



REVIEW

The study of the development of family hygiene education during the republic of China

El estudio del desarrollo de la educación en higiene familiar durante la República de China

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: family hygiene education relates between untidy living standards and sicknesses it offers more instructions how to avoid diseases. In the era of the Republic of China that characterized by tremendous social and political transformation, hygiene education (HE) became one of the important elements of public health.

Objectives: the paper explores the transformation of family hygiene education in China, examining policies, practices, and community programs that influenced public health and individual health standards.

Method: it adopted the historical analysis approach in records of educational curriculum, public health, and community papers would be analysed. Such sources prove useful in mapping the evaluation and results of the distribution of knowledge in the field of hygiene to communities and managing with threats pretended to their well-being.

Result: according to research, family hygiene education played important role in tackling diseases and hygiene problems that were common at that time. The study found that hygiene programs significantly improved community health practices, increased health literacy among community members, and encouraged greater involvement in health-related matters.

Conclusion: they used education to spread the concept of family hygiene as an essential instrument in developing public health and mapped out the principles from the República de China with appropriate social and historical contexts. The present research offers important information on the evolution of hygiene education and its long-lasting relevance to people's behavior.

Keywords: Family Hygiene Education; Republic of China; Sanitation; Education Programs.

RESUMEN

Introducción: la educación en higiene familiar relaciona el nivel de vida desordenado con las enfermedades y ofrece más instrucciones sobre cómo evitar las enfermedades. En la era de la República de China que se caracterizó por una tremenda transformación social y política, la educación en higiene se convirtió en uno de los elementos importantes de la salud pública.

Objetivo: el documento explora la transformación de la educación sobre higiene familiar en China, examinando políticas, prácticas y programas comunitarios que influyeron en la salud pública y las normas de salud individuales.

Método: se adoptó el enfoque de análisis histórico en registros de currículum educativo, salud pública y documentos de la comunidad serían analizados. Tales fuentes resultan útiles en el mapeo de la evaluación y los resultados de la distribución de conocimientos en el campo de la higiene a las comunidades y la gestión con amenazas pretendidas a su bienestar.

Resultado: según la investigación, la educación en higiene familiar jugó un papel importante en el tratamiento de las enfermedades y problemas de higiene que eran comunes en ese momento. El estudio encontró que los programas de higiene mejoraron significativamente las prácticas de salud de la comunidad, aumentaron la alfabetización en salud entre los miembros de la comunidad y alentaron una mayor participación en asuntos relacionados con la salud.

Conclusión: utilizaron la educación para difundir el concepto de higiene familiar como un instrumento esencial en el desarrollo de la salud pública y trazaron los principios de la República de China con contextos sociales e históricos apropiados. La presente investigación ofrece información importante sobre la evolución de la educación en higiene y su relevancia a largo plazo en el comportamiento de las personas.

Palabras clave: Educación en Higiene Familiar; República de China; Saneamiento; Programas de Educación.

INTRODUCCIÓN

The establishment of family hygiene education during the Republic of China (1912-1949) was also inseparable from the influence of politics, societal change, and modernization of the time.⁽¹⁾ When China attempted to develop into a modern nation-state, community health and sanitation became important issues.⁽²⁾ As inspired by the Western biomedical model and education, family hygiene education became another significant component that have been integrated into health promotion strategies for enhancing the health of the general public .⁽³⁾ During this period, different government policies were launched to encourage inclination toward hygiene at the household level. Schools also ensured that knowledge on personal hygiene, nutrition, and disease prevention was passed around.⁽⁴⁾ Information, education, communication, and promotion materials such as textbooks and curricula used in schools provided lessons on cleanliness, proper food handling, disposal of wastes, and preventing contagious diseases. There were health promotion activities directed to both the urban and rural populations with focused messages that mothers should be responsible for hygiene promotion within the homes. Such campaigns were related to the Confucian traditions of obedience to the parents and the Western traditions of scientific approach.⁽⁵⁾ However, family hygiene education during this period had the following several limitations. A major imbalance was greatly observed in the level of development and access to education and health facilities between urban and rural persons.⁽⁶⁾

While urban inhabitants generally had more access to contemporary health and education facilities, rural communities, particularly in big cities like Beijing and Shanghai, had less access. Despite this, the campaigns targeted at achieving the necessary level of hygiene resulted in poor practice among the rural people because they lacked adequate medical facilities and still depended on traditional ways.⁽⁷⁾ Another weakness was socio-political instability indicated by wars and internal conflicts that contributed to diversion of the government's efforts and resources away from health reforms.⁽⁸⁾ More so, cultural expectations and gender roles sometimes limited the women from fully engaging in the program, women who were usually the main focus of the hygiene campaigns. Culturally defined gender roles and potential economic barriers could keep women from adapting or putting into practice innovation.⁽⁹⁾ In general, the Republic of China achieved significant advances in the promotion of education in family hygiene but these efforts were not uniformly successful because of regional, social, and economic differences. In this era of transformation, a lack of political stability and cultural attitudes and practices also hindered modern hygiene education from gaining popularity.⁽¹⁰⁾ This review aims to examine the development of family hygiene education in the People's RoC and to assess its impact on public health, especially in terms of preventing disease and improving hygiene practices.

DEVELOPMENT

AN OVERVIEW OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RoC HISTORY STUDY IMPLICATIONS AND VALUE

The historical research implications of the People's RoC

In 1911, rebels led by Sun Yat-sen.⁽¹¹⁾ overthrew the Qing monarchy and ended China's thousands-year-old feudal empire. Sun Yat-sen won the provisional presidential election that was conducted in Nanjing on December 29, 1911. He served as acting president until January 1, 1912, when he formally assumed office and changed the name of the nation to the Chinese Republic. The emperor period ended on November 13, 459, and the RoC was established. The Gregorian calendar was put into use on the first year's New Year's Day. Thus, the history of the People's RoC officially began. From then on, there was a conflict between separatist warlords and campaign after campaign led by the Kuomintang led by the Communist Party. After taking control

of the Kuomintang, Chiang Kai-shek changed the original goal of Sun Yat-sen's revolution and jeopardized the productive relationship between the ruling Kuomintang and the Chinese communist party. He declared that he would not recognize the Chinese Communist Party as representatives of the working class until October 1, 1949. The history of the People's RoC must begin on January 1, 1912, and end on September 30th.

The historical significance of the People's RoC

The history of the RoC constitutes a significant part of Chinese history, particularly modern Chinese history. During this era, China underwent three major transformations: the first was the Revolution of 1911, which dismantled the Qing dynasty and ended a millennium of feudal monarchy. The second involved the collaborative efforts of the Communist Party and the Kuomintang, which enabled the nation to expel Japanese invaders. Through a national liberation struggle, the Chinese people established a new China. Following the 1911 Revolution, China's productivity and production relations reached unprecedented levels, with the industrial sector beginning to expand and flourish. Additionally, there was a shift in cultural education marked by the emergence of the May Fourth New Cultural Movement, which rejected classical texts in favour of vernacular literature.⁽¹²⁾ Ultimately, the history of the Republic of China encompasses a wide array of captivating topics. Analysing these historical figures and events serves three purposes: first, it lays a foundation for future generations; second, it inspires them and third, it accelerates the peaceful reunification of the homeland.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Early Republican Period

In the early 20th century, China's old system started to fall apart, and turbulent preparations were made for a new society. The political system was challenged by foreign philosophies, and nationalism became the main driving force. The large nation was torn apart by civil wars and the Japanese invasion, which also hindered its development toward modernity. China had practically no democratic preparations, even after the revolution, even though a republic was established. A three-pronged settlement brought an end to the revolution: the Qing dynasty resigned; Sun Yat-sen relinquished his presidency to Yuan Shikai (Yüan Shih-k'ai).⁽¹³⁾ who was viewed as the crucial figure required to unite the nation; and Yuan promised to establish a republican government. Consequently, the country was led by an authoritarian with a strong temperament and background, and the revolutionaries were mostly ignored by the new government.

Political and Social Landscape: China was in political upheaval throughout the early years of the RoC as it transitioned from a monarchy to a republican form of government. This period was characterized by instability, where the regional warlords sought to overthrow the central authority, thereby leading to the dissection of power.⁽¹⁴⁾ Thus the new RoC government was left with a monumental challenge of how to reunite the nation and start the reform process. Thus, it became imperative to tackle the problems of public health since infections and inadequate sanitation threatened people's lives tremendously. To strengthen and stabilize many segments of society, attempts were made to update numerous aspects of life.

Health Modernization Initiatives: The early RoC government focused primarily on promoting Western medical systems, sanitary administration, and sanitation measures as part of its modernization efforts in public health. This involved the development of modern health facilities and the adoption of new methods of treatment which replaced the outdated methods.⁽¹⁵⁾ Another element of the reforms that proved important was the increase in the quality of sanitation facilities including the building up of proper sewage facilities and availability of clean drinking water. Sanitary publicity was a set of measures that were considered necessary for explaining to the population what hygiene measures are necessary to reduce the incidence of diseases and improve the quality of living. However, due to constraints on resources and more so the continuing political crises such efforts slowed down.

Republican Modernization Era

During the Nationalist rule led by Chiang Kai-shek.⁽¹⁶⁾ Significant progress was made in preventing the spread of diseases and promoting proper sanitation in China. This involved the formation of specific health departments that would manage public health policies and health departments while designing and executing several health education programs that would enable the community to understand and practice matters to do with cleanliness, illness prevention, and enhancement of lifestyles. The change was spearheaded in this case by the trained medical practitioners who had been trained in the Western countries and therefore brought in improved Western sanitation measures as well as enhanced knowledge in the medical field. These people contributed to healthier societies and better-organized campaigns to reduce diseases by ensuring that proper standards of hygiene including disposal of wastes well, and hygiene in the supply of clean water were achieved. These were all associated with a massive modernization process that was aimed at improving the quality of life of the Chinese population, bringing China into parity with the developed Western nations and at the same seeking social stability in the country.

Era of Conflict and Reconstruction

The war severely affected Chinese Public Health by damaging the healthcare facilities and also by worsening the sanitation conditions due to the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937 - 1945) and the Chinese Civil War.⁽¹⁷⁾ Nevertheless, public health emergencies and education on hygiene continued to be a focus to address the consequences of the conflicts and preserve people's health. In the subsequent period, measures focused on reconstruction and further development of healthcare, enhancing sanitary training, and increasing sanitation standards as a part of general processes on national restoration and development in the context of post-war modernization. It was an important stage in the process of stabilization and the development of public health after large-scale devastation during the war.

DEVELOPMENT OF HYGIENE EDUCATION

Health Management Strategies: the formation of future health departments is intended to increase greatly the quality of health-related issues, sanitation, and prevention of diseases. These departments were to supervise and coordinate the implementation of hygiene practices as well as health inspection and disease control, therefore they had a very central and strategic role in organizing and regularizing the health needs of various regions for better health standards.⁽¹⁸⁾ The development of rules and legislation that would support better public health and sanitation at the exact same time. More of these measures entailed the set principles of disposal and treatment of wastes, availability and quality of clean water, and general hygiene in public places and affected a top-down approach to tackling problems of health in the community through set laws. The family hygiene is depicted in figure 1.

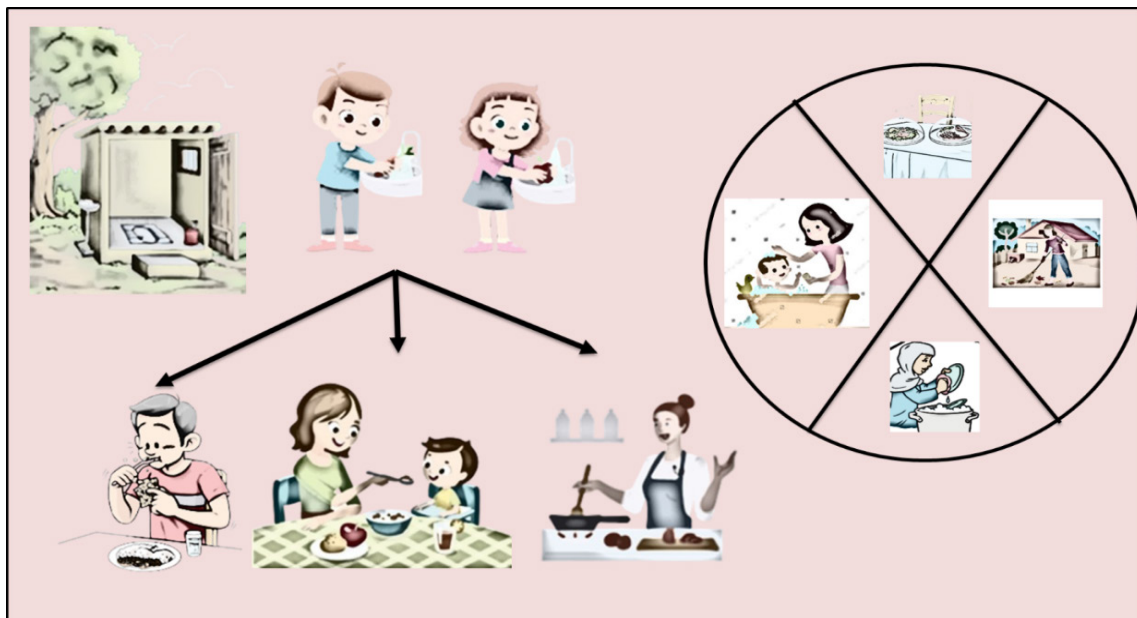


Figure 1. Family Hygiene

Hygiene Education in Public Campaigns and School Programs: Health pamphlets were delivered to homes as well as radio and posters used to pass important health information on hygiene. These materials were intended to educate the population on better sanitation practices, cleanliness, and disease prevention to promote healthier living. At the same time, the school introduced programs that ensured proper hygiene and health habits were taught to the young generation from a tender age. These programs included lessons on hand washing, sanitation, and environmental cleanliness aimed at putting and keeping the students in good health throughout their lives and thus helping to change the long-term health of society.⁽¹⁹⁾ The hygiene education included in school curricula is shown in figure 2.

The Effect of Western Medicine on Modern Hygiene Practices: Western medical personnel and missionaries also contributed to the spread of modern hygiene in China during the medical missions in the country where they provided new techniques for disease and sanitation. These missions not only offered medical care but introduced the Western model of hygiene to the natives thus played a pivotal role in the modernization of China's healthcare sector. Besides, over the years, the opening of medical schools and training programs with the adoption of the Western style of practicing medicine attempted to incorporate modern medical practices, especially on hygiene and disease prevention into Chinese healthcare practitioners. Through this education, the development of a competent workforce was enhanced and the health facilities developed, enhancing their conformity to international standards.⁽²⁰⁾

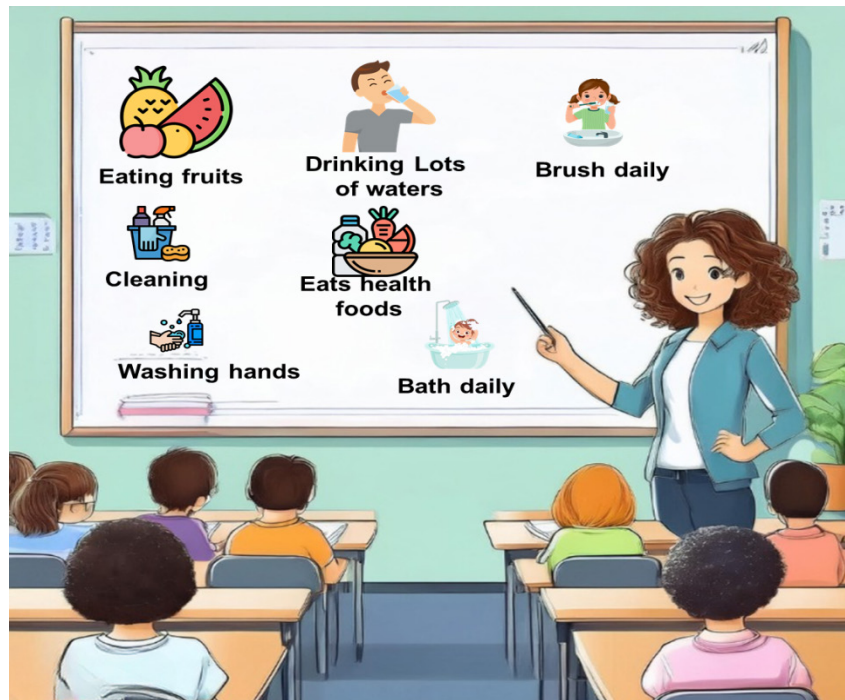


Figure 2. Hygiene education included in school curricula

THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH MOVEMENT IN FAMILY HYGIENE EDUCATION

An important initiative highlighting the development of family hygiene education in the People's RoC was the creation of the National Health Movement in the 1920s. This complete initiative, initiated by way of the authorities, aimed to modernize the nation public health device amidst sizeable public fitness challenges, together with significant infectious illnesses and insufficient sanitation. The movement positioned a strong emphasis on hygiene education at the circle of relative's stage, recognizing that improving household practices became crucial for reinforcing basic public health. Schools became important centres for this education, and hygiene education was included in the curriculum. Children were taught the importance of hand washing, proper food handling, and hygiene, developing lifelong habits to contribute to healthy communities. Women's association was also specially used, outreach programs were conducted which educated mothers child rearing practices, nutrition and disease prevention Empowered to become champions of health.⁽²¹⁾ Figure 3 displays the environmental hygiene.



Figure 3. Environmental hygiene

SOCIO-CULTURAL DYNAMICS

Traditional Practices and Modern Hygiene: Integration attempts to merge traditional Chinese hygienic conventions with current hygienic perception intended to bring together cultural beliefs and progression for improved hygiene. Hence, this approach aimed at observing traditional approaches but including scientifically proven methods of disease control measures and cleanliness leading to a hygiene system.⁽²²⁾ New practices or goals that were introduced were perceived differently by the public based on the traditional perception by people. There are some who adopted these modern standards as they affected them while others who rejected these modern standards because their cultures did not allow them and they doubted the effectiveness of the new standards. These issues demanded awareness creation and cultural negotiation on issues of usage and management to enhance the general hygienic standards of the community.

Urban and Rural Variations in Hygiene Standards: Hygiene practices in the urban regions evolved faster than in the rural regions because of the development in infrastructure, education and better sanitation means. That was due to the advances in medical technology as well as the rallying that enabled the adoption of modern hygiene standards that improved the health of the city populace. On the other hand, the rural areas were still slow to adapt to these practices owing to resource constraints, poor availability of sanitation facilities, low literacy levels and deprived healthcare. Closeness to other people and general poverty deepened the delay of practicing most of the current hygiene measures, which affected the health and sanitation in these places.⁽²³⁾

CONCLUSION

Family hygiene education provided individuals with information about the relationship between unsanitary living conditions and disease, as well as how to develop good hygiene practices. Maintaining good hygiene helped families stay healthy, reduce health costs, and maintain self-confidence. The evolution of public health practices in the Republic of China was significantly influenced by family hygiene education. During this period marked by profound social and political changes, systematic programs to improve household hygiene and health standards emerged. The growth of family hygiene education in the People's RoC was investigated in this research. Community-based hygiene education policies, practices, and services have a long history of development. The study used historical resources such as educational curricula and public health document reviews to track the development and impact of hygiene education programs Findings indicated the importance of family hygiene education in health problems addressing common issues such as infectious diseases and hygiene challenges. These educational programs changed behavior, increased community involvement, and increased public health awareness, all of which had a beneficial effect on public health outcomes during this period. The study highlighted the importance of family hygiene education is important in highlighting the broader historical socio-politics of the People's RoC.

Limitation and Future Scope: First, the historical sources examined do not cover all relevant factors, leading to gaps in understanding the impact of family hygiene education during the People's RoC Perhaps Access to original documents is limited, many records can be incomplete or biased, and affect findings of the trust. Furthermore, focusing on the urban areas where the program design was prevalent can overlook the experiences of rural communities, preventing an examination of its overall effectiveness. Future research could compare it of family hygiene education in rural and urban settings and to assess long-term effects through longitudinal studies. Exploring cultural factors, qualitative approaches, and examining the legacy of these efforts could greatly enhance contemporary public health interventions.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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