

The Psychological Development Issues Faced by LBC in Rural Areas and How to Address Them

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Abstract: As China continues to urbanize rapidly, an increasing number of adults from rural areas are making the move, they choose to leave their families and migrate to the city hoping for a better-paid job. The paper explores the psychological development issues faced by children left behind (LBC for short in the paper) in rural areas and how to address them by means of a literature review. The paper finds that we should raise the awareness of families, schools, and society about the psychological issues besetting the LBC in rural areas, making the families pay attention to the emotional education of the children, the school to assert the importance of psychological education and the government to rectify the undesirable practices and modify some laws that have something to do with urban household registration system.

Keywords: psychological, development issues, psychology, children left behind, rural areas

1. Introduction

Starting from the 1970s, China's economy skyrocketed due to the reformed policy and the process of urbanization thus accelerated. At the same time, an increasing number of workers from rural areas chose to migrate to the city hoping for higher salaries. However, due to the high living expenses and the policies that do not support countryside dwellers' registration as permanent residents, most workers cannot move to the city with their family members. In this background situation, a great number of children were left behind in the countryside, living with their grandparents or other relatives, lacking the caring from parents. Without emotional relations and communication with parents, the psychological development of these left-behind children was highly worried by society. In this article, multiple research projects about the psychological development of left-behind children in China will be studied, summarized, and compared. Considering the left-behind children's growing-up environment, the education they received, and the thoughts they may have, this article finds out that left-behind children face severe psychological problems in life and study. This study's aims are to summarize the recent studies of left-behind children and give suggestions about the problems faced by them.

2. Literature Review

To study left-behind children's psychological development, the first thing that needs to be studied is what kind of thoughts they may have and what problems they may meet without the role of parents

in their lives. In Wang's case study, the researcher used survey questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, and monitoring group projects to learn about the left-behind children's emotional situations. After 6 months spent with the rural area left-behind children, the researcher found that the three main concerns are earning anxiety, loneliness tendency, and relationship anxiety. In other words, children's interpersonal and absorbing knowledge abilities didn't expand well in the absence of parents [1]. In the other case study in Jiangxi Province, the left-behind children were found with psychological problems like anxiety, lack of self-control, low study interest and motivation, extreme sensitivity, and stubbornness. The possible causes of these situations were proposed as inconvenient transportation, lack of cooperation and guidance, and lack of sense of belonging [2]. A similar result was also concluded in research from Central China Normal University by comparing several subgroups with different frequency and length of parent contact, showing that left-behind children have a disadvantage in emotional adjustment [3]. Also, by inputting 861 left-behind children as study objects, via linear regression studies, age and gender were found to perform as negative factors in their psychological situations. In other words, high school male students have more problem behaviors, like fewer school engagement and worse peer relationships.

3. Major Psychological Problem Faced by LBC in Rural Areas

3.1. Learning Disability

The psychological problem of the left-behind children in rural China is represented in their study aspect. Poor behavior in academics, bad relationships with teachers and peers, absence from classes, and bullies are the main performances. These problems will seriously influence their academic performance and later social life after they enter society. Without excellent academic scores to prove their cognitive abilities, they will not be able to find themselves a well-paid job. Also, they are not aware of how to get along well with their peer workers and bosses, and dealing with conflict with others will be a serious problem for them.

3.2. Low Self-Esteem

The lack of parents' role in LBC's life also affects their confidence and their understanding of themselves and society. They have feelings of being betrayed and being given up, which leads to their sensitive characteristics and loneliness tendency. They will be afraid that others will hurt their feelings with such a single look. As a result, they will hardly trust other people and try everything to avoid social contact with others. This will seriously affect their normal life and beget many mental-related diseases. The left-behind middle school students showed more loneliness, self-blame, allergies, and physical symptoms. There are significant differences in the mental health status of left-behind children of different genders, and the mental health level of girls is lower than that of boys. Li Qi conducted a questionnaire survey on the mental health problems of left-behind children in 5 rural primary schools and 3 township middle schools in Nanfeng County, and the results showed that the mental health problems of left-behind children mainly focused on learning anxiety, interpersonal communication, emotions and other aspects [2]. Also, parental contact is of great importance "Among the left-behind characteristics investigated in this study, the frequency of parental contact had the broadest impact on LBC's adaption. Parental contact was beneficial to LBC's mental health. Children who had the most frequent contact with their parents suffered less from loneliness and depression and reported the highest life satisfaction and self-esteem [3].

3.3. Stubborn

Living with their grandparents, most left-behind children were spoiled or lacked correct guidance in life. Also, the rapidly expanding internet, the access to smartphones, and the rising popular TikTok-like short videos make the knowledge and information go to the children without any previous check or selection. This will lead to a distorted value and ideology and will affect negatively their future job opportunities and their chance of getting promoted. Also” Parents tend to put their children in two different perspectives, one is too dependent on the traditional education model, not enough rational and flexible guidance; The other is coddling and letting go [2]. These two polarized attitudes toward students also cause the stubbornness of some of them because they are already used to being overlooked or coddled.

4. Solutions

After knowing their problems, various researchers suggested necessary strategies to the government, parents, and social unions. More parent contact, less spoiled from grandparents, and more education investment are proposed by almost every research. In Wang’s case study, after the intervention of teachers and classmates, the psychological situation of the child was highly improved [1]. That is to say, a nice school environment can work as a kind of substitute to offer some emotional support [1]. Schools are also encouraged to offer psychological education for both children and their guardians, to raise awareness and emphasis on emotional problems [4].

In conclusion, the main problems the left-behind children in China may meet are anxiety, poor relationships, learning disabilities, and low self-esteem. The government, schools, and parents are called to put more emphasis and input on their psychological situations [5]. However, conflict in the highly-developed society between high-paid jobs and limited education opportunities, rising living expenses in cities, the lack of high-quality education in the countryside, the inequality between provinces and districts, the relatively low covering of children’s psychological education, and caring make this revolution a long way to go [6-8].

5. Conclusion

With the deepening of research on left-behind children, all sectors of society have also invested more attention on left-behind children and adopted various assistance measures to help left-behind children in rural areas solve their education, learning, psychology, behavior, and other problems they face. Among them, this paper mainly discusses the causes of mental health problems of left-behind children. The main research focus of this paper is the left-behind children’s mental health problems and countermeasures. This thesis is mainly about some studies about the psychological problems faced by left-behind children such as learning disabilities, low self-esteem, and stubbornness. In addition, the solutions to these problems are also mentioned in this work. The governments should take responsibility to lower the charge of leaving behind children for their studies and life, and make sure that the environment around the school is suitable for their academic lives. Schools, should consider highly on students’ mental health and build more psychological counseling rooms for students who have mental disease. Children’s problem behaviors were also investigated because difficulties with behavioral adjustment negatively impact both physical and mental health” to get their problem solved or to be relieved.; For the families of left behind children [4], they are capable of using modern technology such as Facetime to keep track of their children’s mental situation and, if there is something wrong, the parents can comfort and support their children in time. what’s more, there are some shortcomings in this thesis, for example, I didn’t do real-life research such as asking left-behind children in rural areas or doing some questionnaire research to get first-hand results. I will improve this drawback through browsing the field studies of other researchers, and after knowing the correct

process of doing real-life research I will make a questionnaire about this topic and visit those left-behind children, and make friends with them in order to get to know them deeper and better. This future research will mainly focus on the relationship between the family members of the rural family in which the parents are always absent and leave their children in the village. In order to help the children who are left behind more, the author sincerely suggests that the studies of left-behind children should not just stop at the suggestions, but should spur the real movements of government, teachers, families, and students.

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