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Research on the Relationship Between Perceived Social Support and Subjective Well Being of Left Behind Children

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Abstract

In this study, “perceived social support scale (SPSS)”, “happiness” and “emotional index scale: positive emotion, negative emotion and emotional balance” as the measurement tool of left-behind children understand the relationship between social support and subjective well-being were studied. The results showed that: (a) left-behind children and non left-behind children perceived social support have significant differences, which left the perceived social support level of children is significantly lower than the non left-behind children; (b) left-behind children and non left-behind children in emotional well-being, life satisfaction index, there is a significant difference, performance for the left-behind children in happiness and emotion index, life satisfaction scores were significantly lower than those of non left-behind children; (c) left behind children between perceived social support and subjective well-being are positively related. In particular, friends and family support the greatest impact on happiness. Through the regression analysis, the results showed that friends and family support had a significant predictive effect on the well-being of left behind children.

Key words: Positive psychology; Left behind children; Perceived social support; Subjective well-being

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of reform and opening-up and urbanization, left-behind children from all walks of life especially attracted the attention of academic circles. And non left behind children compared to (Zhang, 2004; Li, 2006; Huang, 2004; Jia, 2007; Xiao, 2007; Yin & Zhang, 2006), left behind children have more interpersonal difficulties and find the character and more extreme, behavior problems, serious psychological disorder, emotional instability and other prominent mental health problems (Li, 2005; Wang & Lin, 2003; Fang, 2005; Zhao & Ge, 2006), that is to say, “left behind children is asking questions of children”. But the researchers mainly focus on the study of children left behind and overcome the negative psychological quality and bad mood, and the positive psychological qualities of inadequate attention. Subjective well-being as the positive psychological qualities of the individual, is one of the important signs of mental health. Study on the existing left-behind children less subjective well-being, and the results are inconsistent. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the left-behind children subjective well-being. The study found that there was a high correlation between social support and subjective well being (Chen & Li, 2006; Xin, 2001). Social support helps to improve the sense of happiness, happiness and so on, to prevent the decrease of subjective well being (Malecki & Demaray, 2003; Pu, 2006; Yan, 2003; Jun, 2005; Barrera, 1986). Through the research on the relationship between perceived social support and subjective well being of left behind children, to

provide theoretical support for exploring more effective psychological intervention mechanism.

1. RESEARCH STATUS

1.1 Research Status of Subjective Well Being of Left Behind Children

Subjective well-being is a general evaluation of the quality of life according to their own criteria. It is an important psychological indicator of the quality of life in a certain society. The study (Cheng et al., 2007) that left behind children's subjective happiness sense is low; some studies suggest that migrant family's economic situation is better than non migrant families, left behind children's subjective well-being should higher than the non left behind children. But Zhang Lifang "general well-being scale (GWB) assessment of left behind and non left behind middle school students results show, left behind children's subjective happiness feeling slightly lower than that of normal children, but there was no significant difference (i.e., the difference was not statistically significant) and SWB of girls was significantly lower than that of boys (in adolescent girls and their changes in the physiological need more guidance of mother's friend, mother in the absence of adolescent daughters will lead directly to the girl lower subjective well-being, and significantly lower than the boy left behind. This may be due to the lack of direct care and emotional communication between parents, resulting in a reduction in subjective well-being, thereby weakening the economic situation and the increase in the relative sense of well-being. When a person's normal living needs are not satisfied, the individual's subjective well-being will be reduced. For children, parents are most closely related to their parents, and parents are the main source of children's SWB. Parents of left behind children working long time, they face the lack of family will directly lead to the reduction of their subjective well-being (Li & Zhang, 2007).

The study on the well-being of foster children showed that the foster children in the family foster care in the high quality of life care, life satisfaction is higher. The more the foster family, the higher the children's life satisfaction. Harmonious relationship between husband and wife, the family's dominant emotions are easy to affect the foster children's mood, thus affecting their life satisfaction. Foster children's subjective well-being is also higher, and with the family structure, foster family relationships, social support has a greater correlation.

It is not consistent with the conclusion of the subjective well being of the left behind children, so it is a more thorough analysis and discussion of the research on this aspect. At present, there is no research on the subjective well being of the left behind junior high school students, so it is worth exploring.

1.2 Research Status Quo of Perceived Social Support of Left Behind Children

This is the empirical research and the social support system of left-behind children social support system mainly concentrated on the study of the status quo of the social support system of the construction of the psychological problems.

Studies have shown that lack of social support for regular physical exercise is a big hurdle for (Orsega et al., 2007). Study on middle school students' social support and other related variables have a dozen articles, mostly studies on the relationship between mental health and coping style, peer relationships, self-esteem and loneliness. The study of van Aken show that early childhood, individuals began to accept multiple sources of support (van Aken & Asendorpf, 1997), so multiple sources of social support in youth development has unique contribution or relative importance has become the focus of attention of researchers (Li, Zou, & Zhao, 2003). Currently, many studies concern the effects of specific sources of social support, peer support and lonely existence significant negative correlation (Sun & Zhou, 2007); friend's affirmation and support, to the friend relationship satisfaction, friend accompany with intimacy and adolescent family self-esteem, general self-esteem, self-esteem and interpersonal self-esteem had higher correlation (Liu & Zou, 2007). Peer support to meet the needs of others, to meet the needs of interpersonal relationships, to ease the pressure, to promote the positive attitude of the generation—through the positive social interaction to achieve the individual physical and mental health support.

At present, although there is a study of (Jing & Liu, 2008) in improving rural youth left behind the overall level of social relations network support, and to make them aware of these support, help to reduce their levels of depression and loneliness, etc.. However, many studies are aimed at the social support system of the left behind children. Liu Xia and others found that the support of the left behind children in junior high school was lower than that in the control group, and the illegal behavior was higher than that in the control group. In the three dimensions of social support, subjective support for junior high school left behind children of illegal, fraud and misconduct has significant negative prediction function, with the increase in the subjective support, junior high school left behind children in illegal, fraud and misconduct will be gradually reduced. Support utilization has a significant negative predictive effect on health risk behaviors. The higher the degree of support utilization, the less health risk behaviors of left behind children in junior middle school. At the higher level of social support, the left behind children in the lower level of social support have less problem behavior. In addition, there are significant gender differences in the health behaviors of

the left behind children in the different social support level of the junior high school (Liu, Xing, & Shen, 2007).

Li Ha, Chen Jun believes that social support is more important than the actual gain (Chen & Li, 2007). This is a problem that most scholars of our country have neglected in the research of social support, that is, most of them ignore the inner feelings of the subject and the perception, understanding and acceptance of these support. Individuals feel the support subjective support although not in objective reality, but perceived reality is psychological reality, and it is psychological reality as the actual (intermediary) variables affect the behavior and development (Xiao, 2005).

Left behind junior high school students in the key period of life development, can feel the teacher, students and other support for their healthy development have a very important influence. Left behind junior high school students and non left behind junior high school students to compare their understanding of social support and understanding whether there are differences, if there is a difference between how to improve their awareness and understanding of the level is worth exploring the issue.

1.3 Research on the Relationship Between Perceived Social Support and Subjective Well Being

Social support especially the perceived social support of individuals especially in all aspects of the mental health of adolescents have important influence. The strict standard bin et al that social support increased the joy of the people sense, a sense of belonging, improve self-esteem, self-confidence, when people face a stressful life events, can also organization or alleviate stress response, increase the healthy patterns of behavior, thereby increasing the positive emotion and inhibit negative temperament, prevent to the reduction of the subjective well-being. Malecki et al. (2003) that plays an important role in promoting social support in many aspects of the individual's social development and psychological health, as is helpful to promote happiness and well-being. Researchers (Pu, 2006) that have good social support individuals have relatively high well-being, life satisfaction, positive emotions and lower negative emotion, social support can provide the help of substances, increase the joy of the people, a sense of belonging and improve self-esteem and self-confidence, when people face a stressful life events, can also prevent or alleviate stress response, increase the healthy patterns of behavior, thereby increasing the positive emotion and negative emotion, reduce the subjective well-being is prevented. Distinctions (1986) also found that the effect of perceived social support on more personal factors are overall well-being. College Students' general well-being is higher, the easier it will be to explain the behavior of

others to support the General well-being as a kind of life attitude, affect the individual perception and choice of social support. Wang Yanzhi and others believe that improving social support is to improve the (Gong, Wang & Wang, 2007) effective way of individual psychological well-being. Feel more social supporters of the self image of the more positive (Xi et al., 2001). In addition, the current for Medical College Students' perceived social support and subjective well-being and sense of study on the relationship between Chen and Li (2006) found, social support subscales and subjective happiness sense are significantly correlated, and family support and friend support has a significant regression effect on the subjective happiness sense. Perceived social support is far more important than the actual social support for the healthy development of the individual, and perceived social support and subjective well-being are highly correlated.

2. RESEARCH PROCESS

2.1 Research Objective

To explore the relationship between perceived social support and subjective well being of left behind junior middle school students.

2.2 Object of Study

Select wall mountain of Chongqing Qi Tang, eight ponds middle school, lotus school, Chongqing Xia Ba school four schools of junior high school students (grade 1 to grade 3) as the subjects of this study, questionnaires were distributed to 1,200 copies. Excluding invalid questionnaires, a total of 856 valid questionnaires were recovered. Among them, 482 left behind children and 374 non left behind children. In the left behind children, 234 boys, girls 248 people; the first 162 people, 161 days, 159 days. Non left behind children, 188 boys, girls 186 people; the first 141 people, 110 days, 123 days.

Table 1
Gender and Grade Distribution of Left Behind Children and Non Left Behind Children

	Sex		Grade (junior high school)		
	Male	Female	Ffirst grade	Second grade	Third grade
Left-behind children (482)	234	248	162	161	159
Non left behind children (374)	188	186	141	110	123
Total (856)	422	434	303	271	282

2.3 Research Method

This paper employs the method of psychological measurement and interview, investigation of the left

behind junior high school students perceived social support level, the level of subjective well-being.

2.4 Research Tool

This study used “perceived social support scale” (SPSS), “happiness” and “Emotion Scale: positive emotions, negative emotions, emotional balance”.

Perceived social support scale (PSSS) (Xiao, 1999) compiled by Zimet et al. PSSS with 12 self rating projects, each project using the 1-7 seven score, that is divided into very disagree, very do not agree, slightly disagree, neutral, slightly agree, very agree, very agree with seven levels. The “family supports” scale from the rest of the total entry points. “Social support” by all the entry points accumulated. Among them, family support, friendly support and other support and the full scale of the alpha coefficient were 0.87, 0.85, 0.91 and 0.88. The test-retest reliability was 0.85, 0.75, 0.72 and 0.85.

Index of well being index (Xiao, 1999) compiled by Campbell et al. The degree of happiness for survey participants currently experienced. This scale includes two parts, namely the overall emotional index scale and life satisfaction questionnaire. The former is composed of 8 items, they describe the emotional connotation from different angles; the latter is a public. When calculating the total score, the average score of the overall emotional

index scale and the score of life satisfaction questionnaire (weight 1.1) were added together. Its range is between 2.1 (the most unhappy) and 14.7 (the happiest). The consistency index of general affect and life satisfaction was 0.55. According to Yao et al. (1995) data, the test-retest consistency was 0.849 ($p < 0.001$).

Emotion Scale: Positive emotion, negative emotion, emotion balance compiled by Bradburn (1969). Including 10 projects, the 10 projects are a series of descriptions of the past few weeks, the feeling is not the title. Among them, the odd numbered items are positive emotional items, and even items are negative emotions. If you answer “yes” to a positive emotional project, “yes”, you can remember 1 points. “No” or “no” is a 1 point. Calculation method of emotional balance is to positive emotional burden of emotion, and a factor of 5, so score is 1 to 9 points. Among them, the project of positive affective items was between 0.19 and 0.75, and the project of negative emotional items was between 0.38 and 0.72. The total correlation between positive and negative emotions is less than 0.10. The consistency of the re examination after 3 days interval was 0.76. The consistency of positive affective items was 0.83, while the consistency of negative affective items was 0.81. If the interval time is longer, the consistency of the two survey is decreased.

2.5 Research Results

(a) The differences in perceived social support level between left behind children and non left behind children.

Table 2
Differences of Perceived Social Support Between Left Behind Children and Non Left Behind Children

Factor	Left-behind children		Non left behind children		T	P
	M	SD	M	SD		
Family support	17.71	4.77	19.63	4.48	6.008***	0.000
Friend support	16.43	4.19	19.48	4.18	10.574***	0.000
Other support	20.77	3.61	20.96	4.07	0.738	0.460
Total social support	54.91	8.91	60.07	10.23	7.883***	0.000

Note. * $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.01$; *** $P < 0.001$. M mean mean, SD standard deviation, the same below.

Through the independent sample *T*-test of the perceived social support level of the left behind children and non left behind children, the two kinds of students have significant differences in perceived social support level ($t=7.833$, $p < 0.001$). Specifically, two types of students in the support of family and friends showed significant difference ($t=10.574$, $P < 0.001$; $t=6.008$, $P < 0.001$); compared with the non left behind children, left behind children in the total social support and the support of family and friends are significantly lower in other support difference is not $t=0.738$ $p < 0.460$ (see Table 2).

(b) Grades and gender differences in perceived social support of left behind children.

Table 3
The Differences of the Total Level of Perceived Social Support Among Left Behind Children in Grades and Genders

		M	SD	T	F
Sex	Male	57.09	9.86	-0.229	
	Female	57.24	9.84		
Grade	First grade	58.78	9.43	7.225***	
	Second grade	56.84	10.43		
	Third grade	55.75	9.48		
Sex*grade					0.122

Table 4
Multiple Comparisons of the Total Level of Perceived Social Support Among the Left Behind Children in the Grade Variables

		Mean difference	Standard error	P
First grade	Second grade	1.934*	0.817	0.018
	Third grade	3.027***	0.809	0.000
Second grade	First grade	-1.934*	0.817	0.018
	Third grade	1.093	0.831	0.189
Third grade	First grade	-3.023***	0.809	0.000
	Second grade	-1.093	0.831	0.189

From Table 3, 4 shows through on left behind children perceived social support for gender differences in the independent sample t-test test and grade differences of multivariate analysis of variance F test. It is found that the left behind children perceived social support does not exist significant gender differences, but showed significant grade differences ($F = 7.225$; $P < 0.001$), and the interaction between gender and age is not significant. On left behind children's perceived social support for post hoc comparison found, first grade students' perceived social support level was significantly higher than that of the second and the third grade, while the second and Third Graders perceived social support level the difference.

(c) Differences in subjective well-being of left behind children and non left behind children.

Table 5
Differences in Subjective Well-Being of Left Behind Children and Non Left Behind Children

Factor	Left behind children		Non left behind children		T	P
	M	SD	M	SD		
Overall emotional index	4.144	0.740	4.241	0.723	1.923	0.055
Life satisfaction	4.617	1.561	5.918	1.494	12.323***	0.000
Total score of happiness	8.751	1.839	10.159	1.809	11.111***	0.000
Positive emotion	2.245	1.088	2.142	0.982	-1.435	0.152
Negative emotion	3.330	1.389	3.366	1.351	0.385	0.700
Emotional balance	3.915	1.562	3.775	1.553	-1.300	0.194

Through for left behind children and non left behind differences in subjective well-being of children compared from Table 5 results indicated that, left behind children and non left behind children in life satisfaction and well-being sense score, there was a significant difference ($t=12.323$, $P < 0.001$; $t=11.111$, $P < 0.001$), left behind children born of life satisfaction and happiness total were significantly lower than those of the non left behind children; left behind children and non left behind children in positive emotion, negative emotion and emotional balance showed no significant difference.

(d) Gender and grade differences in subjective well-being of left behind children.

Table 6
Gender Differences in the Sense of Well-Being of Left Behind Children

		M	SD	T
Overall emotional index	Male	4.233	0.780	1.830
	Female	4.141	0.685	
Life satisfaction	Male	5.192	1.713	0.126
	Female	5.178	1.612	
Total score of happiness	Male	9.426	2.031	0.794
	Female	9.320	1.874	
Emotional balance	Male	3.927	1.602	1.344
	Female	3.783	1.513	

Table 7
Multiple Comparisons of Left Behind Children’S Well-Being in Grade Variables

	Mean difference	Standard error	P
Life satisfaction	0.2781*	0.139	0.045
Negative emotion	0.4092***	0.113	0.000
Emotional balance	-0.4082*	0.128	0.002

Note. 1 of the first and second, there is a difference between the first and 2, the difference between the first and third.

From the results of Table 6, it is found that there are no significant gender differences in overall emotional index, total score of well-being, life satisfaction and emotional balance.

The grade difference of left behind children’s

subjective well-being of *F* test (see Table 7), the left behind children first and the life satisfaction in junior grade two students exists significant differences ($P < 0.05$), namely life satisfaction of junior middle school students was significantly higher than that of junior high school students; students of grade one in junior middle school and grade school students there was significant difference ($P < 0.001$) in the negative affective aspects, namely the negative emotion of junior middle school students extremely significantly higher than junior middle school students; in terms of emotional balance, the students of grade one in junior middle school and junior high school students exist differences ($P < 0.05$), namely junior middle school students emotional balance level significantly worse than grade students.

(e) The correlation analysis of perceived social support and subjective well being of left behind children.

Table 8
Pearson Correlation Analysis of Perceived Social Support and Subjective Well Being

	Overall emotional index	Life satisfaction	Total score of happiness	Positive emotion	Negative emotion	Emotional balance
Family support	0.188**	0.278**	0.307**	0.200**	0.273**	-0.107**
Friend support	0.156**	0.299**	0.313**	0.132**	0.152**	-0.46
Other support	0.110**	0.158**	0.176**	0.114**	0.164**	-0.068*
Total social support	0.204**	0.330**	0.357**	0.200**	0.264**	-0.99**

From the table, it can be seen that left behind children perceived social support and happiness sense there is extremely significant correlation, family support, friend support dimension, social support level and total emotion index, life satisfaction and happiness feeling total score, positive emotion, negative emotion dimensions at the 0.01 level significant positive correlation, between family

support and other support dimension and emotional balance at the level of 0.05 and 0.01 levels exists significantly negative correlation, and total social support and emotional balance dimensions also exist significant negative correlation.

(f) Perceived social support and subjective well being of left behind children.

Table 9
Left-Behind Children Learned to Their Family, Friends and Other Social Support Predict Happiness of Stepwise Regression Analysis

	ΔR^2	R^2	Adjusted R^2	β	<i>t</i>	<i>F</i>
Friend support	0.098	0.098	0.097	0.230	6.695***	92.758***
Family support	0.041	0.139	0.137	0.220	6.407***	69.082***

The perceived social support as independent variables, with happiness as the dependent variable stepwise regression analysis (see Table 9). The results showed that only the support from friends and family support two factors were analyzed by multiple regression equation. Multivariate regression coefficient was 0.220, the decisive factor is 0.139, adjusted for the 0.137 decisive factor. The two factors of social support for the total explanation of the size of the order of the arrangement for the support of friends and family

support. They combined to predict 13.7% of the variance in subjective well-being. The regression equation of the standard: $0.230* + 0.220*$ family support, friendly support.

In addition, the tests and analysis of variance equation significantly shows that the regression equation reached significant level ($F=92.758$, $F=69.082$, $P<0.001$). This shows that the support from friends and family support of these two variables are more reliable predictors of subjective well-being.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

(a) The perceived social support of left behind children and non-left behind children is significantly different, that is, the perceived social support of the left behind children is significantly lower than that of the non-left behind children.

(b) Left behind children and non-left behind children in happiness feeling, emotion index, life satisfaction have significant differences, for the left behind children in a happy feeling, emotion index, life satisfaction score was significantly lower than that of the non-left behind children.

(c) There was a significant positive correlation between perceived social support and well-being of left behind children. In particular, friends and family support had the greatest impact on happiness. Through the regression analysis, the results showed that friends and family support had a significant predictive effect on the well-being of left behind children.

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