

Review of Literature Research on Problems of Left-behind Children

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Abstract. With the advancement of Chinese industrialization and urbanization, a large number of surplus rural labor migrated to the cities. So the problem of left-behind children has become increasingly prominent and become a hot issue of concern from all sectors of society. In this context, scholars have also conducted research on the problem of left-behind children. Through the statistical analysis of data and key content analysis of the literature published on CNKI before June 2023, this paper finds that education problems and mental health problems are the main problems of left-behind children, and the reasons are complex and diverse, and family, school and society are to blame. Therefore, most of the solutions are explored from the four angles of state, society, school and family. Finally, this paper points out the limitations of the research literature, including the overall quality of the literature is not high, the scope of literature research is limited, the literature lacks innovation, and the literature quantity ratio of quantitative and qualitative research is unbalanced, so that the academic community can make improvements in these aspects and pool their efforts to solve the problem of left-behind children.

Keywords: Left-behind children, Left-behind children problem, Research review.

1. Introduction

For a long time, the problem of left-behind children (LBC) has been a hot issue of great concern to the education sector, government departments and even the whole society. The occurrence of this phenomenon is closely related to the development of China. This paper searches the literature on the problems of LBC through the Chinese National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), summarizes the academic research status on the problems of LBC from the aspects of literature data and literature content and comprehensively understands the problems faced by LBC, their root causes and solutions. It is hoped to promote the research on the problems of LBC, and to give certain guidance to the practical work.

2. Data Statistics and Description Analysis of the Problems of LBC

2.1. Quantitative Analysis of Literature

"LBC problem" was searched by "theme" on CNKI. As of June 2023, there were 6,119 related articles, with the earliest articles dating back to April 2002, followed by Li Chen's Education in Rural LBC published in Guangming Daily [1]. From 2002 to 2019, the number of documents on LBC showed a fluctuating upward trend, reaching a peak of 552 articles in 2016. Since 2006, more than 100 documents have been published on LBC. The earliest article to retrieve "LBC problem" by "full text" is LBC, published by Outlook in 1994 [2]. As of June 2023, CNKI has published a total of 183,930 papers in this field. Since 2005, the number of articles has increased rapidly. Since 2013, the number of published articles has been more than 10,000, reaching a peak of 16,953 in 2019.

From the initial number of documents on the problem of LBC, LBC are hot issues that attract social attention, and are also the focus of continuous attention. Based on this, it can be preliminarily inferred that the problem of LBC has not been well solved, and there is still a long way to go.

2.2. Literature Source Analysis

The first is the literature source type. In the "theme" search of CNKI, among the 6,119 articles on the problem of LBC as of June 2023, 4,598 journal documents, 220 newspapers, 1,093 dissertations and 201 domestic and foreign conferences, accounting for 75.14%, 3.60%, 17.86% and 3.28% respectively. The second is the literature author source and the subject classification. The authors mainly come from institutions of higher learning, newspaper publishers, government departments and other related institutions are also involved. The disciplines are widely classified, involving more than 40 disciplines, including education, politics, society and physical education, among which the field of pedagogy has published the most literature, a total of 3,839 articles, accounting for 62.74%. Finally, the source of scientific research funds. A total of 221 documents were supported by national and provincial scientific research funds, accounting for 3.61%. The national social science fund 77, the national education science planning project fund 29, the national natural science fund of 10, the Ministry of Education's money for social science and humanities research is 8. Its fund for the New Century Talent Support Plan is 6 and national science and technology support plan fund 5, national university students innovation entrepreneurship training plan fund 4, China postdoctoral science fund 3, the proposal for the Central University Special Fund for Basic Scientific Research fund 3, the rest of the provincial scientific research fund.

2.3. A Hierarchical Analysis of the Literature Quality

First, academic journal literature and dissertations account for a relatively large proportion. Among them, there were 2,848 documents in academic journals and 1,093 documents in dissertations, accounting for 64.41%. Compared with news and newspapers and conference documents, academic journals and dissertations have strong academic professionalism, more rigorous thinking logic, and more convincing breadth and depth of thought. Second, the author studies the problem of LBC from the perspective of multiple disciplines. For example, Duan Chengrong comprehensively explore innovative social governance in public administration, sociology, pedagogy and other fields, and solve the problem of LBC in the social governance mode of joint construction and sharing [3]. Xiaoli Yang combined with law, system construction and education, called for attention to the crime of LBC [4]. Studying the problems of LBC from multiple disciplines is helpful to inspire our thinking from multiple perspectives and explore the solutions of multiple dimensions. Third, the quality of the research literature needs to be improved. First, among the 2,848 academic journals, there is less literature included in the Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index (CSSCI) and the core journals of Peking University. Second, of the 6,119 articles, only 221 were supported by national and provincial scientific research funds, accounting for less than 4%.

3. Research Background and Research Methods on LBC

3.1. Research Background

LBC are divided into rural LBC and urban LBC. Generally speaking, they refer to rural LBC, because rural LBC appear the earliest, account for the vast majority, and the problems are also the most typical. The most direct reason for the phenomenon of LBC in rural areas lies in the large number of rural labor force flows to the cities. There are deep reasons behind it. First, after the reform and opening up, the restrictions on the population flow between rural areas and urban areas were slowed down or even cancelled. Secondly, with the acceleration of Chinese industrialization and urbanization process, more and more rural labor force is being transferred to the cities. Finally, after Chinese accession to the WTO in 2004, China vigorously developed the urban manufacturing industry, and the demand for local agriculture decreased with the large import of agricultural products, which forced the surplus rural labor force to continue to transfer to the cities [5]. In 2000, Chinese urbanization rate was only 36.1%, Increased to 49.7% in 2010, As high as 63.9% in 2020 [6-8].

Meanwhile, the number of LBC in China increased rapidly from 30.09 million in 2000 to 54.91 million in 2010, and reached 66.93 million by 2020 [9].

Due to the lack of parents' company in the growth of LBC, they are prone to physical health problems and mental health problems, and the group is large and growing, so they have attracted wide attention from all backgrounds. Most scholars have conducted research on the problems of LBC based on this background.

3.2. Research Technique

Through reading and sorting out a large number of literature, this paper found that scholars mainly have the following two research methods to study the problem of LBC, one is a method for studying literature, and the other is a method for statistical analysis.

3.2.1 Literature Research Method

In order to develop a scientific understanding of things, the literature study approach involves gathering, identifying, and categorizing related topics, removing the unsuitable and choosing the suitable, keeping the truth and retaining the false, and evaluating the flaws. The study design, the topic or hypothesis, the literature collection, the literature sorting, and the literature review are the five main components that make up this process. In the study of the problems of LBC, scholars often find the root causes of LBC's problems from the literature of multiple disciplines, and explore the ways to solve LBC's problems. For example, Zhou Kun drew useful results from pedagogy, policy documents, philosophy and other documents, and called on people to understand the problem of LBC in an all-round and multiple way [10].

3.2.2 Statistical Analysis Method

Statistical analysis method is to use mathematical formulas to establish models and conduct mathematical statistical analysis of various data and data, so as to form quantitative conclusions. Statistical analysis methods are supported by objective data, which often make the research conclusions more reliable and more convincing. In the study of the problem of LBC, some scholars will collect data related to Chinese census and relevant data of LBC for analysis, in order to find scientific conclusions. For example, based on pertinent information from the sixth population census in 2010, Duan Chengrong and Lu Lidan made recommendations regarding the state of LBC in rural China [11].

4. Analysis of the Key Content of the Problem of LBC

4.1. Research Problems

Scholars' attention to LBC can be roughly divided into two categories: one is education problems, and the other is mental health problems.

Educational problems can be divided into school education and family education. Scholars believe that there are two bad phenomena in school education. First, the academic performance of LBC is mostly poor compared with the students of the same age in cities [12]. At present, academic performance is related to whether students can be admitted to better universities and receive good higher education, which is closely related to their material satisfaction and spiritual freedom in the future life. It can be said that one step behind, one step behind. Second, even the boarding high schools, which have high hopes, have good educational resources, but have heavy schoolwork, monotonous spare time life, lack of sports, art and neglect the all-round development of LBC in morality, intelligence, physical, beauty and labor. Moreover, the catering and accommodation conditions in the canteen are poor, which causes bad physical and mental health of LBC living for a long time [13]. In addition, scholars believe that there are three undesirable phenomena in family education. Firstly, the problem of LBC are mostly raised by grandparents, and some are even fostered in relatives; secondly,

the poor parent-child relationship between parents and LBC; finally, family education and school education are disconnected [14].

In addition to education issues, scholars are also very concerned about the mental health issues of LBC. First of all, from the conclusion, most scholars believe that LBC are more likely to have mental health problems than non-LBC. However, some scholars believe that there is not much difference between the two [15]. Secondly, from the specific mental health problems of the study, it can be roughly divided into two categories. One is the anxiety, loneliness, inferiority, isolation and interpersonal barriers of LBC; the other is the LBC rebellious, high impulsive tendency [16-19].

4.2. Analysis of Causes

Chinese education problem has always been complicated, and the education problem of LBC has its own characteristics on this basis. Scholars have the following consistent views on analyzing the causes of the education problems of LBC. First, the backward rural education resources are a common phenomenon in China, and it is also the basic reason for the education problem of LBC, which is closely related to the unbalanced regional economic development in China. Second, attach importance to exam-oriented education and ignore quality education [20]. Although this is true of the current education in China, this is more prominent in rural areas. Third, LBC lack discipline and parental supervision, and are prone to weariness and lack of self-discipline, and they have little communication between parents and LBC, and their grandparents generally have a low level of education, so it is difficult to make correct guidance for LBC [21].

Scholars generally analyze the causes of the mental health problems of LBC from three perspectives of family, school and society. First of all, from the perspective of family, the lack of family education for LBC. On the one hand, the parent-child relationship is weakened, and LBC compared with non-children, LBC are more likely to breed anxiety and loneliness, and even form inferiority [22]. On the other hand, as the first teachers of children, their absence is bound to cause the deficiencies of LBC in terms of life, and it is difficult to pay attention to the psychological changes of LBC and make timely psychological guidance [23]. From the perspective of schools, schools do not pay enough attention to the mental health problems of LBC, which is manifested as the lack of professional psychological counseling teachers, the lack of corresponding psychological counseling equipment and places, the replacement of mental health education with moral education, and the lack of corresponding supervision system [24]. From the social point of view, social support is the material support and spiritual support that individuals get from the society, Gong Xiaoyi' research shows that social support has a significant negative relationship with the learning anxiety and impulse tendency of LBC [25]. This shows that the greater the social support, the less negative psychology of LBC. Compared with non-LBC, LBC are not good at using social support. For example, they are unwilling to turn to others when they encounter problems, and they are easy to form bad psychological problems such as silence and solitude.

4.3. Solutions

From the perspective of solving the problem of LBC, scholars' initiatives can be divided into four categories: family, school, society and country.

Firstly, the state should vigorously promote the rural revitalization strategy. The root cause of the problem of LBC is the difference in economic development between urban and rural areas [26]. On the one hand, with the higher level of rural economic development and the increase of employment opportunities, it will reduce the outflow of surplus rural labor force and let the parents of LBC go back to their hometowns, so that LBC have normal families [27]. On the other hand, as the rural economy develops, more funds will be used for education, medical and other infrastructure and social security, attract talents to return, update educational facilities, and improve the situation of backward educational resources in rural areas.

Secondly, society should provide more support to LBC. Scholars call from the following attention to the problem of LBC to form a joint force. First, it calls for cracking down on and banning the

surrounding Internet cafes, game halls, bars and other business places that are not conducive to the growth of LBC. Second, the community committee should take the initiative to assume the responsibility, organize retired cadres and villagers to regularly carry out the activities to care for LBC, and guide them to their difficulties in study, life and emotion [28]. Third, colleges and universities can organize volunteer teaching activities for college students to broaden their horizons for LBC and make them feel the care from the outside world [29]. Fourth, the news media should truly reflect LBC's problems to the public, and mobilize the power of public opinion, so that the whole society will pay more attention to the problem of LBC, to solve the problem of LBC [30].

Thirdly, on the one hand, schools should pay more attention to LBC, and on the other hand, they should improve teachers' quality. First, schools should introduce special policies to care for LBC, such as setting up archives of LBC in the school to pay attention to the growth of LBC in real time [29]. Second, schools should pay attention to quality education, organize sports, music, art and other extracurricular activities, improve art appreciation education, and pay attention to the all-round development of LBC [31]. Thirdly, teachers in rural areas have the characteristics of lower educational level and older age. Schools where conditions permit should introduce young teachers and optimize their age structure. Schools that have no conditions to introduce new teachers should train existing teachers. On the one hand, they should improve their teaching level, and on the other hand, they should assume the responsibility of psychological counseling for LBC [32].

Finally, family education is indispensable. First of all, although parents may not be able to accompany LBC because they work in cities, when the Internet is extremely developed, they should communicate with their children through video phone calls to understand their ideas, confusion and teach them by words and deeds [33]. Secondly, grandparents should not be too indulgent to LBC [34]. Although grandparents cannot help the LBC in cultural learning, they should ignore the LBC in their words and deeds and check the truth in terms of their behavior.

5. Evaluation of the Research Literature on LBC

Firstly, the overall quality of the research literature needs to be improved, and the number of high-quality literatures is small. This is reflected by less literature included in the core publications of CSSCI and Peking University, and fewer projects supported by national and provincial scientific research funds. In the article, most of the literature is presented in the form of "problems + causes + countermeasures". However, most of the phenomena and causes of the problem are shallow descriptions, and the solutions are more imaginary, without combining with the concrete reality, and without rigorous feasibility demonstration, thus leading to a lot of empty talk.

Secondly, there are a lot of similar literature. In this paper, it is found that many of the literature actually talk about the same content, but another expression, there is no actual innovation and contribution, there is a suspicion of "irrigation". This brings great trouble to future generations to study the problem of LBC, and it wastes a lot of time and energy to search for and read highly repetitive documents.

Thirdly, less literature exists for quantitative data analysis. There are relatively few documents applying statistical analysis to study the problems of LBC, and the data, which are more intuitive and real, often more can reflect the actual situation. The applied mathematical formulas and models have been also demonstrated and evolved in the academic circle for decades, with their strong logic and reliability.

Finally, the scope of the research needs to be broadened. As this paper shows, most scholars have focused on education and mental health. However, only a few scholars have paid close attention to the safety problems and crimes of LBC. More scholars need to research on the safety and crime of LBC.

6. Conclusion

This paper searches the research literature on the problem of LBC on CNKI, and through data analysis and content analysis, it mainly finds the following findings. First, the academic community began to pay attention to LBC's problems in the 1990s and has maintained a high level of attention since then. Second, scholars are most concerned about the education and mental health problems of LBC and give suggestions to solve LBC's problems from the perspectives of the country, society, school and family. Third, this paper finds that there are four deficiencies in the current research, including the overall quality of research literature needs to be improved, the innovation is insufficient, few literatures on quantitative data analysis and the scope of research needs to be broadened.

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