

Social group work, parental engagement and child safety in rural China: A case study in Shaan Xi province

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ABSTRACT. Children in rural areas of China often lack adequate safety knowledge and awareness, highlighting the need to improve their environment and strengthen their road safety education. To address the problem of inadequate safety measures, social work-based educational interventions can effectively raise their self-protection awareness and strengthen their self-reliance and resilience. Through literature reviews and field research based on questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, this study aims to improve the safety skills of rural children by providing insights and recommendations for social work teams in similar contexts. Parents, teachers and social work team members from 10 primary schools (grades 3-6) in L County, Shaanxi Province participated. The results indicate that parental involvement significantly influences safety education. Social work-based educational interventions can effectively address the lack of safety awareness among rural children, increasing their self-protection and self-reliance, and build resilience. The importance of collaborative networking between home, school and community is highlighted.

Keywords: safety education, rural areas, social group work, parental involvement.

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Trabajo social en grupo, implicación parental y seguridad infantil en la China rural: Un estudio de caso en la provincia de Shaan Xi

RESUMEN. Los niños que viven en zonas rurales de China suelen carecer de los conocimientos y la concienciación adecuados en materia de seguridad, lo que pone de relieve la necesidad de mejorar su entorno y reforzar su educación vial. Para abordar el problema de las medidas de seguridad inadecuadas, las intervenciones educativas basadas en el trabajo social pueden elevar eficazmente su conciencia de autoprotección y reforzar su autosuficiencia y resiliencia. Mediante revisiones bibliográficas y una investigación de campo basada en cuestionarios y entrevistas semiestructuradas, el estudio pretende ofrecer ideas y recomendaciones a los equipos sociales en contextos similares y mejorar las competencias de seguridad de los niños y niñas rurales. En el estudio participaron padres, profesores y miembros de equipos de trabajo social de 10 escuelas primarias (de 3.º a 6.º curso) del condado de L, en la provincia de Shaanxi. Los resultados indican que la participación de los padres influye significativamente en la educación sobre seguridad. Las intervenciones educativas basadas en el trabajo social pueden abordar eficazmente la falta de conciencia de seguridad entre los niños rurales, aumentando su autoprotección, autosuficiencia y resiliencia. Se destaca la importancia de establecer redes de trabajo colaborativo entre el hogar, la escuela y la comunidad.

Palabras clave: educación sobre seguridad, zonas rurales, trabajo social, participación de las familias.

Trabalho social em grupo, envolvimento parental e segurança infantil na China rural: Um estudo de caso na província de Shaan Xi

RESUMO. As crianças que vivem em áreas rurais da China geralmente não têm conhecimento e conscientização adequados sobre segurança, destacando a necessidade de melhorar seu ambiente e fortalecer a educação sobre segurança viária. Para resolver o problema das medidas de segurança inadequadas, as intervenções educacionais baseadas no trabalho social podem aumentar efetivamente a conscientização sobre a autoproteção e fortalecer sua autoconfiança e resiliência. Por meio de revisões da literatura e pesquisas de campo baseadas em questionários e entrevistas semiestruturadas, o estudo tem como objetivo fornecer ideias e recomendações para equipes sociais em contextos semelhantes e melhorar as competências de segurança de crianças da zona rural. O estudo envolveu pais, professores e membros da equipe de assistência social de 10 escolas primárias (3ª a 6ª séries) no condado de L, província de Shaanxi. Os resultados indicam que o envolvimento dos pais influencia significativamente a educação sobre segurança. As intervenções educacionais com base no trabalho social podem abordar com eficácia a falta de conscientização sobre segurança entre as crianças da zona rural, aumentando sua autoproteção, autoconfiança e resiliência. Destaca-se a importância de estabelecer redes de colaboração entre o lar, a escola e a comunidade.

Palavras-chave: educação sobre segurança, áreas rurais, trabalho social, participação da família.

Introduction

In light of the launch of UNESCO's "Disaster Risk Reduction Begins at School" (DRR) campaign in 2023 and the growing ~~increased~~ emphasis on life-safety education following the 2020 pandemic, the global education community increasingly recognises ~~has come to recognise~~ education as a key ~~potentially valuable~~ tool for managing disasters and fostering sustainable development (UNESCO, 2023). In the post-pandemic era, this paper ~~respectfully~~ reflects on these lessons and explores the potential implementation of safety education for children.

Although ~~While~~ rural schools do face certain challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, underqualified teachers, and limited learning resources, they also possess unique strengths. These include smaller class sizes, close teacher-student relationships, and valuable life experiences from rural communities (Andrés & Garreta, 2023; Du, 2014; ~~González et al., 2021~~; Llevot et al., 2025; Redding et al., 2012). However, it must be acknowledged that there are still some challenges to overcome in terms of safety education in rural areas. Key issues requiring ~~Some of the key issues that require~~ attention include road safety, fire hazards, earthquake preparedness, and drowning prevention.

According to the ~~The~~ World Health Organization's 2014 Global Drowning Report (2014), ~~indicates that~~ drowning is a significant cause of injury-related mortality ~~deaths~~ among children aged 1–14, and accounts ~~accounting~~ for a considerable proportion of unnatural deaths among primary and secondary school students.

Thus, this research employs a cross-sectional study based on Bandura's social learning theory and seeks to integrate safety awareness, knowledge, and skills education with family education theory. The study was conducted in rural schools using a social work team approach with the aim of investigating safety issues among students in grades 3-6. It also sought to contribute to the development of child-focused social work theories. The research questions guiding this study are:

1. How can family and social work teams best support children in rural areas?
2. What factors contribute to the vulnerability of children in rural areas?

Literature review

Left-behind children

For the purposes of this review, the term 'left-behind children' is used to describe those under the age of 18 who are cared for by others while one or both parents are away for six months or longer ~~more. It is often the case that these~~ These children typically come from rural areas and are often referred to as "left-behind children in rural areas". Some scholars have put forth the idea that these children are effectively excluded from the opportunity ~~missing the chance~~ to migrate with their parents and ~~are~~ instead remain ~~left behind~~ in their hometowns, under the care of ~~cared for by~~ relatives or acquaintances (Bryant, 2005).

While migrant parents may provide left-behind children with considerable financial resources, it is possible that the absence of parental care and changes in living environments could disrupt family structure and impact children's quality of life (Bryant, 2005; Graham, 2015; Llevot & Garreta, 2024; Pottinger, 2005). The lack of consistent supervision ~~It would seem that this lack of proper supervision~~ and protection often forces left-behind children to manage significant responsibilities, such as handling large sums of money and caring for younger siblings. Such disruptions can contribute to a range ~~have the potential to give rise to a number~~ of psychological issues, including anxiety, loneliness, depression, low self-esteem and feelings of abandonment (Chen, 2023; Han & Liang, 2023).

However, some researchers suggest that these negative effects may not be solely due to parental separation, but could be influenced by a combination of individual, familial, and environmental factors, such as previous mental health issues, traumatic experiences, and early attachment disorders (Fan & Birmaher, 2010; Mercado et al., 2022). It seems that a more comprehensive approach may be necessary to fully understand the challenges faced by left-behind children, given the complexities involved.

Safety Education

The term "safety" is understood to mean the state of being free from threats, dangers, hazards, and potential losses (~~Glendon, Clarke & McKenna~~ Glendon et al., 2016). Safety education can be defined as organised, purposeful and planned initiatives that are designed with the intention of enhancing the physical and mental well-being of learners by developing their knowledge, skills and attitudes related to safety. It places great emphasis on student-centred learning and strives to foster the abilities to prevent and manage safety incidents, thereby ensuring self-protection (Brussoni et al., 2012; Van, 2021; Xu, 2020). In China, the "Guideline for Public Safety Education in Primary and Secondary Schools", issued in 2007, suggests that there may be value in considering ways to strengthen safety education in schools. It is worth noting that the focus on academic achievement has unfortunately resulted in safety education being somewhat fragmented, formalistic and inconsistent. The World Health Organization's Global Drowning Report (2014) indicates that drowning is a significant cause of injury-related death among children aged 1-14 in China, accounting for approximately 60% of unnatural deaths among primary and secondary school students. The Ministry of Health estimates that around 57,000 people die from drowning each year in China, representing 26% of all accidental drowning deaths worldwide, with children accounting for 56.04% of these fatalities. These alarming statistics highlight the crucial need for comprehensive safety education for primary school students to mitigate risks and safeguard their well-being.

Social Work Group

Social work is a field that involves engaging with communities or individuals with the aim of mobilising resources, facilitating autonomy and addressing social issues (Rodríguez & Ferreira; 2018; Seller, 2015). In China, social workers have found that group work can be an effective tool for enhancing social functioning, fostering change and growth through organised

activities (Xu, 2002). ~~It would seem that effective~~ Effective child-safety interventions appear to require both micro-level and macro-level approaches. On the one hand, at the micro level, collaboration with communities, schools, and families is essential, while at the macro level, enhancing social welfare services and legal protections for children is crucial. On the other hand, the "social worker + volunteer" model integrates resources coordination and tailored safety services to address local needs, ensuring a safe environment for children (Xu & Zhong, 2018). A study in Yunnan Province developed safety education ~~programmes~~ programs for left-behind children in ethnic minority communities, with the aim of utilising group work methods based on social learning and gender theories (Yang, Wu & Du, 2023). While group work was found to be an effective approach to addressing safety issues, the study highlighted the potential benefits of integrating case work, group work and community work in order to better meet the diverse needs of left-behind children.

It would therefore seem prudent to focus this research on left-behind children in grades 3-6, whose parents work away from home, leaving them with limited safety knowledge. From 2021 to 2023, I had the privilege of volunteering in social group activities. With safety education as a foundation, this research will assess social group initiatives over four semesters in the county, with the aim of enhancing safety awareness among these children.

Synergy between family involvement, schooling and social group intervention

Synergy theory, developed by the German scholar Hermann Haken (2004), emphasises the creation of new order through the interaction of different subsystems. When external influences reach a certain threshold, the subsystems interact, creating a coupled state that moves the system from disorder to stability. In Spain, several authors (Garreta et al., 2026; Llevot & Bernad, 2024; Vecina et al., 2026) empathized the importance of building strong and effective connections between schools, families, and the community, which have a positive impact on teaching practices, the school climate, parental engagement, and student's educational success. In this line, a ~~A~~ study by Goodall (2022) emphasised the importance of building strong

relationships between parents, schools and students to increase parental involvement in education. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory further supports this approach, suggesting that individual development is influenced by a complex, multifaceted ecosystem. Applying this theory to 'home-school-community' safety education can integrate different levels of education, making safety education more effective (Bin, 2023).

Educational synergy involving families, schools and communities is well established in the United States, where collaboration between these entities promotes healthy student development (Abernethy & MacAuley, 2003; Li & Cai, 2010). Similarly, in Japan, community resources have been effectively integrated with school sports programmes to enhance physical fitness and education (Liu & Yu, 2014). This demonstrates that optimal educational outcomes are achieved through collaborative efforts between families, schools and communities. In China, while the 'Guideline for Public Safety Education in Primary and Secondary Schools' (2007) advocates strengthening safety education, its implementation has been inconsistent due to the focus on academic advancement. Families often criticise schools for inadequate safety education when incidents occur, highlighting the need for shared responsibility between families, schools and communities. This study aims to explore the impact of integrated family, school and community education on improving the safety skills of primary school children in rural areas. In particular, it examines the role of social work group interventions in improving students' safety awareness and behaviour.

Methodology

The research methodology for this study combined qualitative and quantitative approaches. First, a literature review was conducted to review existing theoretical knowledge on school, family and social security education. Based on this review, interview questions were formulated. Field research included face-to-face interviews with students and some parents in Shaanxi Province, and telephone interviews with parents living in remote areas. In addition, interviews were conducted with administrators of social work teams and school principals responsible for

safety. Parental consent was obtained to protect the privacy of minors, and all data were kept confidential. The data collected was analysed using SPSS 26 for statistical analysis.

~~In regard to~~ Regarding the data obtained, the ethical standards set forth in the Declaration of Helsinki (2013) were respected. The participants were duly informed of the nature and scope of the investigation and provided their consent. The confidentiality of the participants and the safeguarding of their personal data were guaranteed.

Survey

L County in Han Zhong City, located at the southern foot of the Qin Ling Mountains, is a national-level poverty-stricken county and a provincial-level deep poverty-stricken county. L County has large mountains and deep ravines, poor land, harsh natural conditions and frequent natural disasters (2020). In August 2021, severe rainfall paralysed the county's infrastructure ~~was paralyzed~~ and caused the collapse of numerous houses ~~many houses collapsed due to the rising rainfall~~ ~~you~~. It was only after many days of "fighting" that villagers were able to save their homes. Drawing on this experience ~~Therefore~~, one of the authors ~~the author~~, who participated as both ~~an~~ as a teacher and as a volunteer, hopes that this study will provide practical advice for more villages and towns in the same geographical area of the county to prevent security capacity. Ten schools from the county that have received and are receiving social work team interventions, were selected for the study, to compare the social work team interventions and family interment effective.

Participants

The 89 left-behind children surveyed, 28% were girls and 61% were boys; the largest number of left-behind children were in Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6.

Table 1. The information of the participants

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		Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Gender	girls	6	10	5	7
	boys	15	17	14	15
Mark	Number	21	27	19	22
	Percent	22.0%	22.0%	25.3%	21.7%

Source: Research own

Questionnaire & interview

The questionnaire consists of three main parts: personal information, safety awareness and safety knowledge and skills. In this study, the author compiled the "Outline of Interviews with Guardians of Left-behind Children" to collect information on the safety education of left-behind children by guardians and teachers, in order to comprehensively understand and analyse the situation of safety education received by left-behind children in rural areas.

Group work

The group work model is one of the most efficient methods for achieving results (Slavin, 2010). It is a dynamic process with distinct stages, each with its own development model and life cycle. In social work, it is often thought that these stages can be divided into five stages: preliminary contact, power and control, intimacy, differentiation, and separation (Xu, 2002). In practice, this study suggests that the group work process could be divided into two main parts: the first part could be the preparation stage and the organisation and implementation stage; the second part could be the early, middle and late stages.

In light of the current safety awareness, knowledge and skill levels of the children in County L who have been left behind, and in response to their specific needs, we have endeavored to implement targeted interventions using professional group work methods. It may

be of interest to note that this method has also been used in parallel projects in other areas. It is therefore the intention of the social organisation to conduct research on this topic with a view to improving the safety awareness, knowledge and skills of left-behind children, which represents the core focus of this research. It is hoped that the practical implementation of this project will make use of the strengths of social work methods, set up special groups and strengthen safety education and skills development for left-behind children. In light of the aforementioned considerations, the proposed timetable for the implementation of this project is as follows:

Table 2. Planning for group work

Time	Stage	Activity	Goal	Content
1	Initial phase	Knowledge of group objectives and programme of activities Establishing a group compact		Questionnaire & interview
2	Intermediate phase	Traffic Safety A & B	1 Recognize traffic safety hazards; 2 Learn traffic safety knowledge and skills; 3 Completing classroom assignments	Questionnaire
3		Traffic Safety C D		Questionnaire
4		Fire Safety A B	1 Identify fire hazards;	Questionnaire & interview
5		Fire Safety C D	2 Learning to save yourself and each other from fire	Questionnaire
6		Drowning prevention A B	1 Recognise drowning hazards;	Questionnaire
7		Drowning prevention C D	2 Learn to make correct	Questionnaire

			judgements about the risk of drowning; 3 Acquire knowledge and skills of self-rescue and mutual rescue from drowning	
8		Earthquake safety A B	1 Recognize drowning hazards;	Questionnaire
9		Earthquake safety C D	2 Learn to make correct recognize about the risk of drowning; 3 Acquire knowledge and skills of self-rescue and mutual rescue from drowning	Questionnaire & interview
10	Post-implementation phase	Summary		

Source: Research own

Results

The impact of group work interventions in children's safety education

Education is a joint endeavour that benefits from the involvement of families, communities and schools. With the kind permission of the school and community, students kindly agreed to take part in safety knowledge assessments. Table 3 presents the scores of students before the safety group intervention. The results suggest a notable improvement in the safety questionnaire scores, particularly among left-behind children. This chapter analyses the impact from two perspectives: first, through questionnaire surveys and real-time data provided by social work group organisers and volunteers; and second, through interviews with local social organisation

leaders and a volunteer team comprising social workers and teachers.

Table 3. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test results of safety knowledge of children left behind in 10 primary schools (N=10)

School Name	Subject	Traffic Safety	Fire Safety	Safety against drowning	Earthquake safety	Average Mark
	Time					
A	Before	60	70	50	60	60
	After	90	100	80	90	90
B	Before	40	70	40	50	50
	After	100	100	100	90	97.5
C	Before	40	50	40	60	47.5
	After	100	90	80	100	92.5
D	Before	50	70	70	80	90
	After	100	100	90	80	92.5
E	Before	60	20	10	30	30
	After	80	80	90	80	82.5
F	Before	80	80	40	30	57.5
	After	100	100	70	80	87.5
G	Before	70	40	60	60	57.5
	After	100	100	70	90	90
H	Before	70	70	50	40	57.5
	After	100	90	80	70	85
I	Before	50	50	40	50	47.5
	After	90	100	70	80	85
J	Before	70	40	50	60	55
	After	90	90		90	87.5

Source: Research own

Table 3 shows a notable increase in security awareness among all group members following the group work intervention, based on the comparison between the pre-test and post-test results of the Security Awareness Scale. We are pleased to report that nine members scored above 70, while the remaining members scored above 60, with more than half surpassing the passing threshold. This suggests that the participants may have derived considerable benefit from the safety education activities and may have achieved the anticipated outcomes.

With the kind permission of their parents, a number of primary school students kindly agreed to be interviewed and shared their experiences. They indicated that the social work team

intervention had been beneficial in enhancing their safety knowledge. For instance, one student reflected:

I remember my grandpa never wore a helmet when taking me to school on his motorbike. After learning about traffic safety, I gently suggested to him that it might be a good idea to buy helmets for us, and now I feel much safer.

At the conclusion of the group activity, the social worker kindly requested feedback from the students regarding their experience with the safety education activities. The group members were all in agreement that they had enjoyed the group instruction and activities, and that they recognised the importance of safety education for their personal development. Parents were also invited to the final session, where they shared positive feedback and expressed their support for the safety education programme. They also conveyed a desire for similar activities to be held on a regular basis.

Limited Family Participation Modalities

It would be beneficial to expand the safety education provided to left-behind children to include more areas, such as road safety, fire safety, earthquake preparedness, and drowning prevention. Grandparents, who are often the primary caregivers, often find themselves relying on verbal instruction to impart safety knowledge. However, it should be acknowledged that their limited awareness of safety education may potentially hinder their effectiveness in teaching. For instance, during an interview, a grandmother shared her concerns:

There's a river in our village. I often advise my grandson not to swim there, but he doesn't always heed my advice, and I've caught him by the river on a few occasions.

Furthermore, there is a need for improvement in the infrastructure and resources available for safety education in local schools. Currently, there are limited professional materials and effective dissemination channels, which presents an opportunity for enhancement. A grandfather helpfully highlighted this gap by saying:

Safety is discussed at every parent-teacher meeting, but it can be challenging to fully grasp the

true risks of fire without experiencing them firsthand.

Another mother observed that there seems to be a perception that safety education is the school's responsibility, rather than that of the family.

It would be beneficial for schools to address safety issues more frequently. At present, attention often shifts to other topics, and parents may assume that their children are safe at home simply because they are watching TV or playing games.

It is often the case that the responsibility falls on elderly caregivers, who may find it challenging to supervise due to their own limitations. A grandmother kindly offered her perspective:

It is my understanding that safety education is a family responsibility, but I feel that there is room for improvement in terms of supervision. My daughter is employed elsewhere, and I am fortunate to be able to care for my grandson along with three other grandchildren. It can be a little challenging, especially now during the winter break. One of the grandchildren recently had an unfortunate accident involving a stove. It would be wonderful if schools could offer more guidance on safety and provide activities to keep children engaged and safe.

School teachers' Awareness of Lack

The primary school teachers interviewed in County L highlighted the crucial role of student safety education in creating a safe and conducive learning environment. They emphasised that it is a fundamental prerequisite for effective teaching and learning. At Primary School A, a great deal of attention is paid to safety education, with annual meetings dedicated to this important topic and specialised sessions addressing seasonal risks such as drowning and fire prevention. However, teachers often rely on personal experiences rather than formal training to deliver safety education. The methods they primarily use are didactic, with younger teachers occasionally incorporating multimedia tools. Teachers have identified a few challenges that they face in the delivery of safety education. These include a lack of familiarity with the subject matter, a shortage of professional teaching materials, and a limited range of instructional methods.

Furthermore, the quality of safety education may be limited by constraints such as small

school size, limited funding, and inadequate resources. As a result, teachers reported that they would benefit from greater access to specialised training and resources, which they believe would enable them to teach safety more effectively.

For instance, one teacher observed that:

I'm not a classroom teacher, so I usually only discuss safety when I observe something unsafe. Perhaps there could be more opportunities for us to talk about safety together as a team?" It might be helpful if the school could consider organising some specialised courses for teachers, with a view to improving the quality of safety education.

Discussion

Lack of safety education for children

It would be beneficial to consider the possibility of enhancing the effectiveness of safety education for left-behind children in rural areas through collaboration among various stakeholders (Guan & Deng, 2019; Zhang & Naprathansuk, 2024). However, our review of the literature and field research suggest that current efforts may be limited in scope. Our findings suggest that safety education in rural schools is often fragmented and superficial. Considering social-group intervention, incorporating community social work approaches and group-based interventions, may offer a more effective way to strengthen the safety of awareness of left-behind children. For instance, teachers could integrate short safety discussions into class meetings or send home brief notices requiring parental acknowledgment. However, guardians tend to address safety issues on learning about accidents in the media. This reactive and uncoordinated approach limits the development of a shared safety culture and weakens collaboration between schools and families, ultimately compromising the protection of left-behind children.

Inconsistent and Limited Safety Education Content

Social workers have noted that the safety education provided to left-behind children in County L's primary schools could be more comprehensive and systematic. There appears to be no standardised curriculum, and the content delivered varies considerably from one occasion to another. Teachers and parents tend to focus primarily on traffic safety and drowning prevention,

and this information is usually communicated verbally rather than integrated into a coherent and broader safety education framework. As a result, safety education often relies on short-term measures, such as brief class meetings or isolated awareness activities. That are unlikely to achieve the long-term educational goals associated with sustainable development.

Ineffectiveness of a Single Intervention Method

Group work interventions have been shown to be effective in other contexts (Hofmann & Mercer, 2016). They are generally well-received by left-behind children and have the potential to address collective needs. Group activities, such as simulations and role-playing, have the potential to enhance children's understanding and retention of safety information. However, it should be noted that the varying levels of safety knowledge and awareness among children suggest that group interventions may not be the most effective way of meeting individual needs. It would be beneficial to consider that relying solely on group work may have limitations in addressing the diverse needs of each child. This could indicate the necessity for a more individualised approach in safety education.

Conclusion

Ongoing follow-up visits are needed for group work interventions

Although group work sessions are generally scheduled after 4 p.m., they do not always align smoothly with the regular school timetable.

Ongoing Follow-up for Group Work Interventions While sessions are typically scheduled after 4 pm, there are instances when they may not align with the regular curriculum. It would be beneficial to enhance the safety awareness of rural left-behind children through sustained time and effort, rather than occasional or isolated activities. While some progress has been observed, the improvements remain modest; the absence of high scores indicates that there is still room for further development.

From a social work perspective, it would be beneficial to consider follow-up visits as a valuable strategy for reinforcing the outcomes of interventions. However, it is worth noting that resource constraints may potentially limit social workers' ability to carry out these follow-ups

as thoroughly as needed, which could, in turn, risk the sustainability of the intervention's benefits.

Diversifying Intervention Methods

The study suggests that there may be room for improvement in the safety education currently provided in County L's rural schools, which often appears to rely primarily on verbal instruction. Introducing a more comprehensive and structured safety education framework could help strengthen the effectiveness of these efforts. It would be beneficial for the government to consider developing targeted policies to protect rural left-behind children. It would be beneficial for schools to consider customising and standardising safety education, integrating it into their curricula where appropriate. It would be beneficial for social workers to consider using a variety of methods, such as group work and individual casework, to diversify their interventions and better meet the needs of the children.

Establishing an Effective Collaborative Education Mechanism

While group work is beneficial for improving safety education, it is important to consider other methods of intervention in addition to relying solely on social workers. A more comprehensive system involving families, schools, and the wider community would be advantageous. It would be beneficial for parents to engage more actively in their children's safety education, while schools might consider employing professional educators with specialised expertise. It would be beneficial for governments to consider providing resources, funding, and infrastructure. Taken together, these elements point to the value of a collaborative mechanism involving "home, school, and society" to create a secure environment that supports the holistic development of rural left-behind children.

Limitations of study

The scope and depth of the study were influenced by the first author theoretical grounding

in social work, as well as her limited practical experience and research skills at the time of conducting the fieldwork as part of her doctoral research. Although the data collection and analysis were closely supervised, these factors nonetheless shaped the overall development of the study.

The research sample was restricted to left-behind children in grades 3 to 6, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other age groups. Additionally, the intervention methods were limited to group work techniques, without exploring other social work strategies. Future research should consider a broader range of intervention methods and include a more diverse sample to enhance representativeness and applicability.

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