The Effect of Parental Rearing Styles on the Prosocial Behavior of 3-6 Years Old Children

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Abstract. Ever since Diana Baumrind put forward the concept of parental rearing styles in 1967, it has been a subject of great concern to the psychological and educational circles. People have become more and more aware of the influence of the family on the development of young children in various aspects. In order to further explore the influence of parental rearing styles on young children's prosocial behavior, this study adopts a systematic literature review method and selects 19 high-quality documents from China national knowledge infrastructure, Readshow and ERIC databases, focusing on analyzing the influence of parental rearing styles on 3-6 years old children's cooperative and helping behaviors. This study finds that authoritative parenting styles are conducive to the development of prosocial behaviors in young children, whereas young children growing up in permissive, neglectful and authoritarian parental rearing styles show less cooperative behaviors and helping behaviors, and poorer development of prosociality. Effective family education guidance strategies are ultimately proposed to promote parents to adopt positive parental rearing styles to facilitate the development of prosocial behaviors in young children.

Keywords: Young children, parental rearing style, prosocial behavior, influencing factors.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research background

Human beings are social animals and therefore social development is important for humans. Prosocial development is a spiritual need of young children aged 3-6 years old and an important way to achieve individual socialization, and its development is influenced by a variety of factors. What's more, parental rearing styles are important influencing factors on children's socialization, and also a subject of great concern to both the psychological and educational communities. At present, the idea that parental rearing styles can have a significant impact on preschool children's prosocial behavior performance has been confirmed by a number of scholars through questionnaires, tracking surveys and other means. They believe that different dimensions of parental rearing styles have different impacts on young children's prosocial behavior, and that they can, to a certain extent, hinder or promote the development of young children's prosocial behavior. In his study, Yu Peilin finds that when fathers raise their children with emotionally warm and positive parenting styles, the higher the level of prosocial behavior of the children will be, and the more cooperative behaviors appear [1].

1.2. Research topic

However, in the current study, researchers mostly focus on college students or secondary school students, and there are fewer studies on the influence of prosocial behavior of 3-6-year-old young children by parental rearing styles. However, the age of 3-6 years old is the age when young children develop rapidly in all aspects and have strong plasticity, which will lay a good foundation for them to develop prosocial behaviors and establish good interpersonal relationships. Therefore, this study will take 3-6 years old young children as the research object, and analyze the influence of different types of parental rearing styles on prosocial behaviors of cooperative behaviors and helping behaviors of 3-6 years old young children. This study will base on the classification of parenting styles of "authoritative, permissive, authoritarian and neglectful" proposed by American psychologist Diana Baumrind. Besides, it will focus on the effective guidance suggestions of parental rearing styles on the development of prosocial behavior.

2. Research methods

2.1. Study design

In this paper, the systematic literature review method will be used to conduct the research. The systematic literature review method has gradually been accepted by the academic community as a widely used research method, driven by the medical meta-field. It is a standardized method of literature research in which people make use of the Internet, multiple databases and a variety of search tools to comprehensively and accurately grasp relevant information and research progress in a certain field, and to draw and test conclusions. This paper will formulate a research plan around the theme of "the influence of parental rearing styles on the prosocial behavior of 3-6 years old young children", and systematically analyze the relevant high-quality literature, so as to finally form an academic research report on the influence of parental rearing styles on the prosocial behavior of 3-6 years old young children.

2.2. Principles for selecting literature

This paper selects and analyzes several pieces of high-quality literature from scholars. The principles of the literature review are as follows: (1) the literature must be related to parental rearing styles, prosocial behaviors, cooperative behaviors and helping behaviors, etc.; (2) the literature must focus on "the impact of parental rearing styles on the prosocial behavior of young children aged 3-6 years" and systematically address the impact of parental rearing styles on the prosocial behavior of young children.

2.3. Description of selected literature

During the course of the research, this study took “parental rearing styles”, “young children”, “prosocial behavior”, “cooperative behavior”, “helping behavior” as titles, abstracts or keywords and eventually retrieved a total of 19 relevant papers that met the principles of literature selection from databases such as China Knowledge, ReadShow, ERIC. This study was retrieved on 19 June 2023. In the end, this study selects 9 articles focusing on "parental rearing styles" and 4 articles focusing on "cooperative behavior" and "helping behavior" of young children. Of these, five discuss the effects of parental rearing styles on various prosocial behaviors.

2.4. Literature analysis methodology

This study adopts the content analysis method and the literature research method to carry out the research plan on the topic of "the influence of parental rearing styles on the prosocial behavior of young children aged 3-6 years old", analyzes and researches the selected literature, and uses the inductive method to summarize and conclude on the basis of the case studies conducted by scholars. Finally, based on the relevant literature, this study proposes professional recommendations for parental rearing styles to promote young children's prosocial behavior.

3. Literature analysis

3.1. Influence of parental rearing styles on cooperative behaviors

The first to propose the concept of parental rearing styles was the American psychologist Simmonds, who first put forward the two basic dimensions of the parent-child relationship: one is domination, and the other is acceptance. Chinese scholar Xu Hui believes that parental rearing styles refer to the relatively stable behavior of parents in the process of raising young children, which is a general term for the characteristics of various parenting behaviors shown by parents in their daily lives [2]. Chen Qin believes that cooperative behavior is one of the important abilities of prosocial behavior, i.e., the social interaction activities in which two or more individuals voluntarily help each other, communicate and cooperate for the same goal, and ultimately achieve the goal [3].

Wang Kui adopts the experimental observation method by setting up parent-child interaction tasks, creating conflict scenarios in peer interactions, etc. This study selects 46 pairs of families from kindergartens in Jiangxi and Hubei provinces as the observation subjects, and uses the RCCS (Request/Compliance Coding Scheme) coding system (Grunzeweig, 2003), and finally, the data are analyzed using SPSS 18.0 statistical software. It ultimately leads to the conclusions that different parental control strategies lead to different behavioral responses in young children, and that parental control strategies predict young children's behavior to a certain extent. Through regression analysis, he finds that permissive parents always indulge their young children and do not punish their children when confronted with the fact that they only know how to solve problems by physical aggression rather than cooperative behavior. This will make the child think that physical aggression is permissible and is not conducive to the development of cooperative behavior in young children [4]. In addition, the scholar Pei Qiuyue starts her research through the observation method and case study method by selecting 105 young children from all age groups and going into the kindergarten for field non-participant observation. She finds that one of the young children Qiqi. She is introverted, always self-centered, and not only has low willingness to cooperate with peers, but also often argues with peers. In the case study analysis of young children, she learns that Qiqi's parents are working abroad, and his grandparents, who usually live with him, adopt a neglectful parenting style, focusing only on the material needs of young children and neglecting to provide behavioral and emotional guidance. This behavior directly leads to the young children's negative cooperative strategies in the cooperative process. Therefore, the authors believe that parents should correct their children's behaviors that do not conform to social norms in a timely manner, use self-exemplary and reasoned guidance methods to guide and encourage young children to develop cooperative behaviors, and promote the good development of young children's prosociality [5]. Cui Liying uses the literature review method to analyze the previous literature, and she believes that the stronger the mother's desire to dominate others and the more constraints she imposes on her children, the lower the willingness of such young children to cooperate, and the less cooperative behaviors they display [6]. However, her study only focuses on the influence of mothers' parenting styles on young children's prosocial behavior, and there are fewer studies on the influence fathers would have on young children, which is a significant shortcoming.

In summary, most scholars believe that young children growing up in authoritative parenting styles tend to have better prosocial behavior development and show more cooperative and helping behaviors; whereas authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parental rearing styles strategies are not conducive to the development of prosocial behaviors in young children aged 3-6 years old, and young children growing up in these parental rearing styles tend to have lower levels of co-operation with their peers, and are more passive in communicating with their peers.

3.2. The impact of parental rearing styles on young children's helping behavior

Helping behavior is also one of the important components of prosocial behavior, which is an important part of the individual socialization process and an important indicator of young children's moral development and social adaptability. Most scholars believe that the family environment is an important objective factor influencing young children, and that young children growing up under different parental rearing styles will have different manifestations of helping behavior. Sun Xue believes that good imitation is an important characteristic of young children because they will imitate the behaviors they observe in other people, and parents are the closest object of observation for children. If young children see their parents helping others, they are likely to follow suit and help other children [7].

Jiang Qian selects 33 young children and their parents from a mixed-age class in a kindergarten in Kunming City as observation subjects. The author adopts a participatory observation method and takes advantage of internships and apprenticeships to participate in the daily play and teaching activities of the class. The study finds that parental nurturing strategies can have a significant impact on young children's helping behavior. For example, in families with only young children, parents tend

to adopt indulgent parental rearing styles for their young children. Although the conception is in favor of cultivating young children's qualities of care, consideration and helpfulness, they always do everything for their young children in their daily lives. These parents have created a serious gap between concepts and actions, resulting in a sharp decline in the actual behavior of teaching young children to be helpful. Such young children are always self-centered, have less self-control in their actions, and are unable to care for and help others, which is highly detrimental to the development of young children's helping behavior [8]. Tian Yulu adopts the questionnaire survey method, using a stratified sampling method to select 630 parents of children aged 3-6 years old in the school in Henan Province as the questionnaire respondents, and uses SPSS24.0 to process and analyze the recovered questionnaires, and finally obtains 510 valid questionnaires. She believes that parental rearing styles are mostly adopted in families where parents co-parent, collaborate to solve parenting problems when encounter, and parent-child activities will be carried out more smoothly. Young children growing up in such a family atmosphere tend to have higher self-esteem and self-confidence, higher independence, higher level of prosocial development and more helping behaviors. She also finds that among young children's prosocial behaviors, overall cooperative behaviors are shared best and helping behaviors are shared poorly [9]. However, the findings of the questionnaire method are susceptible to the influencing factors of the questionnaire respondents' emotions, temperament, income level and other factors, which are more subjective, and thus there are still obvious deficiencies in the research method. Sun Xue reviews and analyzes the previous literature and she believes that parents often use corporal punishment to manage young children in authoritarian families, which leads to less communication between young children and their parents, young children are more likely to form an introverted and cold personality, lack of the ability to take the initiative to communicate and exchange with others, and even fear of communicating with peers, and the emergence of aggressive behavior is more. As for young children growing up under neglectful parental rearing styles, parents tend to focus only on their daily needs and neglect their emotional development needs. The lack of parental attention to the various behaviors of young children deprives them of the opportunity to develop good social behaviors. Young children under this parenting style seldom submit to others' opinions and think for others, have higher aggressiveness, are not good at interacting with others, and are prone to rebelliousness and antagonism once frustration arises in their interactions with others, with fewer helping behaviors occurring [10].

4. Discussion

This study systematically analyzes the effects of different types of parental rearing styles on both cooperative behavior and helping behavior in prosocial behavior of 3-6 years old young children, bridging the gap in academic research on the effects of parental rearing styles on 3-6 years old young children. The study shows that young children growing up under negative parental rearing styles tend to be influenced by their parents' wrong parenting strategies, with less cooperative behaviors and more aggressive behaviors appearing, while young children growing up under warm, sensible parenting styles tend to show more cooperative behaviors, i.e. authoritative parental rearing styles are conducive to young children's prosocial development. Therefore, this study concludes that parents should adopt authoritative parental rearing styles for young children, create a democratic and equal family atmosphere, and allow young children to obtain more space for psychological development; parents should establish a good parent-child relationship with young children, support the development of prosocial behavior, and adopt scientific parenting methods to guide young children to develop cooperative behaviors and helping behaviors. However, this study neglects the influencing factors of various other subjective and objective factors on the prosocial behavior of 3-6 years old young children, such as the type of temperament of young children, the school environment and the community environment. The results of the study are relatively subjective and contingent.

5. Conclusion

Focusing on young children aged 3-6 years old, this paper adopts the literature review method and selects the relevant literature in the past two decades to conduct further research on the effects of parental rearing styles on the prosocial behavior of young children aged 3-6 years old, focusing on exploring the effects of parental rearing styles on young children's cooperative behaviors and helping behaviors in both aspects. This study ultimately find that it is authoritative parental rearing styles that best promote the development of young children's prosocial behaviors, and young children who grow up in such family environments are often willing to help their peers and cooperate with their peers; on the contrary, parents adopting authoritarian, neglectful and indulgent parental rearing styles are unable to take the right approach to guide young children's prosocial behaviors to develop, which results in young children's poorer prosocial development and lower levels of co-operation and helpfulness. The results of this study can firstly draw parents' attention to the influence of parental rearing styles on the prosocial behavior of 3-6-year-old young children, so as to guide them to adjust the structure of parental rearing styles in a timely manner, which will have a positive influence on the prosocial behavior of young children; in addition, it can also increase the attention of the general public to preschool education, which is beneficial to the formation of the synergy of promoting the development of preschool education, and to improve the predicament of the development of preschool education.

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