



# Study on the Relationship between Peer Relationship and Loneliness of Left-behind Children

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## Abstract

According to the relevant investigation, loneliness is the most easily produced emotion in the social process of left-behind children, and it is a common psychological problem of left-behind children. At the same time, as the rapid development of the economy, the development of urban and rural areas gradually appeared a state of two-tier differentiation. A large number of young and strong labor force to provide better economic security for their children, have left their hometown to work, choosing to leave their children home, the number of left-behind children is increasing year by year as a result of being brought up by one of the parents or the elders or relatives in the family. At present, the physical and psychological development of "Left-behind children" is a very important issue. The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between peer relationship and loneliness of left-behind children. The specific content is only for reference.

## Keywords

Left-behind children, loneliness, peer relationship

## Foreword

Because of the change of family structure, the left-behind children can not get complete affection, which has a certain impact on the physical and mental development of the left-behind children. In the early life of children, peer relationship is an important relationship besides parent-child relationship, which also has a certain impact on children's loneliness. In order to enrich the relevant theoretical research, this study analyzed the interaction between left-behind children and loneliness. At the same time, call on the community, schools and parents to give more care and love for left-behind children, to help them grow better.

## 1. Research status of peer relationship of left-behind children

### 1.1 Current status of research abroad

Foreign scholars have made considerable achievements in the research of peer relationship, for example, they have studied the influencing factors of peer relationship. Specifically, Rubin and Eisenberg studied the effects of student behavior and personality on peer relationships, and found that students who were able to properly control their own behavior benefited their peers and relationships, the opposite is bad. Cook and Ladd conducted a study on peer relationship improvement measures, and the results showed that skill training could improve peer relationship. Cook and Spahn agreed that group counseling could significantly improve peer relationship, Coie and Dodge (1982)

distinguish the types of peer relationships.

## **1.2 Current status of domestic research**

Compared with foreign scholars, the research on peer relationship in China started relatively late, but after these years' efforts, many outstanding academic achievements have been summarized. At present, domestic researches on peer relationship mainly focus on two aspects, that is, the influencing factors of peer relationship and the influence of peer relationship on children's adaptation. For example, Guo and Cheung Lui conducted a meta-analysis of research on children's prosocial and peer relationships, aggression and peer relationships over the past 20 years, it was found that there was a significant positive correlation between children's prosocial behavior and peer acceptance, and a significant negative correlation between children's prosocial behavior and peer rejection (Chen Benin & Li Dan, 2008). In addition, some scholars have also discussed the model of juvenile peer relations, influencing factors. Fan Zhang (2004) studied peer interaction and behavior among adolescents in Guangzhou, Beijing and Shanghai, found that there were significant differences in psychological adaptation among adolescents.

## **2. Peer relationship analysis of left-behind children**

### **2.1 The concept of companionship**

The research on peer relationship originated from the end of the 20th century. Hartup (1986) divided the interpersonal relationship of individuals into two dimensions: vertical relationship and horizontal relationship, and horizontal relationship is peer relationship (Kang Chunhua & Xiao Fei, 2009). Later, domestic researcher Wenxin Zhang (1999) added the factor of age to the definition of the scope. Peer relationship is defined as a kind of interpersonal relationship formed in the process of communication, the age of the object of communication can be the same as the individual itself, but also can be close. In addition, we can also ignore the factor of age, the social cognitive level with the object of contact with their own, people between a mutual help and cooperation relationship. Dajun Zhang (2004) thought that the peer relationship is a kind of psychology formed in the process of cooperation and communication with the students in the school from school perspective.

### **2.2 The factors that affect peer relationship**

#### **2.2.1 Self-factors**

At present, our country youth receives the information the channel to increase, under the influence of adolescence, the youth wants to obtain the more adult feeling, gets rid of the parental control. Although teenagers have certain social experience, but the emotional easily affected, lack of interpersonal knowledge and skills, lack of self-control, words are easy to hurt the people around and affect the interaction with others (Zhang Dan 2021). Adolescents, mental health, psychological quality and personality traits also affect peer relationships. Optimistic and cheerful people are better able to integrate into the group and deal with their peers.

#### **2.2.2 Family factors**

In the process of juvenile socialization, family is a very important place, parents are children's first teacher, so the family factor is very important to the role of children, is an indispensable link in the process of children's growth. (1) Family relations. According to Bandura's theory of social learning, the way of parents relate to each other has a certain influence on the growth of their children. If the parents are in a good relationship, maybe his family is warm, the teenagers will be more active in communicating with others. On the contrary, if the relationship between the parents is cold, maybe the family atmosphere is not harmonious, it can make the adolescent character cold. He will not take the initiative to associate with others even will make the aggressive behavior of others. (2) Parenting style. Psychologist Baumrind divides parenting styles into autocratic, authoritative, tolerant and neglectful types from the two dimensions of response and demand (Ning Jiapeng, Zhu Yali, Yang Yong, & Guo Shuang 2015). It is believed that the adolescents trained by authoritative parenting style have higher sense of social responsibility and achievement. The conclusions of the subsequent research also reach more consistent conclusions. Domestic scholars have also conducted research on family upbringing. It is generally believed that parents who adopt democratic upbringing will respect teenagers and will not force them to do things they do not want to do. It will develop a positive, optimistic, self-confident quality and independent ability, more likely to establish a harmonious relationship with their peers.

### 2.2.3 Social factors

With the continuous progress of society, social means gradually enriched up, the development of the Internet provides a new way. Internet dating can not be limited by region, space and time. Teenagers can make friends easily and freely. Li Lei and Yana Wu (2009) said that teens with high levels of peer alienation are less likely to tell their peers about their pain, for fear of being laughed at by their peers, and of feeling emotionally disconnected from their peers. They want to strengthen relationships with their peers but feel lonely and helpless due to the lack of appropriate social skills. Because of the anonymity of the internet, they are unrestricted in real life. Things like geography, appearance, and so on that prevent actual communication are ignored on the Internet. On the internet, teenagers can express and communicate more freely and easily (Lu Fang, 2019). They can also develop new social skills and make it easier to build relationships online. The society does not pay enough attention to the young people's peer relationship and does not guide them.

## 3. The relationship between peer relationship and loneliness of left-behind children

There is a significant positive correlation between social preference and loneliness of left-behind children. Social preference is considered as an important index to measure children's social acceptance. The higher the score, the higher the children's social acceptance. Children's sense of belonging will be stronger. Otherwise, there will be a strong loneliness. In addition, the friendship quality of left-behind children has a great influence on their loneliness. The higher their friendship quality, the stronger their ability of using emotion, and the less their loneliness, left-behind children also have a higher sense of loneliness. Under the influence of different grades and genders, the dimension of left-behind children's friendship conflicts and betrayals are quite different. For example, upperclassmen are more likely to find negative aspects of friendships. They are more likely to recognize feelings of resistance to betrayal and feel lonely as they become older. And the relationship between girls is generally closer. Boys are more independent, do not like to express their feelings out. So boys are lonelier than girls.

This paper analyzes the factors that affect children's loneliness. The results show that peer relationship has a great impact on the loneliness of left-behind children. For a long time, peer relationship has been the focus of experts and scholars studying left-behind children. Peer acceptance and friendship quality have a great relationship with the loneliness of left-behind children. Specifically, left-behind children's peer acceptance ability is weak. Their sense of loneliness will also be stronger. Higher friendship quality will reduce loneliness. The more popular children are, the less lonely they will feel. In the early stage of children, peer acceptance can basically meet children's needs for love and sense of belonging, thus strengthening their mutual learning and social interaction. The needs of left-behind children increase with age. Build a solid, two-way, mutual trust and mutual love foundation. There was a sense of familiarity. With close feelings, children will no longer be lonely. In other words, establishing close friendship, wider learning space and emotional support for children can help solve the problem of childhood loneliness of left-behind children (Zhou Wenyi Jing & Shen Guanchen, 2018). When the parents of left-behind children are away from home, their feelings for their parents cannot be fully satisfied, and they can seek help from the feelings of their peers. In a good peer relationship, making up for emotional estrangement will help alleviate the negative impact of the family and stimulate its spiritual development, behavioral norms, and social adaptability.

## 4. Measures to reduce loneliness of left-behind children

### 4.1 Live with your parents

Using the relationship between peer relationship and loneliness of left-behind children, we should try to choose the way of single-parent care for children to reduce the possibility of children's loneliness. For the growth of children, the care and care of parents is irreplaceable. When the possibility of simultaneous care of both parents is small, a single parent care method can be adopted, which can greatly reduce the loneliness of children. Don't leave the child to relatives or friends. Children are psychologically sensitive. If they live in the home of relatives and friends for a long time, they will have the illusion of being left behind, which will lead to inferiority complex and introverted psychology, which is very detrimental to children's growth. So, try not to leave the child to relatives and friends.

### 4.2 Create a good campus atmosphere

In schools, we should strengthen students' mental health education and teaching activities and set up mental health education courses. To enable students to understand themselves and others, master certain interpersonal

communication skills and solve interpersonal problems more calmly. For students with poor peer relationship, special social skills training should be carried out, such as empathy training, observation learning, role playing, etc. In addition, we should also hold more extracurricular activities or social practice activities that provide more social opportunities for students, so that students can get to know each other and deepen their friendship. In terms of class management, we can implement a shift system for student cadres, so that all students have the opportunity to manage the whole class and make contributions to the whole class. This method can not only improve students' sense of responsibility, but also improve their self-confidence. At the same time, it also gives students the opportunity to have in-depth exchanges with teachers and classmates. It will form a good social atmosphere in the school.

#### **4.3 Give full play to the role of the head teacher**

Class teachers should treat each other equally and implement appreciation education. We should give priority to praise and encouragement. Teachers should fully understand students, teach students according to their aptitude, carefully evaluate students, avoid students' negative perceptions of themselves and one-sided views of their peers, and help students change their stereotypes of other students, so as to correct the peer relationship of some students. At the same time, teachers should also pay attention to learning and cultivating students' social interaction ability, teach some solutions to peer conflicts, so that students can deal with conflicts calmly. It is conducive to better getting along with their peers and conducive to their physical and mental health development.

#### **4.4 Establish and improve the social security mechanism**

The government should improve the requirements for students to enroll. It is not allowed to enroll without local hukou. Eliminate the restrictions of urban and rural hukou on schooling, let left-behind children enjoy the equal right to education, let left-behind children go to school in the city where their parents work, so that they can live with their parents, and give financial support when necessary, such as reducing school fees and tuition fees, and ensuring the basic expenses of the family. It can largely eliminate the loneliness of children. In addition, for left-behind children who cannot live with their parents, people from all walks of life should pay more attention to them, give full play to their strengths, and solve their loneliness and other psychological problems. The government organizes volunteers to take care of left-behind children regularly, pay attention to their life and psychological conditions, and find problems that can be solved in a timely manner. It is also necessary to guarantee the living environment of left-behind children. The government should invest money to improve the living conditions of boarding schools, so that left-behind children can live better (Zhong Bo, 2015). Organize some young volunteers and returning college students to communicate with left-behind children to alleviate and eliminate the loneliness of left-behind children as much as possible.

### **5. Summary**

Left-behind children are the product of China's economic and social development. They will exist for a long time and cannot be eliminated in a short time. There are many problems among the left-behind children, such as children's school problems, lack of parental companionship and loneliness. If we want to eliminate the loneliness of children, we still need the joint efforts of parents, schools and society, and all parties need to pay more attention to left-behind children and understand their life and psychological conditions. At the same time, we should pay attention to the important role of peer relationship in eliminating the loneliness of left-behind children. Peer relationship can provide emotional support to left-behind children and can largely eliminate the loneliness of children.

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