



# The Influence Factors of Left-behind Children's Inferiority

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**Abstract.** Left-behind children are a special social group and need more care from society. They are children under 16 years old and without the accompany from parents as their parents go outside to seek jobs. Nowadays, the development of society also brings the formation of the social group which is called left-behind children. As technological development and industrial processing, more and more facilities enter rural areas. Many locals lose their jobs and have to emerge into cities to earn money to sustain their family. But because of the policies in the census register, children can only stay in rural areas and are not able to stay with their parents in cities. Under the social situation above, the number of left-behind children is continually increasing. As the children stay in a special environment where they are not accompanied by their parents, left-behind children usually are more timid, sensitive and introverted. And even there are some crimes caused by the left-behind children because of their mental and emotional disorders. In order to observe further the antecedents of left-behind children's inferiority, the first step is to research the behaviors and defects in their character. To better understand the negativity of left-behind children, it is necessary to find out the core factors that influence the growth of left-behind children. This would be beneficial in developing mental therapies for this group. This review will focus on the family, school, personal and social factors that contribute to the diminishing self-confidence of left-behind children, also discuss the intervention for this problem.

**Keywords:** Left-behind children, Inferiority, Influence factors, Family relationship.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Left-behind children are the children who are younger than 16 years old and one side or both sides of parents work or live in other areas with time accumulation for six months so that children are not able to live with parents [1]. The special social group is gradually paid more attention to like more and more criminal events appear [2], which shock the audience and contribute to publishing discussion.

According to previous studies that explored the mental health of left-behind children, researchers found that the feeling of inferiority commonly presented in various behaviors of left-behind children and has a significant impact on their mental health as they grow [3]. There was researcher found that left-behind children showed more aversion toward learning, loneliness in social life and lack of self-restriction in work and study [4]. There are some specific behaviors of left-behind children which strongly show their introversion and silence. In class, they are not that willing to participate in class and only spend a large amount of time playing on mobile phones in daily life since there is not enough supervision from guardians. In this way, left-behind children's grades and social relationships are usually worse than non-left-behind children [5]. The behaviors of left-behind children can be explained by the inferiority inside their mind of left-behind children. The inferiority of left-behind children leads them to be less confident about themselves. So that they are not willing to try new things and do things bravely compared with non-left-behind children. This defect in their character can also contribute to difficulties in their future life, including work and future social life. A vicious cycle is formed among left-behind children. Hence, it is urgent and necessary to discuss the underlying factors that lead to diminishing left-behind children's confidence and try to deal with it to improve their mental health and well-being.

In analyzing the main factors leading to the inferiority of left-behind children, the various aspects during the growth were researched, including family and school environment, social factors, and technology factors. Through the previous research, the findings can conclude into these factors listed above. In analyzing various factors from the growth aspects of left-behind children, the phenomenon of the inferiority of left-behind children can be well-explained. This analysis would facilitate the generation of the solution to the psychological issue and make the solution clearer and more helpful for left-behind children.

## 2 METHODS

Extensive literature research was conducted through academic databases, including CNKI and Google Scholar. The following keywords were entered in the research: "left-behind children", "inferiority", "mental health", "family", "factors", "rural areas", "culture" and "intervention". Studies met the following criteria were included: (I) include the typical and core behaviors of left-behind children (II) the analysis of the factors leading to the behaviors of left-behind children (III) include direct data showed (IV) the impact of the factors on society value (V) consequences of the elements (VI) suggested solutions and interventions. A total of 20 studies were collected from the literature, 7 of them directly evaluated the factors of the inferiority of left-behind children.

### 3 FACTORS IMPACT ON LEFT-BEHIND CHILDREN'S INFERIORITY

Many previous studies showed the inferiority of left-behind children. And through contrasting behaviors and growth between left-behind children and non-left-behind children and the growth of left-behind children, there are a few key variables that can be concluded to lead to inferiority. In the previous studies, family, school, social interaction [6] and technology interruptions [7] were considered the main factors that impacted left-behind children's inferiority.

#### 3.1 Family factor

Based on the definition of left-behind children, the main difference between left-behind children and non-left-behind children is that left-behind children do not live with their parents and are cared for by other guardians. Because of urbanization and industrialization, more and more people living in rural areas are losing their opportunities to make a living. They have to go out to seek a job in urban cities to sustain the entire family. In this situation that more and more parents must work in cities just after they have a child, the average age of left-behind children is decreasing, which means more and more children lose the care and protection from parents since they are at a really young age [8]. At a young age, this type of children has to live and solve many issues only by themselves. And based on the attachment theory [9], children are all willing to attach to their parents. The feeling of attaching benefits the cultivation of trust and happiness of the children. The left-behind children lose the choice to attach to their parents, which may lead the feeling loss of trust and emotional disorder. Because of loss of care, the children can also behave abnormally, such as show the timid and insecure feelings [6]. Therefore, left-hand children's inferiority gradually forms during growth without accompaniment from parents. Also, the left-hand children's emotional disorder would be severe.

#### 3.2 School environment

In rural areas, most schools the left-behind children in can hardly provide them with qualified and sound education which enhances their mental development [6]. Since in these areas, the budget for constructing the areas is limited, schools always can't cost enough sources to maintain left-behind children's mental health. One class always includes dozens of students but only one teacher. The limited number of teaching resources causes teachers to not have enough energy to care for the mental health and emotions of each student [10]. Therefore quite a few left-behind children lack the opportunity to learn how to improve their emotions and cognitive status. Also, teachers in rural areas may not conduct enough communication with the children and teach sufficient psychological knowledge to the left-behind children. Teachers always prefer to care about the overall condition of a class instead of a few specific cases [10]. Moreover, teachers get no chances to communicate with parents of left-behind children, so

although some teachers work hard to help to keep left-behind children more positive in schools, the phenomenon would not change without help and cooperation from parents [5]. So that teachers are not able to change the left-behind children completely and become less confident about the students. The result is that the inferiority and the psychological problems can also be reversed.

### **3.3 Social factor**

The socialization between left-behind children and other people, including teachers, peers, neighbors and guardians, also influence the psychological development of left-behind children. There is a common situation that some parents of non-left-children do not allow the interaction of their children with left-behind children because parents may think the quality of left-behind children is bad without parents' situation. When there are conflicts between the children, non-left-behind children may use their parents to provoke left-behind children. It is normal for left-behind children to face discussion and discrimination from non-left-behind children because they know that left-behind children will not be protected by their parents. The serious problem of school bullying will be formed [11]. Moreover, because left-behind children are introverted and not willing to communicate with other people, they can not communicate with other people efficiently. This leads that left-behind children can easily have conflicts with others, which make them easier to be discriminated [12]. Then they would have high self-esteem and hope to get acknowledgement and praise from other people to improve their confidence. Because of their high self-esteem, they would feel timid and sensitive. Then the inferiority gradually rises for the group of left-behind children. And because of the loss of care, left-behind children are not able to recognize their strengths but focus more on their disadvantages [13]. And the inferiority would be more severe during the process of comparison. During the communication between the teachers and the children, if the teachers show overwhelming empathy toward left-behind children, the children would understand their difference from other non-left-behind students and form the inferiority for their gap. And during the interaction with the neighbors, since neighbors know the children are not cared for and accompanied by their parents, they would consider the children do not receive enough education and teaching and try to avoid the interaction with the children [6]. And another important interaction is between the guardians and the left-behind children. Since in most cases, the children are taken after by their grandparents. Between the gap of age and understanding, grandparents cannot pay attention to and understand the obstacles and the difficulties the children face in school and conflicts with other children [14]. The guardians so are not able to help the children address some mental issues and try to help them. The feeling of inferiority also forms in this process during the socialization with other people.

### **3.4 Overuse of digital devices**

Along with the technological development and more advertisement, more and more information related to violations exists on the social network. The left-behind children do not receive supervision from parents and are always taken after by grandparents.

The grandparents prefer to satisfy the need of the children instead of supervising strictly. The group of left-behind children get more opportunities to explore by themselves on the internet and would play more games and read more information about lust and violation, which would harm the thoughts and mental health of the children [7]. The children find that it is more enjoyable to stay in the virtual world instead of in the real world to interact with other people and life. The children become more introverted and timid. The inferiority also forms as they can also be confident in the virtual world. They cannot find themselves in the real world directly.

## 4 IMPLICATIONS

Left-behind children's growth requires paying more attention on different factors and the environment. And the feeling and behavior of inferiority of left-behind children could be led by the combined effect of the four factors mentioned in the literature review: family factor, school factor, social factor, overuse of Internet. And the main factor is that the left-behind children lack protection and supervision from parents, which is the main difference between them and non-left-behind children. To better solve the problem, the confidence of the children needs to be enhanced in different ways. The first important thing is that parents of left-behind children should understand the serious situation of the psychological problem of their children. To build a better growth environment for left-behind children, having at least one side of parents to stay and educate them is important. Even if they are not able to accompany their children, parents should stay at a constant communication frequency and talk more to encourage and support them so that it is better to help left-behind children become warm and confident [6]. For example, with technological development, phones are not the only way to communicate. Parents can directly use QQ or WeChat, which have the function of the video calls, which can facilitate the communication between children and parents. Children can see their parents from the camera and get attached to their parents. These children can get relatively sufficient care from parents and get support. From the side of the school, to help diminish the issue of inferiority, it is necessary for the school to set up a corresponding department that takes the position of solving psychological issues of school children. A great system of psychological department system should be established and improved. Specifically, teachers should construct the entire class into a great community and help to motivate great interaction between children. In this way, left-behind children can feel inclusive and happy in their daily life, which contributes to more confidence [15]. Teachers should take responsibility for preventing discrimination toward left-behind children from occurring. Teachers should become a bridge between left-behind children and their parents. They can lead the parents to interact and communicate with their children and tell parents their thoughts on children. At the same time, teachers should point out the shining points of the children and their parents' care toward them to greatly encourage left-behind children to be strong and confident towards themselves [6]. School psychological department should also hold several mental health sessions for children to support their healthy mental growth. More detailly, in paying more attention to cultivating the mental health of left-behind children. Each left-

behind child even can have one-to-one emotional counseling meetings with one particular counselor to help them express their unhappiness and enhance their self-esteem. To ensure the better growth environmental growth of left-behind children, the healthy atmosphere of the overall society is also indispensable. The first part of society's atmosphere contains the technology interrupt. Some games and news contain not healthy information, which may influence the formation of thoughts of left-behind children. Government should clear this kind of unhealthy information and avoid spread on the internet [14]. The second part of the atmosphere means the growth environment for the children. The attention of society should be raised to constructing an economic balance between rural areas and cities. Governments can provide more government budgets for infrastructure and industrious development in rural areas so that it can promote the boom of a few fields. More job opportunities can be offered to more people who have to seek a job to sustain their families in cities. Then the number of left-behind children can be decreased significantly. Society can also hold more activities for left-behind children to help them obtain more knowledge and greater understanding [13]. Their confidence in themselves can be enhanced. Furthermore, the government can also make some policies to protect the common rights of left-behind children to encourage them.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

Therefore, because of the labor surplus in rural areas, which is led by urbanization as well as industrialization, more workers go to cities to seek jobs. However, they are not able to census register for their children to get an education based on the country's policy [15]. The children are left to stay with other guardians, especially grandparents. And the number of left-behind children continues increasing which becomes a serious issue in the society [14]. The behaviors of left-behind children show serious inferiority since the children are not willing to discuss with other people, become introverted, pay less attention to their schoolwork and have low confidence in their work and exams. To better explore the underlying factors that lead to the consequences, more studies and research are finished to observe more. And as a result, it shows that factors mainly incorporate five important parts related to their growth environment that can be different from other students. And the factors including family, school, social, personal and technology factors can contribute to the behaviors and personalities of the special social group. There are many methods suggested to help solve the issue. The government and schools and society need to work together to form a clean and healthy network society and market for children. More leading education from teachers and schools needs to be conducted to lead children to form confidence and understand their own strengths.

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