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Research Article

Study on Education of Migrant Children in Minority Areas—Based on Self-concept*

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Abstract

Along with the reform and opening-up and urbanization process, the migrant population in China is increasing day by day, followed by a large number of migrant children. It is the same in minority areas. In this study, 654 children in minority areas in Xinjiang are investigated by questionnaire analysis. It is found that the self-concept level of migrant children in this area is low, and there is no significant difference between gender and registered permanent residence. However, there is a significant difference in the inflow time for the migrant children of minorities. The self-concept of migrant children who immigrate for 1-2 years is higher while that of migrant children who immigrate for 2-3 years or above 3 years is lower. At the same time, the self-concept level of children of Uygur and Kazak nationalities is significantly lower than that of children of other nationalities, and the self-concept level of children of Hui nationality is higher. Family support and peer support can promote the improvement of migrant children's self-concept. Besides migrant children's improvement of self-adaptability, teacher's guidance and emotional support are also the key factors influencing their self-concept.

Keywords

Migrant Children • Self-Concept • Educational Problem

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Along with the deepening of China's reform and opening up and the establishment and improvement of the socialist market economy system, the exchanges and interactions between cities and cities, villages and villages, as well as between cities and villages are becoming more and more frequent and intensive. In the process of urban and rural integration, a large number of rural populations flows to the city, and a large number of children follow their parents into the cities, becoming "migrant children". Most migrant children are born in and live in rural areas for some time before being brought into cities. Differences in urban and rural economic and social development, changes and instability in learning and living conditions often bring about many problems, such as physical and psychological health and learning and socialization (Kupersmidt & Martin, 1997; Zhou & Rong, 2011; Duan, 2015; Hu, Guo, & Liu, 2013). This tremendous change in the environment will greatly influence the formation of self-concept in children's social cognition. Self-concept refers to multi-aspect and multi-level cognition and evaluation of oneself and his relationship with environment, which is formed and developed in the process of socialization and reflects the development level of self-cognition and even self-consciousness (Ling et al., 2016). The development of self-concept in adolescence is unstable and unbalanced. Inappropriate self-concept influences the self-integration and adaptation of an individual, resulting in confusion of individual self-identity. (Xu et al., 2015) The self-concept of children is closely related to their self-esteem, psychological health, academic achievement and peer relationship (Li, Zhang, & Shi, 2016; Lu Xingyue, Zhang Dajun, 2018; Song Shukun, 2017). Self-concept gradually forms in the early adolescence which is the key condition to complete identity. Therefore, this study hopes to explore the characteristics of self-concept development of migrant children of minorities, and tries to find out the relevant factors to carry out targeted education for migrant children.

Research Method

Subjects

In this study, a cluster sampling method is used to randomly distribute 700 questionnaires in class units in 5th, 6th and 7th grades of Hetian, Urumqi and Changji, and 676 questionnaires are collected. After eliminating invalid questionnaires, 654 questionnaires are valid. There are 337 boys and 317 girls with average age of 12±0.67. The test is carried out in minority areas, so ethnic components are non-negligible, including 425 Han students, 113 Uyghur students, 44 Hui students and 72 Kazak students.

Research tool—self-concept scale

The study selects the "Children's Self-concept Scale" of Song-Hattie, which consists of seven sub-scales, namely, ability self, achievement self, class self, family self, companion self, body self, self-confidence self with a total of 35 items, of which questions 4, 12, 15, 22, 25, 26, 32, 33, are reverse scoring questions. Ability self, achievement self and class self constitute the academic self sub-scale. Family self, companion self, body self and self-confidence self constitute non-academic self sub-scale.

The scale uses 6-level scoring standard, expressed by the numbers 1-6. “1” means “don’t be the same as yourself at all” and “6” means “be exactly the same as yourself”. Subjects are asked to select the best answer for themselves. The scores of each dimension can be obtained by adding and summing the scores of all the questions under each dimension, and the total score of the self-concept can be obtained by adding the total score of each dimension. The higher the score is, the better the self-concept level is. In the revised Song-Hattie, the Cronbach α coefficient of the whole scale is 0.89, the Cronbach α coefficient of academic self-concept sub-scale is 0.84, and the Cronbach α coefficient of non-academic self-concept is 0.80.

Research procedure

The researchers distribute questionnaires to the subjects in class. In the questionnaire instruction, the subjects are informed that the questionnaires to be completed are only for academic research. This survey adopts anonymous survey, and the questionnaire data will be completely confidential.

Data processing

SPSS19.0 is used to analyze the data.

Analysis of Self-concept of Migrant Children in Minority Areas

The result of single-sample t test shows that the total scores of self-concept, academic self and non-academic self are significantly lower than the theoretical mean value (3 scores). In terms of the specific dimension, except that the body self is significantly higher than the theoretical mean value (3 scores), other dimensions are lower than the theoretical mean value (3 scores). The scores are from high to low in order: body self, achievement self, ability self, companion self, self-confidence self, class self and family self, among which family and class self-concept are weak, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Average Score of Each Factor of Self-concept Scale of Migrant Children

	Self-concept	Academic self-concept	Non-academic self-concept	Ability self	Achievement self
M \pm SD	2.61 \pm 0.77	2.65 \pm 0.89	2.58 \pm 0.75	2.74 \pm 1.04	2.81 \pm 1.02
T value	-13.78**	-10.69**	-15.29**	-6.57**	-4.48**
	Class self	Family self	Companion self	Body self	Self-confidence self
M \pm SD	2.39 \pm 0.97	1.83 \pm 0.95	2.74 \pm 1.00	3.26 \pm 0.85	2.48 \pm 1.00
T value	-17.17**	-33.49**	-6.83**	8.2**	-13.98**

Note. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, the same below

Statistics of children’s self-concept difference in minority areas in Xinjiang

In order to further investigate the self-concept level of migrant children of minority nationality, an independent sample T test is carried out on the gender and registered permanent residence, finding that there is no significant difference between children’s self-concept, academic self-concept and non-academic self-concept

in terms of the gender and registered permanent residence in minority areas. The study takes inflow time and nationality as independent variables, self-concept, academic self and non-academic self as dependent variables to conduct single-factor variance analysis, finding that the main effect of inflow time and nationality on self-concept, academic self and non-academic self is significant, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Statistics of Difference of Self-concept of Migrant Children

Variables		Self-concept (<i>M</i> ± <i>SD</i>)	Academic self (<i>M</i> ± <i>SD</i>)	Non-academic (<i>M</i> ± <i>SD</i>)
Gender	Male	2.59±0.77	2.64±0.90	2.55±0.76
	Female	2.62±0.76	2.65±0.88	2.60±0.74
	<i>t</i>	-0.61	-0.26	-0.87
Registered permanent residence	Native	2.54±0.77	2.56±0.88	2.53±0.76
	Non-native	2.68±0.76	2.75±0.90	2.63±0.73
	<i>t</i>	-2.35	-2.75	-1.77
Inflow time	Less than 1 year	2.68±0.80	2.73±0.94	2.64±0.75
	1-2 years	2.92±0.83	3.99±0.97	2.86±0.80
	2-3 years and above	2.53±0.74	2.56±0.86	2.50±0.73
	<i>F</i>	11.97**	10.19**	10.04**
Nationality	Han	2.66±0.80	2.71±0.93	2.62±0.77
	Uygur	2.48±0.65	2.44±0.70	2.50±0.70
	Hui	2.71±0.64	2.80±0.75	2.64±0.64
	Kazak	2.44±0.74	2.50±0.91	2.39±0.68
	Other minorities	2.82±0.69	2.80±0.82	2.83±0.62
	<i>F</i>	2.94*	3.23*	2.54*

At the same time, LSD test on the main effect of inflow time shows that the total score of self-concept, academic self-concept and non-academic self-concept of children who immigrate for less than one year is significantly lower than that of children who immigrate for 1-2 years. The total score of children who immigrate for 2-3 years is significantly lower than that of children who immigrate for 1-2 years. From the inflow time, the self-concept level of migrant children from high to low is: 1-2 years > less than one year > more than 2-3 years. Please see Table 3 and table 4.

Table 3
Post-LSD Test of Self-Concept of Children with Different Inflow Time

Grade	1	2	3
1. less than one year	-		
2. 1-2 years	-0.24*	-	
3. 2-3 years and above	0.15	0.39**	-

Table 4
Post-LSD Test of Academic Self-Concept and Non-Academic Self-Concept of Children with Different Inflow Time

Grade	1	2	3
1. less than one year	-	0.05*	0.14
2. 1-2 years	-0.26*	-	0.36**
3. 2-3 years and above	0.17	0.43**	-

Note. Below the diagonal line is the difference coefficient of academic self-concept of children with different inflow time, and above the diagonal line is the difference coefficient of non-academic self.

As for the total level of self-concept and academic level of children in minority areas, other minority children are the highest, followed by Hui children, Han children are slightly lower than Hui children, but there is no significant difference. The self-concept level and academic self-concept of Han children and Hui children are significantly higher than those of Uygur children and Kazak children. The self-concept level and academic self-concept of children of different nationalities from low to high are Kazak-Uyгур-Han-Hui-other minorities.

Table 5
Analysis of Difference of Self-Concept General Table of Different Minority Children

Nationality	1	2	3	4	5
1. Han	-				
2. Uyгур	0.19*	-			
3. Hui	-0.05	-0.24	-		
4. Kazak	0.22*	0.03	-0.27*	-	
5. Other minorities	-0.16	0.23	-0.38	0.31	-

Table 6
Difference Analysis of Academic Self-Concept and Non-Academic Self-Concept of Migrant Children of Different Nationalities

Nationality	1	2	3	4	5
1. Han	-	0.12	-0.02	0.23**	-0.21
2. Uyгур	0.27**	-	-0.14	0.10	-0.33
3. Hui	-0.09	-0.36*	-	0.25	-0.19
4. Kazak	0.21*	-0.06	0.30	-	-0.4
5. Other minorities	-0.10	-0.37	-0.01	-0.31	-

Note: Below the diagonal line is academic self-concept and above the diagonal line is non-academic self-concept.

In view of non-academic self-concept, there is no significant difference in non-academic self-concept among children of different nationalities except Kazak children who are significantly lower than Han children. The difference of self-concept level in children of different nationalities is mainly caused by the difference of academic self-concept level (Hartup, 1996; Jiang, 2005; Yang & Shi, 2018).

Reflection on factors influencing the self-concept of migrant children in minority areas

(1) It can be seen from the result of study that the overall self-concept level of migrant children in minority areas is low, the scores of body self and achievement self are high while the scores of family self and class self are low. Since physiological component in the self-concept of adolescent children is fewer and fewer while psychological component is more and more, self-cognition is more accurate (Damon & Hart, 1982; Bao, Li, & Xu, 2006). However, in the early years of youth, teenagers gradually separate from the family and gradually become alienated from teachers. Parent-child contradictions increase and teenagers face more challenges in school. All these strongly impact the self-concept of 12-13-year-old teenagers. At the same time, children in this period pay attention to their inner world and care about other people’s views of themselves, so their self-confidence will reduce and they will doubt their ability. Research shows that parental support, encouragement and active participation can promote the development of children’s self-concept; a good class environment and teacher-student relationship are beneficial to children’s psychological health (Guo, Wang, & Zhan., 2005; Dalimonte-Merckling, & Brophy-Herb, 2018; Gao, 2018; Lu et al., 2018). Parental support can promote and

guide the completion of migrant children's identity, form a good sense of self-identity, and then form a complete self-concept. In addition, teachers also play an important role and have a special influence on the learning and development of the primary school students. On the one hand, in the daily contact with students, teachers' own knowledge, personality, teaching ability, teaching style and career ideal will influence students' study attitude, study interest and study method imperceptibly, further influencing students' learning behavior and personality development. On the other hand, the physical and mental development of primary school students is immature and plastic and their learning habits and learning methods are in the process of formation, so they need the guidance of teachers while making independent judgment, independent choice and decision-making. Children in primary school are strongly dependent on teachers. Meanwhile, teachers, especially class advisers, can shorten the adaptation period of migrant children and help them form a good self-concept through accepting and encouraging children.

With the growth of age, children participate in more and more social activities and desire for peer intimacy. In particular, migrant children who leave far away from their homelands are eager to get class identity and peer's acceptance. Therefore, children's peer relationship gradually replaces the influence of parents, so class support is mainly good teacher-student relationship and peer relationship which will also enhance the sense of belonging of migrant children and influence the formation of their self-concept.

(2) Although there is no significant difference in self-concept among migrant children of different genders, there is significant difference in self-concept among migrant children of different nationalities. There was no significant difference in self-concept between native children and non-native children, but there is significant difference in self-concept between migrant children with different inflow time.

The study finds that the reason for the highest self-concept level of children with inflow time of 1-2 years is that migrant children gradually adapt to the new environment and remain fresh to the new environment after 1-2 years of study. As a result, their ability gets improved continuously and the achievement motivation obtained from this is also relatively strong. They can play a good role among families, classes and peers, full of longing and enthusiasm for life, so they can show a higher self-concept. However, migrant children who study for 2-3 years have adapted to the environment, but they are easy to produce lassitude after staying in the same place for a long time. Companions and teachers have been fixed and the feeling of freshness recedes. Then they enter the confusion wandering period. At the same time, that they miss their original hometowns or companions makes the self-concept level decrease. And migrant children who study for less than one year reject the surrounding and don't accept themselves because they have just entered a new environment and don't trust the strange surroundings, classmates and teachers, so the self-concept level is the lowest.

The results of this study show that Kazak children and Uygur children's self-concept level is lower, which is mainly reflected in the academic self-concept. Migrant children of Uygur nationality and the Kazakh nationality will face cultural and linguistic differences in addition to the great change in the living environment around them. Xinjiang is a multi-ethnic settlement place. Both Uygur and Kazak people live in ethnic groups and have their own languages and traditional cultures. However, the government of Xinjiang has been vigorously advocating the education of national common spoken and written language. In particular, in urban schools, teaching is basically conducted in Mandarin. Therefore, for migrant minority children from rural areas

to cities, they are facing many problems such as spatial environment adaptation, cultural adaptation, educational adaptation, language barrier and so on. The movement of space and region, the change of national cultures and the limitation of modern social system lead to the multiplicity and contradictoriness of the minority migrant children in the cultural group attribution and the identity construction. On the other hand, most of the parents of migrant children are migrant workers and small businessmen and their overall economic status and educational background are not high. The original intention of these parents to immigrate is to pursue for good education for their children. However, for reducing the cost of flow and being busy with livelihood, they often seldom return home and the living environment is not fixed, so it is difficult for them to pay attention to children's learning life and psychological health. According to previous studies, parental support is an important factor in the formation of identity and self-concept in early adolescence. Therefore, the self-concept level of Uyghur children and Kazak children is lower. It is worth noting that the self-concept level of Hui children is higher. First of all, in Xinjiang, the social and economic level of Hui nationality is generally higher. At the same time, parents of Hui nationality pay more attention to the education of children, and Hui nationality generally uses Mandarin. As a result, there are fewer language barriers in the process of inflow, so there is no discomfort in migrant children of Hui nationality even though they flow from countryside to city.

Educational Suggestions on Promoting Self-concept of Migrant Children of Minorities

From the perspective of minority children themselves, it is necessary for them to understand that they are the main body of a complete personality. After entering the new environment, they should dare to re-examine themselves, recognize their own differences and accept their own identity. They should be free from the constraints of urban and rural environmental differences and ethnic and cultural differences, seek the chance of self-worth realization, actively seek the support and assistance of parents and teachers as well as their peers, and strive to integrate themselves into the local cultural and school environment. Only through this can they build a new self and find a way to adapt in the new environment. After the children enter the senior grade, their non-academic self has been significantly improved so that they can quickly find an entry point in interpersonal communication with others. In addition, the general self of an individual will also get improved and they actively seek peer relationship support to enhance their self-concept.

In terms of teacher and school support, school in the place of movement provides a good campus environment for migrant children. The increase in number of schools accepted by the city can make them adapt to school life as soon as possible. Therefore, in the daily management of the school, the school should strengthen and encourage minority migrant children to communicate in Mandarin according to their characteristics so that they can adapt to the new campus environment in a short time. Teachers should actively construct a good teacher-student relationship and guide migrant children. In class, through friendly interaction with children, teachers can reduce their sense of strangeness to teachers and help form self-concept. Good teacher-student interaction is that teachers understand what they say and do according to the known situation of migrant children. Teachers should combine strictness with respect and trust, treat them in good faith, and give emotional support to migrant children. At the same time, teachers should guide the public opinion of the class not to discriminate against migrant children and let the children pay out sincerity, participate in the class, and

participate in the activities organized by the school together with the class, and integrate into the school environment.

As for migrant children's families, family-school cooperation and community intervention should be carried out so that parents of migrant children are promoted to understand some knowledge of children's development. Many foreign studies show that children's psychological health is related to the parents' parenting knowledge. In addition, parents' responsibility of family education should be aroused to maintain good parent-child relationship that is the core of family relationship. Poor parent-child relationship will not only bring heavy burden to children, but also increase the depression of parents. Therefore, harmonious parent-child relationship is the key factor of the healthy growth of minority migrant children's psychology, which can provide migrant children with care and help of the family, improving the children's positive self-evaluation and cognition and then forming a good and stable self-concept.

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