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Abstract---The ancient dynasty was deposed in 1911, and a new republic took its place. It is found that China made great development in all areas of life throughout the Republican era (1912-1949) excepting Anti-Japanese War. When the last Quing dynasty would approach its end, China is in the primary stage in building a higher education system. In a republican era, China developed its modern higher education system which is composed of public universities, private, universities, and voluntary universities. The war with Japan was certainly the most momentous event in the History of China during the Republican era. The methodology indicating the Reformation era is thoroughly examined during the war. The new development of the war has highlighted a higher education system. Consequently, this paper examines the evolution of China’s higher education system from 1937 to 1945, during Japan’s anti-war era. In this paper, a descriptive methodology is used to get reliable results. Besides, secondary data such as journals, peer-review, papers, books, articles, were used to get information for the topic.

Keywords---anti-Japanese war, China, Chinese education system, higher education system, Western universities.

Introduction

The communist revolution demands the establishment of a new society that was radically different from what traditional communists referred to as conventional China's feudal system (Border, 2019). People with new commitments, motives, and concepts of individual and collective life were needed in this new community. In this context, the importance of education in attaining this revolution and progress was acknowledged.
The Chinese Republic Movement of 1911 saw the Qing empire fall and the Republic of China, led by Sun Yat-Nationalist sen's Party, arise (Qian et al., 2017). The Nationalist Party proceeded on a series of education reforms under the new administration. The Nationalist Party grew stronger in its fight against the warlords, and after defeating them in 1926 during Chiang Kai-Northern shek's Expedition, it regained political stability. As a result, educational reforms persisted, with the benefits of improved educational systems. In addition, during the Republican period, two forces contributed to the adoption of higher education reforms: intellectuals engaging in the New Culture Revolution, and the federal government. The new century began with educational reform as the cornerstone of the last imperial dynasty's faltering attempt to save itself and the country from destruction (Bregnbæk, 2020).

Consequently, it is reasonable to conclude that the Chinese recognized the importance of education as a social constructive component. Besides, China has built a comprehensive set of academic subjects and programs. Education was essential to acquire desired positions in the public sector. Western higher education, especially Christian higher education, played a strong influence in influencing Chinese higher education in its early years (ZHONG & Yanqiang, 2015). Returnees from the US, EU, primarily pragmatist academics, had a significant impact on China's higher education. American-style colleges exploded with the combination of traditional schools delivering teaching in core topics and special universities providing training for basic skills (Perraton, 2016). Chinese higher education has a long and glorious legacy, with major turning points that helped shape the nation's modern tertiary education system. A look back at this history shows how many factors, objectives, and circumstances converged to build a system that, although sharing some traits with other national systems, is distinct in a number of ways, some obvious and others subtle.

As a result, this article is being written in order to assess the evolution of China's higher education system throughout the anti-Japanese war period, 1937-1945. Research has looked into the historical and current worldwide implications of Chinese abroad migrants. The study identified the challenges China experienced in creating its higher education system during the anti-Japanese war. Furthermore, the report evaluates how China's higher education system contributes to the country's development. Besides, according to the dominant view, the higher education system is a system that coordinates and standardizes all practices of higher education institutions and transforms them into biological integrity reflecting the development status of higher education institutions and the development characteristics of the era (Lozano et al., 2015; Dello-Iacovo, 2009).

**Research questions**

- How higher education system developed during the anti-Japanese war period (1937-1945)?
- How Chinese higher education system supports the development of the country?
Research objectives

- To determine the challenges faced by China during the anti-Japanese war in developing the higher education system.
- To identify how higher education contributes to the modernization of China.
- Chinese’s higher education system supports the development of the country.

Significance of the study

China flourished slowly during the first two decades after the Republic of China was established, then boomed during 1927 and 1937 during the Golden Age (Day, 2021). Their increasing pace for both vocational and regular education remained sustained until the end of the 1940s, after a sharp drop during WWII. The study will provide a summary of the development of China’s higher education system from 1937 to 1945, during the anti-Japanese war. It will be useful for teachers, scholars and students interested in recognizing China’s higher education system. Study results will help understand the evolution of the Chinese higher education system during the Anti-Japanese War. This study will promote creative approaches to increasing knowledge in the context of the Chinese higher seduction system.

Literature review

Higher education system of China (1937-1945)

During the war of resistance against Japan, the Republican government created a reasonably solid system of sending students overseas by strengthening the governance of officially-sponsored skilled migrants and imposing strict control over those who were self-supported, in order to cultivate wartime talents and save foreign currencies (Du, 2020). Following the war’s victory, the government encouraged abroad students to return to serve the country while also standardizing the system by selecting and sending self-supporting as well as government-supported students on a national scale.

Following the beginning of the war, the government prioritized battling Japanese soldiers, therefore other social objectives, such as educational endeavors, had to work in concert with this commitment (Zhao, 2021). As a result, several education initiatives were issued during wartime. The Ministry of Education issued “Temporal Measures for Restricting the Sending of Overseas Students” in 1938, which focused on the selection criteria and the disciplines that might be studied. As a result, the number of students sent overseas during the war period declined dramatically when compared to the prior period.
During this era, the process of sending students overseas was more controlled, with a set of rules imposed on the selection of not only government-funded but also self-funded students, as well as the subjects in which they decided to specialize (Gao, 2015). According to the Implementation Program: Students Studying Abroad, government-sponsored candidates should be graduates of universities, vocational or technical colleges, or high schools; all candidates, government-funded or self-supported, should be subject to an evaluation by the authority-in-charge related to their academic performances as well as their remarks and behaviour in the foreign country. At the same time, the importance of a wide range of subjects, primarily in natural and applied sciences, was highlighted.

Besides, it has been noticed that with enhancing the management of sending students abroad, the government also did some rescue operations to assist overseas students who had lost their hometowns in the war, and thus their sources of tuition payments. The process of sending students overseas got much more regulated, and the funding sources became broader. Consequently, in the year 1943, the circumstances turned in China’s favour. According to Ryan (2019), the Republican government decided to eliminate restrictions on self-supporting students going abroad. However, to maintain the accuracy of those overseas students, the policy migrated from placing restrictions to strengthening their management. Given the importance of intelligent people for the nation’s future restoration.

The number of students eligible to study abroad increased in 1943 because of Republican government support but declined dramatically again in 1945. It is because the government has recognized the urgent need for standardization and institutionalization of this practice, decided to prioritise the development of educational institutions within the country, rather than sending students overseas as a secondary means of producing talents in various fields (Chen & Feng, 2000; Gikas & Grant, 2013).

(188)

Table 1
Number of students sent abroad from 1938 to 1942

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foreign countries</th>
<th>1938</th>
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<th>1940</th>
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<th>1942</th>
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<td>Britain</td>
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<td>France</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
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<td>Belgium</td>
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<td>America</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Canadian Center of Science and Education. 2013)
Table 2
The number of students who studied abroad between 1943 and 1945

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>1943</th>
<th>1944</th>
<th>1945</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>America</td>
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<td>149</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Self-made)

The Republican government’s educational reforms were primarily focused on the following factor:

- Education goals and curriculum must be adjusted with the Developed world. A series of rules and regulations regarding higher education was approved, stating clearly that higher education aimed to foster scholars engaged in enhanced studies as well as skilled workers able to apply sciences and technology. During this time, the entire curriculum system was borrowed from Western higher education institutions, and many Chinese universities and technical colleges used authentic textbooks from Western universities. This helped modern Chinese higher education institutions to keep up to date with Western syllabus layout and teaching methods, but it also resulted in a disconnect between what was taught and China’s realities.

- Enhanced global educational and academic exchanges - China’s higher education was opened to an incredible scale under the Nationalist Party’s leadership, as demonstrated by significant educational and academic exchanges of all kinds with other nations. This made it a priority to spread Chinese culture to the Western world, trying to attract students from the United Kingdom, Germany, the Soviet Union, Japan, Belgium, and Vietnam, among others, and offering courses in Chinese culture, Sino-French relations, Chinese law, Chinese language and literature, and Medieval history. Exchange visits by scientific researchers, experts, or professors between China and other nations were part of academic connections at the higher education.

These reforms and adjustments have shaped the characteristics of China’s higher education and research systems in a noticeable and significant manner. Further, in 1949, Chinese higher education ushered in an era of rapid development states (Zhang & Hayhoe, 2017). It has been found that during that period, the communist higher education system was built largely on the Soviet model of a highly centralised and planned institution. Mergers were utilised as a policy measure to reform the higher education sector, among other things. During the early reforms, the key goals for using mergers were to benefit from economies of scale, cut costs, improve efficiency, and improve the academic quality of education.

Besides, the government established these plans to revive the country through science and education, as well as cultivate educated people to help it prosper. The government had also intensified its efforts to create a large number of engineers
who could work in a variety of professions (Zhang et al. 2017). Furthermore, it has stepped up its attempts to modernise China’s higher education system.

**Challenges faced by China during the anti-Japanese war**

Despite the reform’s success, several issues have arisen, primarily as a result of higher education’s expansion. Problems and dilemmas came as a result of the developments of the higher education system, including declining teaching conditions and quality, a lack of capacities for nurturing excellent and talented staff, a gap between the skills taught at universities and the demands of the sector, unsteady and insufficient conditions for the long-term development of higher education. These challenges particularly disrupted China’s higher education system (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Che et al., 2015).

Schools were closed for long periods of time, extending from months to years in the case of secondary schools and years in the context of universities and colleges. Further, when schools were in service, the quality of education provided was poor since old teachers had been sent away or had been kept but refused a license to teach, resulting in teachers who were often ineligible or underqualified to teach classes. Poor facilities are associated with poor teaching quality at the foundation phase, particularly in rural areas (Liu, & Kang, 2021). There are two reasons why teachers are denied; first teachers are rated third from the bottom among professionals, providing little motivation to enter the field. Besides, teachers were sometimes publicly humiliated and exiled to remote places, tortured and possibly killed. In addition, the removal of textbooks posed a severe challenge. As a result, many people who want to teach are concerned that the job assignment process will be employed to send them to remote rural locations.

It is also observed that within the Chinese educational system, there are many areas where inequality exists. Inequality based on race, gender, and geography will be explored in depth. Lopes (2021), points out that having a sibling especially a brother lowers the likelihood of a female enrolling in education. When both a brother and a sister are in school, the parents are more likely to help the son by assigning fewer duties which can have an impact on future educational prospects. This could be a perception by parents of a potential return on the investment, as boys are more likely to earn money in the work and will be the ones to care for their parents as they retire.

Besides, the development of educational infrastructure is another key concern. A university is frequently cut off from disciplines it does not teach, other academics, and the rest of the world. Instead, then having a variety of subjects at the same institution, Chinese institutions often concentrate on one. Due to a lack of interaction between students and teachers from diverse areas, a highly narrow concentration can develop. Poor communication between schools, colleges, and research units also causes issues: work may be duplicated; expensive equipment that could be shared may be duplicated, and knowledge that could be synergy in nature is not shared sufficiently. All of this leads to the deteriorating of scarce resources (Li et al., 2014; Chan, 2006; Lefebure, 2019).
Further, the government expects that Students studying abroad will provide students with a greater grasp of conditions and issues. However, there has been much concern over students who extend their study stay abroad rather than return to China to continue their roles in society. Until the problems of intellectual freedom, low salary, poor benefits, and low status. Consequently, it becomes one major concern in China's modernization effort. Hence, China struggled to provide public education while simultaneously developing the professionals needed to carry out its change.

In addition, Chen (2021), critiques that 'education was seen as a strong harmful Western influence during the revolution; The knowledge and training of the cultivated were considered a strong destructive of Western influence. Western education progressively gained a foothold in China, largely because of teachers employed by Christian missionaries. While the major part of the Chinese gentry was humiliated and suspicious of these advancements. On the other side, a few more pragmatic and liberal-minded officials saw a chance for a balanced approach to teaching, with Confucian classics remaining at the core and being supplemented by a component of Western technology.

Moreover, the curriculum standards are inadequately flexible. While many experienced and skilled instructors opt to work in large cities, those in rural parts of the country have more difficulties in successfully implementing new curriculum due to a lack of resources. Teacher workloads have risen due to the new curriculum's demands and specifications, which include responsibilities such as educator, learner, innovator, facilitator, researcher, and so on.

Despite setbacks, China has developed one of the world's largest higher education systems. However, in the coming decades, the Chinese higher education system is expected to emerge through a range of techniques with new objectives in order to respond to change. Economic transformation, urbanization, and modernisation characterise the new situation. Chinese higher education will be pushed to meet new difficulties and expand its learning and adjusting capabilities in order to deal with more complex scenarios states (Yonghu & Zhanjie, 2015).

**Contribution of the education system in the modernization of China**

Yan & Cai (2019), reports that in the ten years leading up to the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War in 1937, Chinese students studying abroad underwent a tremendous transformation, marked by the uniformity of selection criteria and regulations as well as the institutional of the entire selection process. Indeed, a great number of Chinese students were capable of achieving their goal of receiving higher education in a foreign country because of the Republican government's continuous efforts. As a result, a large number of enlightened and progressive talents have been nurtured, all of whom are poised to make significant contributions to the development of a powerful and wealthy China.

McCann (2015), states the value of education was highlighted as a key factor in achieving modernization. It has been found that it was important for the government to acquire sophisticated science, technology and managerial skills from other countries which, as he famously put it, Education should be prepared
for the needs of modernity, the future, and the world. Besides, it has been observed that many Chinese students moved to the United States to pursue a master's degree in other nations, while many foreign students came to China. China began to welcome foreign students. In the views of Wang et al. (2020), China's strategy of reform and opening-up has been implemented, as a result, the number of foreign countries sending students to China has steadily expanded.

Additionally, it is also found that missionaries established some schools and colleges in and around the missionary stations to provide a western form of education mainly to the children of foreigners residing in Chinese port cities and to newly converted Chinese Christians. As per Cheong (2021), During the colonial era, the western form of the current education system was also brought to China. The integration of math, physics, history, and other affecting factors of knowledge into the syllabus, as well as the publication of standardized textbooks by Christian missionaries for their schools and universities, was a huge step forward in China’s academic development. Besides, medical science in the country benefited greatly from access to modern conceptions of morphology, physiology, operation, diagnostics, and so on from west missionaries. Many great texts were converted into Mandarin, allowing Chinese scholastic civilization to learn about western society’s sophisticated thinking in different fields of knowledge. Many immigrants from the west were brought to China’s treaty major ports by imperialist invasion, and most of them helped develop parts of China’s deprived neighborhoods (Lawson, 2015). Consequently, the new education system is good for Western-styled disciplined knowledge, but it is not conducive to Chinese classical knowledge.

Furthermore, it is also determined that in terms of education, public primary schools were the most important contributors to the modernization of China states (Wang et al., 2015). They dominated the community around the turn of the twentieth century and rose to prominence. Between 1937 to 1946, public primary schools contributed to about 95% of all enrolments, illustrating the primary role of public primary schools in the development of mass education in China throughout the mid-twentieth century (Refer appendix 1).

The decline in the role of public secondary education coincides with what we've seen in primary education, where secondary education was mainly fuelled by private provision and demand. Similarly, the number of colleges and universities did not expand substantially, although the proportion of public universities ranged from 50% to 71%. In addition, China’s increased access to higher education during the Republican eras was mostly attributable to the growth of public schools. Besides, more crucially, in opposed to Imperial China’s approach, limited public financial resources were mainly dedicated to lowering education to create a bigger pool of literate personnel; advancement at secondary and university levels was aided by the private sector. This factor also aids China in its modernity (Sintani et al., 2021; Cobeña et al., 2021).

Moreover, the open-door policy is highly beneficial to Chinese higher education. Returnees have brought back cutting-edge scientific, technical, and professional knowledge, which they have successfully disseminated and utilised states the Chu (2021). Financing is secured through gradually improving financial models
as well as inputs to the higher education system. As a result, the 211 Project, and Double World-class Scheme have emphasized dozens of Chinese leading universities, narrowing the gap between worldwide leading universities. Seeing the potential benefits of new educational institutions, the Chinese were more prone to create Western education and move towards the modern Western educational model.

**Research Methodology**

The research method used in the study is the descriptive method. The researcher critically analyses all the factors and facts of the ancient Chinese education system overall in general and particulate during the anti-Japanese war.

**Data collection**

The secondary data was used in the research for gaining a better understanding and fruitful conclusion. Secondary data such as books, articles, journals, peer-review articles and more.

**Results/Findings**

It is clear from the aforementioned findings that colonialism had a significant impact on the development of Chinese higher education. To some extent, war impact favourable on Chinese society by establishing a modern education system, technology, among other aspects. However, these favourable effects were limited to a few treaties’ major ports. This paper will suggest that the era of 'self-strengthening was China's first step toward engaging with Western reform and modernization of their educational system. The Chinese were more inclined to cultivate Western learning and move toward a modernised Western education system after seeing the potential that Western institutions might provide.

Despite the success of the reform, many challenges have emerged, especially as a result of the expansion of higher education. Problems and dilemmas came as a result of higher education development phases, including declining teaching conditions and standards, a lack of abilities for nurturing excellent and management to be effective, a gap between both the skills taught at universities and the requirements of the sector and unstable and insufficient conditions for higher education's slow gestation. These difficulties wreaked havoc on China's higher education sector in particular (Tri et al., 2021; Pakhomova et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the government anticipates that students studying abroad will develop a better understanding of situations and challenges. However, Students who want to extend their studies stay abroad rather than return to China to continue their roles in society have been a source of concern. Until there were issues with intellectual freedom, low pay, inadequate benefits, and low status. As a result, it has become a key source of concern in China's modernisation efforts. It has been evaluated that the academies made significant contributions to China's academic world’s prosperity and development. As a result of China's reform and opening-up strategy, the number of foreign countries sending students to China has increased gradually. Furthermore, missionaries
constructed certain schools and colleges near missionary stations to provide a western kind of education, primarily to the children of foreigners staying in Chinese port cities and newly converted Chinese Christians. Furthermore, during the Republican times, China’s expanded access to higher education was mainly due to the expansion of public schools. Funding is ensured through the development of the financial models that improve over time, as well as contributions to the education system (Brown & Park, 2002; Hou et al., 2014; Suryasa et al., 2019).

**Conclusion**

During the evolution of Chinese higher education’s, there was evidence of international links nearly from the beginning of Chinese history, followed by further development and a range of educational changes. Both contemporary and modern higher education took the same path from studying and integrating the Western expertise to striking a new direction for independent development. However, during the Japanese invasion of China, higher education faced a significant blow as it progressed along a contemporary track.

China’s higher education has tremendously evolved and internationalized as a result of learning from sophisticated educational systems, management mechanisms, curriculum setting, and other factors, as well as introducing foreign professors and lecturers. For the first time after the imperial war, Chinese society comes in contact with western civilisation. Education, science, philosophy, way of life, cultural aspects, and other European ideas and concepts flooded into Chinese culture at a rapid pace. It has been also identified that there are many challenges and difficulties which has been determined by the study. The issues are ensuring educational equality, bad teacher status, poor facilities, unskilled teachers, irrelevant coursework, low family economic status, cultural tradition, religious beliefs, and more.

Despite these obstacles, China’s higher education system has made significant progress during the decades. China has succeeded in establishing itself among the world’s top institutions. Besides, the educator’s knowledge and expertise were seen as a major factor of Western influence. Western education gradually gained a grip in China, due to the Christian missions’ teachers. While the majority of the Chinese aristocracy were humiliated and wary of these developments. A highly narrow focus might arise as a result of a lack of interaction between students and lecturers from various fields.

As a result, China has struggled to deliver public education while also training the specialists required to carry out its transformation. Despite obstacles, China has built one of the largest higher education systems in the world. However, in order to respond to changing situations, the Chinese higher education system is likely to develop in a variety of ways with new goals in the coming decade. In order to deal with more complicated scenarios, Chinese higher education will be forced to tackle new challenges and improve its learning and adjusting capacities. Furthermore, Chinese higher education has been forced to a slew of education-related legislation, regulations, and guidelines. However, China’s higher education system is far from perfect, and a gap remains between Chinese higher education
and the world's most advanced education system. Furthermore, the current study is far from comprehensive in terms of covering all aspects of Chinese higher education. As a result, more study in this area is expected for future research.

References


Appendices

Appendix 1:

Figure 1. Public vs. private
(Source: Gao, 2015)