

Study on the Needs of Rural Left-behind Children for Belonging and Love in Intergenerational Education and Social Work Intervention

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Abstract

With the rapid development of industrialisation and urbanisation in China, a large number of young and middle-aged labourers in rural areas have left their hometowns to seek development in big cities, and it has become a common phenomenon for their children to be raised by their grandparents. However, due to the backward educational methods of grandparent guardians, the needs of left-behind children for belonging and love cannot be reasonably satisfied. This study aims to explore how social work can help left-behind children in rural areas to better satisfy their needs for belonging and love in intergenerational families. The results of the study show that in an intergenerational education environment, the belonging and love needs of rural left-behind children are subject to a series of challenges, including the indifference of family parent-child relationships, the existence of a large generation gap between grandparents and grandchildren, and the limitations of interpersonal interactions. Therefore, this study proposes a series of social work intervention strategies, including psychological counselling, social skills training and conducting training seminars, to provide effective support for the belonging and love needs of rural left-behind children in intergenerational education.

Keywords

Left-behind children in rural areas; Intergenerational education; Social work; Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory.

1. Introduction

The growth and education of rural left-behind children has always been a focal point of great social concern, and according to data from the Ministry of Civil Affairs on 30 October 2018 at the fourth-quarter regular press conference, there are 6.97 million rural left-behind children across the country, with Sichuan province having the largest number of left-behind children at 765,000 people. In terms of guardianship, 96 per cent of rural left-behind children are cared for by their grandparents in intergenerational care[1]. Bound by traditional ideological concepts, the knowledge and educational concepts of grandparents and guardians are difficult to keep pace with the concepts of the times, and in this context, the learning, psychological and social problems of left-behind children are becoming increasingly prominent.

Since the 18th Party Congress, the party left behind children in rural areas of the education and growth of the problem is increasingly get the party and the government's great concern, with General Secretary Xi Jinping as the core of the CPC Central Committee on the focus on the family, pay attention to the family, pay attention to family education, pay attention to the family style puts forward a series of new ideas and new ideas and new requirements, especially stressed that "the family is the first school in life, the parents are the child's first teacher, we must give the child to give the 'first lesson' to help buckle the first button of life". 'first lesson', help buckle

the first button of life." [2] General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed at the second plenary meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Joint Conference on the Care and Protection of Rural Left-behind Children and the Safeguarding of Children in Difficult Circumstances on 18 December 2019 that great importance should be attached to the work of caring for and protecting rural left-behind children, caring for left-behind children, improving the working mechanism and measures, and strengthening the management and services, so that all of them can feel the warmth of the socialist big family, and that special care and attention should be given to young children in poor rural families, particularly Special care should be given to young children from poor rural families, especially those left behind. [3]

Social work research on intergenerational education for left-behind children helps grandparent guardians to better educate left-behind children, helps rural left-behind children to get better physical and mental development, and creates a good social environment for them.

2. Theoretical Concepts: The Need to Belong and Love

In Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, the need for belonging and love belongs to the third level of the hierarchy of human social needs and is a basic need in human development. Needs at this level include the need for human beings to establish emotional ties and interactions with others. In left-behind children this need is specifically expressed in the identification and acceptance of some important groups (e.g., family, peer group, community). If left-behind children are not satisfied at the level of belonging and love needs, they will feel lonely, lost and helpless, which is not conducive to the growth of left-behind children. This paper analyses the current situation of the satisfaction of the needs of belonging and love of rural left-behind children in intergenerational education to study the current dilemma of rural left-behind children in the process of development. By combining it with the concepts and methods of social work practice and exploring the path of social work intervention in the growth of left-behind children in rural areas, it can help rural left-behind children to achieve better development and provide them with targeted help.

3. Belonging and Love Needs of Rural Left-behind Children in Intergenerational Education

In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the emergence of higher level needs is based on the fulfilment of lower level needs. After satisfying the basic needs of material survival and security, an individual will further seek to establish relationships with others, to gain a sense of belonging from relationships, and to have the experience of supporting and being supported, of loving and being loved.

In the process of taking care of their grandchildren, grandparent guardians tend to pay attention to their grandchildren's needs in terms of food, clothing, housing, transport, safety and study, etc., and their grandchildren's basic survival needs and safety needs are better met. However, grandparent guardians care less about their grandchildren's inner world, such as feelings, thoughts, emotions, etc., and there is little emotional communication with them, resulting in the left-behind children's needs for belonging and love not being met, which are mainly manifested in the following aspects [4]:

3.1. Families have less parent-child relationships.

Parent-child education should play a leading role in family education, and through positive parent-child interaction and educational activities, it can help to cultivate children's self-confidence, sense of responsibility, independent thinking and positive problem-solving abilities. However, in the intergenerational education of left-behind children in rural areas, due to the lack of time and energy, spatial distance and other problems, the parents' accompaniment of

their children has been absent for a long time, and the communication between the children and their parents is limited to "cloud communication" such as telephone and video, and the way of parental parenting has become "cloud parenting", which is limited to online communication. "This kind of communication is limited to online communication is very easy to cause a sense of distance between parents and children sense of isolation, when the child encountered troubles or confusion in life want to get sound emotional support from their parents, parents can not make a timely response, in the long run the child is prone to loneliness, a sense of abandonment, the parents and the child's relationship with the children are becoming increasingly estranged, which is likely to lead to children's sensitivity, lack of love, and environmental adaptation problems. The relationship between parents and children is becoming more and more distant, which will easily lead to children's sensitivity, lack of love and environmental adaptation problems.

In addition, in families with intergenerational education, due to their own backward ideological concepts and lack of scientific knowledge of child-rearing, grandparents cannot completely replace the children's parents in modelling behaviour and guiding their thoughts. However, the reality is that children spend most of their time with the elderly, and the grandparents spend time with the children, so the children can easily develop a sense of dependence on the elderly, and the relationship with the grandparents is getting closer and closer, and the grandparents do not properly teach the children about parent-child relationships, which can deepen the estrangement between the parents and children and the psychological gap and other situations. As the existence of intergenerational education makes it difficult to establish a close relationship between parents and children, children will develop a sense of abandonment, and when they encounter setbacks in their future growth, they will attribute the causes to their parents, and will easily become resentful towards them.

3.2. Large generation gap between grandchildren and grandparents

With the rapid development of China's social economy, the living conditions of left-behind children and their grandparents have changed dramatically. Restricted by the times, most of the grandchildren guardians have a low level of education, conservative and old-fashioned ideas, slow acceptance of new things, the old educational philosophy of the grandchildren's guardians of the psychological development of young children little understanding of the characteristics of the child, and tend to respect the experience of the experience of their own experience of the implementation of parenting education for young children, young children's many innovative behaviours do not have the understanding of the grandchildren's guardian support, that is, overstepping the boundaries of the rules, which to a large extent inhibit children's creative imagination, deepen the child's sense of isolation and To a large extent, this inhibits children's creativity and imagination, and deepens their sense of loneliness and distance from their grandparents.

In addition, most of the elderly in rural areas need to work in the fields, and they inevitably lose sight of their busy farming work and the companionship and education of their grandchildren. For example, when the grandparents are busy doing farm work in the fields, they may ask their grandchildren to stay at home for their own safety, which results in the grandchildren seeing each other for much less time during the day. Due to physical overwork, the grandparent guardian has no extra energy to care for the child's growth after returning home, and communication between grandchildren is limited to some daily conversations, which leads to the grandchildren's dependence on their grandchildren, their desire to share, and the sense of separation deepens, which is not conducive to the establishment of good intimacy and emotional bonding between the grandchildren[5].

3.3. Less interaction between peer groups

In intergenerational education, due to the backwardness of their own educational concepts, grandparent guardians pay little attention to the all-round development of their grandchildren in terms of morality, intelligence, physicality, aesthetics and aesthetics, and they also lack the teaching and training of their children's social skills, which results in left-behind children's lack of a certain degree of social ability and skill, and their lesser ability to communicate and get on with their peers, which leads to the difficulty of left-behind children in adapting to school life, making friends and participating in collective activities.

In addition, compared with urban areas, infrastructure in rural areas is relatively scarce; for example, places for cultural and artistic activities and sports and physical education facilities are rare in rural areas, and left-behind children's groups lack formal space for activities. In addition, in intergenerational education, grandparent guardians may be too worried about their children's safety and limit the time that children spend with their peers, all of which indirectly contributes to the lack of opportunities for left-behind children to interact with their peers.

In the family, left-behind children usually face greater emotional pressure and loneliness due to indifferent parent-child relationships and large generation gaps between grandparents and grandchildren. Peer groups, as an important social support network for left-behind children, are

As an important social support network for left-behind children, peer groups can provide them with emotional support and understanding, share each other's experiences and troubles, reduce the psychological burden of left-behind children, and cultivate positive emotional attitudes. However, due to the above reasons, left-behind children lack communication with peer groups, and it is difficult for them to obtain emotional support in peer groups and release their suppressed emotions effectively, which will have a negative impact on the formation of healthy personality and socialisation of left-behind children.

4. Paths of Social Work Intervention in Rural Intergenerational Education

4.1. Casework interventions

One of the distinctive features of casework is that it can flexibly adopt individualised responses and modes of work for different situations, which is why it is a very important method of intervening in the problem of intergenerational education for left-behind children. Casework in intergenerational education in rural areas can provide counselling to the fathers and grandparents of the left-behind children, or it can provide one-on-one counselling to the left-behind children with psychological and behavioural problems.

Social workers should find ways to get in touch with paternal guardians who work outside the home, explain the importance of paternal education and parent-child communication, and help families with left-behind children establish harmonious parent-child relationships. Parental education plays an irreplaceable role in the development of children's thinking, character shaping, and psychologically healthy growth. Therefore, whether due to competitive pressures or geographical constraints, fathers must strengthen their position as the main body of education, set up their educational responsibilities, and not rely entirely on grandparents to take care of and cultivate them. Parents should find ways to break the time and space limitations, and communicate with their children regularly and as much as possible after work. For example, they should communicate with their children through mobile phone video, find out the confusion and problems encountered by their children in the process of growing up, respond to them in time, provide positive guidance, and fulfil their responsibility for their children's education[6].

For the grandparent guardians of rural left-behind children, social workers should regularly teach them scientific education methods, so that they can correctly understand the physical and mental characteristics of children in the process of growing up. For example, they provide educational training for grandparent guardians, help them understand modern educational concepts and methods, and teach them scientific educational methods, so as to promote positive interaction between grandparent guardians and left-behind children. When grandparent guardians are absent from their children because they are busy with farming, social workers should intervene in a timely manner and temporarily assume the responsibility of accompanying left-behind children, so as to make left-behind children feel loved and cared for.

In the process of one-on-one counselling for children with psychological and behavioural problems, social workers should proactively get in touch with the left-behind children, care about their learning and living conditions, establish a good relationship of trust with them, provide them with psychological counselling and spiritual support, and set up a personal file for these left-behind children to fully understand the factors that lead to their problems. In the process of intervention, full consideration should be given to the need to provide psychological counselling and spiritual support. In the process of intervention, we should take into full consideration the professional concepts of personalisation, perspective of strengths and empowerment that social workers uphold, and combine them with the conditions of the left-behind children and their families to explore the resources they possess, such as their own talents and social support networks, in order to help the left-behind children solve the problems they face in the process of growing up and to achieve all-round growth.

4.2. Intervention in group work

Group work, also known as group work, is a social work method of helping people in small groups. In response to the lack of communication and interaction between peer groups among some left-behind children, social workers can adopt the method of group work. School is an important place for the daily activities of left-behind children, where rural left-behind children gather, so the school is a good field to carry out group work. Before social workers enter a school to carry out group work, they should make prior contact with the headmaster and teachers to have a general grasp of the situation of left-behind children in the school, including their family situation, learning situation and mental health, etc., so as to identify and categorise left-behind children with different problems and carry out work in a targeted manner.

The first step of group work is to determine the objectives and themes of the group work, for example, whether the social workers carry out the group work to help the left-behind children with communication barriers to improve their interpersonal skills or to help the left-behind children who do not like to study to change their attitudes towards learning. After determining the objectives of the group, the next task of the social worker is to find and screen out students who are in line with the objectives and determine the members of the group.

It should be noted that some left-behind children may be reluctant to participate in group activities due to their shyness and low self-esteem. Social workers should communicate patiently with these students, analyse the underlying reasons for their unwillingness to participate in the activities, and actively provide guidance and encouragement to them.

After the formation of the group, the next task is to carry out group activities. The objectives of group activities should be staged, for example, in helping the left-behind children to exercise their interpersonal skills, the first stage should be to let the left-behind children participate in group activities to get to know each other, establish a harmonious and cordial relationship in the group, and encourage each member to actively participate in the communication and exchange of ideas, and bravely take the first step in interpersonal interaction. In the early stage of group activities, some left-behind children may behave in a very formal manner, and then

social workers should play the role of a guide and supporter, encouraging the left-behind children to start from simple dialogue and communication, and step by step, to become bold enough to show their own ideas in the group activities.

The second stage is to carry out as many activities as possible, such as "Who knows my strengths" and "Let me learn social skills". The goal of this stage is to help the left-behind children get rid of their low self-esteem, discover their own strengths, and understand and believe in themselves through the appreciation of others. In addition, the activities should include training in social skills for the group members, which will help them to better integrate into their peer groups and build positive interpersonal relationships with others[7].

The third stage is the later stage of the group work, in which the social worker should lead the group members to review the previous activities and share their gains and changes during the group activities, and encourage each other. At the end of the group work, the social worker assesses the degree of change of each group member so as to carry out consolidation training at a later stage.

During the above interventions, the social worker has to keep encouraging the group members and stimulating their cooperation and team spirit, which helps to cultivate their cooperation ability, mutual help spirit and sense of teamwork, and helps them to better adapt to peer group interactions.

4.3. Community work interventions

Community work is a professional approach to social work that takes the whole community and its residents as its service targets. To address the problem of intergenerational education for left-behind children, social workers can build a learning and training platform for intergenerational educators based on the community. For example, the village committee, which is the main body at the community level, should take the lead in carrying out relevant education and training work, and help and supervise intergenerational education families to do a good job in early childhood education.

As the educational concepts of intergenerational educators in rural areas are relatively backward, their educational methods often lack a certain degree of science, so rural communities can promote the establishment of "intergenerational education guidance centre" and other related institutions or activities, to provide intergenerational educators with a good platform for exchanging educational experience. (2) Through training and learning, grandparents should be able to understand the character traits of preschool children at every stage of their growth and development, enhance the concept of right and wrong, respect children's curiosity, make the right decision when children ask questions, expand their cultural knowledge, patiently explain their problems to them, and play a good complementary role in their knowledge education, correctly guide children's growth and development, give full play to the children's developmental instincts, and enhance their motivation to learn and interest in exploring problems. They can give full play to the children's natural instincts, enhance their motivation to learn and their interest in exploring problems, form a good thinking character, and mould a sound personality.

In addition to paying attention to the parenting style of grandparents, the relevant social institutions should also pay attention to the growth of young children in families with intergenerational education, through the government, the Civil Affairs Bureau and the organisation of some social resources, recruiting personnel to establish a professional social work service team, professional training for the existing staff in the village community, improving the professionalism of the rural community service personnel, so that the professional staff of the family of intergenerational education to make regular visits, through the establishment of family files, etc., and the establishment of the family file. Regular visits are made to families with children in intergenerational education, so that professional staff can gain

a comprehensive understanding of the family situation of young children, their development and other relevant information through the establishment of family files and other means, so that they can pay long-term, ongoing attention to the growth of young children and to the educational concepts and styles of intergenerational educators, and provide timely and effective educational assistance.

5. Summarising and Reflecting

Young people are the future of the motherland and the hope of the nation, and the issue of young people's education should be paid attention to at all levels of society. This paper analyses the reasons and negative impacts of the current intergenerational education in China, in which the needs of rural left-behind children for belonging and love are not reasonably satisfied, and proposes some intervention paths according to the working methods of social work. Social workers should assist families and society to strengthen their understanding of intergenerational education, break through the traditional ideological and educational concepts, correctly guide intergenerational educators, and strengthen the educational responsibilities of fathers and mothers. Social workers should help the guardians of left-behind children to correctly understand their needs in the process of growing up, to cultivate young people with all-round development in high quality and high efficiency, and fathers, grandparents and the society should make concerted efforts to alleviate the educational conflicts and solve the educational problems.

Along with the transformation of China's social structure, the problem of intergenerational education will remain prevalent for a considerable period of time in the future, and we need to see that intergenerational upbringing exists by its reasonableness and superiority, and that a single-minded critique of its shortcomings will not solve the problem. Therefore, in the subsequent research on intergenerational education of left-behind children, we should pay more attention to and think about the real causes of intergenerational education, how to improve the quality of intergenerational upbringing, how to let children under intergenerational upbringing grow up in a comprehensive way, etc. The related problems can be further improved in the research method, such as adopting the way of in-depth interviews to obtain more informative information, and discovering the shortcomings through more in-depth participant observation. For example, in-depth interviews can be used to obtain more informative information, and more in-depth participant observation can be used to identify missing and omitted issues.

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