot about the benefits from education. Taken in this sense, the learning plans in the future, such as one's feeling and thoughts about one's work, family, learning, and society situation, are based on the economic expectation and foresight (Xie & Wu, 2014).

7.4.2 The reasons and backgrounds of individual influential factors in Germany
(1) Approaching individual learning decisions with self-confidence.
This category has been influenced by four factors, including history, teaching and learning practices, economic background, and the educational culture.

From the historical background, we can see that the German narrators either lived through the Second World War, the post-war reconstruction, or the reunification of East and West Germany; therefore, during their learning and living years, they have experienced quite a lot of social upheavals. Based on such living experiences, they have formed the learning habit of depending on their own decisions and opinions, rather than that of authorities. Self-destiny and value has been estimated as more important than the overall

circumstance (Schulz, Li & Du, 2009). Taken in this sense, the learning behavior by Germans has the character of being independent and self-responsible.

From the teaching and learning practice, we can see that the formal and informal teaching in schools or learning institutions have all emphasized the status of students in the teaching activities. The teachers' roles in German schools are as instructors and advisors, without influencing students' learning process. Teachers respect the students' own initiative in order to train self-determination and independence (Zhang, 2003). Due to this teaching style, we can see that most German students have formed such a character.

The German economic background has supported students with an financial basis for their learning. In other words, students do not have to think about their financial problems in their learning process, as there is always financial support from society, government, or enterprises in the form of reduced tuition fees or scholarships (Li & Sun, 2014). There are also plenty of chances to earn money doing part-time jobs, as the society permits "working while reading." Therefore, the financial premise for lifelong learning has been guaranteed.

The German educational culture also encourages such independent learning thoughts and determinations. From elementary school, students are not required to learn much besides creative thoughts and plays with teachers and classmates. From the fifth grade, each one has the free choice of determining the future learning forms, including "Gymnasium, Realschule and Hauptschule" (Gao & Gao, 2007). In this sense, students can make choices much earlier than most Chinese students, who have to follow the unified arrangement and regulations made by the central educational departments.

In Germany, most of learning time during school years has been spent on practical activities. Therefore, each German student has strong hands-on skills and abilities. With such capabilities, most Germans prefer to deal with matters themselves, rather than call other for help. Under such circumstance, the learning activities have become personal matters. The German narrators have this common feature in their learning process, as there is little interference from parents or outer factors. When the German learners talk about their learning experiences and plans, they always come from the standpoint of their own interests and considerations, without attention to other factors or opinions. Thus, the preference and determinations on lifelong learning behaviors and activities are also based on personal thoughts and ideas.

(2) The individual interests are the main learning motivation.
The individual interests as the main learning motivation originate from German history, learning-teaching practices, economic situations, and the overall

educational culture.

From the German history, we can find that learning motivations by Germans are mainly caused by self-determinations and opinions, as each individual has personal rights with their learning choices; therefore, such learning subjects should be endeared by the learners themselves. The educational history and tradition in Germany has told us that there are few compulsory tasks for German students during their learning years; therefore, students could develop their own interests and hobbies (Pan, Liu & Horst 2008). In this way, German youth inherit an independent spirit towards learning, so learning interests and achievements are able to flourish.

The daily learning-teaching practices in German schools also cultivate the independent interest in learning. Teachers do not compel students to learn with inflexible methods, but with creative methods and the help of practical tools. Therefore, from the childhood learning, each student in German class has been trained to develop their interests and learning hobbies. Based on their own learning interests, they have their own thoughts and considerations on their learning contents, which are the source of independent and critical academic thoughts (Xu, 2006). During the interviews, we can see few students hated or disliked the class teaching forms during their learning years. This is a factor for the inclination towards lifelong learning after school years. Based on this view, we can see the importance of teachers on students' learning thoughts for the future.

The German economic situation has guaranteed the realization of learning motivation based on personal interests and hobbies (Li & Sun, 2014). If these motivations are kept after the end of their formal learning, then later in life, the learning choices are also made based on their own interests and hobbies. All the narrators had the same feeling that learning was for pleasure, which greatly diverges from the pragmatic purpose of education based on family and social pressures.

(3) Thirst for knowledge with consideration for future career.
Such thirst for knowledge is based on the German educational culture, the overall educational history, and the learning-teaching practices.

Viewing the German history, we can see that there are many philosophers, scholars, musicians, and politicians who all grew up with the traditional German education system, which has been inherited from ancient times until now with only small changes. Behind the success of the German educational system and cultivation of such talent are traditional thoughts on knowledge and culture, which are greatly respected by Germans. In Germany, there is a truth about universities which has been widely accepted: no matter how rich it's

financial support or how many students and buildings it has, it can only be called a real university if its aim is knowledge and academic freedom (Li & Sun, 2014). Most German narrators are willing to learn more during and after their schools years, not only for their own interests, but also for the career requirements and social needs. Such thirst for knowledge is based on the understanding of one's situation and learning performance, without outer pressures or interference (Gao & Gao, 2007). Therefore, from the traditional knowledge and national spirit, as well as the aims and functions of universities in Germany, we can always find the core of such educational history as learning for more knowledge.

The teaching-learning practices in Germany have cultivated the ability of thinking independently; therefore, students are seldom helped by teachers with the learning questions, which should be solved independently. In this way, students are trained to be positive and active with learning, without dependence on others' help or assistance. Such independence and thirst for knowledge has helped Germans accept lifelong learning automatically and spontaneously.

One of the main goals of the education in Germany is to encourage more and more people to engage in scientific research. The two preconditions for such a goal is the freedom of teaching and academia. It is believed in Germany that freedom of teaching is to explore the value of truth systematically and independently, with plenty of enthusiasm regardless of the application value in reality. This is the noblest sense of free teaching and learning (Ge, 2010). Such a teaching freedom also means professors have their own freedom of choosing teaching content. Academic freedom means students should be liberated from compulsory and rote memorize. Under such learning and teaching circumstances, the thirst for knowledge by individuals can be cultivated, and the lifelong learning thoughts and habits could be also trained and inherited generation after generation.

(4) The concrete plans for future career and learning behaviors.
This character has been cultivated and trained with the German background of overall educational cultures and learning-teaching practices, as well as the relationships between teachers and students.

The overall German culture has encouraged students to have independent and modern thoughts and plans for learning, without supports from others. Such independence has helped Germans to plan and arrange their own matters, such as their learning programs, lifelong learning plans, and future career more freely and agreeably. German society and culture stresses each citizen is independent; therefore, the whole society is composed of many individuals (Gao & Gao, 2007). Therefore, the right and authority of learning

and career arrangement is just held by learners themselves, without radical changes during their life or interference from their parents. Such decisions are always quite steady during their whole life. The concrete arrangement of future career and learning behaviors is just a reflection of such independence by German learners, who want to decide their own fate and future based on their own free will.   In this setting, lifelong learning can reflect and embody the true needs and requirements by students, and therefore become more effective and fruitful.

7.4.3 The comparison of individual influential factors between China and Germany

(1) The difference in sources and roots of learning decisions.

This item refers to different learning decisions made by Chinese and Germans learners under different social and school circumstances. From the interview contents, we can find that the Germans narrators have been influenced very little by outer factors, but rather make their learning decisions nearly totally by themselves, according to their own interests, hobbies, or needs. In contrast, most Chinese narrators have expressed that learning determinations are based on social conditions or regulations from government or educational institutions, which could control or even determine one's learning fate or future. The reason for this difference is based on the different histories and educational cultures in each country.

In recent generations, most Germans have experienced quite a lot of social upheaval, such as wars or social revolutions. According to the complex and various social circumstances, forging one's own destiny and value has been estimated as more important than the overall circumstance. In this way, one's own intellect has been stimulated, and each citizen would like to be controlled not by others, but by themselves. In this process, the learning decisions are reflections of independent thoughts and wills. In contrast, the personal thoughts by Chinese people on learning or adult learning is always conservative, as more and more Chinese people have formed pragmatic ideas about learning. This is mainly based on the social pressures, such as high housing prices and living expenditures, and the requirements to reach a higher living standard. With the historical changes, the characters and personalities of people have also changed, along with their learning behaviors and motivations. Taken in this sense, the learning behaviors by Chinese people vary from generation to generation. However, it is the case that every Chinese generation either would not or could not learn for a pure academic aim, rather for attainment of material needs and higher living standard.

Moreover, the traditional agricultural production has ingrained the idea of the obedience for most Chinese (Hao, 2006, pp43-45). From ancient times, China has only been developing agriculture, generation by generation. The

agricultural techniques have been passed down from father to son, and each Chinese has to obey the same requirement to do farm work, without any deviation, which could result in a serious loss of crop in the coming year. In this way, most Chinese hold a notion that the viewpoints of the last generation are absolute and incontrovertible truth. Therefore, this idea has extended to each aspect of the daily living and learning affairs, which are still controlled by some authority figure, such as parents, teachers, or government.

In contrast, Germans and other western countries have developed the industrial society, which requires each citizen to create and innovate in order to increase productivity. In this way, the natural sciences and engineering have improved in such countries much faster. Therefore, for individuals in such social circumstances, the main pursuit and highest honor is to create inventions to help with the industrial development. During this process, the rebellious spirit and character are a necessity, as each creation could only be produced by breaking with convention. Such innovative and rebellious thoughts have developed the disobedient spirit for most Germans, as they believe that learning and other living affairs belong to their own private business, without any necessity of obeying others' orders. In this way, the learning activities and decisions are also made with free will.

As for the educational culture, we can see that the German students have been taught to have creative thoughts and free activity rather than required tasks from elementary school. Most of learning time during school years has been spent on practical activities (Li & Sun, 2014). Therefore, each German student has strong hands-on skills and abilities. With such capabilities, most Germans prefer to deal with matters themselves rather than call for help. This is the root of self-determined learning aims and decisions by Germans. In contrast, for many Chinese, the traditional obedience to the authority and the functional use of learning are the main roots behind their learning behaviors. These learning behaviors are a reflection of the traditional pragmatic and utilitarian Chinese thoughts which have resulted from the social pressures and national character.

(2) The difference in roots and background of individuals' main learning motivation.
For Germans, the main learning motivation is based on individual interests and hobbies, which are independent from outer factors or influences. However, we can see that the Chinese narrators have expressed their learning motivations as pressures or influences from outer factors, such as their family educations, orders from parents, or social requirements for degrees or certifications. The reason for this difference is mainly based on the history, economic situation, and backgrounds in each country.

The educational history and tradition in Germany has told us there is no enforcement or little compulsory tasks for German students to finish during their learning years; therefore, students could develop their own interests and hobbies with their learning contents (Gao & Gao, 2007). This is the foundation of the learning motivations for most Germans. Moreover, such learning sprit and thoughts have been developed into the daily living and working areas, as Germans could determine their own business and future. As German youth inherit such independent learning ideas, the learning goals and achievements can flourish. Whereas in China, in recent years, the youth are eagerly pursuit material conditions more so than the last generation; therefore, it appears that the current era is more pragmatic and the importance of money is more obvious for the current generation. Such pragmatic thoughts on life and learning have been stimulated by the social pressures, such as difficulty of getting medical, educational, or other services, as well as the skyrocketing property prices. Therefore, the social fashion and attitude, as well as the opinions and thoughts on material conditions and money have influenced the learning purpose and motivation (Gao & Gao, 2007). This analysis demonstrates that the learning attitudes and aims have always been compelled to adapt with the mainstream values in society.

It is obvious that the difference in economic situation could result in diverse thoughts and considerations on learning motivations and aims. Germans have enjoyed social development with high speed and abundant social resources in their daily life. Thus, the German economic situation has guaranteed the realization of learning motivation based on personal interests and hobbies, rather than financial concerns. This is also the reason why many German narrators in this research tell about their plans after retirement to learn for the whole life without worries about finances. In contrast, when we overview the Chinese history, we can see that the Chinese economic situation is developing year by year; however, the economic situation per capital in China is extremely worrisome. Therefore, for ordinary Chinese people, the most important matter in life is not learning for knowledge purely, but learning for wealth and social positions, which could guarantee the basic or even better living standard. In this way, the learning motivations and aims are influenced by social conditions greatly. Moreover, the economic standard and levels in different families and social groups differ greatly; therefore, the thoughts and considerations by ordinary people in China have accompanied and been influenced by the social economic development and policies in different districts and areas.

(3) The difference in feeling and attitude towards the future.
The narrators in the research have expressed their feeling and attitude towards their future, with their own judgments and values. Generally speaking, Germans have more optimistic attitudes towards their future, as they have planned for job opportunities and pursued success with their efforts, such as

learning for the improvement of their capabilities or knowledge in areas of their interests. Compared with this attitude, we can find many Chinese narrators have talked about their futures without a certain aim or specific direction, but just drift with the current. There are always jobs or work around them, and there is little space left for them to think over their future or the idea of lifelong learning. Such difference has been caused by the historical situations.

As mentioned above, in viewing the Chinese history, we can see that most Chinese people in different eras had to obey the orders and regulations made by superiors (Xie, 2007). There is no need for them to think about their futures by themselves, as the futures have been destined from their birth. Farmers have to farm in the field for their whole lives, and craftsmen have no choice but to work in their shop, while people from an official family could have the opportunity to participate in the imperial competitive examination and obtain a higher social position in the government. Although the modern day conditions have changed quite a lot, in the mind of normal, Chinese people, the daily life is still predetermined by the existing social conditions without any flexibility. Therefore, in their lives, there is a lack of change. Whereas for Germans, life is a changing process as they have been taught from their childhood that each individual controls his or her own fate. This is a basic human right for each person in the society (Xie, 2007). From the German history, we can see that the society and culture stresses each citizen as a relatively independent. Therefore, the right and authority of learning and career arrangement is held by learners themselves in Germany. In this way, the attitude towards the future by normal Germans has been formed more positively and independently than for many Chinese people.

(4) The difference in plan and arrangement for learning in the future.
The different attitudes towards the future could affect the lifelong learning motivations and plans. From the narration contents, we can see that the Germans have more considerations and plans for their future, and main focus is improving self-capability by learning. Therefore, when asked about lifelong learning, they could always give a speech on their lifelong learning plans. While for many Chinese narrators, their feelings are always filled with worry and fear based on the current social and living situation; therefore, from their plans for the future, we seldom see learning goals for pure knowledge or self-improvement, but more concerned with increasing personal wealth or striving for higher social positions. The reason for this difference is based on the historical development and educational cultures in each country.

Most German narrators are willing to learn more during and after their schools years, not only for their own interests, but also for the requirements of future careers and social needs (Xie, 2007). Such thirst for knowledge is based on the understanding of their own situation and learning performance, without

outer pressures or interference. Therefore, the learning is a kind of pursuit for their dreams and ideals, without pragmatic reasons. However, for many Chinese, the pursuit for the living substances in the daily life has also increased with development in the country. Today, there are more and more people are willing to obtain the higher social status and better living conditions than the elder generation. The learning behaviors have always been motivated by such pressures and worries. In Chinese history, learning has always been regarded as a method of obtaining social positions and wealth, so the learning aims and motivations have been passed down generation by generation (Xie, 2007). In current times, knowledge and learning seem to be secondary or even dispensable in their life, as there are no direct effects or results gained from learning immediately. Therefore, this is the reason for many Chinese not arranging or planning learning into their future plan.

The German educational culture has encouraged more and more people to engage in scientific research, and two conditions for such a goal is the freedom of teaching and academia. Academic freedom means students should be liberated from compulsory and rote memorization. In this way, most Germans have their own interests and hobbies in their learning process and enjoy the learning activities. For their future, they would like to pursue learning, as they get pleasure from such activities. However, for many Chinese people, the idea of learning for promotion of their positions and earning more money come from their fears and worries about their future living standards, which has been decided by the economic situation and development trend. All forms of learning have been given a pragmatic purpose and motivation; therefore, learning does not originate from individual hobbies or pursuit for academic promotion or knowledge, but for wealth. Many Chinese students are not fond of learning from their childhood, as they could not get pleasures from such obligatory activities. Therefore, after they grow up, the main thoughts about learning are still negative, and the future plans have excluded positive learning activities. Even if there are some who have plans of learning after their graduation, such learning arrangements seem quite negative, without passion or pleasure.

7.5 The differences in narration forms and styles by Chinese and Germans narrators

Besides the macroscopic differences between Chinese and German narrators, such as the thoughts on lifelong learning and the influencing aspects of family, schools, peers, and friends, there are also many obvious differences in their narrating styles and forms, which could also demonstrate some reasons for of their differences in opinions and attitudes on their learning pursuits.

7.5.1 The background and basic preconditions of narrations

From the narration contents, we can see that many Germans are inclined to talk in detail about subtle matters in their life and learning experiences, for example, speaking about friends, certain work contents or tasks during their working years, and influences from their parents on their learning attitudes. Such narrations always describe a vivid and concrete situation, which makes their narrations seem more reliable and convincing. However, for many Chinese narrators, they prefer to discuss the general situation around them, such as social background, general law system, governmental regulations on their learning behaviors, or schools system effects on their learning. Such narrations about general background circumstances show that they care more about the influence of the macroscopic situation on individual learning affairs. These differences are based on the different cultures and political systems in each country. Germans pay more attention to their own feelings and emotions; therefore, the individual experiences on learning come from individual opinions or factors relating with personal living circumstances. On the contrary, Chinese people are influenced a lot by the policies and regulations of the central and regional educational departments (Ying & Yan, 2008). The Chinese learning behaviors always have to obey the educational policies and rules. It is no wonder that the Chinese narrators make their comments on learning based on the general educational circumstances and regulations.

7.5.2 Details and contents during narrations

The narrative order has shown us that Germans are more likely to make narrations with brief educational experiences as beginning but more detailed emotions and feeling, or choices and options in the learning process. But for most Chinese narrators, they would like to talk from the beginning of their learning periods, as the learning experiences in elementary schools, to the higher educational experiences; in other words, the narrative order has followed the general time shaft from beginning to the end of formal school learning. Such narrations are always accompanied with the detailed descriptions of one's activities and experiences during school years.

The narration contents by Germans focus more on the family influences on their learning attitudes and habits, as they believe parents have taught them more from their childhood. The learning aspiration is always heading in the same direction as their parents or elder family members. In this way, we can see that Germans attach great importance to their family views and influences in their daily life, especially in their learning and working. However, for many Chinese narrators, they have suffered more complex influences from outer factors, not only from families, but also society, educational departments, schools, teachers, and classmates. Therefore, in their narration, they always add such factors and influences into the background of their learning with detail and clear sequence.

When asked about the topic of lifelong learning, most German narrators could react immediately and talk with professional explanations and thoughts. However, for most Chinese narrators in this research, we can see that the first reaction is a pause and then questioning, which implies that they are not quite clear about this concept. This shows the difference in popularity of lifelong learning concept in each country. Thus the attitudes and thoughts, and even results and achievements from lifelong learning differ with each other quite a lot between Germany and China.

7.5.3 The style of narrating

The narrating form and style also differ quite obviously, as Germans prefer to make narrations with the personal pronoun "I," while Chinese narrators are more often describing stories or facts caused by others that influenced them. In other words, the Germans in this research used more first-hand episodes and Chinese narrators used more second-hand episodes into use in their narrations. From this difference, we can see that many Germans have subjectivity in their daily life. Such an attitude has been formed and trained from their childhood, and this is also a national spirit and character. Therefore, the learning aims and purposes are always decided by individuals, without many considerations of others' opinions. This attitude is also a result of their living circumstances, as they are financially independent during their school years. For example, many Germans work part-time for payment of tuition fees and living expenditures once they are 18 years old. However, for many Chinese, living seems to be never an individual matter, as from birth to adulthood each Chinese has been influenced and assisted by family members, peers, schools, teachers, colleagues, and superiors. They live in an integrated environment created by families, society, government, schools, and employers. Therefore, when we do research on an individual Chinese person, it is necessary to make clear the surrounding circumstances.

As for narrating style, Chinese narrators can give longer speeches than Germans, as they would like to express their opinions with detailed and content-rich thoughts and memories about their past years, no matter how much time it takes. However, for many German narrators, the narration has to be assisted by questions raised by the interviewer, as their narration pauses after explaining a certain learning or living experience, because they have no idea about their next narration direction. From this point, we can see that Germans have more discipline in their daily lives, as even talking with interviewers should be restricted by certain disciplines and regulations. In other words, without clear or specific instructions, they would not like to express their emotions or feelings completely. This is also relating to their independent character. Therefore, answering questions is also regarded as very formal (Gao & Gao, 2007). However, for many Chinese narrators,

interviews are regarded as a chance to express personal opinions freely, on the condition that the content is anonymous. In this way, we can see that many Chinese are quite outgoing in such activities.

Based on such differences, we can also find that the interviews with Chinese narrators are quite random with regard to time and place. Many Chinese narrators do not need an appointment in advance, but could start at any time after work. However, for most Germans, the appointment time and place are important. The interview location should be considered suitable. In this way, we can see that the attitude towards such public affairs differs a lot, as Germans are more formal than the Chinese on such matters.

8. The inspirations and suggestions for China and Germany

Based on the content and analysis in this research, we can find that each country has its own lifelong learning character, implementation, and features, as well as different educational policies, individuals' learning methods, and learning and teaching experiences. However, the driving force for the improvement of the educational system could rely on referencing other successful experiences to develop their own educational system or establish their own educational policies.

In this comparison, we found that the individual lifelong learning experiences of the Chinese and German narrators had many similarities, but also many differences. According to Levin's opinion, "We cannot afford the unthinking copying from elsewhere of education policies dimly understood. Nor can we afford a situation in which many jurisdictions are doing similar things while failing to learn from each other" (Levin, 1998, p139). This statement means that reference to other systems is important, but these systems should only be imitated with rational selection and local tailoring to the current conditions of each country and region.

By learning from each other, not only the government, but also each member in the society could benefit from others' successful experiences. Levin explains this in saving, "to the extent the analogy of the epidemic becomes less fruitful and the idea of mutual learning more descriptive, we are all likely to benefit" (Levin, 1998, p139). The reference to learning performances among different models and styles could give us more inspirations and benefits for self-learning behaviors and implementation. Levin also analyzed the application of learning from each other as a kind of epidemiology: "Much more could be said about the application of ideas in epidemiology to the current international spate of education reforms" (Levin, 1998, p139). In this way, we can find that the internationalization of learning, and other social habits and governmental policies, could be influencing and affecting each other in different and unconscious ways. In turn, learning from each other's systems could also influence human performance and behavior in a bottom-up way. There is the understanding that "education policies are the result of intentional (more or less) human action in complex social settings," and "current trends in education undoubtedly have much to do with long-run changes in our ideas and social processes." (Levin, 1998, p139). Therefore, it is necessary to reference the different but successful educational models and experiences, and apply them to educational practices in different regions, according to their own needs, backgrounds, and conditions.

As for the German and Chinese lifelong learning motivations and influential factors, we have made an analysis and conclusions about the different models and forms, based on the backgrounds and habituations of families, individuals, society, schools, and peers. From the experiences of many interviewees, we can find that the different social environments, governmental policies, learning cultures, family educational styles, as well as the learning and teaching practices can all influence the behavior of individuals in the different social models and educational circumstances. We cannot say which system is better than the other, as each one has its reason for existence, which corresponds to the social development and concrete conditions in the whole nation. However, after a long period of influence from outer and inner factors in society, whether learning performances and behaviors are effective and successful could also reflect whether influences from outer and inner factors are positive or negative. Based on this theoretical assumption, we can make use of the lifelong learning experiences and influential factors as references for one another.

8.1 Chinese inspiration from German experiences.

Based on the analysis above, we can see that the lifelong learning situation in Germany has many advantages from which the Chinese lifelong and adult educational system could learn. The development scope of Chinese adult education has already reached a considerable level, the quality has been improving, and the achievements have been lauded. At present, China is promoting higher quality requirements from the citizens in all aspects, according to the need for accelerating the development of adult education more urgently. Compared with the status and experience of adult education in developed countries, the Chinese are behind. The way to accelerate the development and improve the operation of adult education becomes the challenge which requires Chinese scholars to think carefully think and have new ideas. Therefore, experiences from the developed countries, such as Germany, are worth studying. This section will discuss the improvement of lifelong learning and education administration by governmental policies and economic situations; the management of educational organizations; social attitudes and overall educational culture; the technical and academic research on lifelong learning and education. The goal of this discussion will be to find ways to promote better lifelong learning and education conditions in China.

(1) The improvement of macro-conditions for the promotion of lifelong learning. Firstly, the attitudes, policies, and administrative styles by the government should be improved. The management principles and practices of the government and education authorities with centralized features should be changed to focus on establishment of the adult education policy framework reflecting the characteristics of adult education and market mechanisms. In addition, there should be improvement of the adult education laws and

regulations with the core of general policies and the principle for the development of lifelong learning and education according to the Chinese current and concrete situations and requirements (Hao, 2007, pp10-13). Finally, the teaching activities could be realized according to the educational laws and policies, with the adult education macro-management based on the guidance educational policies, assessment and evaluation on teaching quality, and exchange of information.

The reclusive and self-contained educational structure and system have hampered the balanced lifelong learning development along with other educational forms. The original educational system has disadvantages caused by little cooperation among different educational forms. The new lifelong educational model for developed countries should be constructing the adult education structure beyond industry socialization or community-based education. The system should strengthen various forms of non-academic education, such as shifting the focus of adult learning to the field of continuing education with the basic content of skills training for jobs, vocational and technical advanced learning, and the vocational education. This main task of this non-academic education would be training workers to be equipped with new technologies, skills, and professional knowledge. The Chinese government and society should abandon the traditional thoughts on informal and non-formal learning, which had been regarded as dispensable parts of the whole educational structure. All the educational forms and models are important for the learning society, as each citizen could benefit from the various learning forms.

As for the autonomy of the local school management on adult education, there are still a lot of restrictions on the concrete management affairs from the administrative departments in the government. Therefore, it is hard for the local schools and educational institutes to carry out their educational reform or activities with freewill. The autonomy of the local school management should be further expanded. Therefore, the basic reform of the adult education management system should be changing the functions of the education authorities in central government, and expanding the autonomy of local adult educational institutions to fulfill the needs for adult education from society. The lifelong educational administration in China should be established and perfected with German models. The system should include job training, continuing education, literacy, popularization of science and technology, adult academic education, vocational qualification certificate education, modern enterprise education, and self-study examination. The system of lifelong education should be gradually improved in China so as to continuously increase the quality of Chinese workers (Tian, 2006, pp142-143).

The improvement of Chinese competitiveness in the economic globalization

could provide knowledgeable and technical support for building a prosperous and harmonious society. The education of a qualified workforce is an arduous task and duty faced by the entire educational field, including adult education.

Secondly, the law system and economic structure for lifelong learning and education should be adjusted. From the analysis of the law system and economic structure in China, we can find that there are seldom special or concrete law items aiming at the development or promotion of lifelong learning in daily life for normal citizens. Rather, more general educational laws or political regulations restrict the operation of lifelong and adult education schools. Fortunately, there are more concerns about the importance of adult and vocational education nowadays in China, which could be reflected by the current governmental action "Speeding up the development of modern vocational education" (Tian, 2006, pp142-143). This decision includes the following content: "The development of vocational education is the strategy in order to promote production mode transformation and adjustment of the producing structures, as well as improve people's livelihood. It is significant to run vocational education with the reform idea, which could expand employment and entrepreneurship, enhance the capacity of the labor force, modify industrial quality and enhance the national comprehensive strength. During the process, social forces, such as enterprises and communities, should be fully mobilized in order to attract more resources to converge to vocational education. There is also a need as the possibilities for the majority of young talents should be offered to improve the Chinese market and manufacturing competitiveness and stimulate economic quality and efficiency upgrades, eventually so as to meet the people's diverse needs for life" (Chinese government web, 2014). Even so, there is still lack of law support for lifelong learning in China, as there are hardly any specific regulations for organizing lifelong educational institutions. The result is a chaotic lifelong educational market, such as overcrowded schools to allow further learning. There is always a lack of supervisions from the law. In this way, we can see that there is urgent need for the Chinese government to formulate concrete laws and political regulations for the lifelong educational market.

As for the economic conditions, although the Chinese overall economic situation ranks as one of the top in the world, the per capita income is much less than in Germany, as well as the per capita investment on education. There is even less investment and attention to the lifelong learning education. The suggestion for the improvement of Chinese lifelong learning situation would be to increase the proportion of investment on education, especially on the lifelong education (Fang, 2014, pp25-27). The use of educational funds also needs to be optimized. This distribution of funds is controlled by the government, political departments, and officials themselves, so it is not a democratic process which investigates the needs of ordinary people (Fang,

2014, pp25-27).

(2) The optimizing of the meso-environment and structures in China.

Firstly, it is necessary to reform and adjust the current educational organizations and management system, especially the adult education management system. The Chinese adult education nowadays has constructed the educational systems and structures with different levels and forms. The educational levels include higher education, secondary education, and primary education, which have a variety of types and forms of schooling. The types and forms of higher education are adult higher education institutions organized by general colleges and universities, independent correspondence schools, international students' schools, adult higher education institutions organized by military academies, self-study examination system of higher education, private educational institutions and religious schools that prepare for diploma examinations, broadcasting and television universities, staff colleges and universities, agricultural colleges and universities, cadre institutes, and education institutes. The types and forms of secondary education are broadcasting and television secondary vocational schools, workers secondary schools, cadre secondary schools, farmers' secondary schools, teacher training schools, adult secondary schools mainly for labors and farmers, and self-study examination of secondary education (Chinese government web, 2014). A serious problem that needs consideration in the development of adult education is that the Chinese educational government should adjust and reform the current educational management system and give full autonomy to the sponsors and institutions engaging in educational affairs for Chinese adult education, so that each educational level and school forms could develop accordingly.

The experiences of Germany and other developed countries suggest that reform of the administrative system of adult education should be focused on promoting the autonomy of each organization and sponsor. The government and educational departments should rely more on the educational organizations and sponsors, who have the actual authority and right to operate the daily teaching and learning management and administration (Fang, 2014, pp25-27). Various types and levels of vocational education should operate and be improved continuously. There are still a number of graduates from junior or senior middle school who are not able to enter a higher degree school or university, who also lack vocational education for pre-employment preparation before entering the labor market (Jiang, 2014, p45). Therefore it is necessary to offer various forms of vocational education and training for them in order to improve the quality of mid-level workers.

Secondly, the existing lifelong educational structure needs to be adjusted. With the development during the past 50 years, China has basically formed a

multi-level, multi-class, multi-form educational system; however, the current educational system still has many problems. There are seldom structural or systematic linkages between secondary vocational education and higher vocational education. The disconnection between lifelong education and the formal education periods is very obvious. After the formal school education, learners and individuals have no aims in learning for the next period. It can also be seen that some schools do not have a clear position, which results in overstating the school level blindly, expanding the scope of school, losing the schools' original features and characteristics, and affecting the overall educational efficiency. For example, there is the phenomenon that many secondary schools upgrades to colleges, colleges become universities, or universities become colleges (Jin, 2014, pp25-27). There are also many problems existing in the structure of lifelong learning and adult education, as the target and scope of the adult education and training are not very clear, both in theory and in practice. In addition, a variety of non-formal education is in pursuit of academic education, especially the higher academic education, which belongs to the formal education. These confusions seriously affect people's initiative to receive formal academic education (Yang, 2008, pp15-16).

This situation indicates that the structure of adult education system in China, as well as the whole structure of the education system, has to establish a flexible adjustment to the needs of society and changes to the labor markets. The socialist economic system requires the improvement of the training modes and structures for the labor force.

(3) The promotion of social educational culture.
It is the inherent requirement of sustainable industry development to implement continuing education and lifelong education in China. Due to the popularity of the nine-year compulsory primary education, the proportion of employees educated to the junior middle school level will gradually decrease in the future, while the proportion of the practitioners and on-the-job workers with high school, general education, or vocational education will be increasing. According to the current educational situation, the overall education level of employees is still not enough to meet the requirements of the modern industrial and technical development. The cultural level among industries is very imbalanced, so that the requirements on education of each industry and enterprise are inconsistent (Yang, 2008, pp15-16). The agriculture and building industries are all basically labor-intensive, which recruit workers with graduation from mostly junior middle school or primary school, some from high school, but few from colleges and universities. The proportion of expertise in the industries of electricity, metallurgy, and railway transportation has rapidly increased in recent years, while the proportion of workers under the primary education level or without any educational experience is still significant. The

future development of these industries depends on implementation of secondary vocational and technical education. The graduates from technical secondary schools or senior high schools still occupy the center position of the employee structure in the high-tech industries, such as electronic information or technology-intensive industries, such as financial capital. In recent years, although the proportion of personnel with high educational level has increased rapidly, it is undoubtedly still far behind the developed countries (Jin, 2014, pp25-27). These industries can only ensure the sustainable development amongst fierce competition in each industrial field with efforts to strengthen the vocational education and various forms of continuing education. This education will help industries adapt to modern technologies.

Moreover, considering the pragmatic learning aims in China, there is a need to declare the real reasons for carrying out lifelong learning activity in one's life. The ultimate aim should be for one's own promotion, such as enhancement of knowledge, spiritual accomplishment, moral level, and general quality of life (Liu, 2014, pp72-73). Therefore, the promotion of education, especially the lifelong education, should be focusing more on the spiritual level, without so many considerations on pragmatic results from learning in one's future. This change is also based on the improvement of the Chinese economic situation and the living quality for each normal citizen. In other words, so long as the economic situation continues to improve greatly, the thoughts on lifelong learning could become more pure and personal than nowadays.

(4) The emphasizing technical and academic research on lifelong learning.
Firstly, the modern network technologies should be extensively used for the development of lifelong education. The educational information featuring network and multimedia technology will greatly change the means and speed of knowledge transfer; increase the acceptance of all kinds of knowledge by people; and break the time and space constraints in teaching and learning to make it possible to enroll educational participants freely and without limits. Thus, the approach of accessing knowledge from the network will be one of the most important means of self-teaching in the future (Liu, 2014, pp72-73). As an important part of the whole education system, adult education will undoubtedly greatly benefit from the development of information technology. Modern network information technology will change the content and structure of adult education and provide new forms of knowledge transfer, so that individuals can organize learning on their own and adapt to requirements of fast-changing jobs. Technology could potentially promote the quality of both the teaching and learning in lifelong education. The educational internet community has provided material and technical preconditions for the implementation of the lifelong education system.

It is worth studying the relationship between adult education institutes and the

extensive use of modern network technology and tele-education institutions. From the internet and modern communicative methods, the exchange of information and statistics for lifelong learning and education could also be strengthened. For example, the research and consulting of lifelong learning could be sped up by means of internet and tele-educational methods. In the fields of research and consulting, the exchange and use of statistics and information on adult education could be used to help adapt the Chinese education system based on the experiences in developed countries. The research, consulting, and information statistics on the German adult education are mainly afforded by the institutions for adult education. The emphasis of research in education is on teaching and learning, teaching plans, teaching research, work and occupation studies, students' research, institutional research, and historical research of education. The other contents and responsibilities which are meaningful for the promotion and development of adult education practice should also be paid sufficient attention (Fang, 2014, pp25-27).

The learning activities of Chinese adult education have also played an enormous role in the economic development and social progress of the country. With the wide dissemination and acceptance of the concept of lifelong education, the scope, schooling forms, and types of adult education continue to be expanded. The educational levels, learning contents, and means of adult education are also increasingly abundant (Yu & Li, 2013, pp79-82). Compared to the development of lifelong education practice, the theory research on lifelong education has clearly fallen behind. Although there are some research institutions, academic organizations, publications, and a number of academic seminars on lifelong education, most of Chinese lifelong education independent colleges and institutions afford the responsibilities of consulting work. Educational authorities also regard statistics and information exchange of adult education as important content for managing and coordinating lifelong education. However, the lifelong education discipline is still generally in the creative phase. The research level, depth, and breadth are only superficial, and the scope of projects involved in the lifelong education consultation is not wide enough. In addition, the statistics is lacking active participation of educational or research institutions of lifelong education.

In order to strengthen research on lifelong education, the society should recognize that the lifelong learning and education will play an important role for the whole national development in the future, including technological, intelligential, cultural and spiritual improvement. The training of specialized personnel for lifelong and adult education research and teaching should also speed up. The lifelong and adult education research institutions should expand their research scope and participate in various types of consulting activities in order to establish a non-governmental network to promote the sharing of

information and resources (Yu & Li, 2013, pp79-82).

8.2 German inspiration from Chinese experiences

(1) The function and implementation of "Peer-assisted learning strategy."
As mentioned above, we can find that most Chinese have been surrounded by family members, teachers, and especially peers during their learning periods. Based on the narration contents by most Chinese narrators, it is obvious that many Chinese have attached great value to the functions and effects from peers and friends on their learning activities and experiences. In this way, we can see that many Chinese have "peer-assisted learning" experiences, which is a promotion factor for their learning and innovation. In contrast, although most Germans have expressed their learning freedom positively, we find that there is still a lack of an intimate group or peer-assisted learning atmosphere. Most are more likely to learn alone. Generally speaking, there is no right or wrong learning forms or styles; however, from the narration, we can find that many German narrators expressed helpless or lonely feelings during their learning periods because they could not get instructions or suggestions on their learning and living decisions. After all, learning is also a social activity, which requires communication and exchange of ideas. In this way, classmates and friends can be essential to the learning behavior.

'Peer-assisted learning,' published by Prof. Topping and Dr. Ehly in 1998, described "Peer-assisted learning" as the learning activity in which learners can acquire knowledge and skills with active help and support from partners and peers with equal status (Topping K & Ehly S, 1998, pp1-3). There is a wide range of the meanings of peer-assisted learning, which includes peer tutoring, peer modeling, peer education, peer counseling, peer monitoring and peer assessment.

The research and development of "Peer-assisted Learning Strategies" have been launched by Professors Fuchs Douglas and Fuchs Lean from the early 1980's. The "Peer-assisted learning strategies" was referred to by the report "What Works Clearinghouse" (WWC), published by the U.S. Department of Education in May 2007. This was a special teaching program enacted by researchers and aimed at improving reading and math scores in primary teaching classes specifically (He, 2005, pp15-17). "Peer-assisted learning" has become a teaching strategy, which organizes students in pairs to learn actively in the form of organizations with specific learning and directing procedures (He, 2005, pp15-17). From this consideration, the importance of communication and exchanging of thoughts has piqued great interest from researchers.

Peers are the people who can offer mutual help. Peers can form special groups to conduct interactive activities (He, 2005, pp17-18). The development

of each learner results from the interactive. Everyone has specific knowledge and skills which can be taught to others, such as skills for effective learning. In such a learning community, learners take care and learn from each other by establishing a mutually beneficial relationship (Zuo & Quan, 2008, p43).

For a long time, educational activities have ignored the presence of "companions and peers" in a learning community due to excessive concern for the community made by teachers and students (He, 2005, pp17-18). Educational development of modern society has challenged the whole society, especially the educational organizations, to pay more attention to the promotion of interaction among students (Career Development Journal, 2014). The primary significance of peer-assisted learning lies in the formation of reciprocal pairs of students with similar learning interests in order to promote students' social development.

As a special learning form, there are unique characteristics of interactive peer-assisted learning activities. The peer activities are more helpful when each member in the group can be active and positive; therefore, the attitudes from each member and participant in the group are very important for the successful and effective of the whole group. Moreover, participators should master skills of communicating knowledge to each other. Individual students can pass on learning habits, basic skills, and learning attitudes to their companions in the group (Career Development Journal, 2014); therefore, "knowledge" for collective and peer-assisted learning relationships is not a general concept, meaning facts, principles, or theoretical hypotheses. For many Germans, it can effectively promote mutual learning when each learner in such a group masters certain skills, including ways to communicate.

Many Chinese learners are the only child in their families; therefore, getting along with peers, such as classmates, relatives of the same age, or colleagues, has become increasingly frequent. Lots of people have developed sibling-like feelings with friends through learning, living, or working, with popular appellations such as ladybro, buddies, or childhood friends. Influences on each other through this kind of intimate relationship can be great in learning activities or everyday life. The individuals will learn the professional knowledge in the same special field in which their friends are strong. This is actually a subtle process of peer-assisted learning. As for German learners, they can also get more learning opportunities or knowledge through this communicative form, which accompanies everyday life while get learning inspiration and innovative ideas unconsciously. After all, the feeling and thoughts from different people can share new ideas on life and learning. Socialization theory can be used here when peer groups for learning are selected. In 1995, American psychologist J.R. Harris proposed the theory of socialization groups, which suggested the function of the socialization group made by peers is very

important, even more so than the family relationships (He, 2005, pp17-18). The theory of socialization groups focuses mainly on the discussion of personality and cultural transmission among groups, which becomes a strong explanation of individual differences (He, 2005, pp17-18).

Studies have found that peer relationships have various effects on different students. Low-capability students are influenced by peers to a greater extent, while high-capability students are less peer influenced (He, 2005, pp15-16). Each type of students will benefit from the peer group with homogeneity. The high-ability students profit from a high level of classmates and companions with a small gap, while the low-ability students will benefit from a similar student group. In short, each student should be placed with the group members who are of a similar learning ability (He, 2005, pp15-16). Each participant in such peer-assisted learning organizations should learn to communicate with mutual integration and affection for common values. Conflict is inevitable in such a process; therefore, it requires each participant to learn to adapt him or herself to eliminate conflict, make intimate relationships, and establish the common values and hobbies. Therefore, for the development of the students, whether in Germany or China, they all have the needs of friendship with similar companions to learn and play together.

For Chinese students, academic performance is an important criterion for group construction, as Chinese students tend to construct groups with persons who have similar ability and expectation of academic success. In addition, high achievements always attract learners with a higher status in the community. In other words, students with academic success seem to be also the most successful in social circumstances. This is also due to Chinese culture, which values academic success.

Therefore, German learners should also make friends with students of similar academic level, personality, studying habits, and attitudes, and learn together in everyday interactions. In the learning process, loneliness will be reduced and more ideas and innovative sparks will be stimulated.

(2) Learning with certain aims and purposes.
Although many Chinese interviewees did not have positive thoughts on the function of lifelong learning; there were also beneficial points in their learning process. For example, their learning behaviors are focused on concrete or specific aims or purposes; therefore, their learning seems effective with a clear destination for solving a problem or question. In the Chinese culture, this is called "learn for practice" or "apply what one has learned" (Xia, 1999). This proverb has been passed down generation by generation. This does not mean that the learning without a clear aim is useless or meaningless; however, for many Chinese people, the learning with a certain purpose could be much

easier and more effective, as their learning behaviors have been guided by a certain target.

In this research, we have found that many German interviewees have expressed their learning motivations as learning for self-interests. For example, Christ and Tina have set their self interests and hobbies as the first and foremost matters when they consider their learning contents and process. In comparison, Chang, the typical Chinese narrator, had learning aims and purposes that were always influenced by the outer factors, such as social pressures or requirements from his job. The further learning motivations and for him were not his own interests or hobbies, but his worries and awareness of failing to keep pace with innovation in his company. In this way, the desire of maintaining his status in his company has driven him to learn more and more. From this kind of learning, we can find that the external requirements from modern technology and ideologies have driven people to update their knowledge much faster than ever before. In return, the learning has promoted and accelerated the development of technology, as well as the promotion of humanity and culture. This is a kind of bidirectional function between learning and social progress. According to the research by Afzal, employees' performances are sensitive to social pressures; especially the academics performance has close relationship with career qualification, social enjoyment and social pressure separately (Afzal, et al., 2010, p83).

In this way, we cannot simply judge the learning for pragmatic aims or purposes as negative, as sometimes these kinds of learning have really promoted the social advancement and the intellective development. Sometimes driving forces from outside can compel people to learn when they would otherwise have no willingness. As was stated by Benjamin Franklin, "Motivation is when your dreams put on work clothes." In other words, one's goals need to be set forth by some instinctive or extrinsic motivation (Williams & Williams, 2011, p18). Sometimes persistence in learning requires further motivation, which is based on not only inner interests or hobbies, but also some pressure or requirements for survival. These kinds of outer driving forces can, in turn, get feedback from individuals' learning results and success.

In this way, the learning effectiveness for Chang is not less than for Christ and Tina, as Chang has kept his position in the modern era with rapid change and promotion in his working position. Therefore, he has contributed to his company based on his clear-aimed learning. The same situation could also be found for Roth, the German interviewee who has learned in a university again at the age of 40 in order to fulfill the requirements put forward by the rapid progress in medical technology relevant to his work. His learning aim is also very specific; therefore he regarded his learning as effective and meaningful. From the analysis results and the performances by interviewees in this

research, we can find that many Chinese individuals could perform with sufficient effectiveness in their learning objectives in order to fulfill their earning aims and purposes. Moreover, the learning seems to be persistent with certain fixed goals. Therefore, we cannot value the pragmatic learning model as positive or negative, but rather state that, to some extent, this kind of learning has indeed promoted some people's learning performances. Based on this view, we should consider these pragmatic learning motivations and purpose for German learners, who could use these learning experiences as reference in order to enhance their own learning effectiveness and willingness.

8.3 Conclusions

It is believed that the future society will be a learning society (Hao, 2007, pp4-5). One of the main approaches and guarantees for the success of a nation in the future will be adherence to the lifelong education concept and the establishment of an effective lifelong education system. The quality of human resources and the level of innovation can influence the comprehensive national strength greatly. The economic competitiveness of a country increasingly depends on the creativity and innovation in the whole society. Therefore, the fundamental driving force of lifelong learning and the formation of a learning society is the trend of knowledge economy and economic globalization nowadays. On one hand, due to the acceleration of newly emerging knowledge, thinking, and technologies, the information initially taught in schools will soon be out of date and not suited to the job requirements. Thus, knowledge needs to be constantly renewed (Hao, 2007, pp4-6). On the other hand, the social concept of career also changes over time, which makes rotation through different occupations more common. Thus, the workers need to keep learning to adapt to new job requirements (Hao, 2007, pp4-6). Moreover, with the changing industrial and technological structure and the development of science and technology, modern enterprises are bound to need employees with adapting qualifications to new tasks. Therefore, it is a fundamental requirement that enterprises pay attention to the continuing education for employees in order to survive (Hao, 2007, pp4-6). All of these principles will inherently stimulate the consciousness and initiative of workers to seek continuing education. Therefore, lifelong education is the result of society's demand for modernization and development by ordinary people

It has become a widely accepted concept and the future focus of educational policy to develop continuing education and implement lifelong education. The development of continuing education has not only helped schools with personnel training and contribution to the overall social development and economic construction, but also formed the close relationship between schools and social organizations and enterprises. This has increased society's

influence on schools, effectively promoting the socialization of general education, including higher education (Hao, 2007, pp4-6). It can be said that in China, the concept of lifelong education has been accepted by the government, the education departments, and the general public. The nation has been paying more attention to lifelong education, which has been reflected in changes to national policies. In the developed countries, the concepts and practice of lifelong education have already attracted universal attention and achieved advanced experience. What is more, the international community has also regarded lifelong education as the focus of future education policy.

In summary, in order to adapt to the future development in society, each individual should learn throughout life in order to narrow knowledge gaps between people and meet people's spiritual needs through the informal and non-formal learning in the daily life. These are inevitable needs for social and educational development. Both the developing countries, such as China, and the developed countries, such as Germany, require a labor force with higher capability for the construction of a modern and intellectual future society. This is not only a need for the advanced sectors of the economy, but also in the ordinary working and living fields. Therefore, the research and practice of lifelong learning will always be useful and imperative for the whole society and the world.

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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.

Kurzfassung

Diese Studie konzentriert sich auf eine vergleichende Erforschung über lebenslange Lernmotivation und deren Einflussfaktoren in China und Deutschland. Da das lebenslange Lernen ein weithin anerkanntes System ist, welches internationale Bedeutung, reichliche Konnotation, Multiplex-Programmen und komplexe Verzweigungen enthält, scheinen die Erforschung und Analyse über das lebenslange Lernen und konkretes Lernverhalten, Strategien, Theorien, Performanz und Einflussfaktoren immer extrem schwierig zu sein. Zum Analysieren der konkreten Lernerfahrungen sowie Einstellungen und Gedanken von normalen Personen über das lebenslange Lernen werden biographische Erzählung Interview als Instrument der Datenerhebung und die Erforschung Schritte vom Grounded Theory als Forschungsmethode verwendet. Insofern ist eine empirische Theorie auf unseren Forschungsgegenstand zu entwickeln.

Die interviewten Personen für dieser Studie besteht aus 20 ausgewählten chinesischen und 20 ausgewählten Deutschen mit unterschiedlichem Hintergrund und Konventionen. Untersucht werden die ganzen Lernerfahrungen und Ansichten von ihnen über die Motivationen und Einflussfaktoren auf ihr eigenes lebenslanges Lernen. Basiert auf einen Analyseprozess von offenen, axialen und selektiven Codierung kann man feststellen, dass die Lernmotivationen und Einflussfaktoren auf lebenslanges Lernen vor allem aus vier Hauptgruppen, nämlich Familie, Gesellschaft, Individuum, sowie Schulen bzw. Mitschüler und Lehrer kommen. Zum Beschreiben der Zusammenhänge zwischen diesen Faktoren und den typischen Kategorien von Einflussfaktoren in den einzelnen Ländern zu beschreiben, werden sie in „Postmoderne", „Scandinavian", „Transformation" und „Traditionelle Asiatische" Typen mit dem „Ideal-Typ" als Leitgedanke eingeteilt . In der konkreten Analyse der Arten der Motivation und Einflussfaktoren auf lebenslanges Lernen von Deutschen und Chinesen, werden die „Autonome" und „Autoritären" Features auf der y-Koordinate, und die „Individuell" und „Sozial" Faktoren auf die x-Koordinate beschriftet, damit die Cluster-Formen der Faktoren in den einzelnen Ländern auf die Diagramme zeichnet werden können.

Die konkrete Analyse der Einflussfaktoren und Motivationen beruht auf dem allgemeinen Hintergrund der nationalen Bedingungen und der Realität der Bildungsentwicklung in jedem Land. Jede Hauptkategorie der Einflussfaktoren und Motivationen hat seinen tiefen Grund von der konkreten Makro-, Meso- und Mikrorealität, wie die nationalen Geschichte, Gesetzessystem, Bildungseinrichtungen, Lehr- und Lernpraktiken, wirtschaftliche Situationen, Gesamt Figuration und Bildungskulturen, sowie das Bildungssystem. Durch Analysieren und Vergleichen kann festgestellt werden, dass jedes Land oder

Region ihre eigenen Eigenschaften, Implementierungsmethode oder Merkmale des lebenslangen Lernens sowie ihrer Bildungspolitik, Bildungserfahrungen, Lernmethoden, Prinzipien, Lern- und Lehrerfahrungen hat.

Zur Verbesserung der Bildungsreformation und deren Fortschritt könnte man erfolgreiche Erfahrungen und Geschichte als Referenz verwenden, damit eigenes erfolgversprechendes Bildungssystem bzw. erfolgversprechende Bildungspolitik gründet werden könnte. Auf der Grundlage von Schlussfolgerungen und Ergebnisse dieser Erforschung sind Vorschläge und Anleitung für die Förderungen des lebenslangen Lernens zu erschließen, die sich in der Zukunft nicht nur in China und Deutschland, aber auch in anderen Industrie- und Entwicklungsländern für verbesserte Leistungen in diesem Bereich anbieten.

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