

# A Study of Child Wellbeing and Welfare Systems in China and Taiwan

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**Abstract** - In recent years, children's wellbeing has become a hot research theme that is increasingly gaining attention in the field of health and social sciences. Still, there are significant gaps in investigating children's wellbeing across countries. The present study was explored the current child wellbeing and welfare systems in China and Taiwan. The phenomenon of assessment in children's wellbeing by comparing two different nations' practices contributed to new perspectives from wider perspectives. A systematic analysis was conducted and analyzed significant research journals based on the study themes "child wellbeing", "welfare systems", "China", "Taiwan". The recent journal articles from the Global Health database, PubMed, which, Google Scholar, Abstracts, Summon, Academic Journals Database, and PsychInfo data sources were reviewed. Research journals and articles published in English in peer-reviewed journals since 2000 were included. The study shows that the wider body of knowledge, recent evidence and compared child wellbeing and social welfare systems of the countries from wider perspectives. Children's wellbeing issue has grown in importance and achieved great advancement, but the current social and economic changes of the nations are uncertain. The study has suggested both nations should further empirical studies to construct comprehensive child-focused policies and support networks to improve the existing child wellbeing and social welfare systems. Therefore, there is a need for an empirical study to reduce the highest wellbeing risks of children and reform the social welfare system in both nations. The interpretation of this study has a number of important implications for future research and practices.

**Keywords** - child wellbeing, welfare systems, policies, China, Taiwan

## I. INTRODUCTION

Globally, the dimension of child well-being in terms of comprehensive worldwide comparisons and studies has grown speedily (Ben-Arieh and Goerge, 2001) and is significant to a multi-dimensional approach (UNICEF, 2007). Additionally, cross-cultural comparative on child well-being has also been assessed at a countrywide and district level (Land, 2007; Hanifin et al., 2007). There is a growing body of literature that recognizes child wellbeing

and welfare systems are crucial aspects of post-industrial societies. It has long been a question of great interest in a wide range of fields and a worldwide phenomenon. However, the needs and wellbeing of children are not widely acknowledged in recent literature.

Some countries react to child mistreatment has advanced from time to time, mainly in regard to the universal characteristics of welfare systems. More recently, literature has emerged that offers contradictory findings of child abuse at dangers and varies significantly, even between countries with similar social policies. A comparative study of how different countries measure, as well as intervention child abuse, has complex the issue over the last ten years, mainly in the thematic focuses of the systems of intervention.

In light of recent events, comparative study plays an important role in addressing children's well-being issues and serves as the best indicator of the future wealth and development of countries. There is evidence that the childhood period is a vital stage in human development, and numerous countries have invested considerable resources to put up the future of nations. Children are a fundamental property, and their well-being is a vital indicator of the future wealth and advancement of nations. A comparative study in which other countries confront similar problems may be significant to identify differences and collaborate on new ways to adapt best practices and policies.

Recent trends have shown significant gaps in investigating children's wellbeing, which can be compared across countries. The study in two countries has significance for looking at differences, comparisons and contributes new ideas that countries can get used to their contexts. Studying at differences of the nations was vital to recognize more about the current welfare system has developed as it has and work on its gaps. The study, therefore, presents a systematic analysis of child wellbeing and social welfare systems in China and Taiwan.

A systematic analysis was conducted to analyze significant research journals based on the study themes of child wellbeing, social welfare systems, China, and Taiwan. Baumeister (2013) found that systematic analysis is a form



of research that is able to address wider issues than a single empirical study ever can. The systematic study is characterized by being objective, replicable, systematic, and transparent views and broader implications. By keeping this in mind, Google Scholar, Databases Scopus, Global Health, Web of Science PubMed, Summon, WHO, PsychInfo, social welfare abstracts, and NIH data sources were used to collect data. English journals/articles published in peer-reviewed journals from 2000 to the present were included. The data were analyzed, interpreted, and written in a systematic manner. The study shows that the wider body of knowledge, recent evidence and compared child wellbeing and social welfare systems of the countries from wider perspectives.

## II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Existing Welfare Systems and Limitations

In contemporary China, social security system reform has highlighted the economic system reform has had many social welfare achievements and huge advancement. However, the fears of life in the speedily changing social and economic realities of China created a need for the comfort and stability of the social security system (Tang, 2005; Minjie, 2011). It seems that social welfare reform is still facing key factors to proceed since the seeds of modern society headed the process of urbanization and industrialization, leading to the formation and development of the modern welfare system (Wang, 2017). The modern economic situation created unstable employment and smaller family sizes, and poor social interaction among the people.

The social welfare system provides coverage for those working in state agencies and institutions, state-owned enterprises, and some collective enterprises. Workers in other collective enterprises, the self-employed, and farmers, which together comprise 70% of the population, have no social security coverage. Coverage of China's social welfare was small and unfair and weak social insurance (Minjie, 2011). The high migration of rural households to cities for jobs and living contributed to the great fluctuation in economic growth and the modern welfare system.

There is a large number of unemployment in cities; however, the findings of Wang (2017) indicated that the government mainly focused on providing temporary aid to families living in extreme poverty. There is a large number of unemployment in cities; however, the findings of Wang (2017) indicated that the government mainly focused on providing temporary aid to families living in extreme poverty. Likewise, the labor insurance system mainly supports "medical services at state expenses" and "retirement and resignation" for employees in government departments, public institutions, and enterprises (Pan, 2002; Tang, 2005). In the meantime, the government strictly controlled the conduct of public hospitals through planning and budgeting to balance medical care and drugs.

The social welfare system in modern China has taken place in between reforms. The country operates a dual economy, a feature reflected in welfare system programs. In a study by Lu (2008), the Government established a system covering all the population, and integrated welfare programs alienated areas between urban and rural and enhanced the social rights of the local people. However, the country has a vast population and social welfare system. As an industrialized country, the needs of society grow and increase from time to time and often a profound burden on the government.

To sum up, the government has replaced the budget as the provision of welfare and has shifted the responsibility of looking after the government employees. The country has become industrialized; the needs of society grow and increase a heavy burden on the government. The government has a responsibility to reform a basic welfare system and regulate its provision and progress.

In Asia, Taiwan has the most highly industrialized and urbanized societies, and the speedy development has resulted in weak social interaction in today's society. Moreover, the concept of child welfare and children's rights is relatively new in Taiwan. The stability of the family has been seriously threatened throughout the last decades. Sadly, the divorce rate has risen; the number of single-parent families has increased. Jing (2009) indicated that large numbers of young people have left their families and migrated from rural areas to larger towns. Single parents consider that government has the responsibility to support children's education and emergency living support (Ministry of Interior, 2002).

Society has become extremely aware of the problems faced by families and children. On the other vein, various organizations, government offices, and academic institutions began voicing their concerns for child wellbeing. Jing (2009) found that the government has a role in implementing a durable nationwide child policy to promote child welfare activities and protect children's rights.

Among the essential policies of the country, social welfare policy is the one that has a significant role in child social welfare activities. With the rapid changes in the social environment, some amendments were made over the years for the balanced development of citizen welfare. There is a concerning issue of social inequality, and the social welfare scientists are taking a serious account to adopt comprehensive welfare policies. However, social welfare schemes are complex and usually be effective and efficient in different social welfare contexts. It needs to assess international practices; the most important contents of social welfare policies frequently involve social assistance, welfare services, social insurance, education, medical and health care, social housing, and employment services. To achieve the goal of social adequacy, a milestone of social policies development scheme also needs to be changed in the country.

Furthermore, take into consideration the current implementation and the history of the country, this

particular guiding principle of social welfare policy has to adopt in the form of multi-leveled protections systems. However, the recent literature indicated that the welfare system in Taiwan focuses on fragmental analysis and proposing a framework on a specific issue (health, long-term care, labor manpower, and minorities), and political situation (Chien, 2004; Liu, 2006). The government has to give emphasis on welfare nation statement and new social changes mainly for employment and unemployment issues and structure of the population (Taylor, 2006).

In Taiwan, the social welfare system mixed with other political issues and the pressure from interests among stakeholders (Jing, 2009). Yet, the welfare provisions have more weight among Taiwanese, which is even difficult to examine the success and failure of support the present welfare resource and provide possible ways to improve as well. Likewise, Hsu, Lee, and Chung (2000) identified that the social welfare system lacks integration, is often full of contradictions, and children suffer welfare stigma and result in social exclusion.

There was a practical limitation regarding coverage in health, a lack of complementary mental health services, and weak service systems/policies to ensure mental, spiritual, physical, moral, and social development of children (Wang, 2017). Thus, policymakers at different levels work together in formulating a comprehensive social welfare framework by considering the current needs of society. The two governments are not committed to supplementing the family income that is defined as the right of children to access diverse material

for their development, such as educational items. A comprehensive welfare provision can be helpful to promote equality and significant to achieve the wellbeing of children as a measure of welfare efficiency.

### III. CONCLUSION

Modernization and urbanization have undergone dramatic social change in nations. The development of the nations changed in social values and way of thinking, changed on population structure, and an increased weak social interaction to the society in return. The social welfare system in modern China has stepped up efforts in the support for farmers so as to promote the more rapid development of agriculture and rural social welfare cause. The economic situation created unstable employment and smaller family sizes, and poor social interaction among the people. Development in Taiwan also changed the social

welfare scheme to achieve the goal of social adequacy as a milestone of social policies. The Taiwanese government has implemented a national long-term child policy to promote child welfare activities, but it mixed with other political agendas and pressured from interests among stakeholders. Therefore, there is a need for an empirical study to reduce the highest wellbeing risks of children and reform the social welfare system in both nations. The interpretation of this study has a number of important implications for future research and practices.

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