

NEW 21ST CENTURY PARADIGM OF HOME ECONOMICS FOR THE CHINESE CULTURAL CONTEXT: THE FU JEN EXPERIENCE.

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The proposed research analyzes and reflects on the beginnings and history of Home Economics at the university level in Mainland China and Taiwan, using the developments at Fu Jen Catholic University - one of the pioneering institutions in this field in the Chinese cultural context - as a case study. It examines the original, the changing and the newly emerging concept of Home Economics in relation to prevailing historical challenges.

Specifically, the study reveals the underlying considerations, the difficulties, and the results of the process of developing and implementing a "re-newed" philosophy of Home Economics in response to the needs and challenges of the Chinese social/cultural situation on Taiwan.

In the case of Fu Jen, the process of rethinking led to a re-structuring and re-orientation of its Home Economics-related Departments and the establishment of the first College of Human Ecology (Home Economics) in Chinese history. The "newness" of the conception of the College is well-expressed in the new Chinese name "Minsheng" College (民生學院), meaning "for the life of the people", a name deeply embedded in Chinese sociological thinking, and hence immediately comprehensible and meaningful to every Chinese citizen.

The study, moreover, demonstrates that in addition to its universal mission, Home Economics needs to be "enculturated" to fulfill its local mission. It is argued and demonstrated that the enculturated and integrated vision and the threefold mission adopted by the "Minsheng" (Human Ecology) College at Fu Jen constitutes a significant development and contribution to a 21st century paradigm of "Home Economics" for the Asian - specifically the Chinese - cultural context.