



# Analysis of Problems and Implements of the Death Education in China

Shuangyan Hong<sup>1,a</sup>, Zijian Zhu<sup>2,b</sup>, Hang Sun<sup>b,\*</sup>

School of Foreign Language, Zhejiang Ocean University, Zhejiang, China

<sup>a</sup>shuangyan1102@163.com, <sup>b</sup>18205751277@163.com,  
<sup>c</sup>\*3562901408@qq.com

**Abstract.** The paper commences by examining the current problems of death education in China, identifying gaps and inefficiencies in its implementation. It considers three distinct regions—Hong Kong, Taiwan, and mainland China—as case studies to highlight diverse approaches and challenges. Additionally, the paper incorporates insights from the American experience to propose recommendations for enhancing death education in China. Death education is a crucial component of comprehensive education, essential for addressing the fear and social stigma surrounding death. By equipping individuals with accurate information and practical tools, it fosters a more open and informed discussion about mortality. This integration not only promotes increased societal tolerance and understanding but also aids individuals in developing emotional resilience and a profound appreciation of life's complexities. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of incorporating death education into various educational settings, including schools and community programs, to ensure a broad reach and impact. Such an approach can contribute to a more empathetic and prepared society, where discussions about death are approached with greater sensitivity and depth, ultimately fostering a healthier societal attitude towards end-of-life issues and bereavement.

**Keywords:** Death education, Analysis of problems, the study of implements.

## 1 Introduction

The concept of death education is pivotal in shaping societal attitudes towards mortality and end-of-life issues. It is an integral part of holistic education that aims to prepare individuals for the inevitability of death and to foster a healthy understanding of the process. Despite its significance, the approach and effectiveness of death education vary significantly between countries, with China and the United States presenting distinct models and challenges.

In China, death education is often considered a taboo subject, with limited integration into the educational curriculum and a general avoidance of discussions related to death. This cultural reticence can lead to a lack of preparedness and understanding

among the population, particularly when dealing with personal loss or the aging process.

Conversely, the United States has a more open approach to death education, with various programs and discussions aimed at demystifying death and promoting a more accepting attitude towards it. However, it is not without its own set of issues, including disparities in access to quality death education and a tendency to medicalize death, which can sometimes detract from a more personal and humanistic understanding.

This paper aims to analyze the problems associated with death education in both China and the United States, exploring the cultural, educational, and systemic factors that contribute to these issues. By doing so, it seeks to identify potential areas of improvement for China's death education, drawing inspiration from the successes and challenges faced by the United States.

The structure of this paper is organized as follows: Following this introduction, the second section will delve into the current state, the key issues and challenges of death education in China. The third section will explore the implications of these findings for China's death education system. Finally, the conclusion will synthesize the insights gained and propose recommendations for enhancing China's approach to death education.

## **2 Problems of Death Education in China**

### **2.1 Lack of the Awareness Towards Death Education**

The prevailing concept of “How can you know about death before you figure out the purpose of living?” leads to a widespread perception of death as a taboo topic. The public's comprehension of death education is insufficient, and there is a scarcity of social focus, government policy backing, general public consciousness, and the advancement of education teams, training programs, and educational settings that necessitate additional improvement<sup>[1]</sup>.

By addressing these gaps in knowledge and resources, society can work towards a more open and informed conversation about death. This will ultimately lead to a healthier understanding and acceptance of mortality. It is important that individuals have the tools and resources to have discussions about death in a constructive and meaningful way. By promoting death education and creating more opportunities for open dialogue, we can help reduce the stigma surrounding this natural part of life.

### **2.2 Lack of Complete and Reasonable Death Education System**

Bai Yansong, a renowned host, highlighted that China has not fully adopted the concept of death instruction. Consequently, death education has emerged as a vulnerable aspect of China's higher education and youth education<sup>[2]</sup>. The prevalence of deliberate acts of harm in response to societal issues and severe traffic accidents indicates that these individuals lack a fear of life and possess a weak appreciation for the sanctity of life.

We can attribute this issue to the absence of death education programs and the ineffectiveness of the death education system. It is imperative to establish precise definitions for teaching objectives, curriculum material, teaching methods, and death education evaluation. In addition, it is imperative to develop a comprehensive trinity education system that encompasses the school, family, and society.

### **2.3 Lack of Systematic Research on Death Education**

While several schools may incorporate death education, the instructional material is rudimentary and lacks comprehensive research. It is crucial to swiftly carry out thorough theoretical guidance and research to ensure the long-term viability of death education inside the system. This entails the incorporation of theoretical principles and real-world implementations, the cultivation of exceptionally skilled educators, and the harmonization of research on death education with China's own national circumstances. It is essential that death education programs undergo continuous review and evaluation for continuous improvement and refinement of the curriculum. In addition, collaboration with professionals in the fields of psychology and sociology can provide useful knowledge and perspectives to improve the quality of death education in educational institutions. By cultivating collaborations with specialists in relevant domains, educational institutions may guarantee the thoroughness and effectiveness of their educational programs. This comprehensive approach also assists in addressing the intricate emotional and psychological requirements of students in understanding and coping with the concept of death.

## **3 Implications of Death Education in the United States for the Development of Related Death Education in China**

### **3.1 Establishing the Concept of Death Education**

In comparison to the United States, China's research on death education began relatively late and lacks local research findings. Consequently, the Chinese population has not widely embraced death education. The report from the 2023 National Health Commission reveals that China's urban population has a suicide rate of 3.59 per 100,000 people, while the rural population has a rate of 8.25 per 100,000 people. Suicide has now become the fifth-leading cause of death in China, and it is the primary cause of death among individuals aged 15 to 34. Hence, it is imperative for our nation to broaden the reach and enhance the vigor of public awareness efforts. For instance, it is important to enhance awareness of death education by promoting it in schools, communities, and society. We can achieve this through various channels, including the Internet, media, film, and television. The aim is to help individuals grasp the importance of conducting death education and develop a proper understanding of life. Furthermore, we should prioritize the integration of China's unique cultural heritage into death education initiatives. We can accomplish this by establishing a dedicated research team, allocating more resources for scientific research, integrating life educa-

tion into quality education, and creating teaching materials tailored to China's specific circumstances<sup>[3]</sup>.

### **3.2 Formulating the Policies and Regulations of Death Education**

In the United States, death education programs, policies, regulations, and specialized psychological services for minors have been systematically integrated into the educational system to provide a comprehensive approach to addressing issues related to death and dying. These initiatives aim to equip students with the tools to understand, cope with, and process the concept of mortality, thereby fostering emotional resilience and mental well-being<sup>[4]</sup>. In contrast, China's Ministry of Education has introduced regulations within the current Code for Primary and Secondary School Students that emphasize the importance of valuing life, prioritizing safety, engaging in physical activity, and maintaining hygiene<sup>[5]</sup>. This framework underscores the significance of life education at a national level and lays a foundation for promoting and integrating life education more deeply within the Chinese education system. By addressing life skills and health, these regulations create a supportive environment that can enhance the development of comprehensive life education programs, fostering a broader understanding of life and its intrinsic value<sup>[6]</sup>.

However, overall, China's laws and regulations pertaining to life education are not comprehensive, and the majority of regions and schools remain in a passive state regarding life education or even fall into a "blind zone." The lack of structured policies results in a fragmented approach, with inconsistent implementation and varying levels of emphasis across different areas. To address this, it is imperative for the government to establish and enhance legislation and regulations pertaining to life education. This should involve bolstering administrative intervention in death education and fostering its development in primary and secondary schools through legal and other administrative measures. Such actions will not only ensure that death education in China operates within a well-defined legal framework but also promote a more uniform and effective approach nationwide. By incorporating comprehensive guidelines and training for educators, as well as integrating death education into the national curriculum, the government can better equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate these crucial life topics.

### **3.3 Integrating Death Education Resources**

In the United States, governmental and non-governmental organizations, including civil society organizations, communities, the news media, and families, actively promote death education in addition to teaching it in schools. They play a significant role in providing death education in primary and secondary schools.

Currently, the implementation of death education in schools faces several challenges, primarily due to the fragmented approaches often taken by schools and families. This disjunction results in a lack of cohesion and shared objectives between these crucial institutions, undermining the effectiveness of death education programs. To address this, schools should take a leading role in implementing comprehensive death

education initiatives. By doing so, they can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, ensuring a more integrated approach.

Incorporating death education into formal classroom instruction provides an opportunity for students to engage with the topic in a structured manner. However, for this education to be truly impactful, it is essential to actively promote and develop conditions that foster strong relationships between families, schools, and the broader community. This requires a concerted effort to enhance communication and collaboration among these stakeholders. Schools can serve as the central hub for death education by developing programs that include not only classroom instruction but also involve parents and community members in the learning process.

One effective strategy is to create educational environments that are inclusive and supportive, reflecting the diverse needs and perspectives of students and their families. Schools should initiate workshops and informational sessions for parents to help them understand the importance of death education and how they can support their children's learning at home. Such initiatives can facilitate open dialogues about death and grief, enabling families to become more comfortable with the subject matter and to provide a supportive context for their children.

The role of community collaboration cannot be overstated. Schools should actively seek partnerships with local organizations, mental health professionals, and grief counselors to enrich their death education programs. By leveraging community resources, schools can offer students access to a broader range of perspectives and support systems. For example, community centers could host events and seminars on coping with loss, while local mental health professionals could provide workshops on grief management and emotional resilience.

Encouraging student involvement in social activities related to death education can also enhance the learning experience. Schools can organize community service projects that focus on supporting those affected by loss or creating memorials to honor deceased individuals. These activities provide students with practical experiences that deepen their understanding of death and its impact on individuals and communities.

Ultimately, creating a comprehensive, harmonious, and friendly educational environment requires a multifaceted approach. Schools, families, and communities must work together to develop and sustain death education initiatives that are both meaningful and impactful. By fostering strong relationships between these institutions and embracing collaborative efforts, we can ensure that death education becomes a valuable and integral part of students' overall learning experience.

## 4 Conclusion

The exploration of death education in China and the United States has underscored the importance of a proactive and inclusive approach to this sensitive subject. By drawing inspiration from the successes and challenges of both countries, China has the opportunity to cultivate a death education system that is both culturally relevant and universally beneficial. The ultimate goal is to empower individuals with the

knowledge and tools to navigate the end of life with dignity, understanding, and compassion.

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