

Research progress on psychosocial competence of rural left-behind children

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Abstract: By reviewing the research on rural left-behind children at home and abroad in the past 10 years, the research progress in the field of psychosocial competence construction of rural left-behind children is summarized. It was found that in the research of psychosocial competence of rural left-behind children, the main psychological competence problems faced by rural left-behind children were summarized into four points: self-perception competence, social adaptation competence, interpersonal communication competence and emotion management competence. In the survey of self-perception competence, it showed that most rural left-behind children have poor self-perception; secondly, children are greatly affected by environment factors, and many children's low sense of family warmth and existence generally caused children's self-perception to deviate; in terms of social adaptation, children are a vulnerable group and the negative impact of bad social discourse and culture on children is very high. It was found that appropriate physical activity and group physical activity will strengthen children's adaptability and improve mental health problems. This research analyzed most of the psychosocial problems of children, as well as possible improvement strategies, and conducted a multifaceted research on the psychological problems of children, involving factors such as family, school and external environment. In recent years, China has made significant improvements to the problem of rural left-behind children, with policies to help children in remote areas and increased control by local government departments, resulting in many improvements to the phenomenon of rural left-behind children.

1. Introduction

Left-behind children refer to school-aged children who are entrusted by farmers who have gone out to work for more than three consecutive months to stay in the place of household registration (hometown), and are supervised by their parents or other relatives to receive compulsory education. The mental health of rural left-behind children is a serious social problem that attracts attention. The social adaptability of rural left-behind children is different from that of non-left-behind children. The lack of care and supervision of rural left-behind children seriously affects the future development of left-behind children and the social stability. Left-behind children, whose parents are absent for a long time, do not receive enough care and guidance during the critical period of growth, and are unable to communicate and talk to their parents for a long period of time, resulting in a gradual weakening of their emotional management competence and possible emotional problems

and anxiety, which will have a certain impact on their future life and growth . (1) Families strengthen parent-child communication and raise awareness of sports; (2) Improve school sports facilities and increase the number of professional teachers; (3) The government shall increase financial investment to protect the rights and interests of children's sports; (4) Create a good sports environment to present the overall development trend of rural left-behind children's basic problems and improvement strategies. Based on this, this research sorted out the related research on the psychological problems and psychosocial competence of left-behind children in the past 10 years, aiming to summarize the optimization research progress of the psychological problems of rural left-behind children, so as to provide a theoretical basis for the psychological research of rural left-behind children in China, and provide help for the research progress of the psychosocial competence of rural left-behind children in the future.

2. Research method

This research takes articles published in 2011-2021 on "left-behind children", "psychology" and "psychosocial competence" as the research object. Chinese literature was searched and obtained in the core journals of Chinese National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), with the theme of "left-behind children", "psychology" and "psychosocial competence" as the search terms. A total of 34 journal papers and 13 dissertations were found. 17 journal papers and 7 dissertations were eliminated through titles and abstracts. Finally, 17 journal papers and 8 dissertations were included. English literature was searched and obtained in the databases of "left-behind children", "Rural children and psychology". A total of 234 journal papers and 3 dissertations were found with the theme of "psychology" and "left-behind children", and a total of 303 journal papers and 1 dissertation were found with the theme of "left-behind children" and "mental health". After manual screening to exclude literature related to non-left-behind children, 114 journal papers and 4 doctoral dissertations were finally obtained. This research classified the literature according to the research topic and content, and summarized and sorted out the left-behind children's mental health and left-behind children.

3. Research on psychosocial competence of rural left-behind children

3.1 Research on the self-perception competence of rural left-behind children

The mental health of rural left-behind children has attracted attention because it is a serious social problem. Left-behind children refer to school-aged children who are entrusted by farmers who have gone out to work for more than three consecutive months to stay in the place of household registration (hometown), and are supervised by their parents or other relatives to receive compulsory education. Rural left-behind children, in the course of their daily lives, are more vulnerable to some or all of the mild or severe mental health problems caused by long periods of separation from their parents, lack of care and support from family members and lack of guidance in family education. In particular, left-behind children are weak in self-perception, and their self-perception has a large deviation from external perception. Self-cognition, also called self-awareness, or self, is the awareness of rural left-behind children about their own existence, including their own behavior and psychological state. Knowing oneself and evaluating oneself realistically are important prerequisites for self-regulation and personality perfection.

3.1.1 Factors influencing the self-perception competence of rural left-behind children

A foreign research investigated the mediating effect of psychological trait resilience on the relationship between protective factors and self-esteem and depression in Chinese left-behind children. The research has shown that left-behind children are more vulnerable to psychological problems, and more attention shall be paid to how psychological trait resilience interacts with protective support for left-behind children and affects their psychological state. Left-behind children with higher levels of trait resilience perceive themselves as more confident and valuable, and as a result, have higher self-esteem. Left-behind children with higher levels of protection support experience warmth and kindness from their surroundings, pay more attention to positive aspects of their lives, and have lower levels of depression^[1]. Rural left-behind children are affected by family factors and are separated from their parents for a long time, which has adverse effects on children's psychology and emotions. Schools also play a crucial role, because schools shall not only engage in exam-oriented education, but also pay attention to students' psychological health. The society shall also care for rural left-behind children, create a good learning environment for them, and pay attention to the healthy growth of rural left-behind children.

3.1.2 Measures to promote the self-perception of rural left-behind children

Left-behind children have certain problems in terms of self-awareness, emotions, feelings and interpersonal relationships. Sports games have a certain effect on children's psychological health and can effectively reduce the psychological problems of children^[2]. Rural left-behind children, like other children of the same age group, are in an important period of physical and psychological growth and development. However, due to factors such as parents' absence from work during the growth process, parents' lack of family education and the uneven distribution of educational resources in urban and rural schools, they often suffer from deviations and deficiencies in self-perception, self-identification and self-management. The intervention of the social work professional approach has been effective in improving the self-perception of left-behind children. After the group activities, the group members had a more comprehensive understanding of themselves, their competences in various dimensions of self-perception were improved to different degrees, their sense of self-identification was strengthened, and the goals of the group activities were basically achieved. The group's working methods have unique advantages and good effects in intervening in the self-perception improvement of rural left-behind children, and it is worth spreading them to relevant research and practice^[3]. Rural left-behind children are in a subhealthy psychological state for a long time, often displaying negative psychology of inferiority, sensitivity, suspicion and anxiety. After active sports intervention, it is found that sports participation can eliminate these negative psychologies of left-behind children to a greater extent. Besides, in the process of participating in sports, they feel more care and concern, while promoting their socialization. Regular and consistent physical exercises are more effective in maintaining long-term control of negative emotions than one-time activities; physical exercise is more effective than relaxation exercises and other enjoyable activities in reducing anxiety and depression (aerobic exercises improve overall mood status, i.e., reduce depression and anxiety, while anaerobic exercises do not have a particularly significant effect on reducing anxiety); and physical exercise is more effective in promoting people's psychological health development for more than 10 weeks, each time for more than 20 minutes^[4].

Self-perception includes recognizing one's strengths and weaknesses. Self-perception includes self-evaluation and self-observation. In order to promote the self-perception of rural left-behind children, it is necessary to ensure that rural left-behind children understand themselves correctly and evaluate themselves objectively. Teachers shall guide rural left-behind children to discover their

strengths. Physical exercise can significantly improve the self-perception of rural left-behind children.

3.2 Research on the social adaptability of rural left-behind children

3.2.1 Rural left-behind children and the concept of social adaptability

The term “left-behind children” is derived from the existence of many “left-behind women”, “left-behind men” and “left-behind elderly persons”. Their parents go to school or work overseas, so it is difficult to raise the next generation, and they have to leave them to the previous generation—grandpa and grandma or grandmother and grandfather to take care of them one by one^[5-6]. Left-behind children are a particularly vulnerable group whose physical and mental health is severely compromised in growing environments where the necessary care is lacking. Social adaptability refers to a kind of executive adaptability that people make psychological, physiological and behavioral adaptation changes in order to survive better in society and achieve a harmonious state in society^[7].

3.2.2 Social adaptation of rural left-behind children

Rural left-behind children have poorer social adaptation and psychological resilience than non-left-behind children, and rural left-behind children are worse than non-left-behind children in terms of learning adaptation, self-awareness, social interaction adaptation, and family environment adaptation dimension. First, the social adaptability of rural left-behind children is different from that of non-left-behind children^[8]. The lack of care and supervision of rural left-behind children has seriously affected their future development and social stability. Secondly, the rural left-behind children have weakened the stability of society.

3.2.3 Effect of physical exercise on the social adaptability of rural left-behind children

Physical exercise has a significant impact on social anxiety in rural left-behind children ($P < 0.01$); exercise time, exercise intensity, and exercise frequency have a significant impact on social anxiety. Physical exercise can reduce the social anxiety of rural left-behind children. Meanwhile, the experimental results showed that sports intervention can effectively improve the social adaptability of left-behind children, which led to a tripod improvement in the social adaptability of left-behind children (such as interpersonal adaptability, psychological resilience, sense of psychological control and psychological energy).

3.2.4 Methods to strengthen the social adaptability of rural left-behind children

First of all, the government shall pay more attention to the physical health of rural left-behind children, and formulate some practical policies and programs of great value; schools shall strengthen the strength of sports teachers, increase the number of sports equipment, and further strengthen the awareness of the role of sports among the guardians of rural left-behind children^[12]. Secondly, the social adaptability of rural left-behind children is promoted through sports, and the corresponding development measures proposed are: (1) the family strengthens parent-child communication and improves sports awareness; (2) the school sports facilities are improved, and professional teachers are increased; (3) the government increases the investment to protect the rights and interests of children in sports; and (4) a good sports environment is created^[9].

3.3 Research on the interpersonal communication competence of rural left-behind children

3.3.1 Influencing factors of the interpersonal communication competence of rural left-behind children

Interpersonal communication competence is one of the most basic competences in people's daily life. It is the process of exchanging ideas, feelings, knowledge and other information between people in interpersonal communication. Therefore, it is essential to improve the interpersonal communication competences of rural left-behind children. Because parents go out to work, the time for parents to accompany their children is very limited. When left-behind children want their parents' help in life, research and psychology, their parents are often not around. Over time, it is difficult for left-behind children to talk to or communicate with their parents when they encounter difficulties, even when they are accompanied by their parents. The communication between rural left-behind children and their parents is limited. Because parents have been away from work for a long time, telephone calls have become the main means of communication with them, but it has not achieved effective communication between left-behind children and their parents^[10]. Parents are also unable to give love and care to their children in a timely manner, and children are unable to experience being loved. In such a long-term situation, the interpersonal communication competences of left-behind children become problematic. Different living conditions have an important impact on the interpersonal communication competences of left-behind children, most of the left-behind children live with their grandparents and have no siblings. When they are emotionally unbalanced, anxious, and under too much pressure to research, they have no objects and environments to communicate with, which leads to more and more left-behind children suffering from psychological problems, especially in the aspect of interpersonal communication competences^[11]. The left-behind children have their own personality problems, and those who are generally extroverted have optimistic and cheerful personalities, will take the initiative to talk to people and socialize more widely. On the contrary, introverted students are more sensitive and suspicious, and they communicate with fewer and fewer people in the long run, which is not conducive to their daily interpersonal interactions and improving their interpersonal communication competences. Reasons from teachers At the present stage, most teachers have a stereotype of left-behind children, believing that left-behind children whose parents go out to work are mostly "problem students" and "violent teenagers", the teachers seldom give care and attention to their life, research and psychological aspects, and cannot serve as a replacement for the lack of family education for left-behind children . This is a hidden harm to left-behind children, resulting in their weaker interpersonal communication competences in growing up than non-left behind children.

3.3.2 Measures to promote the interpersonal communication competence of rural left-behind children

Use diverse means of communication. The telephone as the main means of communication between left-behind children and their parents does have certain limitations, so social resources can be used to provide them with appropriate assistance. For example, schools can regularly organize left-behind children to write letters to their parents who are far away, or prepare gifts for their parents on the eve of holidays and other forms; enable the left-behind children and their parents to have regular video and voice chats over the Internet using the school's hardware resources for remote learning; and let the economically well-off left-behind families equip their left-behind children with children's cell phones to facilitate their contact with their parents. Diversified communication not only promotes the efficiency of communication between left-behind children and parents, but also develops their communication competences and sense of initiative, and

develops the competence of left-behind children to seek support^[12]. First of all, when the caregiver finds that the left-behind child encounters difficulties, he or she shall actively help him or her, whether in material or spiritual aspects, and communicate with the child to understand his or her needs. Teachers shall provide care and attention to left-behind children when they encounter difficulties, especially learning difficulties, enhance the distance between teachers and left-behind children in the process, let left-behind children learn to actively communicate with parents and teachers when they encounter difficulties to enhance the distance between each other, let them grow up in a loving environment, and improve their communication competences in the long run.

3.4 Research on the emotional management competence of rural left-behind children

3.4.1 Factors influencing the emotional management competence of rural left-behind children

Emotional management is the competence of an individual to correctly perceive, cognize, and accept the emotions of self and others, to discard negative thoughts, to reasonably control reason, to effectively express, adjust the emotions of self and others, and to put self and others in a state of physical and mental harmony. The emotional management competence of rural left-behind children is influenced by many factors. If parents are not around for a long time, the lack of affection of parent-child relationship among junior high school students may have some psychological impact, and it is easy to develop negative emotions such as inferiority. Most of the factors for this situation are that left-behind children do not receive enough care and guidance because their parents are absent for a long time and are in a critical period of growth, and they cannot communicate and talk for a long time, resulting in a gradual weakening of their emotional management competence and prone to emotional problems and anxiety, which will have a certain impact on their future life and growth. Compared with left-behind children, parents of non-left-behind children pay more attention and support to their children's emotions, and close parent-child relationship is helpful for the development of children's emotional understanding. Left-behind children lack family affection and attention, and lack of timely feedback and guidance on their emotions, resulting in weaker emotional management competences. In the *Humanistic Psychological Perspective on the Emotional Management of Young Children*, it is clearly pointed out that the factors affecting the health and mood of young children are not only related to parents, but also to whether the teacher-student relationship is harmonious and other factors. Many schools are under-equipped with teachers for psychological health education, or some teachers do not pay attention to this aspect, focusing only on students' unilateral problems. Competences to adapt problems and manage emotions can be used as a criterion for assessing resilience. Left-behind children with insufficient resilience may have poor emotional self-control, good impulses, and personality disorders such as indifference, fear, depression, low self-esteem, and fear of interacting with people. Emotional problems play a major role in the life and development of left-behind children, who exhibit poor negative emotion and emotional management competences in all aspects of life.

3.4.2 Research on measures to improve the emotional competence of rural left-behind children

In order to better develop the emotional management competence of rural left-behind children, the following strategies are proposed. First and foremost, the Government shall increase its investment to create a harmonious atmosphere that values the "emotional management competence of left-behind children." Teachers can go to normal schools for regular training, strengthen professional learning, update educational methods and concepts, and research and discuss problems encountered in kindergartens in normal schools. The Government encourages schools to set up

affiliated schools while improving the school environment and teacher allocation to improve the level of schooling. Focusing on the material and spiritual aspects of lower adverse effects of left-behind children's families, it can also solve the problem of left-behind children's emotional management. The Government increases its support for rural left-behind children to provide employment opportunities for parents who leave their children behind and to improve the investment climate. At the same time, teachers in rural areas are being upgraded to improve their motivation to counsel students in psychological work.

Secondly, factors at the family level cannot be ignored. The absence of parents and the absence of family structure, regardless of the length of time, will have a negative impact on the emotional development of children. As parents of left-behind children, they shall also communicate with their children frequently in their spare time when they go out to work, and care about their children's lives, especially in emotion and feeling exchanges, so that children can feel the love of their parents. Parents shall return home regularly to accompany their children to avoid negative thoughts.

The last is the protection and care at the school level. The school is another home for left-behind children, where not only harmonious interpersonal relationships are important, but also the psychological pressure of left-behind children needs a warm campus environment to ease. Researchs have shown that partnerships can reduce the problematic behaviour of left-behind children towards negative environments. There are a number of methods by which left-behind children can be exposed to emotional experiences in a school environment. Among them, school teachers can create emotional management situations and play role stories to let left-behind children learn more emotional management knowledge and reduce the generation of bad emotions. Schools create a good learning atmosphere, offer courses related to psychological health, organize various class activities, carry out emotional management theme activities, advocate that students explore and learn methods in the activities, and pay attention to the infiltration of disciplines and psychological health education.

4. Conclusions and outlook

Rural left-behind children are a common problem in China. It is important to improve the psychosocial adaptability of rural left-behind children. The aim is to enhance the psychological health of rural left-behind children, so that they can grow up healthily and happily. From the research content, psychosocial competence can be divided into social adaptability, interpersonal communication competence, emotional management competence and self-perception competence. Psychosocial competence refers to the competence to effectively deal with various needs and challenges in daily life. It is the capacity of an individual to maintain a good psychological state and to demonstrate adaptability and positive behavior in interrelationships with others-self, people-people, people-events, and people-things, thereby improving the emotional management competence, interpersonal communication competence, social adaptability and interpersonal communication competence of rural left-behind children. In the past five years, relevant researchs have tended to conduct independent analysis of the psychological health of rural left-behind children.

In our research, we found that the psychosocial competences of rural left-behind children are affected by many factors, and we have found appropriate solutions. The research content mainly focuses on interpersonal communication competence, social adaptability, and self-awareness competence. Influencing factors are mainly divided into family factors, school factors and social factors. Factors in the family are the parents' lack of care and love for their children due to their absence from work. Children shall learn social knowledge and norms in a loving family and learn how to be a person accepted and needed by society; schools shall care about and care for children,

not just focus on the research of the main subject, but also cultivate children with moral, intellectual, physical, beauty and labor comprehensive development. Schools shall have psychological teachers to provide timely guidance and guide the healthy and happy growth of children. Teachers shall care for and love students; society shall pay attention to rural left-behind children and create a good learning environment for them, and children can be encouraged through various media. Researches in recent years have found an increasing focus on the particular group of rural left-behind children. The problem of rural left-behind children can also be better solved, which has greatly helped their development. It also provides important information for our current research.

In summary, at the basic research level, the psychological problems of rural left-behind children are relatively mature, but there are still great difficulties in how to improve the psychosocial competences of rural left-behind children. The exploration of improving the psychosocial competences of rural left-behind children is the trend of future research, especially the research on the social adaptability of rural left-behind children. At the level of practical research, interview surveys are still the core of practical research. A large number of empirical researches shall be conducted to verify how to improve the psychosocial competences of rural left-behind children, and to explore countermeasures on how to promote the psychosocial competences of rural left-behind children. Although China has a lot of research and practice statistics on the psychological problems of rural left-behind children, it shall be pointed out that according to the published academic papers, there are currently few researches on the psychosocial competences of left-behind children in China, and research needs to be improved. Therefore, it is necessary to intensify research in the field of psychosocial competences of rural left-behind children in order to compensate for China's shortcomings and deficiencies in this regard.

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