

Analysis of the Influences of Family Education on Children's Mental Health

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Abstract: One of the most important issues in the field of education today is children's mental health, yet there is still a lack of consensus on how it is affected by family education. Therefore, the research topic of this review paper is the influences of family education on children's mental health. The paper finds out that family education has a significant impact on children's mental health. The paper then analyzes different effects that different family education styles have on children's mental well-being. Authoritarian parenting results in depression and anxiety, which also leads children to two extremes--cowardice and rebelliousness. To build equal relationships and therefore promote children's mental health, there must be mutual respect and understanding. Laissez-faire parenting produces apathy, inaction, and weak self-control, which necessitates the proper involvement of parents and the educational system. Inter-generational education develops stubbornness, selfishness, low self-esteem, and sensitivity. To ensure children's mental health, guidance for grandparents is essential, as is strengthening the connection between left-behind children and their parents.

Keywords: Review, Family Education, Mental Health, Children

1. Introduction

With time, education has come to place a high value on students' overall development, and the improvement of children's mental health has drawn increasing attention. Children have not yet fully integrated into society; therefore school and family education primarily serve to complete their mental health education [1]. A crucial component of the illumination of youth education is family education. Family education, which differs from traditional schooling, is a people-centered education based on human nature and humanistic care, the education of mind, cognition, and logic, so that teenagers can gain some social experience and learning experiences through imitation and learning [2]. Family education differs from school education in that it emphasizes each student's unique personality while also educating and guiding them for purposes other than studying [3]. From a broad social perspective, good family education can encourage children's development psychologically, lessen the psychological deformity change in adolescence, and reduce the likelihood of criminality. At the home level, good family education fosters teenagers' physical and psychological development and supports their growth in self-awareness, interpersonal communication, and autonomy [1]. With the aid of appropriate family education, the parent-child relationship is improved, positive habits and traits are developed, the mental health of children is further promoted, and their psychological risks are

decreased [4]. Education in the family is adversarial. According to research on how family education affects children's mental health, instead of focusing solely on the positive aspects, analysis of the other side is required to properly address the issues [2]. Therefore, the paper mainly focuses on the negative impact of family education on children and explores corresponding solutions, to assist in exploring the underlying causes of children's severe psychological issues related to family education and provide parents with references about improving their teaching methods.

2. The Degree in Which Family Education Affects Children's Mental Health

Family education plays an important role in the process of forming the mental health of children. Good home education has a positive effect on the mental growth of young students, while the negative factors in the family will seriously threaten their mental health development.

The more negative family factors there are, the worse students' mental health situation is. In 2021, research conducted in China selected 69,665 Grade 4 and Grade 8 students nationwide. It examined the influences of individual family negative factors and the accumulation of multiple family negative factors on psychological resilience. Psychological resilience is a process in which an individual's state or functioning bounces back to the previous level following a stressor. Family negative factors include parental conflict, parent-child conflict, poor parenting behavior, high parental expectations, and excessive parental pressure [4,5]. The results of the correlation analysis between cumulative family risk and students' mental health showed that the proportion of students with strong psychological resilience decreased and the proportion of students with emotional problems increased as cumulative family risk factors increased. According to the research, more than 30% of the students experienced two or more family risks. When the number of household cumulative risk factors rose from 0 to 5, the number of students with good psychological resilience dropped by 10 percent from nearly 100 percent (as shown in Figure 1). The percentage of students who had emotional problems rapidly increased from around 10% to around 70% (as shown in Figure 2). The results indicate that as family risk factors increase, it is more challenging for students to adjust their emotional state and they are more prone to suffer from mental health problems.

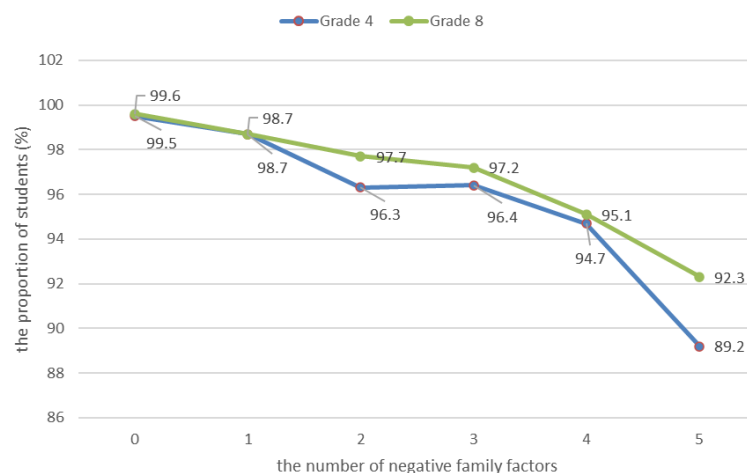


Figure 1: The relationship between the number of negative family factors and psychological resilience.

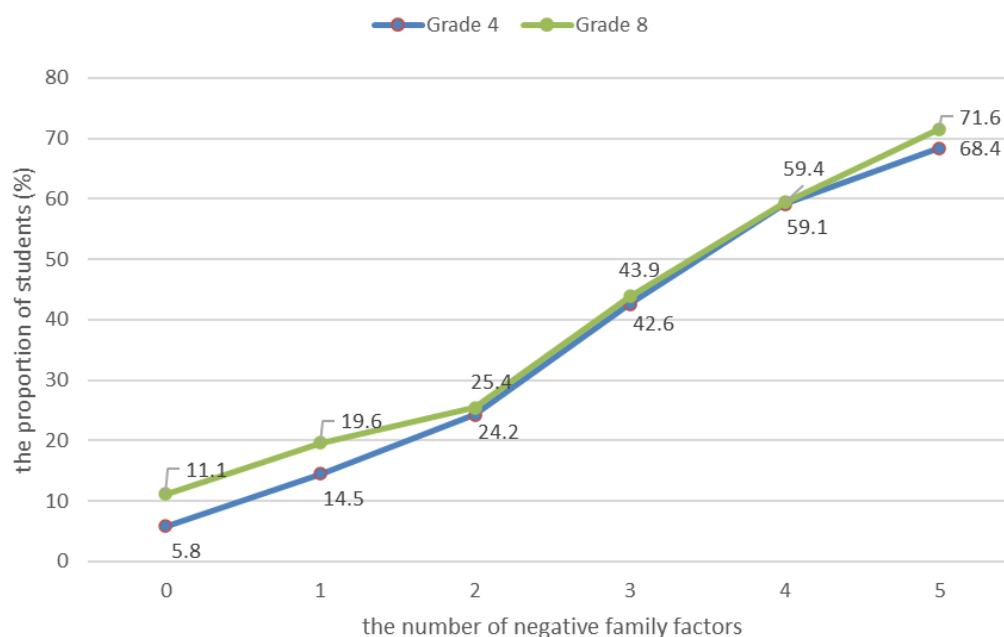


Figure 2: The relationship between the number of negative family factors and emotional problems.

The findings suggest that family education has a significant impact on children's mental health. Therefore, good home education is crucial to the development of children, and it is of great importance to identify and address the problems that may present in family education.

3. The Influences of Different Family Education Patterns on Children's Mental Health

At present, parenting styles are typically classified as democratic, authoritarian, laissez-faire, and indifferent [6]. Varied family parenting strategies will have varied consequences. The democratic family parenting method is currently the most respected parenting approach. The authoritarian, unrestricted, and uncaring familial upbringing approach has certain drawbacks regarding the mental health of children. The discussion mainly focuses on the issues with authoritarian and laissez-faire parenting, as well as inter-generational education, a special but common mode of family education, to identify their negative impacts on children's mental development.

3.1. Authoritarian Parenting

The authoritarian educational model demonstrates that parents have excessive control and authority over their children. High levels of conflict and low levels of shared positive impact in parent-child relationships have been associated with several detrimental teenage outcomes, such as depression, anxiety, and self-harm [7].

Autocratic families often hold high expectations for their kids. For instance, children may receive warnings, criticism, or physical punishment if they fail to achieve good grades or rankings at school. Authoritarian parents place a strong emphasis on controlling and blaming their kids while ignoring the value of encouraging good learning habits in them. In this situation, children will experience worry, dread failure, and possibly lose interest in school and refuse to learn. With authoritarian parents, children tend to acquire an external learning motivation out of fear of punishment. As a result, they spend much time absorbing their parents' orders and exhibit poor critical thinking skills, passive learning, and shallow thinking, which negatively affects their academic performance.

There is seldom any warmth or two-way communication between authoritarian parents and their kids—the majority of which are one-way instructions of blame and command. Such parents prefer to impose rigid standards on their kids, expecting them to submit to rules and follow tradition. They become exceedingly upset when a youngster exhibits negative feelings, and they will severely reprimand, beat, or punish the child once this happens. Parental disputes and authoritarian parenting styles often push youngsters into mental diseases where their mental health does not improve. Children get insecure, feel unappreciated and diffident. They suffer from depression, become eerily quiet, and find it difficult to interact with others.

The psychological growth of children under authoritarian parenting typically goes to two extremes. The severe restriction and strength of their parents will force those weak youngsters to become more cowardly, with worse psychological endurance, a lack of independent-thinking ability, a lack of flexibility, and poor communication skills. Another group of unyielding kids are not afraid of beating and scolding, making it simple for them to develop strong, rebellious, paranoid resistance traits, and all-around aggressive, serious, and even antisocial personalities. They are also likely to grow up to be the next set of authoritarian parents in their families.

3.2. Laissez-Faire

In contrast to authoritarian education, laissez-faire family education is the other extreme of family education, which does not force adults' own beliefs on children or use punishment, allowing children to develop and manage freely. Even though laissez-faire education leaves plenty of space for children's self-development and self-management, allowing children to follow their inclinations unrestrained and their personalities to be fully displayed and released, the negative effects on children's mental health should not be neglected.

Laissez-faire parents can be divided into two types. The first is giving children enough attention while confusing the differences between liberty and indulgence. They consider themselves as democratic educators, letting the kids make their own decisions and deal with the repercussions, however, they ignore the fact that the kids do not yet fully possess the intelligence and knowledge of rational thinking and are unable to fully bear the major consequences caused by mistakes.

The second type is indifferent. Some parents have little time to discipline their kids because they are too busy earning a living. They believe that money is everything and that it can fix all problems. They do not have many guidelines for young children's behavior and often ignore or permit actions that violate social norms. Some other parents lack strong family values, enjoy their distinctive interests, and focus more on meeting their own psychological needs than those of their children. They consider that the main concerns of children may be to eat and stay warm, thus rarely giving thought to the development and education of their children.

Laissez-faire family education results in several problems in children's mental health.

On one hand, due to the absence of crucial parent-child interaction and communication, children lack the familial warmth and experience of being loved, which easily gives rise to the dilution of family love and the development of negative traits like indifference, depression, and inaction. Children who grow up in such kind of familial settings tend to be self-centered and lack a sense of responsibility. They only care about themselves and ignore the world around them, which is threatening to their ability to comprehend the world and fit into society.

On the other hand, without being taught about legal knowledge and the concept of right and wrong, children act entirely according to their temperament, making it relatively easy for them to develop into free, self-righteous, stubborn, and willful people. It is also common for these children to have poor emotional control. Once their will is denied or their behavior is restrained, they tend to lose their temper, make a scene, engage in dangerous behaviors, and even break the law.

In some extreme cases where children are raised in risky households, particularly in impoverished and violent neighborhoods, children are left without proper discipline, thus often displaying behaviors such as smoking, heavy drinking, drug abuse, and chronic stress, which are not only damaging to their physical health but also highly detrimental to their mental health [8]. At present, the occurrence of many juvenile crimes is related to the lack of family psychological education or improper psychological education [1].

3.3. Inter-generational Education

The causes of inter-generational education, according to researchers, are complex. For instance, the grandparents of the family may passively take on the burden of rearing their grandchildren when the parents of the left-behind children move away from their relatives and hometowns to pursue employment. In addition, the death of children's parents due to accident or illness, imprisonment, divorce, and abandonment are also important causes of inter-generational education [9]. The child welfare systems and policies in Western developed nations are relatively perfect, while the problem of inter-generational education for rural left-behind children is relatively more serious in China due to its unique social economy, policies, and cultural environment.

According to researchers, the majority of left-behind children are educated by their grandparents. As grandparents usually either spoil the children or have a low level of knowledge, left-behind children tend to exhibit the following two character flaws [7]. First, stubbornness and selfishness. Children who are used to receiving care may grow up with ideas and traits that disregard the needs of others. Grandparents who are overly concerned always act in the best interests of their grandchildren, denying them the chance to develop their awareness and skills. As a result, these children cannot live independently and are more likely to develop negative personality traits such as selfishness, willfulness, and stubbornness. Second, inferiority and sensitivity. Children are in the transition period of emotional, character, and personality development. With their parents far away from home, left-behind children lack parental care, and grandparents usually only focus on providing for their grandchildren's basic needs, such as food and clothing, while paying little attention to their mental health. This lack of attention, combined with the generational gap between grandparents and their grandchildren, makes it difficult to discover children's mental problems. According to a study, left-behind children's psychological deficiency and subdued performance are more pronounced when inter-generational education is taken into account [10].

4. Measures

Different patterns of family education, which play an important role in the growing process of children, have different influences on children's mental health. Therefore, it is necessary to adopt appropriate family education methods to ensure children's mental well-being.

4.1. Respect and Understanding

For authoritarian families, the primary goal of family education is to transfer the educational philosophy of the parents because this is what drives the family's educational approach. Parents should first give up their belief that grades and outcomes matter during the educational process. They should implement a scientific and systematic approach to family education, keeping in mind that children will eventually become independent members of society rather than a clone of their parents, and focusing on quality-oriented education, psychological education, and emotional education. Mutual respect and understanding develop from equal relationships. Parents and kids should maintain an equitable relationship [11]. The key is to actively listen to their children's hearts, always pay attention to their affective and emotional swings, learn about their habits, interests, and personal goals,

and then motivate them to work toward them. Additionally, parents should modify the educational approach based on the personality traits of their children at different ages, as simple favors and simple mistreatment are both excessively severe and cannot serve as the foundation of a meaningful education. Both sides can only be understood better by actively establishing democratic and equal relationships in the family, improving mutual communication, and appreciating children's ideas and behaviors [12].

4.2. Appropriate Intervention

For laissez-faire families, school involvement is required to manage and monitor. Schools should conduct training and learning for parents to improve the overall education level of parents and transform parents with backward education concepts. Meanwhile, schools should encourage parents to pay attention to the scientific measures of homeschooling, especially that which is congruent with school education. Regular communication between teachers and parents can effectively motivate parents to take on the duty and task of raising their children.

When necessary, parents do not always provide teenagers with the support they need promptly. Teenagers have been observed to underutilize formal resources, such as health care providers, who have a valid and acknowledged professional role in offering pertinent advice and are frequently best-equipped to offer the type of aid needed. The duty of obtaining aid frequently rests on parental activities as a result of this reluctance to seek expert assistance [13]. Parents must maintain frequent communication with their children, be concerned about their psychological well-being, and promptly seek out scientific assistance when issues arise.

4.3. Professional Guidance and Connection Strengthening

In the form of inter-generational education, grandparents bear the primary parenting responsibility, and their educational concepts, methods, and contents directly affect the mental health of left-behind children. Therefore, it is essential to gradually promote the current state of inter-generational education for grandparents to better address the issue of children's mental health. The village committee can carry out training classes or lectures on educational knowledge and methods. Schools and teachers can guide grandparents and stay in touch with them to keep abreast of children's status. It is also necessary to enhance the emotional connection between family members, especially between left-behind children and their parents, emphasize the family education responsibility of parents, and create a good family education environment [9].

5. Conclusions

This paper reveals that family education affects children's mental health significantly and that the impact differs depending on the type of family education used. The article explores the detrimental effects of three different family education methods on children's mental health and offers appropriate corresponding solutions. First, in addition to making kids depressed and anxious, authoritarian parenting pushes kids to the extremities of cowardice and rebelliousness. Parents should change their educational philosophy and implement scientific teaching methods. To establish equal connections and advance children's mental health, mutual respect and understanding are necessary. Second, laissez-faire parenting produces indifference, passivity, and lack of self-control, which necessitates the proper involvement of parents and the educational system. Parents must stay in close contact with their kids, care about their mental health, and act immediately to seek out scientific advice when problems arise. Third, inter-generational education tends to develop inflexibility, greed, low self-esteem, and sensitivity in children. To ensure children's mental health, professional guidance for grandparents is essential, as is fostering close ties between left-behind youngsters and their parents.

Therefore, this essay aids in examining the root reasons for children's serious psychological problems regarding family education and assists parents in enhancing their teaching strategies. Finally, the effects of each distinct method of family education on kids' mental health are not fully taken into account in this article. To promote in-depth research and comparison of the effects of each technique, the author hopes that there will be a unifying consensus for the classification of family education mode in the future.

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