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# Overcoming Challenges: Enhancing Teacher Support and Intervention Measures for Rural Primary Schools in China

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**Abstract:**
*This article focuses on the care issues of primary school teachers in rural China, especially for poor families and left-behind children. Based on data from UNICEF and the National Bureau of Statistics of China, as of 2020, there are a huge number of children in rural China, many of whom come from poor families and lack a stable family environment and high-quality educational resources. In addition, the problem of left-behind children is also significant. These children lack direct family care because their parents go out to work. This study conducted interviews with teachers from three rural primary schools in Hubei Province, organized the interviews, and extracted high-frequency keywords, aiming to clarify key issues and explore support and intervention measures. The research aims to improve the working environment of rural primary school teachers, enhance their caring abilities, and thereby promote the academic achievement and all-round development of rural children.*

**Keywords:**
*Teacher care, rural teachers, rural children, support and intervention*

## 1.Introduction

According to data from the United Nations Children's Fund and the National Bureau of Statistics of China, as of 2020, there were approximately 110.31 million rural children in China. Many rural students come from poor families, have unstable family environments, and lack good family support and educational resources. This will lead to students' poor learning status in school, requiring more care and support from teachers to help them overcome difficulties and achieve better academic performance.

At the same time, as of 2020, the number of left-behind children in China reached 66.93 million. The so-called left-behind children refer to a group of children whose parents go to other places to work in areas with higher wages to earn money, and leave children who are inconvenient to take care of in their hometown for the care of their parents or other relatives. Educational resources in rural areas are less developed than in cities. Coupled with the problem of left-behind children, the problem of teacher care in rural primary schools is particularly prominent.

This article will study from the perspective of how to overcome difficulties and strengthen support and in-

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tervention measures for primary school teachers in rural China. Through interviews with three primary school teachers in Hubei Province, based on the collation of the interview content, high-frequency keywords were summarized to determine the key to the problem, discussed and suggestions were given.

## 2.Materials and Methods

### *2.1. Method*

This study adopts qualitative research method. Through interviews with teachers from three rural primary schools in Hubei Province, we learned about the factors that influence the impact of teachers' care on rural primary school students.The interview question was “What are the factors affecting the level of influences of teachers’ care on the rural primary school students?”The interview was mainly conducted from three aspects: the current status of teacher care in schools, the focus of teacher care, and the difficulties encountered by teacher care.

Based on the interview results, the factors that influence the extent to which rural primary school teachers care about students were discussed, focusing on analyzing the influence from five perspectives: social status and recognition, working environment, work pressure, student needs and feedback, and educational resources. Combining the development trends of the times and society, the development strategies to improve the caring behavior of rural teachers are discussed.

### *2.2. literature review*

.Through a search of relevant Chinese literature, it was discovered that there are currently some difficulties in rural primary education in China, which have seriously hindered rural teachers' caring behavior.

Qiao Zhijun (2018) believes that rural primary schools have insufficient investment in funds, backward infrastructure, and waste of resources. They need to optimize teaching resources and integrate information technology with teaching.

Wang Aiju (2021) further analyzed the reasons for the low quality of teaching in rural primary schools and believed that the number of students in rural primary schools is small and the quality of students is uneven. The shortage of teacher resources, backward teaching facilities and backward school management methods will all lead to the low quality of rural primary school education. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out comprehensive and deepening educational reforms, increase investment in rural primary education, innovate teacher management and training models, and improve the quality of rural primary education and teaching.

At the same time, relevant research by scholars has pointed out the importance of teacher care for student development.

Lei Wanpeng and Li Zhenyi (2020) believe that “learning support, emotional support and communication support all have a significant positive impact on left-behind children’s learning perseverance, openness, school adaptation and communication ability; Communication support has a significant negative impact on the negative emotionality of left-behind children.

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Relevant research by Chen Xu, Zhang Dajun, Cheng Gang, Hu Tianqiang, and Liu Guangzeng (2018) also showed that "there is a significant positive correlation between teachers' overall support and middle school students' psychological quality and academic performance; There is a significant positive correlation between teachers' emotional support and middle school students' psychological quality and academic performance.

To sum up, this article carries out relevant research on the issue of rural primary school teacher care and comprehensively considers the current situation of rural primary education.

## 3.Results and Discussion

According to interviews and related research, generally speaking, the main factors that affect the level of care of rural teachers include social status and recognition, working environment, work pressure, student needs and feedback, and educational resources.

*Table 1.Factors affecting the level of influences of teachers' care on the rural primary school students*

| Themes | Frequency | Sample Response |
|---|---|---|
| Social status and recognition | 12 | T1: The income of teachers is too low, especially rural teachers, which causes our group to be looked down upon by many people. This directly affects the teacher's mood and attitude towards students<br>T4 "For today's primary schools, society always places high expectations on teachers, but simply puts the responsibility of teaching students poorly on teachers. This has a great impact on teachers' teaching enthusiasm." |
| Working pressure | 10 | T9: We have few teachers here and everyone is under great work pressure. Many students are put into a class. Teachers face many students and are under great pressure. They cannot care about every student.<br>T8: Each of us has a full schedule of classes every day. We also have to hold meetings and write lesson plans. We are really busy. Sometimes students may feel uncomfortable, but we may also ignore it. |
| Educational resources | 9 | T1: The teaching facilities and tools here are too scarce to provide ideal educational services.<br>T5: We have too few teachers and too many students to care for every student. |
| Student needs and feedback | 9 | T3: Teacher's caring behavior also requires feedback from students, otherwise it always feels like only oneself is working hard and there is no hope in sight<br>T5: Many times, we need to feel the needs of students in order to provide corresponding care |
| Working environment | 8 | T5: The working environment and teaching conditions in rural primary schools are so poor that it is often difficult for teachers to ensure their livelihood, let alone take the initiative to care for students.<br>T6: The social culture in rural areas may be very different from that in cities. Many teachers from other places have difficulty integrating into the local working environment and do not understand students' behaviors. |

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### *3.1. Social status and recognition*

Recognition of social status is the most mentioned influencing factor in the interviews. Higher social status and treatment may improve teachers' professional satisfaction. Being valued and recognized by society can enhance teachers' pride in their profession, make them more willing to devote themselves to work, and increase their enthusiasm for work.

This result corroborates the research results of Yang Xue (2022), who pointed out in the study: “Higher social status may improve teachers’ professional satisfaction.Being valued and recognized by society can enhance teachers' pride in their profession, make them more willing to devote themselves to work, and increase their enthusiasm for work. "For teachers, being valued and recognized by society can enhance teachers' pride in their profession, make them more willing to devote themselves to work, and increase their enthusiasm for work.

T1 mentioned: "Teachers' income is too low, especially rural teachers, which causes our group to be looked down upon by many people. This directly affects the teachers' emotions and attitude towards students."

It can be seen that rural teachers are under tremendous pressure from society, and social disapproval has led to a decline in teachers' career satisfaction. When teachers feel indifference or negative evaluation from society, they lose confidence in their educational work and weaken their enthusiasm for education, thus affecting their care for students.

T4 mentioned: “For today’s primary schools, society always places high expectations on teachers, but simply places the responsibility of failing to teach students well on teachers. This has a great impact on teachers’ enthusiasm for teaching.”

Relevant research by Zhang Jialong and Wang Zhenjuan (2023) also holds a similar view: "Society has higher requirements for teachers. When the words and deeds of some primary and secondary school teachers do not meet the so-called expectations, you will hear a lot of remarks that are not conducive to teachers. Coupled with some media exaggerating negative reports on teachers, education work faces an embarrassing dilemma."

For parents, most parents respect teachers very much. However, due to problems in China’s education system, there are often too many homework assignments, and many homework assignments need to be completed by parents. This has caused many parents to complain.For example, Xiao Ting, a parent of a student, said: "We can understand that students have heavy learning tasks and are under great pressure, but we cannot let parents accompany them to supervise students' studies, correct homework, and extracurricular activities. Parents also have their own jobs and need to make money."And for rural families, many parents are working outside, and only the elderly are at home. It is difficult to complete the after-school homework assigned by the teacher. This has caused dissatisfaction among some parents.For example, student parent Ma Haiyan said: "We send our children to school to be taught by teachers. If we leave everything to parents to do after class, what are their teachers doing?"

Due to the asymmetry of information, it is difficult for parents to understand teachers. In the field of education, teachers usually have more professional knowledge and experience, while parents may have difficulty

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understanding the school's teaching methods, curriculum, and changes in education policies due to lack of relevant educational background or busy work. This information asymmetry may lead to parents' limited understanding of educational matters, lead to conflicts, and thus affect teachers' caring behavior towards students.

### *3.2. Working pressure*

In the context of China's continuous reform of the education system, society's expectations and requirements for primary and secondary school teachers to cultivate moral character are increasing, which has prompted their responsibilities to continue to be generalized and assume many tasks that have nothing to do with education and teaching. Generalized work responsibilities and complex work tasks have led to infinite extension of primary and secondary school teachers' working hours and blurred boundaries between work space and private space, which in turn has made them physically and mentally exhausted and exhausted, making it difficult for them to focus on their true work of education and teaching.

According to a relevant survey by Sun Tianjiao (2024): "A survey of the work conditions of primary and secondary school teachers in 31 provinces including Henan, Shandong, Guangdong, and Hunan in China showed that the actual working hours of primary and secondary school teachers per week averaged 54.5 hours, far exceeding the labor law "The average weekly working hours shall not exceed forty-four hours". About three-quarters of the total working hours are occupied by non-teaching tasks."

T3 said: "We have few teachers here, and everyone is under a lot of work pressure. Many students are put into one class. Teachers face many students and are under great pressure. They cannot care for every student."

High job stress may make it difficult for teachers to manage their time effectively. Time pressure can cause teachers to feel rushed and find it difficult to provide students with adequate individual care and guidance. The research results of Zhang Jiajun (2024) echoed: "A large amount of work causes teachers to have to extend their working hours, and creates the anxiety of 'time shortage' with too many things and not enough time."

Teacher No. 9 said: "Each of us has a full schedule of classes every day, and we have to hold meetings and write lesson plans. We are really busy. Sometimes students may feel uncomfortable, but we may also ignore it."

Zhu Guangbing (2024) also mentioned this in his research: "For rural teachers, a heavier workload will inevitably bring negative emotions."

On the one hand, teachers in primary and secondary schools play overlapping roles, cultivating moral values and attaching importance to the all-round development of students, To achieve this goal, teachers should cultivate students in all aspects of morality, intelligence, physical, aesthetic and labor, and promote the development of students' essential character and key abilities.

On the other hand, teachers in primary and secondary schools need to complete complicated tasks. Teachers not only need to undertake primary work such as lesson preparation and teaching, as well as professional development work such as professional title evaluation and professional training, but also need to undertake

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non-professional work such as supervision and evaluation, information collection and so on. Facing high-intensity work pressure for a long time may make teachers feel fatigued and tired. Fatigue may cause teachers to lose concentration at work and find it difficult to provide adequate attention and care to students.

### *3.3. Educational resources*

Adequate teaching tools and equipment can improve the teaching effect and make teaching more lively and interesting. Rural primary school teachers lack basic teaching resources and find it difficult to implement diversified teaching methods, which reduces the level of educational care for students. On the other hand, sufficient teaching staff is an important factor in ensuring personalized care for students. The number of teachers in rural primary schools is insufficient to meet the diverse learning needs of students, which reduces the quality of care for students.

This is corroborated with the research results of Zhu Guangbing (2024): "In education and teaching work, rural primary school teachers have problems such as a lack of information-based teaching concepts, rigid application of information technology means, and uneven information-based teaching levels."Some subjects require specific teaching equipment to better transfer knowledge, such as experimental equipment, charts, models, etc. In rural China, these equipment are lacking or not advanced enough, hindering the transfer of relevant subject knowledge and reducing teachers' professional care for students.

T1 said: “The teaching facilities and tools here are too scarce to provide ideal educational services.” Sufficient teaching equipment is very important to support interactive teaching. The lack of interactive whiteboards, computers and other equipment makes it difficult for teachers to conduct real-time interactions and discussions, which limits the ability to deeply understand students and care for teachers.

On the other hand, equally serious is the problem of shortage of teachers. T5 said: “We have too few teachers and too many students to care for every student.”

The lack of enough teachers poses many constraints on the teacher care of primary school teachers in rural China. First, the class size is too large, and teachers have to deal with more students, making it difficult to care for each student individually within a limited time, which reduces the care for individual differences among students. Secondly, classroom management has become more difficult. Teachers need to invest more time and energy to maintain order, making it difficult to focus on students' learning and individual needs, which restricts in-depth care for students.

This is corroborated with the research results of Yang Xue (2022), who mentioned in the article: “There is a serious imbalance in the mobility of rural teachers in China, and the reverse flow of fresh blood and mature talents has caused a structural imbalance in urban and rural education. Current teachers are under tremendous pressure.”

### *3.4. Student needs and feedback*

Student needs and feedback play an important role in teacher care for primary school teachers in rural China. However, relatively traditional cultural concepts may exist in rural areas, and students may not be used to or accustomed to expressing their views on teachers and schools. In some families, parents may place more

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emphasis on respect and obedience to education, and students may be less proactive in expressing personal opinions. It may be difficult for teachers to understand students' true needs and feelings, which limits the level of care they can provide to students.

T3 said: “Teachers’ caring behavior also needs feedback from students, otherwise I always feel like I am the only one working hard and there is no hope.”

This is corroborated with the research results of Pan Yuanyuan (2021): "Students can feel the care of teachers, but teachers never receive positive responses from students. Such unilateral efforts can easily make teachers feel physically and mentally exhausted, They lack the passion and motivation for caring." Therefore, students' needs and feedback are an important factor affecting teachers' care. If students show enthusiasm for learning and respect for teachers, teachers will be inspired to pay more attention and care to their learning progress. Conversely, if students have unmet needs or exhibit negative attitudes toward learning, teachers may become frustrated, causing them to care less about their students.

### *3.5. Working environment*

The working conditions in rural primary schools may be relatively difficult. Teachers may have to travel to rural areas for long periods of time, facing inconvenient transportation and poor living conditions. This may affect teachers' physical and mental health, making it difficult for them to devote more energy to caring for students.

Tian Hua’s (2017) research corroborates this result: “School running conditions restrict the development of teaching sites, and the construction of hardware facilities is the material guarantee for school running.Compared with urban schools, the teaching facilities in rural teaching points are seriously insufficient. Since most of the students in teaching points are left-behind children, all the educational responsibilities that should be borne by families and parents are pushed to teachers and schools, making it difficult for teachers to take care of them. "

T5: “The working environment and teaching conditions in rural primary schools are so poor that it is often difficult for teachers to ensure their livelihood, let alone take the initiative to care for students.”

Most rural primary schools face problems such as small classrooms, insufficient library equipment, and poor laboratory conditions. Students may lack full understanding and experience of various subjects and practical skills under limited classroom conditions. Insufficient classroom environment may cause students to have shortcomings in the cultivation of comprehensive qualities, and it is therefore difficult for teachers to fully care about students' all-round development.

T6: “The social culture in rural areas may be very different from that in cities. Many teachers from other places have difficulty integrating into the local working environment and do not understand students’ behaviors.”

Teachers from other places may not know enough about the living background and family environment of rural students. Due to sociocultural differences, teachers may have difficulty understanding students' life pressures, family expectations, and social environments, which may affect their overall care for students. A

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lack of understanding of students' life contexts can lead to limitations in teachers' ability to deal with student problems.

## 4.Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following are the conclusions of this research study:

(1)Teachers agree with their caring behavior towards students. They believe that their behavior meets the corresponding caring standards in the questionnaire, but the degree of this caring is not high. Teachers have a high degree of recognition and practice in their sense of responsibility for students, but their performance in the dimension of inclusiveness is relatively mediocre.

(2.The low status caused by social disapproval, working environment and work pressure affect the teacher care level of rural teachers.

(3)Teachers are eager to achieve a healthier and more caring work environment through intervention in five aspects: work pressure, social status recognition and treatment improvement, educational resource improvement, student needs and feedback, and work environment.

Based on the findings, the following are recommended:

(1)Schools should provide professional training and seminars for teachers to increase their understanding and awareness of teacher care, especially inclusive education. Emphasize the individual differences of different students and encourage teachers to take more into account student diversity in teaching to improve inclusiveness.

(2)The government should ensure that teachers' salaries and benefits match their efforts to improve their living standards and social status. And the government, media and society should strengthen positive publicity to rural teachers and demonstrate their important role in the field of education. Public recognition and respect are critical to teachers' professional satisfaction and motivation to care for their students.

(3)Schools should optimize work processes, ensure reasonable distribution of tasks, and reduce teachers' burden.

Schools and governments should support policies to increase teachers' salary levels and benefits, and actively encourage social media and the public to publicize the important contributions of educators to enhance their social status recognition. The government should increase investment in education funds for rural schools, ensure that schools have sufficient teaching equipment, teaching materials and teachers, and provide regular education and training to improve the professional level of teachers. Schools should encourage teachers to establish good relationships with students, strengthen cooperation with parents and communities, establish social networks to support teachers, and provide teachers with necessary work resources and conveniences to promote better educational care. The government should also invest in improving infrastructure, create a good working environment, and strengthen communication and cooperation with parents and communities to create an atmosphere of common care for education.

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To sum up, in order to improve the level and quality of rural primary school teacher care, we need the joint efforts and support of schools, governments and society. By improving the working environment, improving teachers' remuneration and social status, and strengthening professional training, it can be expected that rural primary school teachers will be able to better care for and educate students and make positive contributions to students' all-round development.

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