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NEWSLETTER

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## **The Effects of Thematic Reading on Mental Resilience Development in Rural Left-Behind Children: An Empirical Study**

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**M**ENTAL resilience is the ability to cope with difficult situations that happens in the individual's life, conducive to their adaptation to change and uncertainty in addressing setbacks. It is of vital importance for mental health. Mental resilience development is an essential component of mental health education for basic education children. Rural primary schools in China have a high proportion of left-behind children of migrant workers, whose mental health, including mental resilience issue, is a major concern of the public. Based on the reading therapy theory, this empirical study aims to examine the effects of thematic reading on mental resilience development in rural left-behind children with a sample of 83 third and fourth graders from a primary school in northern Hebei province. The subjects were divided into the experimental group (consisting of students scoring lower on the mental resilience questionnaire) and the control group (consisting of students scoring higher on the questionnaire). A two-month thematic reading course was administered to the experimental group.

### Research Findings:

- The between-group comparison shows that the reading intervention successfully bridged the gap in mental resilience between the experimental and control groups
- The intra-group comparison indicates that significant mental resilience improvement occurred in students with the experimental group after the intervention, whereas there was no change in the mental resilience level among students with the control group in the two months.

The research findings demonstrate the effectiveness of well-structured, purposeful reading training in improving the mental resilience of rural left-behind children. The study also proves the malleability of mental resilience in primary school children, lending support to the idea of “the age of 11 or below being the preferable age for mental resilience development,” popular in the mental resilience research community.

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