

A study on the educational strategies to enhance medical students' ideological commitment to rural revitalization

Yan ZHU¹, Hancheng LI^{2,*}, Yanfei XING¹, Xiaowei FENG¹

1. Zhaoqing Medical College, Zhaoqing 526070, China 2. Zhaoqing University, Zhaoqing 526061, China

*Corresponding Author:

Email address: 552165297@qq.com

Abstract: This paper aims to explore how medical students can actively contribute to the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy through ideological education. Rural revitalization is not only vital for improving the quality of life of the elderly in rural areas and advancing social equity, but is also a crucial task in the comprehensive construction of a modern socialist country. By deepening theoretical education and practical training, enhancing research and project alignment, the study seeks to increase the willingness and ability of medical students to serve rural communities. The study proposes specific strategies, including strengthening practical teaching and specialized training, fostering university-community partnerships and social mobilization, and promoting exemplary cases and public outreach. These strategies help medical students develop a proper sense of professional purpose and social responsibility, motivating them to contribute their skills and knowledge to rural revitalization efforts.

Key words: medical students; rural revitalization; educational strategies; ideological education

1 Introduction

The successful implementation of the rural revitalization strategy is crucial to improve the quality of life for the elderly in rural areas and address the challenges of an ageing population. It also plays a significant role in promoting social equity and justice and is integral to the overarching and historical task of fully building a modern socialist country [1]. This strategy permeates the entire process of transforming China into a modern socialist state [2]. Medical students, as future healthcare providers, are uniquely positioned to contribute efforts to these causes. However, for them to effectively serve rural communities, a robust educational strategy that combines both ideological education and practical training is essential. This paper focuses on the key priorities of reform and development in New Medical Sciences higher education. It aims to establish a new framework for the development of medical talent in rural areas, targeting critical and practical issues in rural healthcare development. By exploring the training models for medical professionals in medical colleges that serve rural revitalization, this study seeks to integrate the values of socialism with Chinese characteristics into professional education. The objective is to cultivate medical service professionals for rural revitalization who are well-suited to China's national conditions and future development trends under the new circumstances. The research framework is illustrated in the following figure.

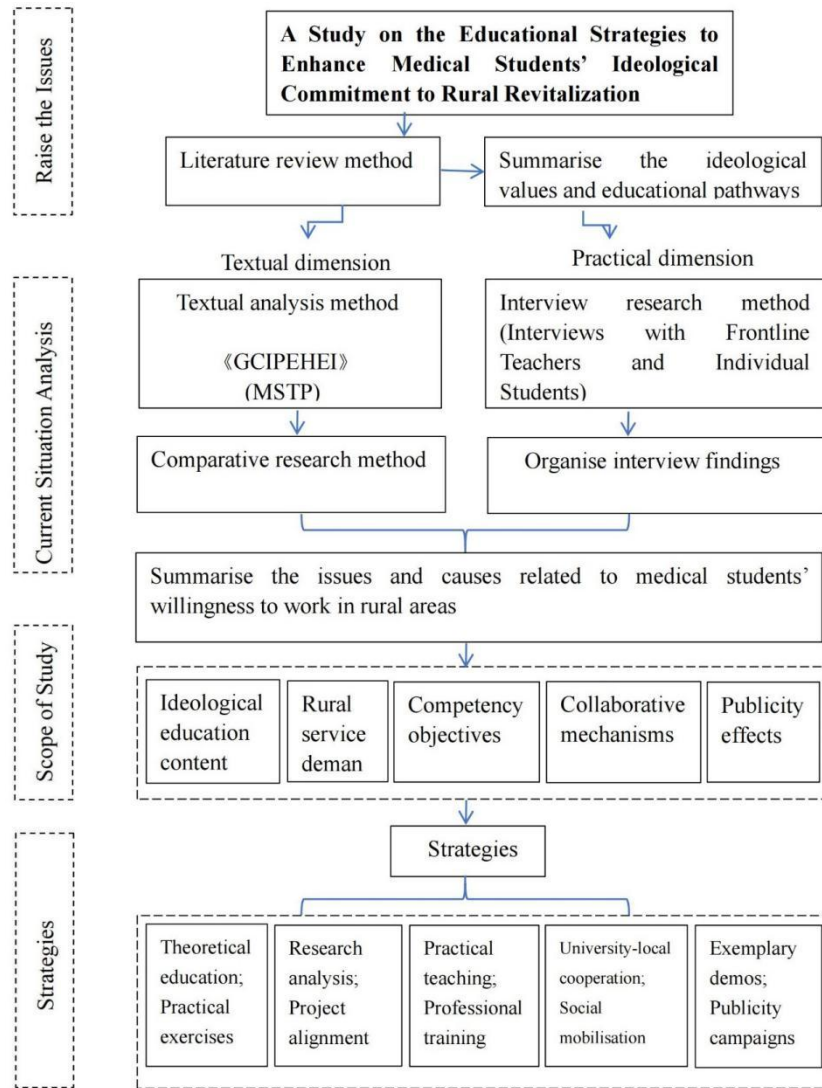


Figure 1. The research framework of medical students' ideological commitments to rural revitalization

2 Current situation analysis

In terms of textual dimension, the *Guidelines for Curriculum Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education Institutions (GCIPEHEI)*, issued by the Ministry of Education in 2020, advocate for the fundamental task of "fostering virtue through education". These guidelines propose a tripartite approach that integrates value shaping, knowledge transmission, and skill development. This integration aims to intertwine ideological and political education with professional learning, ensuring they work together in a coordinated manner [3]. This approach, aligned with the "Medical Student Training Programme (MSTP)", aims to cultivate technically proficient and socially responsible students. However, current practices in medical schools reveal gaps in effectively integrating ideological education with professional training.

In terms of practical dimension, this study includes qualitative research through interviews with frontline educators and medical students. Yet, significant challenges remain, such as insufficient practical training, limited exposure to rural environments, and concerns over career prospects. These issues are compounded by inadequate support from educational institutions and poor coordination with rural healthcare providers. Closing these gaps is crucial to better prepare medical students to contribute to rural revitalization.

3 Scope of study

At the National Conference on Primary Healthcare held in January 2019, health poverty alleviation was identified as

one of the nine key tasks for primary healthcare across the country. Poverty caused by illness and the return to poverty due to illness have become some of the toughest challenges in the battle against poverty [4]. Providing healthcare skills training and promoting the development of rural human resources are vital entry points for medical colleges to fulfil their social service responsibilities [5]. By instilling a strong sense of social responsibility and dedication, students are equipped to tackle the challenges of rural healthcare. Understanding the specific needs of rural communities, such as chronic diseases and preventive care, is crucial for tailoring educational strategies. Medical students must develop a solid foundation in medical theory, clinical practice, and communication skills to provide effective healthcare services in these areas. Collaboration between universities, healthcare institutions, and rural communities is essential, with joint initiatives fostering practical experience and support. Public awareness and positive publicity further enhance student motivation and community engagement, making these efforts more impactful.

4 Strategies to enhance ideological education for medical students in support of rural revitalization

4.1 Deepening theoretical education and practical exercises

A strong theoretical foundation is essential for effective practice. This strategy emphasizes the need to deepen students' understanding of the social determinants of health, rural healthcare systems, and public health principles. The integration of case studies, problem-based learning, and simulations into the curriculum can enhance students' critical thinking and decision-making skills. Furthermore, practical exercises, such as field visits and clinical rotations in rural areas, should be expanded to provide hands-on experience in dealing with the unique challenges of rural healthcare.

4.2 Research analysis and project alignment

Conducting research on rural health issues is vital for developing evidence-based solutions. This strategy encourages medical schools to align their research agendas with the needs of rural communities. Integrating students' scientific innovation projects with rural health initiatives launched in various regions can promote the improvement and optimization of these projects through a combination of research and practice. This approach not only provides students with valuable practical experience but also brings tangible healthcare improvements to local communities.

4.3 Strengthening practical teaching and conducting professional training

To ensure that medical students are adequately prepared for rural practice, this strategy focuses on strengthening practical teaching and providing specialized training. This includes expanding the use of rural health simulations, offering elective courses in rural medicine, and providing opportunities for interprofessional education. Additionally, continuous professional development (CPD) programmes should be offered to educators, ensuring that they are equipped with the latest teaching methods and knowledge to support students in their rural healthcare journeys.

4.4 University-Local cooperation and social mobilization

Collaboration between universities and rural communities is crucial for the success of rural healthcare initiatives. This strategy promotes the establishment of formal partnerships between medical schools and local health authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community groups. These partnerships can facilitate the sharing of resources, knowledge, and expertise, leading to more effective and sustainable interventions. Social mobilization efforts, such as community health fairs and public health campaigns, can also play a key role in raising awareness and encouraging community participation.

4.5 Exemplary demonstrations and publicity campaigns

To inspire and motivate medical students, it is important to highlight successful examples of rural healthcare initiatives. This strategy involves creating platforms for sharing best practices and success stories, such as conferences

workshops, and online forums. Publicity campaigns, including social media outreach and media coverage, can also play a significant role in promoting the importance of rural healthcare and encouraging more students to get involved.

5 Conclusion

This study focuses on how medical students can contribute to rural revitalization through ideological education and proposes several specific strategies. These strategies include deepening theoretical education and practical training, enhancing research and project alignment, optimizing practical teaching and specialized training, fostering university-community collaboration and social mobilization, and promoting exemplary cases and public outreach. Through these comprehensive educational strategies, medical students can better understand and address the challenges of rural healthcare while developing a strong sense of social responsibility and dedication. Moving forward, medical colleges need to further integrate educational resources and policy support, creating more practical platforms to enhance students' enthusiasm and effectiveness in serving rural areas. This approach aims to bring tangible improvements to rural communities and effectively advance the rural revitalization strategy.

Acknowledgments

This research was supported by Guangdong Province Science and Technology Innovation Strategy Special Fund Project (pdjh2023b1061); 2023 Guangdong Province Educational Science Planning Project (Higher Education Specialization) (2023GXJK997); Zhaoqing University Research Fund "Party Discipline Learning and Education" Special Project (DJXXJY202403); 2023 Guangdong Higher Education Society "14th Five-Year Plan" Research Project on Higher Education (Youth Project) (23GQN88); 2022 Zhaoqing Medical College Party Building Research Project (ZMC Party [2022] No. 25); 2020 Zhaoqing Medical College Party Building Innovation Research Project (2020D22).

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

- [1] He XF. 2018. The rural revitalization strategy should serve elderly agriculture. *Journal of Hehai University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 3: 5-11.
- [2] Kong XZ. 2018. *The Nine Dimensions of Rural Revitalization*. Guangzhou: Guangdong People's Publishing House.
- [3] Ministry of Education. 2020. Notice of the Ministry of Education on the issuance of the *Guidelines for the Construction of Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education Programs*. [OL]. http://www.moe.gov.cn/srsite/A08/s7056/202006/t20200603_462437.html?eqid=bc4ffc2f00025ba40000000364292d2e.
- [4] Wang XL. 2019. Addressing the "shortcomings" in health poverty alleviation efforts. *Chinese Community Doctors*, 35(3): 5.
- [5] Jiang LH, Wu JP, Zhang L, et al. 2021. Research on practical pathways for medical vocational colleges to serve rural revitalization. *Modern Distance Education of Chinese Medicine*, 19(15): 171-174.

About the author:

Zhu Yan (1989-), female, master's degree holder, lecturer, engaged in research on humanities and ideological education.

Xing Yanfei (1991-), female, master's student, lecturer, engaged in research on medical literacy courses.

Feng Xiaowei (1984-), female, master's student, associate professor, engaged in research on humanistic quality courses.

Corresponding author: Li Hancheng (1989-), male, doctoral student, lecturer, engaged in curriculum ideological and political research.