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IMPROVING SCHOOL ADAPTATION OF LEFT-BEHIND CHILDREN IN INNER MONGOLIA AUTONOMOUS REGION IN CHINA

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Abstract

This study investigates improving school adaptation of left-behind children in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in China. Left-behind children face significant challenges in their academic, social, and emotional development due to prolonged parental absence and limited access to educational resources. Using a combination of literature review and expert interviews. These factors operate within a collaborative framework that involves schools, families, communities, and government agencies. The findings emphasize the importance of multi-dimensional interventions, such as tailored learning plans, psychological counseling, and inclusive school environments, to address the unique needs of left-behind children. This research highlights the necessity of integrating systemic support, participatory governance, and community engagement to ensure equitable educational opportunities for this vulnerable group.

Keywords: School Adaptation, Left-behind Children, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region

Introduction

The phenomenon of left-behind children in Inner Mongolia poses a significant challenge to equitable education. These children, whose parents migrate for work, are often deprived of parental care, creating substantial barriers to their academic and social development. The study employs frameworks like Educational Administration and Social Support Theory to assess strategies that address these issues. By understanding the roles of schools, communities, and governments, this research aims to contribute to the growing discourse on improving access to quality education for vulnerable populations.

Educational Administration and Its Role

Educational Administration Theory provides a structured approach to understanding how schools can effectively manage resources and processes to meet the needs of diverse student populations, including left-behind children. The theory highlights the significance of leadership in creating a supportive learning environment. Effective school leaders, as emphasized by Leith wood and Jantzi (2012), play a critical role in addressing the academic and emotional needs of left-behind children. These leaders not only implement inclusive policies but also foster a culture of collaboration among teachers, students, and the broader school community. For left-behind children in Inner Mongolia, whose parental absence impacts their emotional stability and academic engagement, strong school leadership ensures personalized interventions, such as tailored learning plans and counseling programs, aimed at reducing educational disparities.

One of the central tenets of Educational Administration Theory is the application of systemic management to optimize the interconnections between various educational subsystems, such as families, schools, and communities. In the context of left-behind children, these subsystems must work cohesively to provide a safety net. Systemic management also involves deploying data-driven strategies to monitor student progress and identify areas where additional support is needed. Research has shown that schools employing evidence-based

decision-making processes tend to achieve better outcomes in terms of student adaptation and academic performance. For instance, schools in rural areas that regularly assess the psychological and academic needs of left-behind children can proactively address emerging challenges, ensuring these students remain engaged in their education.

Furthermore, Educational Administration Theory emphasizes the importance of developing a positive school culture as a cornerstone for improving school adaptation. A nurturing and inclusive culture fosters emotional resilience among left-behind children, helping them overcome the social and psychological challenges associated with parental absence. Studies by Fullan (2014) suggest that schools that prioritize professional development for teachers and encourage student-centered learning environments create a sense of belonging for vulnerable students. In practice, this means training teachers to recognize and respond to the unique needs of left-behind children, building trust between educators and students, and promoting peer support networks that help children integrate socially and academically.

Governance and Collaborative Interventions

Governance Theory provides a framework for understanding how multi-stakeholder collaboration can enhance the management of educational systems, particularly for marginalized groups such as left-behind children. Governance in education involves not only government agencies but also families, communities, and non-governmental organizations working together to pool resources and expertise. The theory underscores the importance of transparency, accountability, and participatory decision-making in achieving equitable educational outcomes. For left-behind children in Inner Mongolia, whose challenges are deeply rooted in socio-economic and familial contexts, collaborative governance offers a pathway to create a comprehensive support system that addresses their multifaceted needs.

The collaborative aspect of governance is especially crucial in rural and underprivileged areas, where educational resources are often limited. Effective governance involves mobilizing community resources and establishing partnerships with local organizations to provide additional support to schools. For example, community organizations can contribute by offering extracurricular programs, tutoring services, and mental health workshops specifically tailored for left-behind children. Moreover, governance frameworks that prioritize stakeholder engagement ensure that the voices of teachers, students, and their families are heard in policy formulation. This participatory approach not only increases the relevance of educational policies but also strengthens trust and cooperation among all parties involved.

A key element of governance in education is the integration of formal and informal networks to address systemic challenges. In the case of left-behind children, formal governance mechanisms, such as government policies and funding programs, must be complemented by informal initiatives, such as peer mentoring and volunteer-driven support systems. Research indicates that hybrid governance models, which leverage both institutional and community-based resources, are particularly effective in addressing the complex issues faced by marginalized students. For instance, schools that partner with local businesses and non-profits to provide scholarships, school supplies, or nutritional programs can significantly alleviate the economic burdens on families of left-behind children, ensuring they have equal opportunities to succeed.

Addressing Marginalization through Social Support

Marginalization Theory highlights the structural barriers that prevent left-behind children from fully participating in educational and social systems. This marginalization often manifests in emotional isolation, academic underachievement, and limited access to resources, perpetuating cycles of inequality. Addressing these issues requires targeted social support that

fosters inclusivity and empowerment. Schools, as primary socialization agents, play a pivotal role in bridging these gaps. By creating inclusive environments that prioritize the well-being of marginalized students, schools can significantly improve the social and emotional adaptation of left-behind children.

Social support, as discussed in Marginalization Theory, encompasses emotional, material, and informational assistance from various stakeholders, including families, teachers, peers, and community organizations. For left-behind children, whose family structures are disrupted by parental migration, teachers often become surrogate caregivers. Emotional support from teachers—through mentoring, encouragement, and understanding—can mitigate the adverse effects of parental absence. Furthermore, peer support networks within schools can provide left-behind children with a sense of belonging and security. Positive peer interactions not only improve social skills but also enhance self-esteem, enabling these children to navigate academic and social challenges more effectively.

Community-based interventions are also critical in addressing the marginalization of left-behind children. Marginalization Theory emphasizes the role of community networks in providing holistic support. Initiatives such as after-school tutoring programs, community mentoring, and recreational activities help build a supportive ecosystem around the child. These programs are particularly effective when designed to include input from the children themselves, ensuring their specific needs and preferences are addressed. Additionally, partnerships with non-governmental organizations can bring specialized expertise and resources to these initiatives, amplifying their impact.

Finally, a safe and inclusive school environment is essential for reducing the sense of marginalization among left-behind children. Schools must foster a culture of acceptance and care, where all students feel valued and supported. This involves implementing anti-bullying policies, promoting diversity, and ensuring that teachers are trained to handle the unique challenges faced by marginalized students. Research has shown that left-behind children who perceive their schools as safe and welcoming are more likely to develop positive relationships, engage in learning, and achieve academic success. By addressing the structural and interpersonal aspects of marginalization, social support systems can empower left-behind children to overcome their challenges and thrive in both school and society.

Enhancing the Educational Experience of Left-Behind Children: Key Success Factors

Improving the educational experience for left-behind children in Inner Mongolia requires a multidimensional approach that addresses both their academic and emotional needs. This population faces unique challenges stemming from parental absence and limited resources, necessitating the integration of effective strategies across government policies, school practices, and family dynamics. The research findings and expert interviews highlight key success factors that form a comprehensive framework to support the school adaptation and overall development of left-behind children.

Government Policies: Foundational Pillar Government policies play a critical role in establishing the infrastructure necessary for supporting left-behind children. A significant success factor is the development and implementation of targeted policies that ensure equitable access to quality education. Financial investment in rural education, including infrastructure improvements and teaching resources, is essential. Experts emphasized the importance of allocating funds to provide psychological counseling services, scholarships, and mental health programs in schools. For instance, rural schools often lack the necessary facilities for extracurricular activities or psychological support, which are vital for fostering a well-rounded

educational experience.

Another crucial aspect is the effective execution of these policies. While macro-level strategies such as subsidies and aid programs are in place, there are notable gaps in reaching individual children, particularly those in remote areas. Strengthening cross-departmental collaboration among education, social security, and civil affairs departments can address these deficiencies. This integrated approach ensures that resources are distributed equitably and that support systems operate cohesively to meet the needs of left-behind children.

Additionally, the promotion of professional social workers and counselors in rural schools enhances the emotional support available to students. Government-backed programs that train and deploy these professionals ensure that left-behind children receive the specialized care they require to cope with the psychological effects of parental separation and adapt to school life.

School Initiatives the Heart of Support Schools are central to the educational and social development of left-behind children. Teachers serve not only as academic guides but also as critical emotional supporters. Training programs to enhance teachers' awareness and skills in providing emotional care have proven effective. Educators who can identify signs of emotional distress and offer personalized support create a stable and nurturing environment for students.

Another success factor lies in the establishment of psychological counseling centers within schools. These centers provide regular mental health education and one-on-one support, equipping students with tools to manage stress, build self-confidence, and navigate the challenges of school adaptation. For example, group activities such as peer mentoring and collective counseling sessions have been effective in fostering a sense of belonging and community among left-behind children.

School culture also plays a vital role. By creating an inclusive and supportive campus environment, schools can mitigate feelings of isolation and alienation. Organizing extracurricular activities, sports, and arts programs offers children avenues to develop social skills and self-expression. Collaborative group projects further encourage peer interactions, enhancing their social adaptation and reducing emotional loneliness.

Family Dynamics: Sustaining Emotional Bonds, the family remains a cornerstone of support, even in the absence of parents. Strengthening parent-child communication is a pivotal factor in improving the educational experience of left-behind children. Advances in technology, such as video calls and messaging apps, allow parents to maintain regular contact and provide emotional reassurance despite physical distance. Consistent communication fosters a sense of connection and reduces feelings of abandonment.

Relatives and extended family members also play a crucial role. Grandparents or other caregivers who provide emotional and practical support can act as stabilizing figures in the child's life. Community engagement programs that train relatives to address the emotional needs of left-behind children further enhance this support system.

Educational guidance for parents is another critical area. Workshops and resources that teach parents how to stay involved in their children's education from afar can bridge gaps in academic support. Furthermore, providing mental health resources to parents themselves helps them manage the stresses of working away from home, enabling them to offer more meaningful support to their children.

Conclusion

The analysis reveals that a multi-faceted approach combining effective educational policies, robust governance, and targeted social support is essential for improving school adaptation among left-behind children. By leveraging interdisciplinary frameworks, stakeholders can address systemic inequalities and enhance educational outcomes. Further

research should focus on longitudinal impacts of these interventions to ensure sustainable development.

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