



Exploring the trust-based learning culture from teachers for student success, growth mindset, and school development

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ABSTRACT

Building a trust-based learning culture is a core foundation for student success, a growth mindset, and whole school reform. This qualitative case study aims to explore the teachers' perceptions about how they build a trust-based learning culture for student success, student growth mindset, and school development. Twelve teachers (N=12) participants were employed through semi-structural and open-ended interviewing protocol. Findings show that teachers use three ways for student success, including (1) support always, (2) professionalism, and (3) interpersonal relationships. This study also finds out that teachers use the other three ways for student growth mindset building, including (1) openness, (2) respect, and (3) justice. Findings finally show that teachers use three ways for school development, including (1) dialogue, (2) honesty, and (3) prosperity. Therefore, the basic qualitative and mixed exploratory research design would be recommended for future study.

Keywords: Covid-19, Foreign Countries, Leadership, Secondary Education, Trust, Teacher Educators

INTRODUCTION

In a changeable society after Covid-19 and beyond, teachers build a trust-based learning culture, which is essential for school development, student growth mindset, and student success. The previous studies showed that a trust-based learning culture is a core foundation for educational improvement in multicultural competitive school climates (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Perrone (2022) pointed out that diversity causes many disparities, advocating that teachers need to explore trust-based approaches to motivate students toward their learning goals. This viewing shows that the diversity and multicultural school contexts call for teachers to build a trust-based culture for school development and student performance. For example, Hofstede (2001) also indicated that the high-power distance in social-cultural contexts, such as in China, causes teachers to have a gap between students and other school stakeholders, including parents, principals, and others in a private school climate in Beijing (Zhang, 2022a).

In addition, Zhang and Koshmanova (2022a) presented that teachers in the private school setting in Beijing usually emphasize using power, authority, and rule in classroom management, which causes a gap and disconnection between

teachers and students. This viewing causes students to be afraid of sharing their inner thoughts, challenges, and difficulties with their teachers if they cannot have guanxi (Chen & Eweje, 2020; Tilly, 2005). Guanxi means an interpersonal relationship between school stakeholders through Confucian virtues of trust, empathy, and humanity (Chen & Eweje, 2020; Xie & Zhang, 2022c). For example, Zhang and Koshmanova (2020b) indicated that students could trust and follow their teachers only if they could help them pass the exam with the highest test score and have a high academic qualification and vice versa. Veldman et al. (2013) emphasized that a close interpersonal relationship between teachers and students fosters teachers to work with students closely for student success. For example, Meier (2002) proposed that teachers need to create a trust-based relationship with students as a priority to foster their academic learning outcomes. Bryk and Schneider (2002) also indicated that a trust-based school culture between school stakeholders improves student learning outcomes and school development. This remarkable link between teachers and students could help teachers to foster student whole-person growth (Chan & Chan, 2022) and school development (Meier, 2002; Ylimaki & Brunderman, 2022; Zhang & Koshmanova, 2022b).

However, teachers have difficulty building trust-based relationships with students in a private school setting in Beijing. For example, Zhou et al. (2018) and Zhang (2023) reported that teachers could make the students trust them and follow what they say only if they could cultivate students to pass their standardized tests and help them to receive a college offer from the top universities in the world. Private school in China is profit-oriented, and the tuition cost is very high, reaching over 200,000 RMB (around 30,000 US dollars) per year (Vahle, 2020). Students and parents pay high tuition fees and want a high-quality learning outcome like a business transaction (Zhang & Koshmanova, 2021a). For example, Zheng (2013) and Zheng (2014) indicated that cultivating students pass the exam with a high test score is the priority. The score is the key indicator for student learning outcomes, teacher job performance, and school reputation. Unfortunately, teachers, schools, and principals cannot ensure that all the students reach their learning goals and satisfy all the students' and parents' high expectations (Zhang, 2022). Education is not like a business transaction, and education cannot be business (Cuban, 2004). Instead, education needs to cultivate student whole-person growth through dialogue (Bohn, 2004), collaboration (Yankelovich, 1999), and a trust-based relationship building for student success, school development, and student growth mindset (Brock & Hundley, 2020; Dweck, 2016; Leithwood, Sun, & Pollock, 2017; O'Brien, 2020).

Thus, the purpose of this qualitative case study aims to explore how teachers could build a trust-based learning culture for student success, student growth mindset, and school development in a private school setting in Beijing. The research questions were as follows:

- (1) How do teachers build a trust-based learning culture for student success in a private school setting in Beijing?
- (2) How do teachers build a trust-based learning culture fostering students' growth mindset for their whole-person development in a private school setting in Beijing?
- (3) How do teachers build a trust-based learning culture for school development in a private school setting in Beijing?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature that informs this paper covers four major themes. They are the importance of building a trust-based learning culture, the relationship between trust-based learning culture and student success, the relationship between trust-based learning culture and student growth mindset, and the relationship between trust-based learning culture and school development.

The Importance of Trust-based Learning Culture

A trust-based learning culture motivates teachers to contribute knowledge to serve the students and the school. Since China is a high-power distance and guanxi social and cultural school climate, teachers must build a close connection with teachers to deliver high-quality teaching and school improvement. This viewing means that Chinese people are deeply trapped in an

intricate web of guanxi, a Chinese term for social links. The traditional concepts of guanxi describe the fundamental dynamic in personalized networks of influences (Zhang & Koshmanova, 2020a). The idea of guanxi originates from Confucianism for Chinese people to enlarge their social network for life and study (Ruan, 2017).

The Chinese people develop trust-based relationships (guanxi) among school stakeholders, such as between teachers and students, for school development through their decision-making degree (Lin & Huang, 2017). For example, Chinese parents select schools for their children through various channels and means, including money (school fees, sponsorship fees), power, guanxi, academic achievement (test scores, honorary awards, friends' recommendations), and trust. This view is supported by Qian and Walker (2013), who said that teachers could pay attention to the students' needs only if they have close guanxi with students, which could help teachers build a trust-based learning culture.

In addition, a trust-based learning culture could foster teachers to develop students' whole-person abilities and motivate them to build their self-identification. Within a trust-based learning culture, students could increase their learning outcomes, such as test scores. For example, Bryk and Schneider (2002) claimed that schools with high trust are three times as likely to increase students' test scores (p.111). They also said that schools with high relationship trust improved reading scores by 8% and math scores by 20% over five years (p.40). Sheng (2019) also indicated that good guanxi could help teachers to foster students' whole-person growth and motivate them to learn through close interaction between teachers and students.

Furthermore, a high trust-based learning culture between teachers and students could help teachers to create a healthy connection working with students for their growth and learning goals. For example, Handford and Leithwood (2018) found that teachers could foster students' confidence, enthusiasm, and zeal for learning (p. 10) by strengthening close interpersonal relationships. Frydenberg, Deans, and Liang (2023) also indicated that a trust-based learning culture could foster teachers to build empathy in students through whole-school connections.

Finally, a high trust-based learning culture enables teachers to foster students for school development through high academic targets, developing effective instructional strategies, and creating a trust-based supportive learning community (Townsend, 2018). Zhang and Koshmanova (2020b) presented that building a trust-based learning culture is vital for school principals and teachers to deliver quality education for students' success and increase the school's social reputation. Bathurst and Chen (2023) also emphasized that teachers, as classroom leaders need to build a trust-based classroom teaching culture to work with students for their effectiveness, such as learning achievement. Therefore, teachers need to build a trust-based learning culture for whole school enhancement.

Trust and Student Success

A trust-based learning culture could at least help teachers to foster student success in three ways. First, students trust teachers and their peers, which could help them to increase their academic outcomes, such as test scores. For example, Zhang and Koshmanova (2020d) pointed out that China's high-power distance school context causes students to fear sharing their thoughts with their peers and teachers. They also suggested that teachers could make students trust them through test scores. Zheng (2014) indicated that Chinese students usually seek to pass the exam with the highest test score, which could help them receive a college offer from a prestigious university (Zhang & Koshmanova, 2020c).

Conversely, Jeynes (2023) said that a close relationship among students, teachers, and parents could foster teachers to increase student learning outcomes through collaboration. Conrad and Lundberg supported this viewing (2022) and emphasized that students could achieve academic success through sharing and learning from others in the community. As a result, teachers need to foster students to develop their sharing ability with their peers and ask for help from teachers when they face a challenge in learning toward their higher learning outcomes.

Second, a trust-based learning culture could foster student zeal for learning to have a better learning outcome. Zhang and Koshmanova (2022a) indicated that students could improve their interest in learning by working with their peers and support from teachers. Day et al. (2011) also said that teachers could help students to reach their learning goals through encouragement and companionship. Suppose students could trust their teachers, peers, and other school stakeholders. In that case, they could effectively deal with their conflicts and challenges positively, which could help them to focus on their learning toward a better outcome (Van Maele, Forsyth, & Houtte, 2014). Deutsch (1973) claimed that a trust-based learning culture helps students resolve conflicts to achieve higher learning outcomes. Their viewing showed that teachers need to build a trust-based learning culture to positively encourage students to face their learning challenges toward a better learning outcome.

Finally, a trusting relationship between teachers and students could foster students to share their learning challenges with their teachers to seek help from them toward their learning outcomes. For example, Murphy and Brennan (2022) highlighted that students could reach their learning goals once they could receive help from teachers. However, Zhang (2023) discovered that Chinese students usually ask for help from the top teachers and vice versa. The top teachers mean that the teachers could cultivate students to pass the exam with the top score. This viewing showed that teachers need to continuously sharpen their knowledge and improve their teaching competency for student success, such as test scores. Therefore, students could increase their learning outcomes if they trust their teachers, peers, and other school stakeholders, such as parents and principals.

Trust and Student Growth Mindset

A trust-based learning culture could help teachers to foster student growth mindsets in at least three ways. First, the trust-based learning culture enables students to develop their self-efficacy to face challenges with a positive mindset. A positive mindset could help students effectively resolve their learning and life barriers toward personal success (Fischer, 2017). Santoro (2021) indicated that student confidence could help them to face their challenges by working with their peers and seeking help from others, such as teachers. Orgad and Gill (2022) stated that student self-efficacy could help them deal with their life and learning difficulties through self-determination. Meadows (2015) finally said that confidence could help students to overcome their limiting beliefs and achieve their goals through a positive mindset. Satterthwaite et al. (2011) confirmed that the trust-based culture help school stakeholders, such as teachers, to open their hearts to see others in the community with a positive mindset. Reina and Reina (2006) supported their viewings and indicated that classroom teachers must strategically encourage their students to face challenges with a confident, positive mindset. As a result, students could develop their efficacy within a growth mindset to drive school improvement and student success.

Second, the trust-based learning culture could help students to develop their communication skills with a positive mindset to deal with their life and learning challenges. Johnson and Hackman (2018) indicated that communication is an effective strategy for school principals, teachers, parents, and students to exchange their thoughts for school effectiveness. Garcia (2012) stated that communication helps teachers build a trust-based school culture, inspire loyalty, and lead school development effectively. Jeynes (2023) supported their viewing and indicated that teachers could foster students' growth mindset through communication, as the same idea from Vangelisti (2022) mentioned.

Third, students under a trust-based learning culture could ask for help from their teachers openly, no matter their challenges. If students could request help from their teachers, they could deal with their challenges and discover their potential talents for self-integrity and whole-personal growth. For example, Lowney (2015) indicated that teachers could help students to develop their self-awareness and self-conscience, which encourage students to discover their talents, weaknesses, and skills toward their learning goals through a growth mindset toward a better life (Ward, 2020).

Therefore, the trust-based learning culture could make the students recognize how the trusting relationship with teachers fosters them to develop their growth mindset for better living conditions.

Trust and School Development

The trust-based learning culture could foster teachers to work with students toward school development in two ways. First, the trust-based culture could motivate all the school stakeholders to work closely for school development. For

example, Heckscher (2015) indicated that trusting school stakeholders as drivers in the complex world could enrich their school community development through daily operation, implementation, and ongoing evaluation. Horsager (2012) also indicated that trust between school stakeholders could gain school improvement. Walker, Hu, and Qian (2012) supported their view and pointed out that students in China work with their teachers closely, which undoubtedly helps them to increase the school's social reputation. Zhang and Koshmanova (2022b) indicated that China is an interpersonal relationship society that advocates for teachers to foster a trust-based learning culture in leading school development.

Second, the culture-based learning culture could help teachers to work with students to increase the school's social reputation with a high enrollment rate. Zhang and Koshmanova (2022b) indicated that private schools in China run for profit. Private schools could survive and develop sustainably only if they continuously maintain and increase their student enrollment rate. Zhang (2023) stated that teachers work with students through a trust-based learning culture and work closely for whole school development. For example, students trust their teachers and work hard toward their learning target through the trust-based approach toward high test scores and top university admission notices. Hallinger and Kantamara (2001) indicated that a close relationship between teachers and students could make sustainable school growth in a changeable community.

Therefore, the trust-based learning culture between teachers and students could foster student success, student growth mindset, and school development. As I demonstrated above, teachers need to create a trust-based learning culture for students to work with their peers, teachers, principals, parents, and all other school stakeholders for school improvement, student success, and student growth mindset.

METHODOLOGY

Overview Research Design

A case study was employed in this study. Yin (2018) stated that qualitative case studies across numerous disciplines contribute to the knowledge of individuals, groups, processes, and relationships. Similarly, Stake (1995) said that a case study is a holistic approach to understanding real-life phenomena. Flyvbjerg (2019) further stated that a case study refers to real-life situations for teaching and learning. The case study can develop a natural and understanding process for developing skills (p. 235). This study explores how classroom teachers create a trust-based culture in leading school improvement in an exam-oriented private school in Beijing. Specifically, this study investigates how a trust-based learning culture helps teachers foster student success, student growth mindset, and school development in a private school setting in Beijing.

Regarding the characteristics of a private school in China, the teacher's priority is to figure out the various strategies to cultivate students to pass the exam with the highest score and to help them apply for the top universities with admission

notice. Zhang and Koshmanova (2021b) indicated that principals evaluate teachers' job performance based on their student's test scores, salary, awarding, and reputation. However, teachers could not ensure that all the students passed the exam with the top score and top college admission notices. As for this viewing, the study is to figure out how teachers could build a trust-based learning culture to foster student success, student growth mindset, and school development in Beijing.

The school that I selected was registered in 2012 in Beijing. The school has about 500 students from Grades 8 to Grade 12. There are about 60 teachers and 5 staff. The purpose of the school is to cultivate students to pass the exam with the highest test score and to receive a top university admission notice through mock preparation, test, quiz, and all intensive and demanding training (Zhang & Koshmanova, 2020e). Since the participants of teachers were randomly and purposively selected from the private school, the qualitative case study was to employ to analyze the school contexts and encourage teachers to build a trust-based learning culture in the highly competitive social and cultural school contexts in Beijing (Flick, 2022; Hardin, 2004; Mulvihill & Swaminathan, 2022). The qualitative case study is appropriate to the current study.

Besides, the thematic, descriptive, and interpretative analyses were used to analyze the interview data to emerge the theme to answer the research questions accordingly (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Silverman & Patterson, 2022; Smith, Flower & Larkin, 2009; Saldana, 2016). This study fills in the gap in the literature, and the conceptual framework shown in figure 1 below was guided in this study.

Conceptual Framework in this Study

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework in this Study

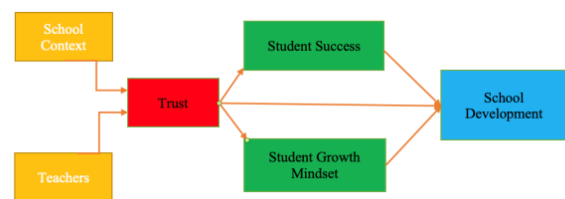


Figure 1 above shows that teachers build a trust-based learning culture for student success, student growth mindset, and school development in Beijing's high-power exam-oriented private school contexts.

In this study, trust was defined by Tschannen-Moran (2004) that one can trust another based on their vulnerability of the core elements: benevolent, honest, open, reliable, and competent" (Chapter 2, definition trust, para 1). Meier (2002) also pointed out that the school needs to create a trust-based learning culture to improve the school. Trust plays various functions and covers several factors in school significantly. Meier (2002) said that trust in school helps the school stakeholders have those functions to the school, benevolence, love, care, and all the school values that could help the student

achieve lifelong learning and emphasize the importance of the school values.

Tschannen-Moran (2004) confirmed that schools must create trust, which is necessary now because trust is a big issue globally. She suggested using visioning, modeling, coaching, managing, and meditating to cultivate trust among the school stakeholders. Van Maele, Forsyth, and Houtte (2014) further supported her view that teachers need to build a relationship with students, parents, and school principals to deliver high-quality teaching in the classroom. Bryk and Schneider (2002) developed a relational trust theory that addressed the importance of successful trust effectiveness patterns. They indicated that cultivating trust can be dynamic, flexible, and informative as one creates a relationship that inspires confidence. They also display that teachers could use many factors too. For example, develop trust such as admiration, personal respect, and proficiency. Specifically, they suggested using the four elements to create trust: respect, competence, personal regard, and integrity. With this concept of trust in mind, teachers explore the trust-based approach (Green, 2006; Kelly, 2018) in the high-power distance school contexts to increase student success, student growth mindset, and school development. Therefore, the trust concepts from Meier (2002), Tschannen-Moran (2004), Van Maele, Forsyth, and Hutte (2014), and Bryk and Schneider (2002) were guided in this study while analyzing the interview data.

In addition, student success means that teachers build a trust-based learning culture to increase student learning outcomes, such as test scores, top university admission notices, and competition awards. The concepts from Leithwood, Sun, and Pollock (2017), Zhang and Koshmanova (2020f), and Bass (2022) about student success are guided by teachers, principals, and other leaders fostering school development. Besides, the growth mindset means that students can figure out positive strategies to face learning and life challenges. The growth mindset concepts from previous scholars, such as Dweck (2006) and Fischer (2017), were guided through analyzing the interview data from participants of teachers in this study. Finally, teachers in the exam-oriented high-power school contexts in Beijing build a trust-based learning culture, along with student success and student growth mindset, which could drive the whole school development for student success and whole person growth (Chan & Chan, 2022; DePaul, 2023, and Feng, 2023; Zhang & Koshmanova, 2020g) in leading this study.

Participants, Recruitment, and selection

A total of twelve high school teachers in a private school in Beijing were employed in this study. This study implies that teachers navigate their personal and professional experiences, investigate their opinion and beliefs, and explore their viewings in Beijing's Confucian high-power exam-oriented school contexts (Patton, 2015).

Purposive and random sampling was used to recruit via an invitation letter distributed to the potential participants. The invitation letter included the contents of the purpose of the study, confidentiality, voluntary withdrawal, consent form,

researchers' information, and the use of zoom for interviewing the participants of teachers. Finally, I conducted, collected, and analyzed the teachers' experiences through descriptive, interpretative, and thematic analysis (Saldana, 2016). The age of the participants of teachers ranges from 25 to 55, and their working experience is from 2 to 30 years. The total of twelve teachers' participants is shown in table 1 below.

Table 1
Demographic Participants of Teachers in Beijing

Participant ID	Age	Gender	Level of Education	Years of Experiences
T1	26	F	BA	3
T2	27	F	BS	3
T3	28	M	BA	2
T4	29	F	MA	5
T5	31	M	BA	7
T6	35	F	BS	6
T7	37	M	MA	12
T8	25	F	BA	3
T9	45	M	MA	20
T10	55	M	BS	30
T11	46	F	MS	21
T12	38	M	MBA	5

The participants of teachers shown in table 1 were recruited through a semi-structured protocol interview with an average 60-minute one-on-one conversation. The interviewing emphasized the constructs of participating, planning, designing, and developing content through ten recorded and transcribed questions. I prepared the interview protocol, sampling criteria, recruitment procedures, and methods for analyzing, categorizing, and synthesizing the significant themes in the coding process (Dweck, 2006; Feng, 2023; Zhang & Koshmanova, 2020).

I only included the voluntary participants, and I protect the participants' confidentiality with the pseudonym and coding process. Since the participants were from Beijing, China, I interviewed them through zoom in this study. In addition, I also followed the coding procedures, always protected confidentiality, and maintained trustworthiness in collecting data and data analysis. All the interviews were audio-taped using a semi-structured interview protocol during the meeting. Therefore, the study took one 60-minute interview per participant, and overall, the investigation took two to three months to collect data, literature review, and complete the task.

Finally, I sent 40 invitation letters to the potential participants, and finally, only twelve of them voluntarily accepted and participated in this study. Therefore, this study included an analysis of ten teachers' interviews that collected data on their personal experiences using the concept of trust to develop a student growth mindset, success, and school development. Thus, I recruited those teachers through the process described above to select the participants in this study.

Data Sources and Data Collections

I collected data in March and completed the interview in May 2021. In March 2021, I emailed the selected potential participants and waited for their response. If they responded by email within a week, I would set up a WeChat conversation to exchange thoughts and share the study's purpose with them. I sent 20 emails to the participants; however, I only received 5 of them voluntarily participating in this study. Then, I set up a remote zoom interview with them from 25 to March 29, 2021. After interviewing them, I translated the Chinese version to English through back translation theory.

After transcribing the first five participants' recordings, I sent 20 invitation letters to the other participants to recruit the potential participants at the beginning of April 2021 and May 2021. In two weeks, I received another seven participants who agreed to participate in this study. Then, I set up a short conversation with them before taking a formal Zoom interview. Therefore, I interviewed the second seven of them from April 18 to May 25, 2021. After translating the transcripts, I started to analyze the transcripts described in the data analysis.

Data Analysis

I started to analyze the transcripts through the iterative process. First, I identified emerging themes by examining the transcripts, memos, and self-reflective journal logs using multiple cycles of coding and analysis processes (Adu, 2019;

Saldana, 2013). I uploaded the transcripts into the Nvivo 12 qualitative software to analyze, categorize, and merge the major themes. Second, I read several times and studied the transcripts to find similar thoughts from each participant, and then I combined the central themes through a synthesizing process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Finally, I listed the major themes with the codes and selected the originated texts to support the codes regarding the research questions.

Methodological Integrity

I invited one of the Ph.D. candidates to check the clarity and reasoning of the themes. Also, I used the journal log and audit trails to ensure that the analysis follows the process and avoids bias in this study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings in this study show that teachers build a trust-based learning culture to foster student success, student growth mindset, and school development in the high-power distance exam-oriented school contexts in Beijing. Findings are presented below per research questions accordingly.

(1). How do teachers build a trust-based learning culture for student success in a private school setting in Beijing?

Findings show that teachers often use three strategies, including (1) support, (2) professionalism, and (3) interpersonal relationship to foster student success shown in table 1 below.

Table 1

Three Major Themes with Quotes Selected from Participants of Teachers for Increasing Student Success

Major themes	Quotes Selected from Participants
Theme 1: support always	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I believe only if I could support what my students need, I can help them to raise their learning performance (T5). With a positive support, I think I can help my students to reach their learning goal (T2). I do believe supporting each other is a good way for improvement (T5). I think, as a classroom teacher in a private school, I need to always give my hand to the students if they request (T11).
Theme 2: Professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I do believe professional capacity is an effective way of helping students to reach their learning goal (T8). I always improve my teaching knowledge, skill, and figure out the effective way to help the students toward their learning goals (T9). I have taught students for over 10 years, but I read books every day (T7). I think only I am skillful and has a high standard such as higher education degree and licensure, which can make my students to accept my suggestion (T12).
Theme 3: interpersonal relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can help student only if they trust me (T10). I make a social relational relationship with students, and other school stakeholders to improve my teaching efficiency (T4). I assume that making a personal relationship with a trust is important for me to help students to work hard. I think with a good relationship, students easily trust me and I can directly say some things and help the students to increase their learning outcomes (T6). I am guanxi which is important for me to work with students for their better outcomes (T12).

Referring to table 1 shown above, teachers help student success through their support whenever the students request them. The first finding of support is compatible with the previous studies. For example, Daniels and Hedegaard (2011) indicated that students could have a better learning outcome if they could receive help from their teachers. Similarly, Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) said that teachers need to develop their teaching skills to help students succeed through various types of support. Hue and Karin (2022) indicated that teachers must continually support their students, whether rich or poor, in the inclusive classroom. Pilcher and Richards (2022) emphasized that teachers need to enhance student support, which is essential to foster student success and have a better learning outcome, such as test scores. However, Zhang and Koshmanova (2020a) pointed out that students are often afraid to request help from their teachers because some teachers would not respond to the students in need in the power-distance school contexts besides their classroom teaching time. Therefore, findings in this study show that teachers could help students have a better learning outcome if they could receive support from their teachers, parents, peers, school principals, and all other school stakeholders.

The second finding shows that teachers could foster student success through their professionalism. In the high-power distance school contexts in Beijing, students and parents expect to learn from top teachers, who graduated from a leading university, a higher reputation in teaching with the number of successful students they cultivate. Zhang (2023) supported this view that teachers could make students obey and follow what they said only if they trust them and recognize them as the top teachers who could help them toward their learning goals, such as high test scores. Gu (2014) indicated that teachers as a sample in the school could motivate students to learn and to achieve their learning goals. Gutierrez, Fox, and Alexander (2019) claimed that high teacher professionalism could foster students to fulfill their learning goals, such as high test scores or better learning outcomes. However, Zhang (2023) said that high professionalism might not help students achieve their learning goals if the teachers could not pay attention to their needs. For example, a teacher with a doctoral research degree who teaches elementary or high school students might not be better than those with a master's or bachelor's degree with a whole heart in teaching. Therefore, professionalism from teachers plays a vital role in either helping students achieve better learning outcomes or causing a big gap between students and teachers.

The third finding shows that teachers could increase student learning outcomes, such as higher test scores if they could have the ability to interact with students and other school colleagues. This study added to the previous literature, such as maintaining positive and supportive guanxi, which could help teachers foster students' learning outcomes. For example,

Ruan (2017) indicated that guanxi is a social link between teachers and students and all other school stakeholders to help others succeed. Lin and Huang (2017) also found that a strong guanxi and a weak guanxi between teachers and students make an enormous difference in the high-power school contexts in Beijing. Six (2005) further emphasized that teachers must emphasize the importance of creating a strong interpersonal relationship with all the school stakeholders, such as students, for school development and student success. Riggio and Tan (2014) supported their view and claimed that the strong interpersonal relationship between teachers and students is essential for school implementation and whole-school reform.

(2). How do teachers build a trust-based learning culture fostering students' growth mindset for their whole-person development in a private school setting in Beijing?

In this study, the findings in table 2 below show that teachers could foster students' growth mindset for their whole-person growth through three major themes, including (1) openness, (2) respect, and (3) justice.

The first finding is that teachers could foster students' growth mindset through openness. Openness means that teachers can always open their hearts and time to welcome their students whenever they need. If teachers could help students open their hearts and mind to see their life, they could help students build a growth mindset to have a better life condition and contribute what they have learned in school to the community. Dweck (2006) stated that building a mindset could help people change their views and fulfill their potential life. Schein and Schein (2018) also showed that teachers with an open mindset could help others, such as student's life changes. Siu (2021) suggested that leaders, such as classroom teachers, need to open their doors to welcome all the challenges, which could help them discover their unique talents and foster their life changes. Pinfield et al. (2021) also said that openness could give both teachers and students a solid close interpersonal relationship for students to develop their growth mindset to resolve their challenges in life and learning.

The second finding is that teachers must help students develop their growth mindsets through respect. Teachers could show their relation to the students, which could help them discover their talents, strengths, and weaknesses to develop a growth mindset facing their life and vice versa. Clarke and Mahadi (2017) showed that teachers could motivate students to develop their growth mindset through encouragement, companionship, and respect. Sennett (2003) also indicated that teachers need to respect all the students wherever they are from, either rich or poor, urban or suburban. Hill (1991) supported this finding that respect could make a progressive life improvement and create a better life condition. Therefore, respect is one of the effective strategies to help students develop their growth mindset and improve their lives.

Table 2

Three Major Themes with Quotes Selected from the Participants of Teachers for Developing Student Growth Mindset

Major themes	Quotes Selected from Participants
Theme 1: openness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think I open my heart to share my understanding with my peers, students, and other school stakeholders. By doing so, I develop my positive mindset (T9). I can say I may make a relationship with others. If I have friends, I surely develop my growth mindset. Well, making a friend is difficult actually, but I still want to make more friends (T8). I think no matter how challenges in my teaching, I think I need to open to all ways to make a big contribution for my students (T7). I think teachers need to accept all students' issues to help them in a positive mind (T11).
Theme 2: respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When I feel to be respected, I really feel so happy. Sometimes, I do not I did right nor not (T3). Sometimes, I feel sad because I cannot see the educational core values but only testing, testing, and still testing (T10). No matter how the educational situation is, I still believe that respect to others is a great way to receive respect from others (T9). In China, teachers have a power and often show judgment, but I think teachers need to respect students' viewings and help them to discover their talents, which is important (T12).
Theme 3: justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think treating all my students with an equality. I think it is a good way (T7). Sometimes, we may think there are different from each student. But, I still believe that I need to treat all of them in a same standard. If not, I could not help my students to develop their skills, and also their self-efficacy, and positive mindsets (T6). I think with a justice mind, I can develop my positive mind (T3).

The third finding is that teachers could foster students to enhance their growth mindsets to have better life condition through a justice-oriented philosophy. The previous supported this finding. For example, Trono (2013) indicated that teachers treat all students in the same manner, which could help them to treat others fairly in their life. Students receive a justice treatment from their teachers, which could form their life values and develop their growth mindset solving their life challenges. Angelle and Torrance (2019) also proposed that teachers need to use social justice leadership to treat students equally for their growth mindset. Chapman and Hobbel (2022) also said that teachers could use the concept of justice to develop their students' growth mindset and to make a better life condition through pedagogy and curriculum implementation. Therefore, teachers could foster students to develop their growth mindset through openness, respect, and justice.

(3). How do teachers build a trust-based learning culture for school development in a private school setting in Beijing?

Findings in table 3 show that teachers could explore the trust-based learning culture for school development through three strategies, including (1) dialogue, (2) honesty, and (3) prosperity.

The first finding shows that teachers could use dialogue to build a trust-based learning culture to work with students and other school stakeholders for whole school development. Dialogue is an effective strategy for teachers to connect with students in delivering highly effective teaching. For example, Bohn (2004) and Yankelovich (1999) indicated that dialogue

between teachers, students, and other school stakeholders could work effectively and increase the school's effectiveness for its sustainable development. Zhang and Koshmanova (2020b) also said that a dialogue approach could help teachers resolve conflict and guide the students toward their learning goals. Xie, Kollontai, and Kim (2020) finally proposed that teachers must use interdisciplinary dialogue to foster school development, student success, and a growth mindset.

The second finding presents that honesty is an effective strategy for teachers to work with students, parents, principals, and other school stakeholders in leading school development. Since Cuban (2003) indicated that parents and students have difficulty seeking a great school in the material society, this study finds that teachers need to propose using honesty to present what the school is, how the school helps the students, and what the success of the school is. By doing so, teachers could effectively work with students and parents to serve students in a better way and to increase school development. The previous scholars supported this view. For example, Hamilton (2021) pointed out that teachers need to share what they know and what they have with their parents and students to deliver highly effective support to the students. If teachers do not tell the parents the reality of their children, parents will not know how their children perform and how they could support their children through collaboration with teachers and other school staff (Frydenberg, Deans & Liang, 2023). Therefore, teachers with honesty could help students succeed and develop a growth mindset through parent involvement and increase school service for school development.

Table 3

Three Major Themes of Teachers Creating Trust with Quotes Selected from The Participants for School Development

Major themes	Quotes Selected from Participants
Theme 1: dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I want to share an example from one of my students. When I first see the student, she did not tell me anything besides learning. Three weeks later, I made her to trust me and she shared her thoughts with me. It is because I always communicated my thoughts with her (T2). A dialogue is best way for me to make a relationship with my students, I think (T10). Students could trust teachers, I think, if teachers could have a good conversation with students both formal and informal, so, I think conversation is a good way (T5). Conversation is an effective way to deal with conflict and difficulty in the guanxi society in China, I think (T12).
Theme 2: honesty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think I can make a trust with my students only if I tell them what they need to do honestly (T4). Sometimes, I feel difficult to make a good relationship with students. I am not sure how I need to do, but I just do what I think (T1). I help students with my heart and positive attitude. Although sometimes I am not sure that my teaching helps my students to grow nor not, I just do the things I believe that is useful for me and I also think it is good for my students (T3).
Theme 3: prosperity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students tend to trust me only I make them to pass the exam with the highest score (T6). Sometimes, it is very challengeable for me. I think no score, no other things. Even though sometimes, I help the students to pass the exam in the first time, but later on, the students did not pass the exam well. Then, they tend to distrust me. I feel difficulty (T7). I try to help students all the time for their needs for success (T10). I believe my high standards and best outcomes such as the number of students that I cultivate who go to the top universities and high test score, which can increase the school social reputation and get more students in the private school setting (T12).

The third finding shows that teachers could contribute their service to school development by enhancing their prosperity. Prosperity means that teachers have high qualifications, high performance, and success, which could make students and parents trust them and work with them for student achievement and whole-person growth. For example, Zhang and Koshmanova (2022b) stated that teachers have high prosperity, such as a high rate of helping students with a high passing score, even total score, or a high rate of assisting students in receiving the top university admission notice. This viewing could help teachers to build trust with students and parents for their support and increase the school performance, such as student enrollment rate. Meier (2002) supported this view that teachers need to build a trust-based learning culture for student success and school development through various strategies, such as improving school test performance.

Nevertheless, Ravitch (2020) proposed that school promotes the high-test score as the priority in the current school contexts, which mislead education. However, many scholars still believe that school produces the high-test score to ensure students have more chances to receive a top university admission notice for high school student (Zhang & Koshmanova, 2021e). That is essential, especially in exam-oriented school contexts in Beijing. Therefore, this study finds out that teachers should increase their prosperity as their qualification and reputation to help students reach their

learning target and make schools sustainable development in the competitive school market in China.

Conclusions

Three findings are concluded. First, teachers must improve their professionalism and prosperity to build a trust-based relationship with students, parents, principals, and other school stakeholders for student success, student growth mindset, and school development. School principals evaluate teachers' performance through their student's test scores and feedback from teachers, students, and other school staff. Only if teachers could cultivate students to pass the exam with the highest test score and top university admission notices could they have a chance to build a trust-based strong relationship with students in effectively delivering high-quality teaching. Zhang and Koshmanova (2021c) pointed out that teachers could create a trust-based learning climate only if they could make students follow them and obey them for student success, growth mindset, and school development.

Second, teachers need to be open and respectful to work with students for their success, integrated growth, and school development. Once teachers open their minds, they can figure out many approaches to help students through collaboration, encouragement, and sharing for their self-determination and whole-person competency improvement. With a respectful attitude, teachers could encourage students to improve their self-reflection ability and slowly build a growth mindset in

resolving their challenges in life and learning toward a better life condition. Third, teachers could use dialogue and self-prosperity to build a trust-based learning culture with students for their learning success, growth mindset building, and school development. Ely (1980) and Zheng (2014) indicated that teachers have the chance to create a trust-based relationship with students only if they can show their higher teaching qualifications. For example, Zhang and Koshmanova (2021d) reported that students recognize that the top school is to produce the highest test preparation and to prepare students to get the full university college admission notice and vice versa. Therefore, this study finds out that teachers could have a chance to build a trust-based learning culture for student success, student growth mindset, and whole school development through their openness, prosperity, professional qualification, and respect for sustainable school growth.

Implications

Three implications are suggested. First, the finding shows that teachers must use dialogue and honesty to create a trust-based learning culture for student success, student growth mindset, and school development. Currently, teachers are afraid of criticizing students and reporting the students' weaknesses to their parents in the competitive school market in China (Zhang & Koshmanova, 2020a). However, this study finds that teachers must honestly report students' learning reality to their parents in exam-oriented school contexts in China. As for this viewing, this study suggests that teachers need to use the scientific-data analysis framework to present students' strengths, weaknesses, and real situations to their parents for student success and school development.

Second, this study suggests that teachers need to explore social justice leadership to treat all the students in the same manner and help them build their self-efficacy in changeable societies (Bandura, 1995). Previous studies show that competition causes many issues, such as inequality and distrust between school stakeholders. With this view in mind, teachers need to use social-justice leadership to foster students' growth and school development for student success (Angelle & Torrance, 2019; Ginsberg, 2022; Nesoff, 2022). Therefore, this study suggests that teachers must use the same standards to treat all students for their success.

Finally, this study suggests that teachers need to use a dialogue approach to build a trust-based learning culture for all school stakeholders to work together, providing comprehensive support to the students for their success and school development.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Studies

This study has two limitations. First, the participants are from one private school, and the sample size is small. Second, this study focuses on how teachers use trust-based learning concepts to build relationships with students for student success, growth mindset, and school development.

Regarding the first limitation, the proposed basic qualitative study will be employed through semi-structural and open-

ended interview protocol to conduct research with a total of 48 participants, including principals (N=12), teachers (N=12), students (N=12), parents (N=12). This study will explore how principals, teachers, students, and parents explore their viewings on building a trust-based learning culture for the whole school reform in China. Regarding the second limitation, the proposed mixed exploratory design will be used to find out what challenges and successes teachers and principals face in the private school setting in China. The survey and interviewing method will be used to collect the data from principals, teachers, parents, and students for the whole school reform and student whole-person growth.

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