

Analysis of Migrant Children's Problems and Coping Strategies

Sui Hanwu*

School of Political Science and Law, University of Jinan, Jinan, China

**Corresponding Author.*

Abstract: In the process of social transformation, the scale of population mobility continues to expand, and the group of migrant children continues to grow. This study focuses on the problems of migrant children, comprehensively uses the theories of social stratification, socialization and social integration, and uses literature research, questionnaire survey and interview methods to carry out the analysis. The study found that while the scale of migrant children is growing, they face many difficulties in terms of education, health and family economy, and there are significant problems in social integration, access to educational resources and mental health. In terms of institutional factors, household registration and education policies restrict the protection of their rights and interests. In terms of family factors, educational concepts and economic conditions affect their growth. Among the socio-environmental factors, social discrimination and lack of community support hinder its development. Through case analysis, this paper summarizes the lessons and lessons of successful integration and integration difficulties, draws on relevant experiences at home and abroad, and puts forward solutions from the aspects of improving policies and systems, strengthening family support, and building a social support system, aiming to promote the healthy growth and social integration of migrant children, and promote the harmonious development of society.

Keywords: Migrant Children; Social Inclusion; Social Support

1. Introduction

With the acceleration of urbanization in China, a large number of people have migrated from rural areas to cities, and the scale of migrant children has become increasingly large.

According to the data of the seventh national population census, the size of China's floating population has reached 376 million, of which the number of migrant children is also considerable. These children leave their hometowns with their parents to live and study in cities, and they face many challenges, such as uneven distribution of educational resources, difficulties in social integration, and psychological stress. It is of great practical significance to study the issue of migrant children. Paying attention to the growth and development of migrant children is a manifestation of protecting their basic rights. Children are the future and hope of the country, and every child should have equal access to education and the right to development. Addressing the problems faced by migrant children can help promote social equity and justice and reduce social inequalities. A good education and growth environment can provide more opportunities for migrant children to develop, so that they can reach their full potential and contribute to society. In addition, the study of migrant children can also provide a scientific basis for the formulation of relevant policies, and promote the government and all sectors of society to take more effective measures to improve the living and learning conditions of migrant children.

2. Analysis of the Current Situation of Migrant Children

2.1 Educational Status

Access to school is the primary issue facing the education of migrant children. Although the state has introduced a series of policies to protect the right to education of migrant children, there are still many obstacles in the actual implementation process. Some urban public schools have set a high threshold for migrant children to enter the school, requiring a series of materials such as temporary residence permits, work certificates, and social

security payment certificates. Obtaining these materials is not an easy task for some families of migrant children, some of whom are unable to meet the requirements for school due to unstable jobs and discontinuous social security contributions, resulting in their children not being able to attend school smoothly. According to relevant surveys, in some large cities, a significant proportion of migrant children are still unable to enter public schools on time to receive compulsory education.

In addition, migrant children face the dilemma of going on to higher education. Due to the restrictions of the hukou system, many migrant children are unable to take the high school entrance examination in the city after completing junior high school, and have to return to the place where they are registered to take the exam. However, due to the differences in education policies and teaching content in different regions, it is often difficult for migrant children to adapt to local examination requirements after returning to their places of origin, and it is difficult for them to go on to higher education. This dilemma not only limits the educational development of migrant children, but also affects their future career choices and social development.

2.2 Health Status

Migrant children face many difficulties in providing health services. Due to high mobility, some migrant families find it difficult to establish stable medical relationships in the local area, resulting in children not having timely access to routine health check-ups and preventive health services. In some areas, the management of migrant children in primary medical and health institutions is not perfect, and there are cases of omission of registration and management, resulting in some migrant children not being vaccinated on time. According to relevant studies, the vaccination rate of migrant children is significantly lower than that of local registered children, and the incidence of some infectious diseases is relatively high. Due to the financial difficulties of their families, some migrant children cannot afford medical expenses, and often do not receive timely and effective treatment when they fall ill. Some migrant families live in the rural-urban area, where medical resources are limited and it is inconvenient to seek medical care, which also affects their use of medical

and health services.

Mental health problems are more prominent among migrant children. Migrant children leave their familiar living environment and come to unfamiliar cities, facing differences in lifestyle, language, culture and other aspects, and are prone to negative emotions such as loneliness, low self-esteem, and anxiety. Due to discrimination and exclusion in urban areas, some migrant children find it difficult to integrate into the community at school and lack friends, which further increases their psychological burden. Long-term psychological stress may lead migrant children to develop behavioural problems, such as truancy, fighting, etc., which can seriously affect their physical and mental health and academic development. Studies have shown that the incidence of depression, anxiety and other psychological problems among migrant children is significantly higher than that of local children, which needs to be paid close attention to by the society.

2.3 Family Financial Situation

In terms of income level, most of the parents of migrant children are engaged in manual labor or low-skilled jobs, such as construction workers, couriers, waiters, etc., with high work intensity and relatively low income. According to relevant surveys, the average monthly income of migrant child families is significantly lower than that of urban households, and many families are only able to maintain basic living expenses. In order to save money, some families live in poor, low-standard rental houses that lack basic living facilities, which seriously affect the quality of life and health of children. Household economic stress also has a negative impact on the psychology of migrant children. Some children feel guilty and have low self-esteem when they see their parents working hard to make ends meet, affecting their motivation and self-confidence. In the process of interacting with urban children, migrant children may feel inferior due to the differences in family economic status and dare not take the initiative to participate in social activities, which further limits their social interaction and growth and development. Financial stress can also lead to tensions in family relationships, increased conflicts and quarrels between parents, creating a bad family atmosphere for children,

affecting their mental health and character building^[1].

3.Problems Faced by Migrant Children

3.1 Social Integration Dilemma

Migrant children often experience social discrimination and exclusion in urban areas, which further exacerbates their identity crisis. In their daily lives, some urban dwellers may look at migrant children in a different light, and show unfriendliness or even discrimination in words or behaviors. In schools, some teachers and classmates may also have prejudices against migrant children, believing that they have poor learning ability and bad behavior habits, which will cause migrant children to have a sense of inferiority and isolation psychologically, and affect their evaluation and identity of themselves. The identity crisis has had a negative impact on the mental health of migrant children. Faced with a long-term identity dilemma, migrant children are prone to negative emotions such as low self-esteem, anxiety, and loneliness. Identity crises can also affect the social interactions of migrant children. Due to a lack of confidence in their own identity, they may behave too sensitively and cautiously when interacting with others, and are afraid to take the initiative to communicate with others, resulting in a narrow social circle and difficulty in establishing good interpersonal relationships.

3.2 Unequal Access to Educational Resources

There is a significant gap between migrant children and local children in terms of access to public schools, and the main constraint behind this gap is the hukou system and the consequent set of policy provisions. In China, the cost of compulsory education is mainly borne by local governments, and it is distributed according to the registered population. As a result, governments in the host countries face the pressure of insufficient education funding when admitting migrant children to school. In order to control the cost of education, public schools in some cities have set high barriers to entry for migrant children.

Differences in access to school have a profound impact on the educational development of migrant children. Unable to

access public schools, some migrant children have to choose private schools with poor teaching conditions and weak teachers, or schools for migrant children, which makes them lag behind local children at the beginning of their education. Frequent difficulties in enrolling in schools and school transfer experiences can also have a negative impact on the learning mentality of migrant children, resulting in their lack of confidence in learning and low motivation for learning.

3.3 Mental Health Risks

Migrant children have a wide range of sources of psychological stress, and environmental changes are the first to bear the brunt. As they move from a familiar rural environment to an unfamiliar city, they face huge differences in lifestyle, language, culture, and more. The relatively quiet, close-knit lifestyle in the countryside contrasts sharply with the fast-paced, highly competitive life in the city. In terms of language, the dialects of migrant children are different from the Mandarin spoken in the city, which not only leads to misunderstandings in communication, but also may cause them to feel nervous and inferior when expressing themselves. The diversity of cultures and values in cities also confuses migrant children, who need time to adapt and understand these new ideas.

Social discrimination takes a serious toll on the psyche of migrant children. In cities, migrant children are often discriminated against and excluded because of their identity. Some urban dwellers have a prejudice against migrant children, believing that they come from rural areas, have poor hygiene habits, poor academic performance, and show unfriendly attitudes towards them in their daily lives. In schools, some teachers and classmates may also discriminate against migrant children by treating them differently in terms of class questions, homework correction, and evaluation. This kind of social discrimination makes migrant children feel marginalized, and they have negative feelings such as low self-esteem and helplessness, which seriously affects their mental health and social integration.

4. Fourth, Solutions and Suggestions

4.1 Improve Policies and Systems

The government and schools should put in place policies and programs to help them make a smooth transition to their learning and life^[2]. The conditions for migrant children and their families to settle down should be gradually relaxed. Lower the threshold for urban settlement, and remove some unreasonable restrictions, such as the number of years of social security payment and residence requirements, so that more migrant families can settle in cities, so that they can enjoy the same public services and social benefits as urban household registration children. Families of migrant children who are stably employed in urban areas and have a fixed residence can be given priority to settle down and provide them with a stable living environment.

At the same time, we will further improve the "two mains" policy and strengthen the responsibility of the governments of the receiving areas in the education of migrant children. Increase investment in the education of migrant children, and ensure that migrant children can receive compulsory education in public schools or private schools with services purchased by the government. Establish and complete mechanisms to ensure funding for migrant children's education, clarifying the proportion of government at all levels of government's share of finance, and ensuring that education funds are allocated in full and in a timely manner. According to the actual number of migrant children, the governments of the places of inflow should rationally plan the layout of schools, increase the supply of places, and meet the demand for migrant children.

4.2 Family Support Reinforcement

Parents of migrant children tend to provide their children with relatively more material support and less emotional communication, and the emotional interaction of family members has an important positive effect on migrant children^[3]. In order to improve the educational capacity of parents of migrant children, the government and education departments should strengthen family education guidance services. Specialized parent schools or family education guidance centers can be established to provide regular training and guidance to parents. These trainings can cover many aspects, such as the characteristics of children's psychological

development, scientific education methods, parent-child communication skills, etc., to help parents understand their children's growth needs and master the correct education methods.

The government can increase financial subsidies for families with migrant children. Special education subsidies have been set up to provide tuition subsidies and school supplies subsidies for families of migrant children to reduce their educational burden. According to the family's economic situation and the child's learning stage, different subsidy standards are formulated to ensure the fairness and effectiveness of the subsidy. For migrant children whose families are particularly financially disadvantaged, full tuition subsidies can be provided and free school supplies can be provided.

4.3 Construction of Social Support System

Eliminating social discrimination is an important prerequisite for the social integration of migrant children, who often lack access to information about plans and policies due to long working hours, unstable lifestyles, and language barriers^[4]. Therefore, in terms of publicity and education, the government and social organizations should play a leading role in publicizing the rights and values of migrant children through various channels and forms, and raising the public's awareness and concern about the problems of migrant children. Use television, radio, newspapers, the Internet and other media platforms to publish special reports and public service advertisements on migrant children, showing the living conditions of migrant children and stories of their struggles, guiding the public to correctly understand migrant children and eliminating prejudice and discrimination against them.

Strengthening cooperation between communities, schools, and families to form a joint force in education is also the key to the construction of community support networks. The community should establish close ties with the school to understand the performance and needs of migrant children in school, and work together to do a good job in the education of migrant children. Organize training activities for parents, improve parents' educational awareness and ability, and promote the organic combination of family education with community education and

school education. Tripartite forums are held regularly among communities, schools, and families to discuss the education of migrant children, share educational experience, and form a good atmosphere of common concern and support for the growth of migrant children.

4.4 Participation of Social Organizations

Social organizations play an important role in the care and protection of migrant children, and they can provide all-round support and assistance to migrant children by carrying out various public welfare activities and providing professional services. As a professional service entity, they can use their own professional service capabilities to carry out personalized and diversified social protection services based on the characteristics and advantages of migrant children^[5]. Social organizations can carry out a variety of public welfare activities to meet the different needs of migrant children. Organize donation activities to raise school supplies, books, clothing and other materials for migrant children to improve their living and learning conditions. Organize summer camps, winter camps and other activities to provide migrant children with opportunities to expand their horizons and increase their knowledge, so that they can make new friends and cultivate teamwork spirit and social communication skills. Carry out career experience activities to let migrant children understand the characteristics and requirements of different occupations in advance, and help them establish a correct career outlook and life goals.

5. Conclusions and Prospects

This study focuses on the education, social integration and psychological issues of migrant children, and reveals the many dilemmas faced by this group in the process of growing up and the complex causes behind them. In the field of education, access to school is limited by factors such as the household registration system, and there is a gap between the quality

of education and that of local children. In terms of social integration, identity crises and barriers to social interaction are prominent; Psychologically, they are under multiple pressures brought about by environmental changes, academic pressure and social discrimination, and are prone to psychological problems such as anxiety, depression and low self-esteem. The issue of migrant children is a complex social problem involving multiple levels and fields, which requires the joint efforts of the government, families, schools and all sectors of society to take comprehensive measures in order to effectively promote the healthy growth and social integration of migrant children and achieve social equity and harmonious development.

References

- [1] LIU Yapeng, QI Xingliang, XU Youyun, et al. The Effect of Family Economic Stress and Socioeconomic Status on Social Withdrawal of Migrant Children: A Chain Mediation Model[J/OL]. Chinese Journal of Clinical Psychology, 2025, (01): 87-92+97 [2025-03-13]. <https://doi.org/10.16128/j.cnki.1005-3611.2025.01.017>.
- [2] XIAO Lina, YANG Jialing. Social Development Research, 2024, 11(04): 131-150+244.
- [3] GUO Zhiying. The relationship between parenting style and self-control of migrant children: the chain mediating role of family function and self-esteem[J]. Psychology and Behavior Research, 2023, 21(04): 503-509.
- [4] ZHAO Jinghui, LI Sirui. Construction of family education guidance service system for migrant children in the United States: history, characteristics and challenges[J]. Foreign Education Research, 2024, 51(09): 41-58.
- [5] LI Wenxiang, LIU Yifeng. Hebei Academic Journal, 2024, 44(06): 185-191.