

Research Review of Parenting Behavior of Parents of Children with Visual Impairments in China

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Abstract: *Education of children with visual impairments in China has gain more and more attention from not only Chinese specialists and teachers but also related organization in other countries. As parenting behavior is an important component of children education, which is also one of the concerns that have been working on to the educators of children with visual impairment, this research selected all empirical studies on the subject in all Chinese papers on education of children with visual impairments in China to have a closer look at how education of children with visual impairments has been developed. The result indicates little progress on parenting behavior as well as poor quantity of empirical research papers and insufficient quality of some researches. Conclusion and analyses of parenting behavior from the selected studies are given, and followed with brief advices on future concerns of education and relevant researches of children with visual impairments in China.*

Keywords: children education, visual impairments, parenting behavior

1. Introduction

'To feed without teaching is the father's fault.'
--Three Character Canon

1.1 The Importance of Parenting Behavior

Parenting behavior is an important influencing factor of children's development. Researches show that parenting is related to the cognitive and social development as well as behavioral and psychological problems of children. For children with visual impairments, parenting behavior is of the same importance to their development. However, in China, parents of children with visual impairments lack related educational knowledge, and systematic social support and guidance is also insufficient, especially in terms of early education, thus making many children with visual impairments unable to fully develop their abilities. Such conditions have attracted the attention of some foreign organizations and institutions with rich experience in educational field of visual impairments; through international cooperative projects, they have brought some mature educational services and methods in visual impairments to some regions of China, thus boosting the educational development of children with visual impairments in China. However, research and development of Chinese education of children with visual impairments lacks support of empirical research and macro data (Hua Ying, 1998). Hence, it is difficult to evaluate the quality of education of children with visual impairments in China. Besides, it might leads to deficiency of pertinence of supportive service, which alleviates the service effects.

Given that, this paper summarizes the related researches on parenting behavior of Chinese parents of children with visual impairments and provides understanding with empirical support for the education of children with visual impairments in China.

1.2 Education of Children with Visual Impairments in China

According to the sampling data of Chinese government in 2001, the proportion of children with disabilities in China

that have received preschool education is 43.92%. Although it does not mention the concrete proportion of children with visual impairments that have received preschool education, the researcher indicates that China does not have the exact number of school age and preschool children with visual impairments and that China lacks related professional organizations and teachers and most children with disabilities are brought up and educated by their parents at home (Zhong Min, 2012). Besides, a relatively recent research on children with visual impairments indicates that although China is attaching more importance to education of children with visual impairments and the number of educational organizations and other educational services are increasing, some of these programs are still taking home as the target place for children with visual impairments to receive early education (HuaYing, 1998) Thus parents and family members are still the dominant force of education of young children with visual impairments.

After children with visual impairments reach the school age, the insufficiency of early education will lead to the development insufficiency of their abilities; parents still play important roles after children with visual impairments receive elementary education. In response to this situation, educators of children with visual impairments have summed up their experience after various practice of working with those parents. However, most of these summaries are introduction of experience rather than those with support of empirical researches on parenting behavior of children with visual impairments at school age.

2. Discussion

2.1 Current Study

Home education has been one of the main methods for children with visual impairments at preschool age in China to receive education; parents assume main responsibilities for the development of children with visual impairments at preschool age. Even for the children with visual impairments that receive intervention in professional organizations, parenting behavior also has great influence on their development. While in school age, parents play key roles in school adaptation and subsequent development of children

with visual impairments. And many schools also regard parenting education as one of their key tasks. Therefore this research focuses on parenting behavior and summarizes the empirical studies and researches with related data on parenting behavior of parents of children with visual impairments, so as to provide an understanding of education situation in China of children with visual impairments from the perspective of parenting with the support of empirical researches data.

Empirical researches on parenting behavior of parents of children with visual impairments as well as researches and papers that can provide related data in the recent 15 years were searched in the scope including published papers on Chinese journals, conference papers and unpublished theses. However, only five papers between 2000 and 2015 meet the requirements. The research objects of three of them are children with visual impairments at school age; two of them used standardized measuring tools to measure the parenting behavior and the remaining one does not show the source of the data or the methods adopted in the research. The research objects of the other two are children with visual impairments at preschool age, which mentions the contents related to parenting behavior through description, summary and simple number enumeration; the data come from researchers' interviews of children's parents.

2.2 Measurements of Parenting Behavior

Researchers have been paying attention to the influence of parenting behavior on children's development; among numerous related researches, there are multiple division methods of the types or dimensions of parenting behavior as well as according measuring tools of parenting behavior.

Egna Minnen Beträffande Uppfostran(EMBU) is the standardized measuring tool adopted in the research of children at school age. EMBU can be divided into four dimensions: rejection, emotional warmth, overprotection and favouring Subject (Aunola, 2015). In the Chinese version translated by Qiu Dongmei and colleagues, the original four dimensions became emotional warmth, overprotection and interference, rejection, and punishment for mothers and emotional warmth, punishment, interference, rejection, and overprotection for fathers (Nelson et al, 2002).

The two researches whose objects are children at preschool age adopted interview method; through interviewing parents of children with visual impairments and analyzing interview contents, it summarized the parenting behavior of children at preschool age. However, in these two researches, only one of them mentioned related theoretical evidence when discussing parenting behavior. Before interview, Aunola (2015) concluded three types of parenting behavior of parents with children with visual impairments from former researches on parenting and parent-child interaction - pity and spoil the children, feel shame for having the children and abandon them, and face the impairments and educate the children.

2.3 Analysis of Parenting Behavior

Parenting Behavior of Parents of Children at Preschool Age

Even though none of the two chosen researches related to parenting behavior in preschool period has given details on theoretical foundation of how they analyze their interviews, both of them have stated the predominant features of how these parents raise their children with visual impairments.

In the researches which focus on the influence of different educational environments on the psychological development of children with visual impairments at preschool age, HuaYing. (1998) observed and interviewed parents of 13 children with visual impairments between 3.5 and 7, summarized the parenting behavior of parents of these 13 children with visual impairments and compared their parenting behavior before and after entering the school. The Research indicates that before children receive school education, 4 parents tend to provide purposeful education and guidance for children, among whom one child is an orphan from welfare house and one inherits the disease of visual impairments from the family. Parents who spoiled their children and met all their requirements and did not provide any purposeful education before the children received school education takes up 53.8%; these parents 'treat their children as a delicate flower' and 'never think about anything to teach the children except trying to ensure them adequate clothing and food, satisfying all the demands and doing everything for them' (Zhong Min, 2012). Still, 2 parents neglected their children, did not conduct any educational behavior to their children and ignored the demands of their children. After children began to receive school education, 8 parents can actively support the school to be concerned about the educational information; however, there are still 4 parents who gave the educational responsibilities to the school and did not pay any attention to the children. They even 'visited their children for only once or twice within a semester' (Zhong Min, 2012). The parents who provided purposeful education and guidance for their children before school all supported the school and paid attention to the educational information of their children; only 4 of the parents who did not provide proper parenting behavior for children before supported the school.

In another research that focuses on the interaction between parents and preschool-age children with visual impairments, Zhong Min (2012) interviewed 12 families of children with visual impairments, stated and analyzed in great details the parent-oriented parenting behavior. Among the parents of these 12 families, 70% focus totally on the cognitive development of children and only 30% hold that children should participate in social activities and learn to be independent. It means that in most of the families, interaction between parents and children focuses only on questions such as 'what's this?'. The other features of parenting behaviors listed in researches without detailed data include the following aspects: parents give fewer responses and pay less attention to children; interactions with children are mostly done through guidance on language and behavior of children; parent-child interactions are mostly carried out in a compulsory way, sometimes with violence, with much punishment and few awards. After analyzing the interviews,

the researcher summarized the parenting style of families of children with visual impairments, expanding the former three types to the following four types: authoritarian parenting, permissive parenting, democratic parenting and uninvolved parenting; it further divided the parenting behavior of facing the impairments and educating the children into authoritarian parenting and democratic parenting. Permissive parenting is the method adopted by most of the families of children with visual impairments; this kind of parents does everything for their children. Authoritarian parents center on themselves and neglect children's appeal; they may also use violence in compelling the children. Democratic parents pay both attention to children education and their demands; they encourage their children to express themselves and learn to be independent. Uninvolved parents give up on education of children, lose confidence in them and do absolutely nothing for them; but some of the uninvolved parents will regain their confidence and pay attention to their children's development after they see the children's competences.

In the above two researches, spoiling because of the children's pitiful eye condition is the commonest parenting behavior of parents of preschool-age children with visual impairments in China. These parents express their love for children in the permissive way. They satisfy all the demands of children except for the development demands, which is related to the limited knowledge of parents and the concept of compensating the children.

Parenting Method of Parents of Children at School Age

In a paper focusing on familial education of children at school age, although data resource and investigation method are not given, it indicates that parents who think little of children with visual impairments and hence give up education of them take up 25% in the researched group; parents who show sympathy for children and hence spoil them take up 50%. This result is similar to the investigation results of Zhong Min (2012) that study parenting behavior of parents of children with visual impairments at preschool age. That is to say that whether children reach the school age or not, most parents of children with visual impairments will treat them in a permissive or neglected way, if schools do not remind them.

As children with visual impairments enter primary school and possess the ability of finishing scales and evaluating their parents' behavior independently, researchers begin to study parenting behavior with the children's evaluation. The following two are the research results of parenting behavior evaluated by children with visual impairments with EMBU. Thanks to the convenience of collecting questionnaire data in schools for the blinds, the number of research subjects is much larger than those of preschool-age children. And the two researches also provide comparison group--children with normal vision at similar age. In the researches of parenting behavior of parents of children with visual impairments, Zhong Min (2012) randomly chose students,

respectively, from Guangzhou School for the Blind, and Jinan School for the Blind, Binzhou School for the Blind, to study parenting behaviors of fathers and mothers of children with visual impairments on different dimensions of EMBU. She (2012) chose 92 students (59 boys) from Grade 3 to Grade 5 at 10.01 years old in averaged from Guangzhou School for the Blind, among whom 28 are low vision. And Li Juan (2002) chose 100 students (63 boys) from Jinan School for the Blind and Binzhou School for the Blind, averaged at 12.45 years old. Among these 100 students, 96 were included in the data analyses, but the research did not explain the reason for the 4 missing ones. The comparison group in line with Guangzhou School for the Blind includes 43 students (26 boys) at Grade 3, whose average age is 10.02. The comparison group in line with children with visual impairments in Jinan School for the Blind and Binzhou School for the Blind includes 100 students at Grade 6 and Grade 7, averaged at 12.11 years old.

Table 1 listed the scores of parenting behavior of parents of children with visual impairments and those of comparison group in all the dimensions in the two researches. The scores of the comparison group are basically the same in the two researches, but those of children with visual impairments are not all the identical. In the scores of parenting behavior of parents of children with visual impairments and those of comparison group in the subjects in Guangzhou, the differences of parenting behavior of mothers are significant in all five dimensions: emotional warmth ($t=-4.572$, $p<0.001$), overprotection and interference ($t=4.462$, $p<0.001$), rejection ($t=-5.794$, $p<0.001$), punishment ($t=6.087$, $p<0.001$), favouring subject ($t=-7.014$, $p<0.001$); and parenting behavior of fathers has significant difference in three dimensions: emotional warmth ($t=-6.127$, $p<0.001$), punishment ($t=5.468$, $p<0.001$), favouring subject ($t=-6.721$, $p<0.001$) (Zhong Min, 2012). In the researches of Li Juan (2002), the dimension of favoring subject is not measured; parenting behavior of mothers has significant differences in two of the four dimensions: overprotection and interference ($t=2.14$, $p<0.05$) and punishment (2.30, $p<0.05$); and parenting behavior of fathers has differences in two of the five dimensions: punishment ($t=2.01$, $p<0.05$), overprotection ($t=3.24$, $p<0.005$).

In the two researches, mothers of children with visual impairments show more punishment, overprotection and interference than those of normal children; fathers of children with visual impairments show more punishment. In addition, although the dimension of favoring subject is only measured in the research of HuaYing (1998); yet the results shows that children with visual impairments get less preference than children with normal vision do. And in the subjects of Guangzhou, children with visual impairments also get less emotional understanding and concern than the normal children do; they get more refusal from their mothers than the normal children do. But these conditions do not appear in the other research.

Table 1: Parenting Behavior of Parents of Children with Visual Impairment and Parents of Normal Children

Type of Children	Children with Visual Impairments		Children with Normal Vision	
Region	Guangzhou School for the Blind (92)	Jinan School for the Blind and Binzhou School for the Blind (96)	Comparison Group (Guangzhou 43)	Comparison Group (Jinan) (100)
Parenting Behavior of Mothers				
Emotional warmth	47.37±9.337	53.4±9.46	51.82±10.09	51.82±10.09
Overprotection and Interference	34.55±5.706	34.6±5.36	31.90±5.86	31.90±5.86
Rejection	10.64±2.514	13.2±3.87	12.16±4.73	12.18±4.73
Punishment	13.30±3.001	13.9±5.48	11.40±4.48	11.40±4.48
Favouring subject	6.88±4.253		9.99±3.81	
Parenting Behavior of Fathers				
Emotional warmth	44.87±8.063	51.57±6.7	50.02±9.38	50.02±9.38
Punishment	19.13±4.368	19.74±6.47	16.64±7.36	16.64±7.36
Interference	19.98±3.524	20.80±3.50	19.54±3.97	19.54±3.97
Favouring subject	6.86±4.226		9.82±3.83	
Rejection	10.01±2.540	10.14±2.94	9.50±2.67	9.50±2.67
Overprotection	10.89±2.695	11.89±2.68	9.96±2.96	9.96±2.96

3. Conclusion

In the past 15 years, China has paid more and more attention to the education of children with visual impairments. Apart from the efforts of native educators in China, many experienced foreign organizations and staffs with advanced techniques and philosophy are also working in this field. However, from the perspective of parenting behavior of parents of children with visual impairments, the educational quality of children with visual impairments in China is still not that satisfactory. In the preschool stage, over half of parents spoil their children with visual impairments; some of the parents who can accept the fact that their children have visual impairments and attach enough importance to early education of their children are tiger moms and wolf dads who control the children from their perspectives. Those are obviously not the advocated parenting behavior (Lohaus et al., 2009). When children with visual impairments reach the school age and begin to receive primary school education, they will receive more punishment from their parents than their peers with normal vision do and more over-protection and intervention from their mothers; however, they feel less preference from their parents. Even in a research, children with visual impairments feel less warmth from their parents, although they feel less refusal of their mothers than the children with visual impairments do. Children with visual impairments at school age can feel their parents' protection; however, their parents often spoil them, not seeing nor trusting their competences. They do that for compensation the children as well, which is not the way of understanding and cultivating their children. One of the reasons for more punishment and control may be restrict the activities of children. And some children thus fell less emotional concerns.

From the summary of this research, it can be seen that from preschool age to school age, parents of children with visual impairments tend to over-protect, intervene in and control their children. Children with visual impairments receive less treatment with positive effect in the development of their abilities from their parents. In China, educators dealing with children with visual impairments should not only give education to children with visual impairments, but also give rearing and education guidance to their parents as early as at

preschool period, so that parenting behavior could be more adaptable to the demands of children with visual impairments, which will be more helpful to the development and growth of these children with special needs.

However, researchers in the field of education of children with visual impairments in China do not pay much attention to parenting behavior and they do not have the access to directly contact with children with visual impairments; and the educators who have the most understanding of real conditions do not have much research skills — most of them adopt the method of general description to do their researches (Zhong Min, 2012). Hence there are not that many researches that can provide data for this paper and the qualities vary. Besides, the data on which the conclusion of this paper is based on cannot cover the conditions of all the regions in China. Family is an important part of children's growth and education environment and parenting behavior has great influence on children's development. Therefore, in future researches, standardized methods should be adopted to measure the parenting behavior of parents of children with visual impairments at preschool age; sample quantity should also be increased so as to get more comprehensive data. And for children with visual impairments at school age, more research methods should be adopted so as to know more about parenting behavior from the perspective of parents and children. Meanwhile, sampling quantity and type should also be increased so as to investigate the actual conditions of all regions in more details, which will be of realistic help for educators to progress their work in pertinency and for parents to provide children with visual impairments better education and support from family.

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