

# Research on Family Sex Education of Chinese College Students Based on System Ecology Theory

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**Abstract.** The enlightenment and development of family sex education is very important for students, and college students have better protection to avoid a high number of sexual accidents. To prove the importance of enlightenment and development of family sex education, this paper accesses to proper method and attitude to spread sex education in the microsystem of system ecology theory, that is sex education in the family. A comprehensive study was conducted by analyzing a series of papers from the perspective of system ecology theory. Many sexual defects lead to a high number of accidents in college students, but also physical injuries and psychological trauma. Sex education is analyzed in terms of the family as the smallest unit in system ecology because the family should be the unit that initially enlightens sex education. The shortcomings of sex education in China are one of the most serious problems in education. It is clear to recognize the present situation of family sex education which is also regarded as a microsystem in the concept of system ecology, such as the influence of parents' sexual concepts and parents' educational level. Suggestions for family sex education are necessary to be carried out. Chinese college students lack enlightenment and development of sex education, especially family sex education, the smallest sex education development unit. Therefore, parents should be allowed to establish the concept of correctness and cultivate their ability to sex education at the same time. Sex knowledge in the social publicity should also cooperate with family sex education.

**Keywords:** Sexuality education; College students; System ecology; Family.

## 1. Introduction

The enlightenment and development of family sexual education are very important for students. College students will have better protection to avoid a high number of sexual accidents if they have a comprehensive understanding of family sex education. Besides a range of sex education in every aspect, such as school and social media, It is important to show that sex education in a family has the main impact on the original and potential conception of every student regarding sex. Among the 624 college students, only 185 (11.39%) often or always carry out sex education at home; 214 people think that when they ask questions related to sex, they can get a full solution from home, accounting for 13.18%, and 296 people will first turn to their parents for help when they encounter sexual problems, accounting for 18.23% [1]. The data illustrates a clear consequence that parents are the easiest teachers who can enlighten their child into an unknown area. However, the proportion of gaining sex knowledge from parents is low. The lack of family education in college sex and reproductive health is a serious problem leading to gaps in sexual and reproductive health knowledge between parents and students. They lack communication skills when parents convey conservative ideas, most teenagers are reluctant to talk about "sex" with parents eventually leading both parties to avoid talking about "sex" [1]. Situations like this can lead to students avoiding sexual issues and not addressing them head-on when real harm occurs, which is something that needs to be addressed urgently. Now there are many college students after abortion and abuse, have extreme ideas or because of the concept of the family are ostracized, can not get the right mentality to face sexual problems, and finally get mental problems. Most papers show that sex education for college students is few, but family sex education is few to mention. These are all the shortcomings of sexual education in China. The paper will discuss specific defects in Chinese sex education.

When most students contact adult movies for the first time, they will be full of curiosity. It is worth reflecting on what kind of behavior will be produced under such a psychological drive [2]. This is another problem shown in many articles. Lack of parental guidance, as well as the enlightenment of sex education from childhood, students have curious impulses for sex education, such emotions will lead to more accidents, and how to carry out sex education, do parents also need to be aware of the necessity of sex education? Are parents' perceptions of sex necessarily correct? All these situations will affect their attitude toward student's sex education. From the perspective of parents, students whose parents' education level is high school or above are more conservative in their sexual attitude, It may be because their parents have a high education level, pay more attention to spiritual education, and timely conduct family sex education for their student, so that such students have a strong sense of self-protection [3]. The author's paper will also discuss the influence of sex education brought about by parents' education level and family's attitude towards sex on college students. Moreover, the paper will deeply explore family sex education as a microsystem in ecosystem science is a crucial level of education and people should make up for and develop this level of sex education.

## **2. The Shortcomings of Sex Education in China**

### **2.1. The Lack of Sex Education Leads to a Series of Problems with Sex**

There are tons of accidents and crimes occurring regarding sex at present, such as abortion, sexual assault, and so on. According to many events, college students also have a large proportion of sexual crimes. Due to the lack of formal sex education guidance, the most intimate environment which is in the family, college students can not obtain knowledge and there is no suitable environment to understand the knowledge related to sex. Therefore, when students encounter sexual problems, they do not dare to discuss them with their parents, and they go to find out what is wrong, which will inevitably come into contact with dirty sexual thoughts, which will form different degrees of sexual crimes [4]. Many parents avoid talking about sex, thinking it is a difficult topic to talk about.

### **2.2. Chinese Traditional Thought Leads to the Ideological Closure of Sex Education**

Most parents are influenced by the old social ideology that things in terms of sex are shameful and humiliating. This way of thinking is not optimistic. On the respective of students' sex education, it will lead to estrangement between students and parents on sexual issues, resulting in unknown areas. Students are easy to explore by themselves with curiosity. Some students will touch the red line, some will have accidents. After these kinds of events happen, parents may think that students are embarrassed because of the old-fashioned thoughts. The communication between parents and students can not be carried out normally, and students will be extreme to deal with the problem. Compared with community schools, parents can provide sex education to their children in a more gentle way through good parent-child communication under the conditions of creating a relaxed and pleasant family atmosphere [5]. This is the substantial difference between family sex education and others. In the past, sex was a dirty, shameful word and people would deliberately avoid it, but today people can talk openly and actively about sex, which is "a sexual revolution" [6]. It's ingrained that most people who are parents today are educated in the context of old conception and are therefore less receptive to open-minded change on sexual topics. The opening and reform policies introduced at the end of the twentieth century created such opportunities. Freeing one's mind is both the prerequisite and the result of reform and opening up [6]. Thirty years of China's reform and opening up has also been a change in ideological openness, so parents have experienced a lot of negative information in the early days of opening up, resulting in this generation having a strong rejection of sex. Without guidance, sex education is difficult to conduct in a microsystem.

### **2.3. Most Parents Refuse to Talk About Sex in Family Education**

In Chinese family education, sex education rarely appears. Now some parents try to explain some picture books about male and female body structure to their children, so that they can understand the

gender difference and cultivate some basic awareness of sexual safety and privacy, but they choose not to talk about it more in-depth or more detailed. In addition, the lack of parents' knowledge of sex education and under the influence of traditional ideas, most parents are still in a state of shame for their children's sex education, therefore, under the restrictions of subjective and objective conditions, sex education based on family microsystem does not play its function [5]. This is also the present situation of parents refusing to talk about sex. In other words, why do most parents reject or avoid sexual education for their children?

Many parents are worried about the influence after receiving sex education. Students will face sex problems commonly or they will have an instinctive way to solve problems immediately, that is asking parents for help. If parents provide a healthy environment for children to talk about or to figure out some "secrets", they will protect themselves to a great extent. Providing children with appropriate and correct sex education can not only promote the normal physical and mental development of children but also enable them to protect themselves with scientific knowledge and skills [7].

### **3. The Present Situation of Sex Education in the Family**

According to research by Guo Rui-xue and Li Feng, 87.5% of students think parents must educate their children about sex, but as high as 33.6% and 39.4% of students never or rarely receive sex education at home [7]. Though the research can not represent the whole situation in China, It is also a typical ratio to demonstrate the present situation.

#### **3.1. The Influence of Parents' Sexual Concepts on Their Willingness to Carry out Sex Education**

There are lots of reasons regarding whether parents are willing to teach children sex knowledge. Perhaps some parents also do not have enough sexual knowledge, so they can not discuss or guide children correctly. Other parents may think that talking about sex for children to learn is too embarrassing to conduct. Parents in different occupations can influence this aspect as well. The parents of farmers and workers have a relatively conservative attitude towards sex education. "When I was a child, I asked my parents where I came from, and my parents all said that they picked it up from under the tree at the door [8]. This is one of the reasons parents often tell their children. However, some highly educated families will still retain conservative ideas, because they have been raised in this way, and will not change their sexual attitudes because of acquired education. Parts of parents consider sex as a valuable thing. They will think sex is about chastity. They do not seriously tell children how sex should be defined, but simply prohibit it. And many people still feel that premarital sex is a very shameful behavior, especially girls, which is to lose their value.

There are indeed many college students who have not received correct guidance and rational sex education within the family so that when they encounter accidental pregnancy, the students dare not tell their parents, or severely criticized by their parents, or are even looked down on. Because of this kind of thing, many parents do not choose to do more sex education but choose to scold and hold a firm attitude, making family sex education a more difficult topic to talk about. When parents convey conservative ideas, most teenagers are reluctant to talk about "sex" with their parents, eventually leading both parties to avoid talking about "sex" topics [1].

#### **3.2. The Influence of Parents' Educational Level on Children's Sex Education**

"My father went to college, the family was highly democratic, and my father was not shy about teaching me about sex. When I was five or six years old, my dad and I were watching the animal world, and there were two antelope mating. I asked Father, 'What are they doing? '... Grow up some, when I asked such questions again, my father explained that they were giving birth to small  $\times \times$ ; And told me it was the most natural thing in nature. [8] This is an example in Zhang Lihong's paper, which briefly shows how simple sex education is put into effect in the family. From Zhang's thesis, the author gets a piece of information that highly educated parents carry out a democratic approach to

sex education. However, It is the opposite circumstance between the paper and the real situation in the author's family and the classmates around her. It can not rule out that many parents now live in coastal areas or have higher education, the family sex education they receive also affects them. "Family education is not specifically to find a time to educate their children, and parents' evaluation of things around them is also affecting their children [8]." For example, if parents do not have a clear understanding of AIDS, they will discriminate and even hate AIDS people, if the child contracted the disease will do everything possible to hide, and even retaliate against society [8].

Early sex education is not comprehensive or even subtle. Although parents have received some sexual enlightenment, but not complete, some are even incorrect. they do not know how to conduct sex education. Although highly educated parents may choose to understand the problem from a more enlightened perspective, China's feudal ideology will still make most people be influenced by public opinion or atmosphere, thus affecting their views on children's education, resulting in sex education not from providing good guidance to children, but from fearing whether children will be excluded in society and whether there is a scandal in the family.

### **3.3. Sex Education Differences between Boys and Girls in the Family**

"In their eyes, girls must clean themselves and not have premarital sex; The weird thing is, guys can [8]. Blame only for thousands of years of men and women inferior, what ability do we have to change it overnight [8] ?" Just like the example mentioned in Zhang's article, there will be many families where boys watching more sexual things are acquiescent but girls who watch these kinds of things will be considered to have "dirty" thoughts. Most of the time, mothers talk about sex with their daughters, and fathers talk about sex with their sons [9]. Whether such family education is complete, it may not change anything in terms of complete sex education, or maintain the sexual concepts of men and women themselves. In reality, however, topics such as sexual health are mainly targeted at girls rather than boys [9]. When talking about sex, most of the male students focus on topics related to sexual behavior, and most of the education for them is how to use condoms correctly, or the male students themselves learn through videos on the Internet. It is also important to cultivate a sexual health environment for boys from a young age so that they realize that "sex" is not only sexual life but also the sexual health of boys and girls, and how to face sex correctly and cultivate their healthy understanding of sex. As girls receive more ascetic education, it is believed that a "no ask, no tell" dynamic is formed between parents and daughters when daughters are just coming of age [9].

Girls are mostly taught how to protect themselves but rarely receive normal or complete sex education. Boys and girls should be given the same model of sex education, especially at the university stage. Students have just come of age, they should have a reserve of sexual knowledge and a common sense of sexual health, rather than explore sex randomly by themselves. Talk about what students should do in different events for the things themselves, rather than girls only teaching them to protect themselves and at the same time giving girls all kinds of labels on the topic of sex; Boys should not only focus on sex itself, but also on sexual health and respect for women. Boys' and girls' sexual education is alike. It should be correct and should not spread thoughts like "girls have sex life is dirty, boys do not matter" for students in family education. Such ideas should be taken seriously.

## **4. Suggestions for Family Sex Education**

There are loads of models regarding family sex education because of different parents. However, our goal is the same which is to provide students with the right and healthy sex education as they grow up so that they are prepared and have their sense of right and wrong about sexual matters in their early adulthood in college.

### **4.1. Social Propaganda and Advocacy of Family Sex Education**

In general, family sex education is often ignored but family sex education is crucial in social propaganda. Several parents have begun to educate their children in all aspects according to several

educational We-Media accounts. Nevertheless, numerous views of the "we media" are not rational, nor is it the most appropriate method and it is easy to mislead some parents' views on education. For example, lots of picture books on sex education have been published in China before. Many parents read the marketing accounts and some media quotes out of context, to stop reading such books to their children. Parents should create a good family atmosphere for their children, which is the same as other education. For instance, when learning Chinese, parents need to communicate with them, to create a good language environment for them, sex education is the same [10].

Therefore, social propaganda and advocacy of sex education in the family is necessary to increase the credibility of the implementation of sex education in the microsystem, as well as social recognition of family sex education. It is the invisible support that many parents need.

#### **4.2. Cultivate Parents' Ability to Carry out Sex Education and Establish Home-School Cooperation**

College students' education is a stage that needs parents to control because college students have formed a certain self-idea, thus it needs more attention in terms of sex education. Yet family sex education should start from a young age, not begin in university. Education also requires parents to learn how to do it properly. Sex education at school and home can be used as a complementary education model so that parents learn how to teach sex education first, or more precisely, parents also need to carry out appropriate sex education. In addition to the limited level of personal knowledge, teaching practice experience is insufficient. However, after various consulting, collection, and collation of data, the understanding of adolescent sex education is not comprehensive enough and understanding is not in place [11]. In other words, parents should first cooperate with school education and keep pace with the times in educational concepts.

Parent-child books can be produced to bring the identity of parents into the picture book. Parents participate in the growth environment of students' sex education so that children do not exclude parents in the presence of sexual topics.

#### **4.3. Correct Parents' Sexual Concept Deviations and Establish a Good Family Sex Education Environment**

Correcting the irrational attitude in terms of sex is the first step for parents to achieve good sex education. Parents then need to make themselves deeply understand the importance of sex education, set up a correct view of sex education, and bear the important responsibility [7]. Thus, college students will have a healthy and completed sex education before their college lives. It can avoid a huge number of accidents because of the lack of sex education. Most of the time, the parents' attitude determines whether the children will communicate with them and the majority of university students are just of age. Relatively speaking, they are immature to face such a new thing. Therefore, family sex education is essential. Simultaneously, good sexual concepts and attitudes will bring students and parents closer together.

### **5. Conclusion**

In reality, there are different aspects and angles to analyze sex education and this study mainly focuses on family sex education. Family is the smallest living circle of all research units, so the family level is studied as a microsystem. This study analyzes the problems, phenomena, and suggestions that family sex education still needs to be put into practice.

The results of the study confirm that the implementation of family sex education in China is not good, mainly because parents' thoughts and contemporary education are not at the same frequency. Firstly, the influence of old ideas is deeply rooted, and the social view of sex education or public opinion on sexual issues is not rational, resulting in sex education in the family cannot be rational. Most parents refuse to talk about sex with children because of Chinese traditional thoughts. Secondly, there are also lots of families that have gender inequality. The influence of parents' concepts determines

whether they are willing to have sex education and their educational level affects the openness degree of mind. Moreover, social media propaganda is also a necessary way to enhance the extent of implementation of family sex education. This article shows why parents cannot accept the current sex education and how to better carry out sex education work so that family sex education can play a substantive role.

Future research will focus on how to make a home-school cooperative sex education model and how to let parents learn the appropriate sex education ideas first which is a relatively difficult task. The change of parents is not controllable, so the work will be limited. The real situation may be more complicated than the study suggests because every family is different and the way they deal with an accident is very different. Therefore, educational materials similar to family books and parent-child picture books also need to be further improved and there are no real experimental objects in China to practice whether it is feasible. There are limits to getting parents and school teachers to let go of their sexual shame.

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