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Wang Jing

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Behavior Problems and Family Parenting Styles of Elementary School Seniors in Rural China

Wang Jing

Wuyi College Business School Fujian China, SEGi University Faculty of Education Selangor Malaysia Email: 1556115505@qq.com

Abstract

Purpose: to investigate the status of behavior problems, family parenting styles, and the relationship between them in elementary school seniors. Methods: this paper used conners' behavior questionnaire and family parenting style scale to survey 232 elementary school seniors in rural china, and spss21 was used for statistical analysis. Conclusions: behavior problems of elementary school students were significantly correlated with family parenting style, in which democracy parenting style factor was significantly negatively correlated with behavior problems, while indulgence, democracy, laissez-faire, authoritarianism, and inconsistency were significantly positive correlations. This indicates that democracy parenting style helps to prevent and stop behavior problems of elementary school students, while other parenting styles tend to cause and exacerbate behavior problems of children. Based on the above findings, some educational suggestions are proposed to provide guidance and reference for improving the situation of children's behavioral problems and the scientific of family parenting style and to provide an empirical basis for improving the mental health of elementary school seniors and improving family parenting style.

Keywords: Rural, Elementary School Students, Behavioral Problems, Parenting Styles

Introduction

In recent years, with the reform of education and the increase of social pressure, more and more elementary school seniors are experiencing behavioral problems. The psychological development of elementary school seniors is very rapid, and at this age, students' personality, cognition, thinking style, self-concept, interpersonal interaction, and socialization are in a period of development and transition (Tian, 2015). During this period, students are prone to psychological problems such as learning anxiety, low self-esteem, interpersonal disharmony, fear of learning, and obsessive-compulsive disorder (Zhu, 2015).

With industrialization and urbanization, as well as socioeconomic development, the emergence of behavioral problems in children is on the rise each year, with early studies showing that 60% of 10-year-old children with behavioral problems still exhibit similar problems 4 years later (Huesmann et al., 1984). It has also been shown that children with problems in childhood enter adulthood showing a higher incidence of psychiatric disorders than the control group. For example, Larsson et al. used the CDI to investigate 3471 Swedish

school-age children aged 8-13 years and found that more than 10% had depressive symptoms, which persisted in 40% of them at later follow-up (Larsson & Melin, 1992). This suggests that children with problem behaviors have a high probability of also having problem behaviors in adulthood. In the Chinese context, elementary school seniors in grades 5-6, who happen to be between the ages of 10-12, also have data indicating that elementary school seniors have more severe behavioral problems (Zhang, 2019). Therefore, the development of mental health in elementary school seniors is directly related to the child's psychological development in adulthood. As one of the important influences and constraints on students' social adjustment and cognitive abilities, the environment that parents create for their children and the guidance they can provide is very important. Family parenting style is the central expression of the environment and guidance that parents can provide for children's development. Compared to urban elementary school students, many parents of elementary school students in rural China are still struggling to survive, and many of them choose to go away from home to work in the city, and can only teach their children through holiday gatherings and phone calls. The mental health and behavioral problems of these students are particularly striking when they are in such a hostile family environment for long periods. Studies have shown that elementary school students in warm, caring, and moderately stressful homes can often receive emotional support from their parents academically and have a good motivation, clearer learning goals, stronger desire and initiative to learn, and fewer behavioral problems than students in adverse home environments (Yu et al., 1998).

Through the investigation of parenting styles and student behavior problems of senior elementary school students in rural China, it helps to explore some characteristics of behavior problems and parenting styles of senior elementary school students in rural China in the new era, deepen the understanding of family parenting concepts and parenting characteristics of elementary school students in rural China, and help to cause the community to strengthen targeted guidance for parents of primary school students in rural China, to make some proper suggestions. It is of theoretical and practical significance to make some suggestions for improving the mental health of primary school students and adopting the correct parenting style.

Therefore, this paper hopes to put forward the following research objectives in the context of literature reading and practice: Objective 1: To investigate whether there are gender and age differences in the behavioral problems of senior students in rural primary schools in China. Objective 2: To examine whether there are gender and age differences in family parenting styles of senior students in rural primary schools in China. Objective 3: To determine whether there is a correlation between the behavioral problems and the parenting styles of senior students in rural primary schools in China. Three null hypotheses of the study are:

Null hypothesis 1: there are no gender and age differences in behavior problems of rural Chinese elementary school seniors. Null hypothesis 2:there are no gender and age differences in family parenting styles of rural Chinese elementary school seniors. Null hypothesis 3:There is no correlation between behavior problems and family parenting styles in rural senior elementary schools in China.

Conceptual Framework

Behavior Problems

Behavior problems, as the name suggests, are problems or abnormalities in children's everyday behavior that differ from normal social norms of behavior. The research on this problem was first proposed by the American psychologist (Wickman, 1928). So far, many

experts and scholars at home and abroad have conducted a lot of research, and because of the differences in the starting point of their respective studies, the conclusions reached are not the same. However, there are similarities in the understanding of behavioral problems, for example, children grow up with behaviors that are different from those of most children, such as hyperactivity in class, inability to concentrate for a long period, and unawareness that their consciousness is wandering outside the classroom (Zhao, 2006); language disorders, not talking no matter how the teacher talks, different styles of behavior, and confusion as to which one is the real child (Jiang, 2004). These dysfunctional behaviors are socially inappropriate and harm the problem child himself. What needs to be further explained here is that behavioral problems are not only seen to occur in students who are poor learners, but also in students who excel in their studies, only the severity of the problem varies. Only students with particularly severe behavioral problems are called problem or poor students, but students with less severe behavioral problems who excel in their studies should also be given attention and focus to prevent them from developing into problem students.

Family Parenting Style

For children, it is their parents who have the most interaction with them in the family, and they have a relatively stable form and style of daily contact and communication with their children. This form and style is the family parenting style, and it has individuality and relative stability.

Experts and scholars both nationally and internationally have conducted many special studies on family parenting styles, and there are various definitions of the concept of family parenting styles because of the different perspectives of their respective studies. The most widely used is Nancy Darling, Lawrence Steinberg's (1993) concept of family parenting style as a collection of attitudes toward children conveyed by parents (mainly parents) and the emotional climate expressed by parents' behavior (Nancy & Lawrence, 1993). In addition, Venning and France (2003) summarize family parenting styles as the totality of parental attitudes and perceptions in the education of children. Baumrind (1971) argues that the definition of family parenting style should include two aspects: first, the instructions given by parents to children; and second, the responses of parents when children respond (Baumrind, 1971). Chinese experts and scholars also differ in their definitions of the concept of family parenting styles, such as parenting style, nurturing style, and education style, which express the same meaning although there are differences in the terms used. Lin Lei and other scholars have studied and summarized the types of family education styles and their characteristics and summarized five types of parenting styles (Lin, 1995). Miao Xiaochun first adopted the concept of "parenting" when he translated a foreign work on the subject (Miao& Bandura, 2003). This paper synthesizes the various statements made by experts and scholars at home and abroad and concludes that family parenting style refers to the fixed patterns, attitudes, and methods of solving parenting problems adopted by the elders in the process of raising children, which are relatively stable behavioral patterns with individual differences and reflect the emotional attitudes of parents toward their children.

Family Parenting Styles and Behavioral Problems of Elementary School Students

Psychologist Simonds, a relatively early researcher on the relationship between elementary school students' behavior problems and family parenting styles, found through his extensive data surveys that students who are accepted by their parents have fewer behavior problems, conform to social norms of behavior, and are compassionate, have a wide range of hobbies,

and are emotionally stable; conversely, if they are denied too much by their parents, students have more behavior problems and greater mood swings, either apathy shyness, fear, anxiety, and even aggression. Therefore, Simonds believes that a more appropriate parenting style is one in which parents give their children the right amount of love, affirmation, and support, without either arbitrarily dominating them or being overly harsh, or spoiling them (Simons & Conger, 2007). In addition, foreign researchers have also found that parenting styles affect children's cognitive development, with authoritarianism or permissive parenting styles being detrimental to children's academic progress and emotionally frustrated parents hindering their children's cognitive development (Wang, 2010). In conclusion, if parents have problems with their attitudes and ways of treating their children, their children are more likely to have behavioral problems, and respectful and democratic education is conducive to normal development and growth (Tian, 2015). Similarly, with the gradual increase in reports of school violence, Chinese psychologists, behavioral scientists, scholars in the medical field, and educationalists have conducted numerous related studies on it, and it is generally agreed that although various factors can contribute to behavior problems in elementary school students, parenting style is the recognized direct influence (Zhang, 2016). Wang and others (2002) found that if the warm understanding and support of fathers and mothers for their children was lacking in the family, their boys had prominent behavioral problems. If parents' warm understanding of their children was lacking and there was too much rejection and denial, interference, and protection, their girls' behavioral problems were prominent (Wang, 2002). In a study by Qing, it was found that parents' authoritarianismism and rejection of children's denial would lead to anxiety, sensitivity, and lack of self-confidence in adulthood, and they would be less able to adapt to new environments and less likely to achieve good results. Other scholars have also conducted research from different perspectives, and in general, the conclusions are similar: family parenting style affects children's academic, cognitive, physical, mental, emotional, and social development; parenting style not only has an impact on elementary school students' behavior but also sows hidden dangers for their behavior problems in adulthood (Xia & Fang, 2022). In conclusion, different scholars have conducted research from different perspectives, but in general, the conclusions are similar: family parenting styles affect children's academic, cognitive, physical, mental, emotional, and social development; parenting styles not only have an impact on elementary school students' behaviors but also sow potential problems in their adult behaviors.

Method

Participants

The survey used stratified random sampling and whole-class questionnaires to select all elementary school students in grades 5 and 6 in Xingcun Primary School and Langu Primary School in Wuyishan City, Nanping City, Fujian Province, China as the subjects of the study. A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed to the students and 245 questionnaires were returned, with 232 valid questionnaires, a return rate of 98%, and an effective rate of 92.8%. There were 63 boys and 65 girls in the fifth grade and 58 boys and 46 girls in the sixth grade.

Behavior Problems Questionnaire

The survey was conducted using the 1978 revision of the Conners Parent Use Questionnaire (PSQ, Parent Symptom Questionnaire) (Conners, 1970), containing a total of 48 questions, was grouped into 6 behavioral factors, namely, conduct problems (factor 1), learning problems (factor 2), psychosomatic problems (factor 3), impulsivity and hyperactivity (factor

4), anxiety (factor 5), and ADHD (factor 6).), anxiety (Factor 5), and ADHD (Factor 6), which were rated on a scale of 0, 1, 2, and 3. A score of 3 was assigned for more than two occurrences per week, 2 for at least one occurrence per week, 1 for more than one occurrence per week, and 0 for never occurring. The overall alpha coefficient of the child behavior scale in this study was 0.937, indicating a high level of internal consistency of the scale.

Family Parenting Style Rating Scale

This questionnaire was used to investigate parenting styles and attitudes and was developed by Yang et al (1998) in China (Yang et al., 1998). The questionnaire consisted of 40 questions divided into five dimensions: indulgence, democracy, laissez-faire, authoritarianism, and inconsistency. The questionnaire was evaluated on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 point for parents not exhibiting a certain behavior to 5 points for parents always exhibiting it. The higher the score, the more prominent the parent's indulgence, democracy, laissez-faire, authoritarianism, and inconsistency. The questionnaire was answered by the child's primary caregiver. The indulgence dimension mainly refers to parents' over-satisfaction with children's needs, over-accommodating and obeying children, and over-protecting children. The democracy dimension mainly refers to parents treating children as independent individuals, paying attention to children's initiative, and developing their self-care and selfcontrol skills. Expectations, demands, rewards, and punishments are more appropriate for children. The laissez-faire dimension mainly refers to parents' indifference to their children, parents, and children each have their scope of activities, giving their children absolute freedom, and although there is communication and exchange, there are no specific rules and requirements for their children, and there are few rewards or punishments. The inconsistency dimension refers to parents' contradictory approaches in dealing with matters related to their children, depending on the time, place, and mood. The overall alpha coefficient of family parenting style in this study was 0.915, with good internal consistency, and this scale has high accuracy and reliability.

Results

After the questionnaires were collected, the valid questionnaires were screened, reviewed, and numbered one by one, and the information of the questionnaires was coded uniformly for data entry and statistical analysis. This study finally used SPSS 21.0 statistical software to conduct descriptive statistical analysis, one-way ANOVA, correlation analysis, and one-sample t-test on the questionnaires.

1. A Comparison of Gender and Grade Differences in Behavior Problems of elementary school seniors in Rural China

(1) Comparison between genders

By t-test, there was a highly significant difference between male and female students in upper elementary grades on the anxiety factor (t=-3.430, p=0.001) and a significant level of difference in the ADHD (t=2.184, p=0.048), while there was no significant gender difference on any of the other factors. In particular, girls scored significantly higher than boys on the anxiety factor, while girls scored lower than boys on the ADHD factor.

companson between Genders						
Dimension	male		female		+	Cia
	Μ	SD	Μ	SD	t	Sig
conduct problems	1.100	0.440	0.850	0.38	1.255	0.210
learning problems	1.500	0.530	1.380	0.52	0.316	0.752
psychosomatic problems	1.480	0.040	1.420	0.41	1.060	0.290
Impulsive-Hyperactivity	1.220	0.620	1.130	0.66	1.599	0.110
anxiety	1.840	0.510	2.031	0.55	3.430***	0.001
ADHD	1.760	0.480	1.070	0.45	2.184**	0.048

Table 1

Comparison between Genders

Note: *p<0.05,**p<0.01,***P<0.001

(2) Comparison between Grades

Table 2 shows that the difference in the status of behavioral problems between fifth and sixthgrade students was not significant. Among them, the fifth graders scored higher on conduct problems, anxiety, and ADHD than sixth graders, and sixth graders scored higher on psychosomatic problems, learning problems, and impulsive ADHD than fifth graders.

Table 2 Comparison between Grades

Dimension	Fifth Grade		Sixth Grade		+	Sig
	Μ	SD	Μ	SD	L	Jig
conduct problems	1.900	0.390	1.860	0.430	1.05	0.294
learning problems	1.370	0.500	1.387	0.550	0.048	0.962
psychosomatic problems	1.411	0.370	1.578	0.430	0.366	0.715
Impulsive-Hyperactivity	1.180	0.650	1.370	0.640	0.116	0.907
anxiety	1.370	0.560	1.275	0.520	1.985	0.325
ADHD	1.362	0.440	1.110	0.480	0.657	0.511

A Comparison of Gender and Grade Differences in Family Parenting Styles of elementary school seniors in Rural China

(1) Comparison between genders

As can be seen from Table 3, there were differences between genders in indulgence and inconsistency in family parenting styles. On the indulgence factor in family parenting style, P < 0.05. i.e., there is a difference between boys and girls in indulgence in family parenting style. indulgence of girls' parents was higher than that of boys' parents, that is, parents were more likely to adopt an indulgence parenting style for girls compared to boys. On the inconsistency of family parenting style, P < 0.001. i.e., there was a difference in the inconsistency of family parenting styles between boys and girls. inconsistency of parents of girls was higher than the inconsistency of parents of boys, that is, parents were more likely to show inconsistent attitudes and practices toward girls compared to boys.

Comparison between Genders							
Dimonsion	male		female	female		Sig	
Dimension	Μ	SD	Μ	SD	ι	Sig	
indulgence	1.850	0.388	2.705	0.380	2.355	0.020*	
democracy	2.440	0.303	2.380	0.520	0.316	0.752	
laissez-faire	1.380	0.257	1.420	0.410	1.060	0.290	
authoritarianism	2.220	0.401	2.130	0.660	1.599	0.110	
inconsistency	2.071	0.334	3.570	0.550	3.430	0.001***	

Table 3

Table 4

(2) Comparison between Grades

According to the data in Table 4, there was no significant difference in family parenting styles between the fifth and sixth grades in the upper grades of rural elementary schools.

Comparison between Grades						
Dimension	Fifth Gra	Fifth Grade		Sixth Grade		Sig
	Μ	SD	М	SD	t	Sig
indulgence	2.377	0.370	2.860	0.417	1.050	0.193
democracy	1.870	0.320	1.887	0.350	1.058	0.962
laissez-faire	2.434	0.170	2.450	0.451	1.366	0.715
authoritarianism	2.580	0.630	2.370	0.225	1.116	0.907
inconsistency	2.670	2.540	1.275	0.356	1.985	0.325

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2. Analysis of Behavior Problems and Family Parenting Styles Related to elementary school seniors in Rural China

The correlation matrix in Table 5 shows that conduct problems showed significant positive correlations with all factors of family upbringing except democracy and negative correlations with democracy; learning problems showed significant negative correlations with democracy and significant positive correlations with other factors of family upbringing, and The psychosomatic problems were significantly and positively correlated with other parenting styles except democracy; Impulsive-Hyperactivity was significantly and positively correlated with indulgence, laissez-faire, authoritarianism, and inconsistency. The anxiety factor was significantly and positively correlated with indulgence, laissez-faire, authoritarianism, and inconsistency; ADHD was significantly and negatively correlated with democracy and significantly and positively correlated with the other factors of family parenting style.

Correlations					
Dimension	indulganca	democrac	laissez-	authoritari	inconsistenc
DIMENSION	indulgence	У	faire	anism	У
conduct problems	0.418**	-0.203*	0.316**	0.258**	0.373**
learning problems	0.240**	-0.360**	0.275**	0.238**	0.283**
psychosomatic problems	0.207*	-0.037	0.281**	0.188**	0.210**
Impulsive- Hyperactivity	0.317**	-0.044	0.194**	0.151**	0.237**
anxiety	0.271**	-0.066	0.320**	0.184**	0.257**
ADHD	0.319**	-0.120*	0.274**	0.217**	0.314**

Table 5 Correlations

Conclusion

Through an overall analysis of behavior problems and parenting styles of rural elementary school seniors in China, the study found that the anxiety level of rural upper elementary school female students was significantly higher than that of male students, and this result was inconsistent with the results of Huiping's (2012) study. The reason may be related to the pattern of physical and mental development of male and female students. In grades 5 to 6, it is the most critical stage of rapid physical and mental development for Chinese girls, while men only tend to mature mentally and physically in middle school. Therefore, girls are more demanding and want to be better all the time, which makes them prone to anxiety and other psychological problems. The results of this study are consistent with the reality and with the findings of the study by Zhang (2013), who found that boys are more hyperactive than girls on the ADHD factor. Therefore, null hypothesis 1 is not valid.

In addition, a study on the status of family parenting styles of Chinese rural elementary school students using gender as the independent variable found that

indulgence of girls' parents was higher than that of boys' parents, that is, parents were more likely to adopt indulgence parenting style towards girls compared to boys. At the same time, inconsistency of girls' parents was higher than the inconsistency of boys' parents, which means that parents were more likely to show inconsistent attitudes and practices toward girls compared to boys. It is likely that with the rapid development of China, the concept of son preference has changed in most parts of the country and parents are placing more importance on girls with each passing day. Therefore null hypothesis 2 is not valid.

Finally, the correlation matrix between behavior problems and family parenting styles of elementary school seniors showed that conduct problems, learning problems, and ADHD were significantly positively correlated with indulgence, laissez-faire, authoritarianism, and inconsistency of family parenting styles The results of the study showed that the relationship between the indulgence, laissez-faire, authoritarianism, and inconsistency parenting styles was significantly positive, and the democracy parenting style was negatively correlated; psychosomatic problems were significantly positive with indulgence, laissez-faire, authoritarianism, and inconsistency in and inconsistency parenting styles; Impulsive-Hyperactivity was significantly positive with indulgence, laissez-faire, authoritarianism, and inconsistency; and anxiety was significantly and positively related to indulgence, laissez-faire, authoritarianism, and inconsistency. This indicates that indulgence, laissez-faire, authoritarianism, and

inconsistent parenting styles tend to bring about adverse emotional experiences for children and seriously affect their psychologically healthy development. The positive and relaxed parenting style of democracy, on the other hand, brings children a sense of belonging and security, making them feel care, understanding, respect, and trust, which helps students develop psychologically healthy and produce fewer behavioral problems. The results of this study illustrate that the democratic parenting style contributes to the psychologically healthy development of rural elementary school seniors, while indulgence, laissez-faire, authoritarianism, and inconsistent parenting styles are detrimental to the psychologically healthy development of elementary school seniors. Therefore null hypothesis 3 is not valid.

It is undeniable that, besides school, the family is the main environment for elementary school students to live and learn, and parents are the important contact objects of children in the family, and every word and deed of parents will have an impact on children. Therefore, family parenting style plays an important role in the healthy development of elementary school students' behavior that cannot be ignored. This study mainly explores the behavior problems of elementary school seniors and their relationship with family parenting style, telling us that there is a correlation between the two and how to target to avoid and correct children's behavior problems and promote the healthy growth of elementary school students. Therefore, parents should respect and trust their children, and good communication begins with psychological equality. This study found that democracy parenting style is more conducive to the maintenance of healthy parent-child relationships compared to authoritarianism, indulgence, and authoritarianism parenting styles. Because democratic parents are at the same level psychologically as their children, there is no domination or rejection, and the child can receive psycho-emotional support, making the child feel warm and stress-free, thus enabling the child to develop an optimistic outlook on life.

Furthermore, today's society is changing rapidly, the rapid development of the social economy, people's perceptions are also changing, the Internet, cell phones, television, and other kinds of media are releasing a large amount of information every day, this information is also impacting on the growing stage of primary school students, parents sometimes because of the children say some Internet terms child differences or surprise this is precisely the parents need to change their educational concepts this is exactly where parents need to change their education, we can help children to explore their potential and strengths, to solve and avoid the emergence and deterioration of behavior problems in elementary school students, and to be more beneficial to their future development.

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