

Study on Mental Health Status and Influencing Factors of Rural Left Behind Children

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Abstract: In order to investigate the mental health status and characteristics of rural left behind children in primary and secondary schools and put forward relevant countermeasures. The mental health status of rural children was measured with the Mental Health Scale for Middle School Students in China (MHC). Based on the above analysis, combined with the current reality of rural primary and secondary schools, this study puts forward some suggestions and countermeasures.

1. Introduction

The left behind children in rural areas of China are a huge group that can not be ignored^[1-2]. Left behind children refer to minors who are in the stage of compulsory education and are left in the place of household registration due to the absence of both parents or one of them, who cannot live together with both parents, who are raised and self supervised by single parents, grandparents or other relatives^[3].

The research shows that the left-behind children in rural areas have personality defects and psychological barriers to varying degrees due to the lack of family ties, emotional and psychological care, and the lack of people to talk to and ask for help^[4]. Without parents' attention and care, left-behind children are prone to psychological problems such as closed heart, apathy, lack of love, timidity, inferiority, willfulness, rebellion, etc., which are prone to deviation in understanding and value and bad behavior, and some people may even commit crimes^[5]. The left-behind children's mental health is a prominent social problem at present. Studying the left-behind children's mental health is not only the need of their healthy growth, but also the need of family happiness and social harmony^[6].

2. Research Method

2.1 Research Object

The author believes that to explain the concept of rural left behind children clearly, we should start with children. Children can be divided into broad sense and narrow sense. The broad sense of children refers to minors under 18 years old, that is, children's individual psychology during the period from birth to maturity. The narrow sense of children refers to children before the juvenile stage, that is, children before the age of 11 and 12^[7]. The United Nations understands and defines children in a broad sense. Based on this, the author believes that rural left behind children should also be defined from the perspective of children in a broad sense, including pre-school children in the "left behind" state. Therefore, the so-called left behind children in rural areas refer to children under the age of 18 who are left in their hometown to be raised, educated and managed by their parents alone or by their elders or others when both or one of their parents goes out to work in rural areas^[8].

Considering the need for research and the possibility of investigation, the research object of this paper is the left behind children in rural areas who are left behind because both parents or one of them goes out to work and are between 10 and 18 years old.

2.2 Research Tool

In this study, the questionnaire survey method is the main method, supplemented by the comparison method, in order to obtain more complete, accurate and rich survey data, and present the mental health status of rural left-behind children more comprehensively.

In 2000, there was also a domestic study on the mental health status of left-behind children in rural areas, and different studies focused on different issues. However, SCL-90 is mostly used in this research, while psychological research shows that SCL-90 is more suitable for psychiatric diagnosis, but not for normal people, especially for children's development research. Comparatively speaking, MHT (mental health test) is a psychological test specially designed for young students, which is suitable for development research^[9]. Based on this, we used MHT to investigate the mental health status of left-behind children in rural areas.

The MHT full scale is composed of eight content scales, which are respectively impulsive tendency, anxiety about people, learning anxiety, terror tendency, self blame tendency, physical symptoms, loneliness tendency, and allergic tendency. They are independent and have their own scoring standards. In addition, they also include a validity scale, the Lie Telling Scale, to test whether the subjects answer questions truthfully. The higher the score is, the worse the mental health condition is. The results can be divided into three grades. If the total score is between one point, it is normal. If the total score is between one point, it is a problem of mental health. If the total score is above one point, it is a serious problem of mental health, which has constituted a psychological obstacle.

2.3 Survey Method and Data Processing

Group survey shall be conducted by class. The examination papers shall be uniformly distributed, and anonymous questionnaires shall be adopted, which shall be completed within minutes and collected on the spot. My operation is standardized, and the tested students have a serious attitude, so the reliability and validity of the test are good. After the questionnaires are collected, they are reviewed one by one, and invalid questionnaires are deleted. All data are processed and analyzed through Supplementary Power Supply Set (SPSS) statistical software^[10].

3. Research Results

3.1 Overall Mental Health of the Tested Subjects

MHT scores the level of mental health in three grades: between 1-55 points, it is normal; between 56-64 points, it is poor mental state or problem tendency; those with more than 65 points have more serious mental problem tendency. From the test results, 498 of the 600 subjects had normal mental health, 84 had poor mental health or problem tendencies, and 18 had more serious mental problem tendencies, accounting for 3% of the total. The specific results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Detection Rate Of Mental Health Problems of the Tested Population.

Project	Anxiety about people	Learning anxiety	Self reproach tendency	Loneliness tendency	Physical symptoms	Anaphylactic tendency	Impulsive tendency	Terrorist tendency
Number of people detected	102	153	36	186	105	156	215	143
Detection rate(%)	17.0	25.5	6.0	31.0	17.5	26.0	35.8	23.8

This study also tested the difference of mental health status between left behind children and non left behind children, and the results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Differences in The Detection Rate of Mental Health Problems between Rural Left-Behind Children and Non-Left-Behind Children.

Project	Anxiety about	Learning anxiety	Self reproach	Loneliness tendency	Physical symptoms	Anaphylactic tendency	Impulsive tendency	Terrorist tendency
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	people		tendency					
Detection rate(%)	24.0	5.4	24.5	16.0	25.5	29.8	23.5	11.3
	17.5	4.5	20.3	10.4	14.1	25.4	11.4	7.6

The statistical results show that the detection rate of non left behind children in each project is lower than that of left behind children.

3.2 The Influence of Other Variables on the Mental Health of Left Behind Children

This study found that boys of “left behind children” scored higher than girls in hostility and psychological imbalance, and the difference was significant. We speculate that, in the way of raising people in normal families, fathers are more partial to girls, while mothers and the elderly are too indulgent to children, which may lead to behavior problems of boys left behind children. At the same time, this is also related to the physiological and personality traits of adolescent boys and girls. The girl is delicate, sensitive and timid. The biggest feature of boys' puberty is that they grow faster, their thoughts and behaviors are greatly influenced by their peers, they are eager to learn, curious, brave to explore and innovate, have a strong spirit of adventure, have a stronger sense of independence, like to make decisions by themselves, do not like too much restraint, want to try what adults do, like to look at other things critically, and sometimes even resist the legitimate interference of elders, so they are prone to emotional instability, Rebellion and hostility are easy to be unbalanced, impulsive and reckless.

This study also found that different guardians will have an impact on the depression of left behind children. After the event mean comparison showed that children with mothers as guardians scored lower on depression than those with fathers and grandparents as guardians, with a significant difference. It can be speculated that when the mother goes out, the traditional family model of “male outside, female inside” is broken, and all the burdens of the family fall on the father. While carrying out production and labor, they also need to take care of the elderly, raise and educate children. The dual pressure from production and family often makes them unbearable, which makes them have no energy and ability to educate children, treat children either laissez faire or too strict and interference. These are not ideal childcare attitudes. At the same time, because children at this stage are in puberty with rapid changes in physiology and psychology, their psychological status is vulnerable to impact, and they are more likely to have psychological problems when faced with the pressure to continue learning or give up the choice of entering a higher school.

This study also found some new characteristics of left behind children's psychological problems in time. After the event, the mean comparison showed that the psychological problems of left behind children whose parents had been out for a long time were significantly more serious than those whose parents had been out for a short time. In the early period when parents go out, children left behind face various adaptation problems. Parents' expression of love is affected by time and space conditions, which is easy to cause psychological estrangement between parents and children, making children gradually lose their basic psychological belonging and attachment, and become lonely, sensitive and anxious. In addition, due to the current living conditions in rural areas, guardians usually need to engage in a lot of farm work, and they do not pay enough attention to the needs of left behind children, which makes them feel psychologically different from other children. When encountering things or seeing other students being cared for by their parents, it is easy to have a feeling of lack of dependence, distrust, grievance and sadness, which will have a certain impact on their interpersonal communication. With the change of time left behind, the emotional experience of left behind children also has a certain change process, which can be summarized as three modes: from influence to gradual weakening or disappearance of influence, unpleasant emotions have been accompanied, from no influence to influence.

This suggests that for left behind children who have “unpleasant emotions always accompanied”, we can help them to relieve their emotions by raising their awareness of their parents' going out to work, helping them establish and expand their friend network, and increasing the frequency of contact between parents and children. For the left behind children with the “no influence to influence” model, if they can actively guide their parents at the early stage of their departure, they may avoid the emergence of negative emotional experience in the later stage to some extent.

This study also conducted a difference test on the scores of left behind children in various learning related variables. The results showed that there was no significant difference in the impact of grade, job counselors, number of peers, whether they were class leaders and whether they had received mental health education on the mental health of left behind children, but there was a significant difference in the impact of learning achievements and learning interests on the mental health of left behind children.

4. Conclusions

According to the data analysis and discussion results, it is found that the mental health level of rural left behind children in four aspects of learning psychology, self-consciousness, interpersonal communication and social adaptation is generally good, but there are still some problems in the mental health of a small number of children. For these children with low mental health level, the education administration department, teachers and parents should pay more attention.

Due to the lack of teachers in rural primary and secondary schools, the allocation of mental health education personnel needs to be flexible and diverse. The following ways can be adopted to solve the problem of lack of psychological consultants: organizing and applying college student volunteers of psychology department to go to the countryside three times to cooperate with the mental health education of rural left behind children; Mobilize outside counselors. Most of the out of school counselors are composed of retired teachers with rich experience in teaching and educating people, who should actively play their potential; Use human resources with psychological and educational background in the city.

In addition, if necessary and possible, parents' psychological counseling of left behind children in rural areas should also be included in the scope of school mental health education. The effect of mental health education can be fully demonstrated and expanded by providing information, advice, guidance and even training for their parents in terms of the concept, mode and parent-child relationship of family education, and obtaining the support and cooperation of parents.

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