



An Empirical Study of Occupational Respect from Urban Residents and Its Structure

—Based on a Survey in Hangzhou

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Abstract: This paper analyzes survey data collected in Hangzhou and quantifies the respect local residents have for various occupations. According to the research findings, such respect varies significantly from occupation to occupation, which is irrelevant to an occupation's position in the occupational hierarchy. It exhibits both intergenerational differences and common grounds, and has a distinct structure of categories. This paper also pinpoints the inadequacies of this study and areas for further studies.

Keywords: urban residents, professional respect, empirical study

Research Background and Research Questions

Occupational respect and occupational prestige are two major research areas of occupational sociology for which the research goals are to identify the social evaluations and value orientations of various occupations among the general public from a variety of perspectives. This research area can be traced back to *The Division of Labor in Society* research conducted by David Émile Durkheim in 1893, and was later extensively recognized by the academic community (2000). These two research areas have a history of more than 120 years. In 1925 the American scholar George Counts became the first to study

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occupational prestige and since then this research area has been a regular focus among scholars worldwide, including those in China (Zhang & Xiao, 2005, p. 470). Accordingly, occupational prestige in different times during this period has basically been shaped in North America, Western Europe and China, and features considerable consistency. By contrast, occupational respect has yet to become a subject of interest to the academic community. There are no related empirical analyses of occupational respect and no theoretical predictions.

Occupational respect is different from occupational prestige. Occupational respect focuses on individuals who are engaged in a particular occupation, i.e. specific practitioners. The respect for them is based on their contribution to society and their social recognition, and, more importantly, on their diligence, legitimacy regarding profit-making and dominant values in a particular stage. Thus, respect for a particular occupational group is determined by more complicated influencing factors and such respect varies significantly from era to era. However, occupations that contribute more to society do not necessarily gain more respect from the public or attract more people to engage in them. Occupational prestige, however, focuses on a particular occupation itself. Such prestige is primarily about the position of a particular occupation in the occupational hierarchy based on its practitioners' income, work environment, labor intensity and opportunities for promotion. Given that, the public view of a particular occupational group tends to be quite stable. Chinese scholars have concluded from the results of over 10 major studies since the 1980s: Occupations with the highest prestige are those such as government officials and SOE (state-owned enterprise) managers, followed by highly-skilled professionals such as college professors, scientists and doctors. Occupations with the lowest prestige are those that are economically and socially deprived such as farmers, service workers and caretakers (Gao, 2005; Zong, Li & Sun, 2016). Also, the higher an occupation's position is in the occupational hierarchy, the higher prestige it enjoys and the more people it attracts.

The study of occupational respect is of great theoretical and realistic significance. Theoretically, occupational respect is a key entry point to understanding, defining and serializing the positions of various occupations in the occupational hierarchy against the backdrop of increased industrialization, marketization and occupational differentiation. Realistically, the degree of respect from the public for various occupations can help renew the established understanding of various occupations, and more importantly, can allow relevant government authorities to correctly manage those occupations by category, eliminate misunderstandings and hostility among practitioners in different occupations, enhance cohesion and affinity among different occupational groups, and subsequently promote social integration and harmony. It is fair to say that the research area of occupational respect is an indispensable part of occupational sociology. This is particularly true in contemporary society, in which each occupation "has a different price" and is accordingly placed in a particular position in the occupational hierarchy. It is thus of great significance to study occupational respect.

The Chinese people's occupational respect varies greatly from era to era due to the evolution

of social institutions, culture and value orientations. For example, during the 1960s and 1970s, intellectuals were discriminated against by society and were stigmatized as the so-called “choulaojiu”, or “Stinking Old Ninth” (a Chinese vulgarity for intellectuals). Such discrimination against intellectuals was eliminated in the 1980s when the whole society rediscovered the importance of scientific knowledge and came to regard “science and technology as the primary productive forces”. In such a context, accomplished intellectuals, represented by Qian Xuesen and Chen Jingrun, were once again admired and respected by people from all walks of life. The second example is the image of urban management staff in current Chinese society. As law enforcers, urban management staff are supposed to maintain social order and guarantee a quality living environment for urban residents, for which they deserve due respect from urban residents. In reality, however, conflicts frequently arise between urban management staff and vendors, resulting in a negative or even bandit-like impression of them by the general public. Another example is the image of social workers, who are professionals specializing in “helping the weak and the needy” by providing social services. They deserved respect from the general public, too, but according to disclosures by some centrally-administered media, starting in 2011, China’s then social support structures were far from adequate to satisfy social needs, and there was a shortage of social workers because this occupation was not yet widely recognized by society. Social workers were sometimes even called “street aunts/uncles”, meaning kind-hearted middle-aged volunteers, not professionals. This lack of due respect for social workers led to a severe outflow in this occupational group. Thus, in a particular historical stage, the dominant values and social sentiments could stigmatize certain occupations which should have been treated with due respect, resulting in respect for certain occupations to be disproportionate to their contributions to society.

Since 1978, due to urbanization and marketization, the number of occupations in China has been in constant change with the times. According to the *Occupational Classification System of the People’s Republic of China*, there were 1,838 different occupations in China in 1999; unexpectedly, this figure was reduced to 1,481 in 2015. That means during this 16-year period, a total of 357 occupations disappeared. The extensive application of scientific technologies to work and life has led to the disappearance of some traditional occupations, such as bus conductor and train ticket collector, and given rise to new occupations such as expressman and real-estate broker. Some of the emerging occupations such as security staff are already well known to the general public while others such as perfumer and pet trainer are still less known.

The change in occupational types reflects the progress of a society’s urbanization and marketization and concerns the complexity of its occupational structures and social stability. According to Talcott Parsons’ structural functionalism (Parsons, 2012), when all members of a society share the same values and internalize them, people in all walks of life would consciously and faithfully play their roles, and contribute accordingly to society. With each practitioner performing his or her own function, society naturally tends to reach equilibrium

and harmony. When it comes to China, at the 18th CPC National Congress in November 2012, the CPC leadership introduced the core socialist values, i.e. “prosperity, democracy, civility, harmony, freedom, equality, justice, the rule of law, patriotism, dedication, integrity and friendship.” Yet, the rapid growth of the market economy has led to the emergence and rampant increase of egoism, making it difficult to popularize these core socialist values, and preventing the people from fully internalizing and practicing them. At present, it is not uncommon for practitioners in various occupations to deviate from their supposed occupational roles and corresponding duties. Such a deviation can be exemplified by some sensational scandals such as environmental pollution resulting from illegal sewage disposal by some business owners, as well as tainted steamed buns and poisonous bean sprouts produced by some individual businesses. The increase of deviant behaviors by practitioners can lead to two social problems. The first is hatred among different occupations. Such hatred can subsequently trigger frequent conflicts and seriously affect social stability. The second is disturbance of the established judgements of occupational values, which can manipulate the respect for various occupations from the public and re-serialize the degrees of respect for those occupations.

Currently, against the backdrop of rapid industrialization and urbanization in China, egoism has become rampant; and occupational respect is yet to be covered by any academic study. How should occupational respect be approached? I believe that the approach to the study of occupational respect should be the same as the approach to the study of occupational prestige and should comprise four aspects.

First, the study of occupational respect should be based on the national catalogue of occupational classification, rather than each practitioner in a specific occupation. Any study should try to include occupations familiar to those available to the general public. Specific analysis should focus on three issues, a) degrees of respect for selected occupations and rankings of various occupations by degree of respect, b) the degrees of respect for various occupations from people with different social characteristics, and c) possible structural differences in the degrees of respect for various occupations.

Second, the study of occupational respect requires an analysis of influencing factors. There are many complicated factors influencing occupational respect. Given this, is the respect for an occupation universal in a particular social reality? If not, what are the specific influencing factors? It can be assumed that in addition to demographic characteristics, the influencing factors also include personal value orientation (PVO), social value orientation (SVO), the category of occupation that one is engaged in, as well as positive or negative social events arising from certain occupational categories.

Third, the study of occupational respect needs to focus on whether the respect for various occupations is influenced by local urbanization and marketization. Regarding this, there are two questions to be answered. How does the respect for various occupations vary from region to region within China, and how does the respect for various occupations vary from country to

country?

Fourth, the study of occupational respect should predict the trend of changes in the respect for various occupations. To make such a prediction, the study must be a longitudinal trans-era tracking study.

The above four aspects are the primary concerns for the study of occupational respect and are also undoubtedly the core areas for occupational sociology. Due to limited space, this paper only tentatively analyzes the first aspect based on the survey data collected, and leaves the remaining three aspects for future analysis. This analysis sequences various occupations by degree of respect, identifies intergenerational differences in the degrees of respect for various occupations, and establishes a corresponding structure.

Question Design and Data Source

Question Design

The design of occupations was a major challenge for this study. Such a challenge lies in two points, namely, how to determine the standard for the selection of occupations to ensure their representativeness, and how to select occupations and acknowledge their social functions to the interviewees so that they can truthfully describe their respect for the occupations included in the study.

Regarding the standard for the selection of occupations I decided to group them according to the basic principle of “work nature identity”, which places all occupations into eight categories based on the national catalogue of occupational classification (issued by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of the PRC). The first category includes heads and officials of state agencies, party organizations, enterprises and public institutions. The second category includes a variety of professionals and technicians. The third category includes clerks and related personnel. The fourth category refers to business service staff. The fifth category includes practitioners in the sectors of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, fishery and water conservancy. The sixth category includes operators of production equipment, transport equipment and related personnel. The seventh category refers to military personnel. The eighth category covers all other practitioners. The second challenge is how to select representative occupations from the eight categories and acknowledge their social functions to the interviewees. In contemporary society, new occupations keep emerging. Although some new occupations are already recognized by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of the PRC, such as perfumer (occupational code: X2-02-06-04), their content and social functions are probably still unfamiliar to those in their 30s, let alone seniors above 60. Consequently, when it comes to such new occupations, interviewees may be unable to identify their respect for them.

In light of this, the selection of occupations for this study is based on two principles. The first is giving consideration to social reality. Accordingly, I selected 28 well-known traditional occupations for analysis. Occupations selected from the aforementioned first category are “government official”, “SOE director” and “private businessman”; those selected from the second category are “doctor”, “teacher”, “journalist”, “judge” and “actor”; those from the third category are “government clerk”, “bank clerk” and “urban management officer”; those from the fourth category are “supermarket assistant”, “expressman”, “tour guide”, “salesman” and “individual businessman”; those from the fifth category are “farmer”, “migrant builder” and “migrant sanitation worker”; those from the sixth category are “SOE worker”, “bus driver” and “taxi driver”; those from the seventh category are “serviceman”, “fireman”, “armed police” and “policeman”; those from the eighth category are “vendor” and “beggar”. The second principle is giving consideration to the contemporary urban residents’ awareness of and respect for emerging occupations. For this requirement I included two occupations with characteristics of the times, namely, “perfumer” and “public nutritionist”. This study then examined 30 occupations selected from the the national catalogue of occupational classification issued by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of the PRC. The Cronbach’s alpha of the 30 occupations is 0.9314.

The survey questions for the 30 occupations were: How do you rate your respect for the listed occupations? Please specify your degree of respect by choosing one from the following six options: high respect, due respect, OK, slight antipathy, strong antipathy, and N/A, whose respective values are 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0. It is noteworthy that “0” corresponds to N/A, which means the interviewee has little or no knowledge of a particular occupation and therefore cannot rate their respect for it.

It is fair to assume that the respect for the above 30 occupations from urban residents is not necessarily at the same degree. Personally, such occupational respect is influenced by factors such as age, education, gender, frequency of media access, contact with certain occupations, as well as one’s own occupation. Socially, such occupational respect is influenced by certain social events, whether positive or negative, arising from the performance of certain occupations, and is guided by society’s core values. Take China’s efforts to combat the 1998 Yangtze River floods as an example. Those who participated in the emergency rescue and disaster relief (the Chinese People’s Liberation Army, armed police, firemen) secured high respect from the public. By contrast, urban management officers and tour guides tend to be less respected by the public due to the frequently reported conflicts between urban management officers and vendors, and between tour guides and tourists. After all, dedication and integrity are part of the core socialist values. Those who work hard of course deserve more respect from others. Also, the degree of respect for one particular occupation varies from era to era. In fact, there are a variety of complicated factors influencing people’s respect for a particular occupation and those factors can change as time goes by. Due to limited space, I only took the influencing factor of age

into account to explore the intergenerational differences and common grounds in occupational respect among age groups with varied social experiences.

Data Source

I carried out a special survey on the degrees of respect for various occupations from urban residents from July 2017 to August 2017. The survey covers five districts of Hangzhou; Shangcheng district, Xiacheng district, Xihu district, Jianggan district and Gongshu district. Chinese people's value orientation varies significantly from era to era and their value judgements of an occupation's social functions vary from age group to age group, as each age group has their unique social experiences. Given this, the survey targeted ordinary residents aged 20-70. The survey first drew random samples from all subdistricts and the neighborhood committees of the five districts, and then proportionately sampled a total of 2,386 random persons from the qualified residents in the registers of those sample neighborhood committees. Questionnaires were handed out to sample persons via local neighborhood committees and one week later, a total of 2,371 completed questionnaires were collected. It was later verified that 2,154 of the 2,371 were valid, a validity rate of some 90.3%.

Empirical Analysis

Degrees of Respect for Various Occupations

Table 1 excludes the option of "N/A" and lists 30 occupations by degree of respect they gain (mean value). "Serviceman" tops the list with a mean value of 4.83, which indicates a degree of respect somewhere between "due respect" and "high respect" and closer to "high respect". The second and third places are "armed police" and "fireman", both of whom are of a disciplined service nature. With respective mean values of 4.71 and 4.62, they also enjoy a degree of respect close to "high respect". The fourth, fifth and sixth places are "doctor", "teacher" and "judge", all of whom are professionals. Their respective mean values are 4.17, 4.11 and 4.08, indicating degrees of respect somewhere between "due respect" and "high respect" but closer to "due respect". Other occupations with a degree of respect close to "due respect" include "SOE worker", "farmer", "bus driver", "migrant builder" and "migrant sanitation worker". There are eight occupations ("bank clerk", "policeman", "individual businessman", "supermarket assistant", "clerk", "journalist", "government official", "SOE director") whose mean values are between 3 and 4, indicating degrees of respect between "OK" and "due respect". It is just that the degree of respect for "bank clerk" is comparatively closer to "due respect", while those to "clerk", "journalist", and particularly "government official" and "SOE director" are closer to "OK".

The two emerging occupations, i.e. "perfumer" and "public nutritionist" are respectively

unknown to 89.8% and 88.5% of the interviewees. Yet, they respectively have mean values of 3.24 and 3.19 among the interviewees who know them, making degrees of respect for them somewhere between “OK” and “due respect” but closer to “OK”. The mean values for the four occupations of “private businessman”, “taxi driver”, “actor” and “expressman” are between 2 and 3, indicating degrees of respect for them somewhere between “slight antipathy” to “OK”. Of the 30 occupations on the list, the bottom five (with mean values of only 1-2) in descending order are “urban management officer”, “salesman”, “tour guide”, “vendor” and “beggar”. The degrees of respect for them are somewhere between “slight antipathy” to “strong antipathy”.

Table 1 Rankings of 30 Occupations by Degree of Respect Gained

| Ranking | Occupation | Mean value | Standard deviation | N/A | Ranking | Occupation | Mean value | Standard deviation | N/A |
|---------|---------------------------|------------|--------------------|-----|---------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------|------|
| 1 | Serviceman | 4.83 | 0.606 | 0.0 | 16 | Perfumer | 3.24 | 0.431 | 89.8 |
| 2 | Armed police | 4.71 | 0.458 | 0.0 | 17 | Public nutritionist | 3.19 | 1.091 | 88.5 |
| 3 | Fireman | 4.62 | 0.485 | 0.0 | 18 | Clerk | 3.14 | 1.318 | 0.0 |
| 4 | Doctor | 4.17 | 1.306 | 0.0 | 19 | Journalist | 3.11 | 1.274 | 0.0 |
| 5 | Teacher | 4.11 | 1.084 | 0.0 | 20 | Government official | 3.04 | 1.427 | 0.0 |
| 6 | Judge | 4.08 | 1.107 | 0.0 | 21 | SOE director | 3.02 | 1.336 | 0.0 |
| 7 | SOE worker | 4.05 | 0.896 | 0.0 | 22 | Private businessman | 2.99 | 1.321 | 0.0 |
| 8 | Farmer | 4.04 | 0.691 | 0.0 | 23 | Taxi driver | 2.88 | 1.081 | 0.0 |
| 9 | Bus driver | 4.04 | 0.994 | 0.0 | 24 | Actor | 2.84 | 1.282 | 0.0 |
| 10 | Migrant builder | 4.03 | 0.808 | 0.0 | 25 | Expressman | 2.52 | 0.768 | 0.0 |
| 11 | Migrant sanitation worker | 4.02 | 0.712 | 0.0 | 26 | Urban management officer | 1.90 | 0.767 | 0.0 |
| 12 | Bank clerk | 3.78 | 1.189 | 0.0 | 27 | Salesman | 1.87 | 0.942 | 0.0 |
| 13 | Policeman | 3.59 | 1.230 | 0.0 | 28 | Tour guide | 1.80 | 0.735 | 0.0 |
| 14 | Individual business | 3.56 | 0.926 | 0.0 | 29 | Vendor | 1.68 | 0.640 | 0.0 |
| 15 | Supermarket assistant | 3.46 | 1.342 | 0.0 | 30 | Beggar | 1.37 | 0.483 | 0.0 |

Table 2 Degrees of Respect for 30 Occupations from Different Age Groups

| Occupation | Aged 20–30 | Aged 31–40 | Aged 41–50 | Aged 51–60 | Aged 61–70 | <i>F</i> |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| Government official | 3.41 (1.260) | 2.98 (1.412) | 2.84 (1.538) | 2.82 (1.438) | 2.68 (1.511) | 8.629*** |
| SOE director | 3.30 (1.298) | 2.95 (1.319) | 2.86 (1.399) | 2.83 (1.398) | 2.94 (1.236) | 4.982** |
| Private businessman | 3.19 (1.216) | 2.97 (1.280) | 2.81 (1.426) | 2.92 (1.461) | 2.92 (1.441) | 2.789* |
| Doctor | 4.15 (1.323) | 4.17 (1.302) | 4.03 (1.352) | 4.19 (1.306) | 4.46 (1.164) | 1.187 |
| Teacher | 4.16 (1.171) | 4.11 (1.049) | 3.98 (1.105) | 4.07 (1.043) | 4.22 (0.877) | 1.093 |
| Journalist | 3.33 (1.135) | 3.08 (1.277) | 3.14 (1.398) | 3.05 (1.397) | 3.40 (1.212) | 2.303+ |
| Judge | 3.96 (1.138) | 4.09 (1.083) | 4.06 (1.163) | 2.69 (1.328) | 4.36 (0.985) | 2.628* |
| Actor | 3.12 (1.249) | 2.99 (1.388) | 2.92 (1.192) | 2.76 (1.271) | 2.69 (1.328) | 6.968*** |
| Clerk | 3.43 (1.259) | 3.10 (1.302) | 2.50 (1.319) | 3.61 (1.237) | 2.98 (1.237) | 6.626*** |
| Bank clerk | 4.04 (1.123) | 3.73 (1.181) | 2.92 (1.192) | 3.45 (1.312) | 3.78 (1.183) | 7.25*** |
| Policeman | 3.89 (1.168) | 3.55 (1.212) | 3.41 (1.257) | 3.02 (1.348) | 3.62 (1.277) | 8.428*** |
| Urban management officer | 1.74 (0.739) | 1.89 (0.742) | 2.01 (0.789) | 2.06 (0.795) | 2.02 (0.845) | 6.364*** |
| Supermarket assistant | 3.81 (1.262) | 3.39 (1.330) | 3.25 (1.363) | 3.12 (1.436) | 3.36 (1.411) | 8.811*** |
| Expressman | 2.61 (0.722) | 2.50 (0.776) | 2.43 (0.802) | 2.36 (0.835) | 2.62 (0.725) | 3.359* |
| Tour guide | 1.98 (0.733) | 1.76 (0.690) | 1.69 (0.751) | 1.56 (0.726) | 1.86 (0.833) | 9.710*** |
| Salesman | 1.73 (0.969) | 1.93 (0.944) | 1.88 (0.903) | 1.95 (0.934) | 1.96 (0.989) | 2.232+ |
| Individual business | 3.72 (0.831) | 3.57 (0.946) | 3.45 (0.965) | 3.29 (1.030) | 3.40 (0.990) | 5.805*** |
| Farmer | 3.95 (0.786) | 3.96 (0.669) | 3.97 (0.764) | 4.02 (0.683) | 4.15 (0.623) | 3.312* |
| Migrant builder | 3.79 (0.713) | 3.94 (0.762) | 3.98 (0.654) | 4.08 (0.612) | 4.17 (0.610) | 3.365* |
| Migrant sanitation worker | 3.82 (0.510) | 3.95 (0.613) | 4.01 (0.813) | 4.05 (0.582) | 4.14 (0.583) | 4.102** |
| SOE worker | 4.32 (0.814) | 4.07 (0.774) | 3.97 (0.925) | 3.96 (0.976) | 3.80 (0.782) | 11.700*** |
| Bus driver | 4.20 (0.996) | 3.99 (0.895) | 3.89 (0.916) | 3.79 (1.002) | 4.10 (0.814) | 3.045* |
| Taxi driver | 3.08 (1.060) | 2.83 (1.077) | 2.71 (1.096) | 2.62 (1.087) | 3.08 (1.066) | 6.423*** |
| Serviceman | 4.87 (0.541) | 4.82 (0.639) | 4.83 (0.560) | 4.63 (0.484) | 4.73 (0.445) | 1.284 |

| Occupation | Aged 20–30 | Aged 31–40 | Aged 41–50 | Aged 51–60 | Aged 61–70 | <i>F</i> |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| Fireman | 4.63 (0.483) | 4.58 (0.494) | 4.72 (0.768) | 4.65 (0.478) | 4.80 (0.402) | 1.430 |
| Armed police | 4.73 (0.446) | 4.65 (0.485) | 4.78 (0.679) | 4.74 (0.443) | 4.76 (0.431) | 3.271 |
| Vendor | 1.24 (0.429) | 1.41 (0.492) | 1.42 (0.494) | 1.45 (0.500) | 1.48 (0.505) | 8.015*** |
| Beggar | 1.61 (0.618) | 1.68 (0.605) | 1.72 (0.659) | 1.80 (0.664) | 1.76 (0.771) | 2.502* |
| Perfumer | 3.21 (0.419) | 3.29 (0.463) | 0.00 (0.000) | 0.00 (0.000) | 0.00 (0.000) | 0.288 |
| Public nutritionist | 3.28 (1.039) | 3.17 (1.092) | 3.12 (0.000) | 0.00 (0.000) | 0.00 (0.000) | 2.414 |

Values in the above tables are mean values; those in brackets are standard deviations; *F* refers to *F* value in variance test; + $P < 0.10$, * $P < 0.05$, ** $P < 0.01$, *** $P < 0.001$.

Interviewees' Age Groups and Their Degrees of Respect for Various Occupations

As is shown in Table 2, the variance test result shows that of the 30 listed occupations, only five occupations (“doctor”, “teacher”, “serviceman”, “fireman”, “perfumer”) exhibit no apparent difference in the degrees of respect gained from different age groups. Take the occupation of “doctor” as an example. The mean values given to “doctor” by the five age groups are all between 4 and 5, indicating a degree of respect somewhere between “due respect” and “high respect”. As for “serviceman”, “fireman” and “armed police”, the mean values given to them by the five age groups are also between 4 and 5, and are relatively closer to 5, indicating degrees of respect for them somewhere between “due respect” and “high respect” but closer to “high respect”.

Except for these six occupations (“doctor”, “teacher”, “serviceman”, “fireman”, “perfumer”, “public nutritionist”), respect for the remaining 24 occupations vary between age groups. Take “government official” as an example. This occupation received the highest mean value of 3.41, which indicates a degree of respect somewhere between “OK” and “due respect” from interviewees aged 20-30. Yet, this occupation received a lower mean value of 2-3, which indicates a degree of respect somewhere between “slight antipathy” and “OK” from interviewees aged 31-70. Another example is “bank clerk”. This occupation received a mean value of 4.04, which indicates a degree of respect somewhere between “due respect” and “high respect” but closer to “due respect” from interviewees aged 20-30. This occupation respectively received mean values of 3.73, 3.45 and 3.78, all of which indicate a degree of respect somewhere between “OK” and “due respect” from interviewees aged 31-40, 51-60 and 61-70. This occupation only received a mean value of 2.92, which indicates a degree of respect somewhere between “antipathy” and “OK” and closer to “OK” from interviewees aged 41-50.

Special attention should be paid to the feedback of the two emerging occupations, i.e. “perfumer” and “public nutritionist” from the interviewees. Perfumer is only known to and

rated by interviewees aged 20-30 and 31-40. This occupation received mean values of 3.21 and 3.29 from the two age groups, indicating their respective degrees of respect for “perfumer” somewhere between “OK” and “due respect”. More specifically, only 61 interviewees of the 20-30 age group and 33 interviewees of the 31-40 age group had heard of and rated the occupation of “perfumer”; while none of the interviewees aged 41-50, 51-60 and 61-70 had any idea of what this occupation is about. As shown in Table 1, “perfumer” is unknown to 89.8% of all interviewees. “Public nutritionist” was only rated by interviewees aged 20-30, 31-40 and 41-50. The mean values given to this occupation by the three age groups are respectively 3.28, 3.17 and 3.12, all indicating a degree of respect for public nutritionist somewhere between “OK” and “due respect”. More specifically, only 34 interviewees of the 20-30 age group, 28 of the 31-40 age group, and 21 of the 41-50 age group had heard of and rated the occupation of “public nutritionist”, while none of the interviewees aged 51-60 and 61-70 had any idea of what this occupation is about. Also, as is shown in Table 1, “public nutritionist” was unknown to 88.5% of all interviewees.

Structure of Degrees of Respect for Various Occupations

According to the mean values of the 30 occupations, Table 1 and Table 2 respectively showcase the rankings of those occupations by degree of respect, and the differences in their respect from the different age groups. I then examined the structure of the degrees of respect for the 30 occupations through factor analysis.

I applied KMO and Bartlett’s test to check whether the designed survey items are suitable for factor analysis. The 30 occupations-targeted Bartlett’s test of sphericity records an observed value of 0.964, a p -value statistically significant at 0.1% ($p < 0.001$) and a KMO value of 0.826 (far higher than 0.5). This meant that factor analysis was applicable to the 30 occupations. First, principal component analysis was applied to facilitate factor analysis of the 30 occupations. Second, a total of eight factors are generated through varimax rotation to interpret 65.397% of the original total variation (see Table 3), for which the factor analysis’ results was quite satisfactory. Next, I explain the eight factors in detail.

Table 3 lists the results. The first factor which includes “clerk”, “bank clerk”, “policeman”, “supermarket assistant”, “journalist” and “individual businessman”. Mainly serving public institutions and enterprises, the financial sector, the business sector and the press, this factor is named “service-oriented practitioner”. The second factor includes “farmer”, “migrant builder”, “migrant sanitation worker”, “SOE worker” and “bus driver”. Mainly consisting of agricultural and industrial laborers, this factor is named “agricultural/ industrial practitioner”. The third factor includes “urban management officer”, “tour guide”, “salesman”, “taxi driver”, “actor” and “expressman”. Given these occupations’ profit-seeking nature, this factor is named “profit-oriented practitioner”. The fourth factor includes “government official”, “SOE director” and “private businessman”. With all of them belonging to the management of government, public

institutions and enterprises, this factor is named “government/enterprise/institution manager”. The fifth factor includes “doctor”, “teacher” and “judge”. Given that these occupations are equipped with professional expertise and skills, this factor is named “professional”. The sixth factor includes “serviceman”, “fireman” and “armed police”. With these occupations all featuring disciplined service nature, this factor is named “disciplinary force”. The seventh factor includes “beggar” and “vendor”. As both of these occupations are highly mobile and hard to classify, this factor is named “floating occupation”. The eighth factor includes “perfumer” and “public nutritionist”. As both have emerged in the past few years, this factor is named “emerging practitioner”.

Table 3 Analysis of Respect for 30 Occupations in Eight Factors

| | 1: Service-oriented practitioner | 2: Agricultural/industrial practitioner | 3: Profit-oriented practitioner | 4: Government/enterprise/institution manager | 5: Professional | 6: Disciplinary force | 7: Mobile practitioner | 8: Emerging practitioner | Total |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| Clerk | .819 | -.013 | .031 | -.078 | .075 | .087 | .043 | .062 | .697 |
| Bank clerk | .816 | -.017 | .095 | -.057 | .069 | .069 | .144 | .066 | .713 |
| Policeman | .797 | -.053 | .092 | -.116 | .058 | .088 | .023 | .083 | .679 |
| Supermarket assistant | .796 | .026 | .111 | -.082 | .052 | .065 | .117 | .047 | .676 |
| Journalist | .764 | -.030 | .157 | -.034 | -.040 | -.016 | -.086 | -.009 | .619 |
| Individual business | .708 | .032 | .098 | -.020 | .043 | -.046 | -.185 | -.011 | .550 |
| Farmer | .011 | .777 | .069 | -.072 | -.067 | .253 | .075 | -.150 | .710 |
| Migrant builder | .024 | .754 | -.100 | .269 | -.022 | .012 | .044 | .074 | .659 |
| Migrant sanitation worker | -.059 | .691 | -.107 | .123 | -.016 | .305 | .060 | .023 | .605 |
| SOE worker | .014 | .665 | -.130 | .271 | -.177 | -.010 | .210 | .164 | .635 |
| Bus driver | -.081 | .526 | -.013 | .487 | -.057 | .134 | .122 | -.023 | .557 |
| Urban management officer | .098 | .026 | .742 | .070 | .076 | .074 | -.114 | -.085 | .597 |
| Tour guide | .068 | -.112 | .736 | .048 | .129 | .107 | .007 | -.068 | .595 |
| Salesman | .074 | -.198 | .636 | .056 | .144 | -.019 | .381 | -.007 | .617 |
| Taxi driver | .252 | -.055 | .625 | -.068 | .035 | .072 | .200 | .218 | .555 |

| | 1: Service-oriented practitioner | 2: Agricultural/ industrial practitioner | 3: Profit-oriented practitioner | 4: Government/enterprise/institution manager | 5: Professional | 6: Disciplinary force | 7: Mobile practitioner | 8: Emerging practitioner | Total |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------|
| Actor | .135 | -.029 | .598 | -.042 | .090 | .111 | .075 | .350 | .527 |
| Expressman | .169 | .131 | .443 | -.323 | -.005 | -.106 | .067 | .286 | .444 |
| Government official | -.139 | .038 | .030 | .872 | .010 | -.009 | .096 | -.026 | .792 |
| SOE director | -.093 | .188 | -.029 | .826 | .009 | .043 | .122 | .007 | .744 |
| Private businessman | -.076 | .306 | .040 | .726 | -.003 | .006 | .067 | .061 | .636 |
| Doctor | .082 | -.048 | .081 | .029 | .877 | .017 | .047 | .029 | .789 |
| Teacher | .071 | -.012 | .071 | -.032 | .819 | -.027 | -.064 | -.027 | .688 |
| Judge | .051 | -.154 | .197 | .000 | .796 | .014 | .068 | -.007 | .705 |
| Serviceman | .037 | .107 | .020 | .061 | -.039 | .868 | .113 | .076 | .791 |
| Fireman | .057 | .180 | .061 | .117 | .016 | .828 | .071 | .075 | .750 |
| Armed police | .134 | .185 | .197 | -.096 | .031 | .688 | -.005 | -.092 | .583 |
| Beggar | -.001 | .224 | .087 | .114 | .029 | .116 | .795 | .111 | .729 |
| Vendor | .022 | .146 | .131 | .184 | .003 | .073 | .794 | -.020 | .709 |
| Perfumer | .082 | .052 | -.004 | -.014 | .077 | .053 | -.115 | .810 | .792 |
| Public nutritionist | .056 | -.013 | .169 | .051 | -.105 | -.003 | .201 | .702 | .636 |
| Eigenvalue | 3.913 | 2.756 | 2.700 | 2.602 | 2.208 | 2.186 | 1.730 | 1.525 | 19.629 |
| Variance contribution (%) | 13.042 | 9.188 | 8.999 | 8.673 | 7.358 | 7.288 | 5.765 | 5.084 | 65.397 |

There may be some inaccuracies in the above naming of these occupational categories but we can conclude that a structure of categories is found in the degrees of respect for various occupations. All occupations can roughly fall into eight categories, which are “service-oriented practitioner”, “agricultural/ industrial practitioner”, “profit-oriented practitioner”, “government/enterprise/institution manager”, “professional”, “disciplinary force”, “mobile practitioner” and “emerging practitioner”. The data in Table 3 also indicate that the degrees of respect for various occupations are shaped by complicated factors. The chart below exhibits the degrees of respect for the eight occupational categories. “Disciplinary force” has the highest degree of respect with a mean value of 4.72, followed by “professional” with a mean value of 4.12 and “agricultural/

industrial practitioner” with a mean value of 4.04. Occupational categories which gain lower degrees of respect are “service-oriented practitioner” (3.44), “emerging practitioner” (3.22), “government/enterprise/institution manager” (3.02), “profit-oriented practitioner” (2.30) and “mobile practitioner” (1.53). Accordingly, there are significant differences in the five degrees of respect (high respect, due respect, OK, slight antipathy, strong antipathy) for the eight occupational categories based on the interviewees’ responses.

Conclusion and Discussion

Based on the survey data collected in Hangzhou, I conducted the above statistical analyses regarding the degrees of respect of urban residents for various occupations. Through the statistical analyses, I draw the following conclusions.

Conclusion

First, the degree of respect varies significantly from occupation to occupation. Of the 30 occupations selected and examined, “serviceman” is most respected and is regarded as “most beloved”. “Serviceman” is followed by “armed police” and “fireman”, then “doctor”, “teacher” and “judge”. The least respected occupation is “beggar”, due to its excessively high mobility and negative impact on the urban environment. The second least respected occupation is “vendor”. In particular, the degree of respect for “serviceman” is close to “high respect”, while that to “vendor” is close to “high antipathy”.

Second, the degree of respect for an occupation is irrelevant to its position in the

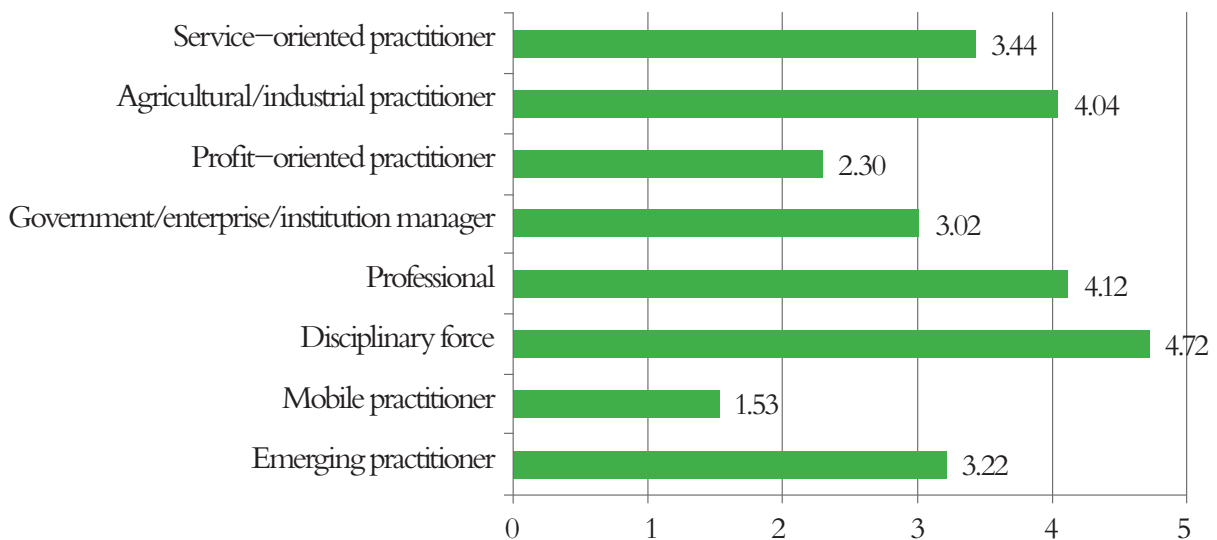


Chart Degrees of Respect for Eight Occupational Categories (mean values)

occupational hierarchy. Judging from the rankings of various occupations by degree of respect, there are significant differences in the degrees of respect for various occupations from urban residents in China; yet the degree of respect for an occupation is irrelevant to its position in the occupational hierarchy. In 2004 a research group chaired by Lu Xueyi classified all existing occupations in China into ten groups according to their organizational, cultural and economic resources. The ten occupational groups are “administrative official”, “manager”, “private businessman”, “professional”, “clerk”, “individual businessman”, “business and service staff”, “industrial worker”, “agricultural laborer”, and “the unemployed/partially unemployed both in rural and urban area”. These ten occupational groups are sequenced in descending order to form an occupational hierarchy. Although “serviceman” is not found in the list, there is no doubt that it belongs to one of the ten groups. The degrees of respect for various occupations reported in this paper is evidently not entirely in line with those concluded by Lu Xueyi’s research group. In fact, there are even contrary judgements (such as those concerning “industrial worker” and “agricultural laborer”). This indicates that the evaluation criteria for an occupation’s social position is different from that for the degree of respect for an occupation, which is determined by more complicated factors.

Third, there are both intergenerational differences and common grounds in this regard. Apparent intergenerational differences do exist in people’s respect for the 30 occupations. Such differences are reflected in three conditions; a) Certain occupations tend to gain more respect from older age groups. For example, “vendor” is generally a less respected occupation but it gains relatively more respect from older age groups. The same is also true of occupations such as “farmer”, “migrant sanitation worker” and “migrant builder”, b) Certain occupations tend to gain less respect from older age groups. For example, “government official” and “actor”, both of whom are generally less respected by all age groups, are even less respected by older age groups, and c) The degrees of respect for some occupations do not feature any apparent age-based tendency. Take the occupation of “clerk” as an example. It gains a degree of respect somewhere between “OK” and “due respect” from those aged 20-30, 31-40 and 51-60, but a degree of respect somewhere between “slight antipathy” and “OK” from those aged 41-50 and 61-70. This lack of age-based tendency also exists in the degrees of respect for other occupations such as “bus driver” and “taxi driver”.

Yet, for a minority of occupations, the degrees of respect feature intergenerational common grounds, rather than apparent intergenerational differences. For example, the degrees of respect for the occupations of “doctor”, “teacher”, “serviceman” and “fireman” from all age groups are invariably somewhere between “due respect” and “high respect”, with no apparent intergenerational differences.

Fourth, a clear structure of the degrees of respect for various occupations has taken shape. Through factor analysis, I discovered that the degrees of respect for various occupations from urban residents in China are not out of order and that they form a clear structure of

categories. More specifically, this structure includes the following eight major occupational categories; “service-oriented practitioner”, “agricultural/industrial practitioner”, “profit-oriented practitioner”, “government/enterprise/institution manager”, “professional”, “disciplinary force”, “mobile practitioner” and “emerging practitioner”. By degree of respect, these eight occupational categories are sequenced in descending order as follows; “disciplinary force”, “professional”, “agricultural/industrial practitioner”, “service-oriented practitioner”, “emerging practitioner”, “government/enterprise/institution manager”, “profit-oriented practitioner” and “mobile practitioner”. Besides, the descending extent is quite substantial. In particular, the degree of respect for “disciplinary force” is somewhere between “due respect” and “high respect” but is closer to “high respect”, while the degree of respect for mobile practitioner is somewhere between “slight antipathy” and “high antipathy”.

Discussion

Occupational respect has yet to come into sight in the academic community. Given this, I can only focus on discussing the findings of this study, which indicates that the degrees of respect for various occupations, based on urban residents’ value judgments, is free from the influence of their positions in the occupational hierarchy. Also, there are many factors influencing the degree of respect for a particular occupation. The degrees of respect for various occupations from urban residents in China mainly depended on three indexes; social functions in emergency rescue and disaster relief, selfless contributions to society, and diligent labor. Consequently, in contemporary China, the most respected people are not those enjoying a high socioeconomic status (men in power, celebrities, parvenus), nor vulnerable social groups who have a low socioeconomic status and who exert a negative impact on the social environment. Instead, the most respected groups are those who can bravely step forward at critical moments (servicemen) and unknown diligent laborers (professionals, agricultural/ industrial practitioners). These are most respected people in China because they protect the motherland, heal the wounded, rescue the dying, teach and educate the young, safeguard fairness and justice, and work diligently. Such a tendency of occupational respect is in line with the core socialist values which China is now advocating.

Also, this study of occupational respect is to a large extent different from the study of occupational prestige, which means that they are two different research areas in occupational sociology and that they specify the social evaluations and value orientations of various occupations among the general public from different perspectives. The study of occupational prestige can identify the tendency of occupational mobility through prestige analysis, while this study of occupational respect can quantify the affinity among various occupational groups through respect analysis.

The impact of people’s age on their respect for an occupation is not universal. Given that older age comes with more social experiences, one’s age does matter to one’s respect given to

most occupations. There are intergenerational differences in this regard. Yet, apparent common grounds can be found among different age groups when it comes to the degrees of respect for “disciplinary force” and “professional”. This indicates that in the present stage, urban residents in China have the same value judgments for the two occupational categories.

There have been three main standards of occupational stratification in the academic community. They respectively are ownership of the means of production (Marx, 1995); power, status and prestige attached to an occupation itself (Weber, 2006); and total amount of economic and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1985). Weber’s standard of occupational stratification is the most influential of all. Now, the degrees of respect for various occupations, which are analyzed in this paper, arguably form a new standard of occupational stratification. Compared with the above three scholars’ standards, the occupational respect-based standard I have presented is the more current. This new standard of occupational stratification excludes “cult objects” such as power and income, and includes factors such as an occupation’s contribution to society, social image and social evaluation. It is in this sense that the eight arguably disruptive occupational categories in this paper are different from those introduced by Marx, Weber, Bourdieu or Lu Xueyi’s research group.

Research Inadequacies and Areas for Further Studies

As an exploratory study, this paper is not without inadequacies. First, the degrees of respect for various occupations are only shown in a simple form of mean values. I did not conduct a more detailed and rigid multivariate analysis controlling for other variables. For this reason, the accuracy and universality of the research findings require further testing. Second, with their criterion validity and construct validity untested, whether the 30 occupations are adequately representative remains in doubt, even if the selection of the 30 occupations is based on the national catalogue of occupational classification and their Cronbach’s alpha (0.9314) signifies good homogeneity reliability. Whether the scale should be applied to future studies is not yet clear and requires more discussion.

I only specified the degrees of respect for various occupations, corresponding intergenerational differences and common grounds, and their structure of categories, which means I only studied the first aspect. Yet, occupational respect is a new research area of occupational sociology, and many questions remain to be answered. Apart from the second, third and fourth aspect listed at the beginning, it is also necessary for scholars in this area to make contrastive studies of occupational respect between countries with different cultures and institutions and see if there is any consistency in occupational respect as in occupational prestige. Occupational respect is faced with more complicated influencing factors than occupational prestige although both research areas belong to occupational sociology. In addition to demographic characteristics (gender, education, income), other factors (media promotion,

the popularization and recognition of core socialist values, the occurrence of negative events, personal value-orientation, occupational prejudice, exchange and integration between occupations) can also exert influence on occupational respect. Compared with occupational prestige, occupational respect is more changeable, and can vary from era to era and from region to region due to different paces of urbanization and marketization. For these reasons more comparative studies of occupational respect among different eras and regions are needed.

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