

The Status of Left-behind Children in Rural Areas under the Background of Parents' Migration

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Abstract: The group of left-behind children in China has long been characterized by large-scale and numerous challenges, among which the education of left-behind children has been the center of attention and a contentious topic. In China, there were 170 million rural migrant laborers by 2022. Rural migration may have a significant positive influence on the families, communities, and work force of the migrants as well as on themselves personally. It is important to investigate how these massive rural migratory workers affect the family unit, particularly their children. The object of this paper is the left-behind children in rural areas under the background of parents' migration. There are two main research directions: the first is the behavioral problems of left-behind children in rural areas under the background of parents' migration and the causes and countermeasures of the behavioral problems; the second is the education status of left-behind children in rural areas under the background of parents' migration. Children whose parents migrated had a considerably greater overall frequency of behavior problem than children who were not left behind. When one parent migrated, the likelihood of problem behavior in the children was much higher when the mother migrated than when the father migrated. Children's academic performance is significantly influenced by aspects related to education, including family education spending, involvement in education, and supervision in school.

Keywords: parental migration, left-behind children, behavior problem, education

1. Introduction

Children who are left behind in rural regions are those who can no longer live with both of their parents because one or both of their parents has moved away for a variety of reasons [1]. Children who are left behind in rural regions are a result of a certain stage of social and economic development. People from many areas of life are concerned about the problematic behaviors of these kids. As is well known, parents assist children in building a secure, loving connection, offering emotional support, enhancing self-control, and acquiring social skills [2]. However, migrant labor will also boost household income and lessen investment restrictions on education, which will enhance the educational standing of children who are falling behind and raise their chances of enrolling in school. As a result, the educational possibilities for rural children who fall behind in the obligatory school stage have significantly improved, and the gaps between these children and non-left-behind children have steadily shrunk or even vanished. The academic performance of left-behind children is much worse than that of non-left-behind children, and the fact is that left-behind children in rural regions

are still in a clear disadvantageous position in terms of academic accomplishment and educational attainment. The educational success of children who are left behind is significantly harmed by parental relocation [3,4]. Meanwhile, in order to examine the effects of parental relocation on the academic achievement of left-behind children, data from 18,181 fourth-grade students from 166 rural schools in five provinces were collected. These students' data came from large-scale sample surveys conducted in rural areas in 2014, 2015, and 2016. The study also investigates whether parents moving to cities for employment has both good and negative effects. As a result, the second section of this paper discusses rural parents' relocation and the situation of the children who were left behind. Investigate the effects of different types of families on the academic performance of left-behind children whose parents move to cities (families whose parents move for a short period of time and parents move for a longer period of time) and find out whether adverse effects and positive effects play a role simultaneously [5].

2. Status Analysis

2.1. The Negative Influence

The previous research found that children whose parents migrated had a considerably greater overall frequency of problem behavior than children who were not left behind. When one parent migrates, the likelihood of problem behavior in the children is much higher when the mother migrates than when the father migrates. Children's academic performance is significantly influenced by aspects related to education, including family education spending, involvement in education, and supervision in school. This paper makes the case that children who are left behind in family education as a result of their parents' migratory employment are less academically successful. Children who are left behind may experience different levels of concern depending on the migration patterns of their parents. When Wang et al. compared the anxiety symptom scores of left-behind children in grades 5 to 8 with both parents working outside the home and those who only had one working outside the home, they discovered that the latter group scored higher [6]. Additionally, some studies have shown that children who are left behind and are cared for by their grandparents' parents, who are also migrant workers, perform better than children whose parents are also migrant workers [7]. The parent-child bond is more likely to suffer harm in left-behind children whose mothers migrate because they are more susceptible to their parents' migration. It is also simple to produce the worry problem. Through a follow-up study, Zhao Jinxia et al. discovered that the mothers' psychological control over them and the emotional support from their peers and teachers were key factors in reducing the risk of left-behind children whose fathers immigrated to China [8]. In conclusion, children who are left behind are more likely to experience anxiety issues when both of their parents commute outside of the city than both left behind and non-left-behind children who only have one parent commute outside of the city. The depression of children who are left behind is affected differently by the various parental migration patterns. Compared to children with one working parent outside the home, children with both parents working outside the home experience higher levels of stress and depression. In addition, left-behind children whose parents are cared for by relatives or no one takes care of both parents are more susceptible to internal issues like depression than left-behind children whose parents work or those whose grandparents look after both parents while they are away. Additionally, spending time away from both parents increased the chance of depression getting worse. The incidence of depression among children who had one parent working outside the home (parents' migration and parents' migration) was also significantly different at the same time. Children whose parents moved away from home experienced depression at a significantly lower rate than children whose parents stayed behind. The early stages of parent separation were when the difference mostly happened. Conversely, children whose parents both worked outside the home had lower mental toughness than children

whose parents did not, and the lower mental toughness was typically associated with a higher depressive feeling. In general, children of migrant workers with both parents have a higher risk of depression than children of migrant workers with only one parent, and children of migrant fathers have a significantly lower rate of depression than children of migrant workers with both parents and children of migrant mothers who are left behind.

2.2. The Positive Effect

However, the resilient traits of children who are left behind play a certain advantage in the context of parents' migration. In some scholars' investigation and research into children's psychological behavior in trying circumstances, some academics discovered that kids exhibited good adaptability instead of the anticipated psychological issues, suggesting that kids may have some anti-frustration potential [5]. Children may therefore be better able to withstand risks when they find themselves in the situation of "being left behind". The left-behind children in rural areas understand that the family responsibility taken on by their parents is a decision they are compelled to make in order to raise the living standards of their family members when they have a positive interpretation of the reasons why their parents leave their hometown for work. As a result, when they "stay behind" and encounter challenges and setbacks, it is challenging to ask their parents for assistance. However, they can logically analyze the roles played by family members, refrain from griping, and lessen the trouble brought on by a lack of security. On the other hand, left-behind children have stronger autonomy. The capacity for self-decision and self-planning as an engaged person is referred to as autonomy. Erikson's eight-stage theory of personality development states that children must go through a crisis process from "autonomy and shyness, doubt" to "oneness to oneness difficulty". Each stage has a particular developmental objective. Their ability to handle their own affairs, exercise self-control, plan ahead, and realize their own potential can be improved by their independence, diligence, and initiative. In the absence of their parents, children who are left behind are forced to develop their own decision-making skills, which makes it simpler for them to gain an advantage in group activities and social interactions and experience "jump forward" growth. Many youngsters who are left behind are also trained to assist their grandparents with household chores, which develops their independence.

2.3. Past Research

The relocation of rural parents will have a significant impact on how children live and learn as well as how well they will do on the labor market in the future [9,10]. Children from rural areas who were left behind will play a significant role in China's future labor force. Children who are left behind in education are extremely important for national economic and human capital development as well as for their own growth. Many studies have been conducted on the education of children who are left behind both domestically and overseas. Existing research has examined how parental relocation impacts the academic performance of left-behind children because the majority of them are in the nine-year compulsory education stage (primary and junior high schools), but the results have been mixed. According to certain research, children who are left behind academically suffer when their parents relocate for work [10-12]. Other studies have discovered that parental migration can help improve or at least not reduce the scores of children who are left behind [13-17]. According to a study conducted on 13,000 rural students, parental migration considerably improved the academic performance of children who were left behind, particularly those who had low test scores based on a comparison of 141,000 children who were left behind and kids who were raised by their parents [15,16].

The fact that parental migration can have both favorable and unfavorable consequences on the academic performance of children who are left behind explains, in part, why the conclusions are

inconsistent. These beneficial and detrimental impacts are combined to produce the ultimate result in the empirical study that was previously discussed. favorable consequences include parents being able to raise their family's income by relocating to urban areas for employment, which frees up families' mobility, as well as having a favorable impact on children's research through higher investment in education [13,14,18]. Because working in cities exposes parents to more information about the advantages of education, such as access to better jobs, parental migration helps promote favorable expectations for a return to education.

3. Solutions

3.1. Alleviate the Behavioral Problems

The first is to control how people interact with one another. Children who live in rural areas who are left behind benefit from the support of their families, schools, and communities. They can develop resilience with the aid of positive relationships with their parents, teachers, and the community. Aiming to provide left-behind youngsters in rural areas more agency, their interpersonal relationships should be regulated and paid more attention. Relationships with parents, teachers, and the community can be improved by participating in worthwhile practical activities. The use of activities like "role playing" and "empathy" can help left-behind children in rural areas fully comprehend their parents' original motivation for working as migrant workers, personally experience the challenges of being uprooted from their hometowns and achieve mutual understanding in a cooperative relationship. It is possible to lessen the sense of oppression in the traditional teacher-student relationship and make teachers' support a dependable force for left-behind children in rural areas when they face challenges by implementing teacher-student fellowship activities and tightening the relationship between teachers and students. Getting kids involved in community development can help them develop a sense of their shared identity, which will help left-behind kids reject and lessen the sense of inferiority that comes with being called "left-behind" and feel cared for and loved by everyone.

Second, creating an efficient "risk prevention" system can assist youngsters who are left behind in handling problems and emergencies on their own. Children who are left behind cognitively should be assisted in fully interpreting left-behind behavior in a good light, assisted in the development of dialectical thinking, and assisted in seeing things from two perspectives. Children who are left behind in rural areas should be told that they can manage their own problems and should be given complete trust and expectations. Children who are left behind will feel more effective when they overcome obstacles and succeed on their own via self-strength. Children that are left behind will acknowledge their special skills with constant encouragement and assistance. Children that are left behind will acknowledge their special skills with constant encouragement and assistance. Even without their parents there, kids are able to solve a variety of problems. For youngsters who are being left behind, famous cases of people who face challenges and overcome them should be taught in everyday instruction. In addition, they should be made aware of the resources available to them in case of emergencies as well as the precautions being taken to ensure that left-behind children living in remote regions have someone they can turn to for assistance.

3.2. Solve the Existing Educational Problems

The aforementioned regression results don't match up with the majority of studies on how parental migration affects the academic achievement of children who get left behind. One reason for the regression results in the table is that after a year of parental relocation, adverse impacts start to manifest. Short-term consequences of parental migration are detrimental to the children who are left behind. The long-term negative effect of parental migration on children left behind gradually fades away after two years of parental departure because the cumulative positive benefit is higher than the

negative effect. The results of the majority of research are contradictory to those of this paper because they do not account for the order of these two effects. Hu and Li discovered that children who are left behind in math or Chinese perform significantly worse when one or both parents migrate for longer than six months [19]. The study also discovered that remittances made by immigrant parents to their home countries can somewhat offset this adverse effect. However, it did not look at the precise moment at which this income effect starts to take effect. The extent and length of the favorable and unfavorable effects of parental migration have been the subject of numerous research. According to Tao and Zhou, only when both parents move for an extended period of time will their children's academic performance suffer significantly [20]. Additionally, the importance of childcare outweighs the positive income impact, making it unlikely that the academic performance drop caused by a parent's move will be offset by an increase in family income. Tao and Zhou defined kids with two parents moving as left-behind children, but the definition included students with at least one parent moving, which may be why the results of the research mentioned above differ from those of this paper [21].

4. Conclusion

In order to evaluate how parental migration affects the academic performance of children left behind data from prior studies from 2014 to 2016 were also analysed. The results showed that one year after parental migration, the negative impact plays an immediate role, as evidenced by the children's declining academic performance. However, two years following parental migration, the benefits start to exceed the drawbacks, and the offspring of those who were left behind are no longer impacted. The author discovered that, in contrast to majority of previous studies, the advantages and disadvantages of parental migration manifest themselves at various stages of life. In actuality, the relocation of parents will result in a lack of care and supervision for the study's left-behind children.

Other careers can take care of the children left behind, but none can give them the sense of security that their parents can. As a result, in the short term, the negative impacts of parental migration are more noticeable. Following a period of emigration, parents send money to their rural homes to pay for their children's education and lessen the burden that schooling places on their kids' ability to work and support themselves. Immigrant parents place greater focus on educating their children's education and use more of their income to invest in their children's education as a result of migration to cities, which has exposed parents to more information and opportunities and raised their hopes for a return to school. Immigrant parents would reiterate to their children the idea that education will make it simpler for them to find a better job based on their experience working in cities.

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