

The Negative Effects of TV on Left-Behind Children and the Counter Measures – Survey on Children in Dabie Mountain

Junjiao Sun

The Webb school, Bell Buckle, Tennessee, 37020, America

**Corresponding author. Email: Vivian.wang@cas-harbour.org*

ABSTRACT

With the rapid development of urbanization, there are more and more left behind children. They are teenagers in rural areas, mountain villages, and other remote areas, and they have to be left at their hometowns and live with their grandparents or others because one or both of their parents have been away for a long time. For left-behind children, TV is the most important medium. Although television has many positive effects on the development of most adolescents, it also exerts some negative influences on the left-behind children, such as psychological problems or even illegal behaviors. This paper will explore the negative effects of TV on the left-behind children and propose some methods, which aims to provide a friendly and healthy world for left-behind children.

Keywords: *Left-behind children, television, negative effects of television, countermeasures*

1. INTRODUCTION

As a negative product of China's industrialization and modernization, there have been 6.97 million left-behind children by September 2020 (China's public welfare and charity projects). Most of them live in remote areas and their families get low income. According to the 2016 report on the living conditions of left-behind children, the per capita weekly allowance of left-behind children is 6.28 yuan. Although the public's attention to left-behind children has been greatly increased, there are still lots of children living a terrible life. Because there is a large number of left-behind children, and most of the places where they live are too remote.

In this paper, it chooses TV as the research medium. This is because first of all, most of their families are poor and cannot afford other high-tech products. Second, even some people buy computers and other media, their operation is complicated for the left-behind children due to the lack of teachers. Therefore, TV, popularized by the support of national policies, has become the most commonly used medium for most left-behind children. A study by Zhou (2018) showed that 50% of left-behind children use TV as a medium frequently.[1] However, many people think that TV can exert a lot of positive influence, but in fact, it also brings a lot of negative influence.

This article will analyze the influence of TV on left-behind children in Dabie mountain in psychology and education aspects. And it will also propose some measures for this issue.

2. TELEVISION'S NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON LEFT-BEHIND CHILDREN

In this part, this paper will talk about television's negative effects on left-behind children, mainly from inferiority, crime and education, these three aspects.

2.1 Low Self-esteem

Left-behind children lack care from their parents when they are young, which makes them have a sense of inferiority. According to the Research Report on the Situation of Left-behind Children in Rural Areas of China, 95% of them live with their grandparents and they are poor. Most of the grandparents are difficult to take good care of them due to physical problems and educational level.

According to the survey released by the All-China Women's Federation on the situation of left-behind children in rural areas, the average age of Left-behind children's grandparents is 61 years old.[8] Therefore, children need to take care of themselves in most of cases. In the Dabie mountain, 80% of left-behind children have to take care of their families after they enter primary school.[3] As a result, the quality of life of left-behind children is very low. In recent years to attract a large audience, 45% percent of the shows were romances. In these shows, the directors create a very rich and powerful environment in rural areas. The environment and supplies they live in are top-notch. A lot of audiences like this kind of program because it can give them emotional sustenance. But in the eyes of left-behind children, most of them think

the content in these shows is the portrayal of urban teenagers. This will aggravate their low self-esteem. Make them less and less confident, and do not want to go out of their hometown for the city. Even fell into depression.

At the same time, the majority of left-behind children leave their parents at an early age. According to statistics, 4% of left-behind children leave their parent before the age of six, 90% leave their parents before the age of 14. According to 2015 white Paper on the Mental Status of left-behind children, 15.1% of left-behind children have not seen their parents for one year, and 4.3% of children have not even had contact with their parents for one year.[2] This makes many left-behind children yearn for family affection. Many people feel sad when they see a family drama or reunion on TV and feel inferior when they relate to their own experiences. 70 left-behind children in Dabie mountain watch the scene of a comedian "family has children". 43 of them feels sad when they see the whole family eating together, while 11 children even cry. And 39 people do not laugh when they see the comedy.

Psychologists say people with low self-esteem tend to have feelings of distaste when they contact with the outside world, while grandparents are more likely to neglect children's mental problems. Zheng, Gao, Zhong, Zhang (2019) conduct a research including 100 left-behind children and 100 children living with parents in Dabie Mountains, and finds that the left-behind children in the Dabie Mountains have a higher incidence of mood disorders than other children.[9] Besides, Yan(2020)does a survey that 91% of left-behind children are in the middle and late stages by the time they are diagnosed with psychological problems.[5]

2.2. Crime

In the face of the outside world in TV programs, these left-behind children are prone to be jealousy and violent in addition to low self-esteem. In the face of their parents' absence, all left-behind children will ask a question from an early age, "Do parents abandon me? In the face of these problems, most of the guardians will only leave a sentence "Your parents have to work" behind. If the parents and guardians cannot take care of the children's emotions, children will be prone to generate extreme thoughts. When children see that the outside world is much better than their own life through TV during this time, many of them associate it with their parents left. They may think that their parents left because they have to seek a better world outside. It makes them feel like they're just an accessory. So it is easy for them to have resentment towards their parents. According to the 2018 White Paper of the Mental Status of Left-behind Children, the rebellious period of left-behind children is in the fifth grade of primary school,

2-3 years earlier than most teenagers.[4] They resent their parents for neglecting them, so they will do a lot of bad behaviors such as smoking cigarettes and being alcoholic, and they do so to attract their parents' attention.

Another reason for crime is that they question their situation. When they see that many people live a better life than they do, they will have an sense of unfairness and hope to change. Chinese children's welfare policy reports that the crime rate of left-behind children accounts for 70 percent among all the juvenile crimes.[10] In a survey of 299 children in juvenile detention centers, 178 of whom are left-behind children, which accounts for 59.5 percent, and 115 of them are charged of robbery.

Also, there are many problems in terms of teachers and family education for left-behind children. As mentioned above, 95 percent of left-behind children live with their grandparents. According to the survey on the situation of left-behind children in rural areas, most of the grandparents have only know the rules in primary school and they have never been to school. In schools, left-behind children live in very poor places, so the teachers are few and maybe with poor education too. Without much positive guidance, many left-behind children don't have the right values. So when they see a lot of violence on TV, they will just imitate it.

2.3. Lack of Educational Resources

Information spreads faster in big cities, and in recent years, many programs and mainstream media have reported the plight of left-behind children to make the public pay more attention to them. According to statistics, at least one documentary about left-behind children can be found on every major video broadcasting platform and every major TV station. When shooting this kind of documentary, the director will highlight the suffering of left-behind children, or even use exaggerated methods to break the environment or shoot the poorest family in the whole village, and then describe this family as the common life of the whole village to gain the sympathy of the public.

However, this will also make many college students who want to volunteer recoiled. As a great source of knowledge acquisition for left-behind children, volunteer teaching only has about 2,000 people in 2018. In a survey of 150 college students about their graduation intentions, 93 choose not to consider teaching as an option. And 61 of them choose because the environment is too hard. This kind of blindly highlighting the suffering of left-behind children will discourage many students who volunteer to teach. After returning, many college students say that the actual environment is not as bitter as imagined. So this kind of report will make many college students give up the idea of supporting education in the rural areas.



Figure 1. reason why college students not volunteering to teach

3. THE COUNTERMEASURES AND SUGGESTIONS

In this section, this paper will talk about the ways to solve this problem. These countermeasures and suggestions are based on the negative impacts of TV on the left-behind children in rural areas.

3.1. Television Promotes Management

Left-behind children in rural areas are mentally immature, so their ability to evaluate and identify information is weak, and it is difficult to identify many contents on TV. Not only for left-behind children, but many TV programs also have a negative influence on teenagers. Violent TV dramas are not good for teenagers' bodies and minds. Children imitating cartoons threw toys downstairs and hit the old lady. Children imitating cartoons caused injuries to their hands. Such news often appears in our sight. According to the survey about teenagers' TV preferences and their reasons, 92% of the girls imagine themselves to be that girl who married a rich and handsome man, while 52% of the boys imitate martial arts actions alone or with a partner after watching the violent movie. Therefore, TV channels in the selection of material content need to do a strict check on the work. In this way, we can arrange suitable TV channels for left-behind children at the appropriate time according to their mental characteristics, to promote their physical and mental health.

3.2. Psychological Counseling

A large part of the reason why left-behind children are so affected by TV is their inner vulnerability. Growing up in a special environment, most left-behind children have some psychological problems. These psychological problems tend to erupt when they encounter something new. So TV channels can launch some programs about the psychology of teenagers. The program can ask students to discuss their psychological problems and then invite experts to answer. In this way, the left-behind children feel like they are the same as the children in city because they all have some trouble. At the same time, the government can dispatch psychological experts to the left-behind children's areas every month to help children solve psychological problems. Besides training of rural teachers for some psychological counseling methods is another way. Because for left-behind children, facing teachers who are of a similar age with their parents, many of them can feel a sense of closeness and belonging. So they adopt teacher's advice and like to talk to the teacher.

3.3. Better Welfare for Volunteer Teacher and Training in Advance

Teachers are very important for left-behind children. This is because they lack the companionship of their families and their guardians are generally less educated. So they don't know how to guide children properly. The government can promote more incentive policies to encourage college students to volunteer to teach. Yan(2020) research shows that many left-behind children

admire their teachers for their age and experience, and they play a role that cannot be ignored.[5]

Since the importance of teachers, the government should also increase the quality and ability of volunteer teachers' audit system. As more policies encourage volunteer teaching, many people will do so. Many of them have no ability, and with a vanity, mentality hopes to meet personnel interview, which can promote themselves. This, in turn, has a negative impact on left-behind children. So the review is necessary.

Finally, the government should train volunteer teaching teams in advance. Many people think they are superior to left-behind children, so they communicate with them in a sympathetic tone and attitude. It is likely to hurt the self-esteem of left-behind children. Training in advance can avoid this problem.

4. CONCLUSION

Although the rapid development of TV allows more people to pay attention to left-behind children and enable these children to grasp more resources. However, due to the particularity of left-behind children, these media have some negative impacts on their life. In terms of psychological convenience, left-behind children are prone to feel inferior, which will make them have hatred and thus commit crimes. And television can also affect teachers, because many people will recoil from the bad environment into consideration. To some extent, these negative effects even outweigh the positive effects. This paper concludes that because the fact that left-behind children leave their parents when they are young, few people around them care about their psychological condition. When the children see outside world through TV, it can exacerbate the problem of low self-esteem and jealousy.

In response to this, TV programs should be censored strictly and broadcast programs that are beneficial to the physical health of teenagers should be played at certain times and on certain channels. Second, more opportunities of psychological counseling should be offered to children. Finally, better welfare for volunteer teachers and training program can also help the children to get better teachers.

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