

The practical dilemmas and breakthrough strategies of school-based family education guidance services in ethnic minority regions—based on relevant survey findings from Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

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Abstract. This study primarily employs questionnaire surveys and interviews to investigate the current status of school-based family education guidance services in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region of China. Using this region as a case in point, the study analyzes the overall situation and challenges of such services in ethnic minority areas of central and western China. The findings indicate that although the content of school-based family education guidance services is relatively comprehensive, there remains a gap between service provision and actual needs. Schools have paid attention to special groups such as left-behind children, yet the implementation of related guidance services faces considerable obstacles. Teachers' awareness of legal and policy frameworks concerning family education is insufficient, and their professional competence in providing guidance requires further improvement. Most schools are willing to engage social workers to carry out guidance services; however, the necessary supporting conditions have not yet been adequately established. In addition, the lack of effective financial support for family education initiatives constrains the development of professional teams and the delivery of services. In response to these issues, the study proposes several strategic measures: enhancing the effectiveness of resource integration and constructing a demand-oriented and precision-based guidance service system; strengthening support for special groups and improving the content of guidance services for left-behind children and other vulnerable populations; reinforcing training and supervision to enhance teachers' professional competence and the effectiveness of guidance; improving supporting mechanisms by clarifying employment standards for social workers and detailed provisions for their school-based services; and implementing sustainable funding mechanisms to promote the development of family education guidance teams and the upgrading of service provision.

Keywords: schools, family education guidance, social work

1. Introduction

Family education constitutes an essential component of modern national education and serves as the foundation of both school education and social education. In recent years, the Communist Party of China and

the Chinese government have attached great importance to family education guidance and have issued a series of relevant laws and policy documents. In 2011, the *Guiding Opinions of the All-China Women's Federation, the Ministry of Education, and the Central Commission for Guiding Cultural and Ethical Progress on Further Strengthening the Work of Parent Schools* proposed that parent schools should serve as the principal platform and primary channel for promoting and guiding family education, and that primary and secondary schools should incorporate parent school initiatives into their overall institutional planning. In 2021, the promulgation of the *Family Education Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China* further stipulated that "primary and secondary schools shall incorporate family education guidance services into their work plans and include them as part of teachers' professional training". In 2022, eleven departments, including the All-China Women's Federation and the Ministry of Education, jointly issued the *Five-Year Plan for Guiding and Promoting Family Education (2021–2025)*, which emphasized that the coverage, precision, and effectiveness of public family education services in China urgently require improvement. It also noted that the professionalization and standardization of family education guidance remain insufficient, and that the collaborative education mechanism among families, schools, and communities needs to be further strengthened. The plan explicitly identified family education guidance as an important approach to promoting coordinated education among families, schools, and early childhood institutions.

In 2021, based on research conducted across nine provinces and municipalities in China, scholars including Yufang Bian found that schools were the channel through which parents most hoped to receive family education guidance services. However, schools currently face several challenges, including insufficient resources and service channels to meet actual family education needs, inadequate responsiveness to parental demands, incomplete development of professional teams, insufficient attention to children's mental health, and limited capacity for resource integration [1]. Similarly, Li Yang pointed out that the dilemmas faced by schools in providing family education guidance services include an underdeveloped service system, insufficient team construction, and incomplete supervision, evaluation, and support mechanisms [2].

At present, most primary and secondary schools in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region of China have begun to provide family education guidance services. However, these services still fall short of meeting families' increasingly diverse needs for professional, precise, personalized, and multifaceted support. Based on a sample survey of family education guidance services in primary and secondary schools in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, this study uses the region as a representative case to examine the current status and challenges of school-based family education guidance services in ethnic minority areas of central and western China, and, on this basis, proposes corresponding strategies for overcoming these challenges.

2. Research design

The purpose of this survey was to examine the current status of family education guidance services provided by primary and secondary schools in ethnic minority regions of China, and to provide empirical evidence for improving such services in ethnic minority areas of central and western China.

2.1. Research subjects and methods

The research subjects and data sources of this study were primarily derived from two aspects. First, in 2025, the research team conducted questionnaire surveys and interviews with primary and secondary school teachers in Guangxi regarding the current status of family education guidance services. School administrators accounted for 92% of the respondents. A total of 502 valid questionnaires were collected, including 65% from primary schools, 25% from junior secondary schools, 6% from senior secondary schools, and 4% from other

types of schools (such as nine-year compulsory schools and complete secondary schools). Second, in 2025, the research team conducted surveys on the current status of family education among rural left-behind children in Guangxi through questionnaire surveys, field observations, and unstructured interviews. A total of 531 valid questionnaires were collected from left-behind children, including 23% from primary school students, 69% from junior secondary school students, and 8% from senior secondary school or secondary vocational school students. In addition, 487 valid questionnaires were collected from their guardians, among whom fathers accounted for 38%, mothers for 45%, grandparent caregivers for 12%, and other relatives and friends for 5%.

2.2. Survey content

The survey primarily focused on the following aspects. First, it examined the current level of teachers' family education guidance services and the implementation of such services within schools. Second, it investigated the challenges faced by rural left-behind children, the current status of their family education, and their guardians' needs for family education guidance services. Third, it explored strategies and recommendations for optimizing school-based family education guidance services.

3. Current status and dilemmas of school-based family education guidance services

Based on a comprehensive analysis of the survey data, it was found that school-based family education guidance services currently face numerous challenges.

3.1. The content of school-based family education guidance services is relatively comprehensive, but there is a gap in meeting actual needs

According to questionnaire data collected from primary and secondary school teachers, the content provision of school-based family education guidance services demonstrates a diversified profile. The proportions of schools providing various types of guidance services are as follows: cultivation of moral and legal awareness (86%), guidance on behavioral habit formation (77%), cultivation of national identity and patriotic values (74%), instruction in safety awareness and self-protection skills (65%), parenting method guidance (63%), parent-child communication skills training (59%), emotional management strategies (54%), life skills development (52%), parent-child relationship adjustment strategies (50%), dissemination of scientific parenting concepts (49%), psychological adjustment guidance (49%), and family environment optimization (34%). These findings indicate that school-based family education guidance services have already established a relatively comprehensive content framework.

However, when respondents were asked whether existing family education guidance services provided by schools adequately met the needs of students and parents, only 53% believed that current services aligned with students' developmental needs and parents' educational expectations, highlighting a significant imbalance between supply and demand. Meanwhile, questionnaire data from guardians of left-behind children showed that 71% explicitly expressed a need for family education guidance and support [3]. The combined analysis of these two data sets confirms that the current content and scale of school-based family education guidance services remain insufficient to fully meet actual needs, and there is considerable room for improvement in both the effectiveness and relevance of service provision. Although some schools have attempted to mobilize social resources to advance family education guidance services, the effectiveness of cross-sector resource integration remains generally limited. Survey results indicate that only a relatively small proportion of schools are able to effectively integrate high-quality external resources to support family education guidance. Specifically, the

rates of collaboration between schools and external institutions—such as courts, procuratorates, professional family education training institutions, social work service organizations, and medical and health institutions—are all below 30%. This finding reflects that the social collaborative mechanism for school-based family education guidance services has not yet been fully established. The exploration, integration, and empowerment potential of external resources remain underutilized, and a multi-stakeholder, collaborative ecosystem for family education guidance services is still at an early stage of development.

3.2. Schools pay attention to special groups such as left-behind children, but the implementation of related guidance services faces difficulties

As an important labor-exporting provincial-level administrative region in China, the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region has a large population of left-behind children in rural areas. The growth, development, and family education support of this group have become critical issues in regional educational governance and the protection of minors. According to data from specialized questionnaires administered to left-behind children and their guardians in Guangxi, 46% of guardians reported that the children under their care were excessively engaged in electronic devices, spending more than two hours per day on entertainment and gaming. Meanwhile, 72% of left-behind children explicitly reported experiencing academic problems and difficulties [3]. Most primary and secondary schools within the survey scope have included rural left-behind children and other special groups as key targets of attention, providing targeted psychological counseling, establishing one-to-one support mechanisms pairing teachers and volunteers with left-behind children experiencing academic difficulties, and offering corresponding family education guidance services. However, only 55% of schools expressed satisfaction with the effectiveness of family education guidance services for left-behind children, indicating that service outcomes have not met expectations. Moreover, all surveyed schools reported encountering practical constraints in implementing guidance services, and none indicated the absence of implementation barriers. The specific constraining factors, ranked by proportion, include insufficient financial support (73%), inadequate professional knowledge reserves (72%), limited practical skill support (72%), low participation willingness among guardians (69%), insufficient allocation of working time (49%), failure to achieve expected service outcomes (45%), and lack of supporting tools (37%). In addition, many schools reported that students' psychological issues and behavioral problems can be effectively addressed and corrected during the school term. However, after extended periods away from school, such as winter and summer vacations, the corrective effects achieved within the school environment are significantly weakened due to the influence of parents' unscientific educational concepts, inappropriate parenting practices, and adverse social influences. As a result, some students experience a recurrence of psychological problems, and previously corrected behavioral issues show signs of regression.

Furthermore, although some schools provide full-time boarding care services for left-behind children and other special groups, these measures have not fully mitigated their adaptation risks. Many left-behind children exhibit limited self-care abilities, difficulty adapting to collective dormitory life, and insufficient access to after-school recreational activities. These challenges, compounded by weakened emotional bonds resulting from parental absence and delayed psychological support and emotional guidance, contribute to increased mental health risks and deviant behaviors such as fighting, truancy, absenteeism, and even school withdrawal. From a deeper structural perspective, the guardians of left-behind children are often preoccupied with livelihood demands and tend to prioritize basic care over educational guidance. At the same time, teachers face heavy routine teaching workloads, lack sufficient professional competence in family education guidance, and are supported by an inadequate number of full-time or part-time psychological counselors. The interaction of these multiple constraints makes it difficult for schools to provide personalized and professional family

education guidance services to left-behind children and other special family groups. As a result, the construction and effective implementation of a comprehensive family education support system for special populations remain fraught with practical challenges.

3.3. Teachers' insufficient awareness of family education laws and policies and the need to improve their professional guidance competence

According to the questionnaire survey of primary and secondary school teachers, 92% of respondents were school administrators. Among them, 56% had more than 20 years of teaching experience, while those with 5–10 years, 11–15 years, and 16–20 years of teaching experience accounted for 18%, 12%, and 10%, respectively, and only 4% had less than five years of teaching experience. This distribution indicates that the survey sample was composed primarily of experienced education management professionals, whose cognitive levels and professional competence are broadly representative of the field. From a cognitive perspective, teachers generally demonstrate limited familiarity with key laws related to family education. The familiarity rate with the *Law of the People's Republic of China on the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency* was 43%, while familiarity with the *Family Education Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China* was only 30%. In addition, familiarity rates with several national-level policy documents on family education guidance—such as the *Five-Year Plan for Guiding and Promoting Family Education (2021–2025)*—as well as child welfare and protection policies, including national and Guangxi-specific supporting documents such as the *Outline for the Development of Chinese Children (2021–2030)*, were all below 30%. These findings indicate that most school administrators lack a systematic understanding of the legal and policy framework governing family education, and that their capacity to interpret and translate policy into practice exhibits structural deficiencies.

From a competency perspective, only 53% of teachers reported that their ability to provide family education guidance services was sufficient to meet work requirements, while nearly half indicated a need for further improvement. This reflects a significant gap in teachers' practical competence in this domain. Qualitative analysis of the assessment results from the 2024 Guangxi training program for "One Thousand Family Education Instructors" (in which primary and secondary school teachers accounted for 45%) further confirmed this situation. The analysis revealed deficiencies among teachers in several core areas, including understanding family education policies, assessing service recipients' needs and analyzing problems, designing service activity plans, and evaluating service effectiveness. Existing studies based on large-scale survey data from nine provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities across China have likewise confirmed significant shortcomings in the professional competence of family education instructors. Specifically, 31.6% and 65.9% of homeroom teachers reported that they needed to strengthen their ability to interpret policy documents and laws and regulations, and to master professional knowledge of family education, respectively. Furthermore, only 8.4% of school leaders indicated that their school's family education guidance service teams possessed professional competence sufficient to meet work demands [4]. These findings demonstrate that primary and secondary school teachers, including school administrators, currently face dual deficiencies in both their understanding of family education laws and policies and their professional competence in providing guidance services. These limitations not only constrain the professional advancement of family education guidance services but also hinder the effective functioning of collaborative educational efforts among families, schools, and communities. Addressing these issues urgently requires systematic training initiatives and strengthened institutional support mechanisms.

3.4. Most schools are willing to employ social workers to provide guidance services, but supporting conditions remain inadequate

The involvement of social work in family education guidance services offers numerous advantages and significant value. Social work is characterized by professional service concepts and procedures, a client-centered orientation, diverse intervention methods, and multidimensional evaluation approaches, all of which help ensure the scientific rigor, relevance, and effectiveness of family education guidance services [5]. Moreover, the participation of social workers in minor protection and family education guidance has received explicit legal and policy support. For example, the *Law of the People's Republic of China on the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency* encourages and supports educational administrative departments in enabling schools to employ social workers on a long-term or periodic basis to assist in moral, legal, life, and mental health education, and to participate in the prevention and handling of student bullying. The *Opinions of the State Council Leading Group on the Protection of Minors on Strengthening the Protection of Minors* further clarifies that schools may introduce professional personnel to participate in student management and service provision. In regions with appropriate conditions, school social work can be promoted through the establishment of school social work stations, dedicated social work positions, and government procurement of services. The *Family Education Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China* explicitly requires primary and secondary schools to incorporate family education guidance services into their work plans and encourages the involvement of social workers in such services. Similarly, the *Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Minors* emphasizes schools' responsibility to prevent student bullying and provide family education guidance, while requiring local governments to cultivate and guide relevant social organizations and social workers to participate in minor protection and family education services. In addition, the *Ten Measures for Further Strengthening the Mental Health Work of Primary and Secondary School Students*, issued by the General Office of the Ministry of Education in 2025, explicitly encourages qualified schools to introduce professional social work personnel to provide psychological and social support services.

According to the questionnaire survey results, 78% of primary and secondary school teachers expressed willingness for their schools to employ social workers on a long-term or periodic basis to assist in moral, legal, life, and mental health education, as well as in the prevention and handling of student bullying. However, in practice, fewer than 1% of schools had actually employed social workers to reside in or regularly serve schools. The primary reasons for not employing social workers include insufficient financial support (81%), lack of policy documents and guidelines for establishing social work positions (64%), insufficient understanding of the professional competence of social workers (46%), and the belief that existing school personnel are capable of undertaking related work (20%). These findings indicate that while most schools demonstrate a positive willingness to introduce social workers, structural barriers—including inadequate financial guarantees, insufficient standardization of position establishment, and misconceptions regarding professional competence—have hindered the effective implementation of relevant policies and services.

3.5. Insufficient financial guarantees for family education work constrain team development and service implementation

The *Family Education Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China* clearly stipulates that people's governments at or above the county level shall incorporate family education guidance services into the public service system and government procurement service catalogs, and include related expenditures in fiscal budgets to ensure financial support for such services. Supporting policy documents—including the *Opinions on Improving the Collaborative Education Mechanism among Schools, Families, and Society*, issued in 2023 by the Ministry of Education and twelve other departments, and the *Work Plan for the Collaborative*

Education Consortium among Schools, Families, and Society, jointly issued in 2024 by the General Office of the Ministry of Education and sixteen other departments—further clarify that schools must regard family education guidance services as an important responsibility and incorporate teachers' competence in family education guidance into the teacher evaluation system. However, existing laws, regulations, and policy documents generally present financial support provisions in principled and advocacy-oriented terms, lacking detailed operational guidelines, binding enforcement mechanisms, and dynamic monitoring systems. As a result, financial guarantee policies have not been fully implemented in practice.

At the practical level, schools in both urban and rural areas across China generally lack dedicated funding for family education guidance services, and financial support mechanisms exhibit a fragmented pattern. Governments, educational administrative departments, and schools have not yet established normalized or large-scale service procurement mechanisms. On the one hand, the coverage of government procurement of professional services from third-party organizations, such as social work service agencies, remains limited and is concentrated mainly in a small number of pilot regions and schools. On the other hand, existing service procurement arrangements often involve insufficient funding levels and short service cycles, making it difficult to meet long-term and systematic service needs. As a highly specialized public service, the effective provision of family education guidance depends on sustained investment in human resources and stable financial support mechanisms. Insufficient funding directly prevents schools from covering essential costs such as service material procurement, hiring external experts, teacher training, and performance-based incentives. This situation creates a chain reaction of constraints. Most schools are unable to organize systematic and professional training for teachers, resulting in stagnation in teachers' professional development. At the same time, the absence of performance evaluation and incentive mechanisms weakens teachers' intrinsic motivation and reduces their enthusiasm for providing family education guidance services. Survey results indicate that more than one-third of schools have not regularly organized public welfare family education guidance services and practical activities as required by policy documents. Approximately two-thirds of schools have not incorporated teachers' family education guidance competence into performance evaluation systems. Therefore, constrained by the dual limitations of insufficient funding and a shortage of professional personnel, school-based family education guidance services have struggled to achieve normalized, standardized, and professional development. Consequently, their functional value within the collaborative education system involving schools, families, and society has not been fully realized, falling short of policy expectations.

4. Breakthrough strategies for school-based family education guidance services

4.1. Enhancing resource integration efficiency and building a precision-oriented guidance service system based on real needs

Given the professional nature of family education guidance services and the heterogeneity of family needs, it is difficult for schools to meet the diverse demands of parents solely by relying on teachers and internal school resources within a short period of time. As the primary platform for delivering family education guidance services, schools must move beyond a single-actor model and establish a diversified, collaborative resource support system. In other words, schools should improve coordination mechanisms, enhance the efficiency of resource integration, and build a precision-oriented guidance service system grounded in actual needs. First, schools should strengthen collaboration with mass organizations such as the Communist Youth League of

China, the Working Committee on Caring for the Next Generation, and Women's Federations, and establish normalized linkage mechanisms with regional family education guidance centers and community-based parent schools. This will promote cross-sector resource sharing and functional complementarity. Second, a regional resource coordination and partnership assistance mechanism should be established. Through the coordination of government and educational administrative departments, high-quality schools can provide support and mentorship to less-resourced schools, thereby facilitating resource diffusion and mutual development. At the same time, exemplary practices in school-based family education guidance should be systematically documented, and multi-departmental collaboration should be encouraged in compiling guidance manuals and model case collections to provide practical references for schools. Third, a diversified professional support network should be developed by mobilizing experts in education and sociology from universities, legal practitioners, procuratorial personnel, and social workers. These professionals can provide systematic training for teachers in areas such as policy and legal interpretation, needs assessment methodologies, service program design, and effectiveness evaluation, thereby continuously improving teachers' professional competence in family education guidance. Fourth, schools should develop scientific, systematic, and practically implementable family education guidance curricula based on the *National Family Education Guidance Outline (Revised)*. These curricula should be aligned with students' psychological and developmental characteristics at different age stages, as well as parents' specific educational guidance needs. Fifth, schools should expand professional service provision channels by introducing third-party professional forces, such as social work service agencies and specialized family education guidance institutions, through service procurement and collaborative research. At the same time, schools should actively recruit parent volunteers committed to public welfare in family education, retired senior professionals ("Five Elders"), and university student volunteers to form public service teams. This approach will create a diversified service provision model integrating "professional support and volunteer participation", thereby expanding the coverage and accessibility of family education guidance services.

On this basis, a stratified and categorized precision-oriented guidance service system should be established. Using questionnaire surveys, interviews, and other assessment methods, schools can evaluate and classify the family education problems and needs of both general families and special families—including migrant children, left-behind children, and children in difficult circumstances. Focusing on key areas such as academic development, behavioral regulation, internet addiction, and mental health, schools should establish graded classification standards based on the severity of problems and the specificity of needs. For families with low to moderate and general needs, schools can provide routine family education guidance services. For families with high-risk or specialized needs, professional referral mechanisms should be established, linking social workers, psychological counselors, psychiatrists, and other specialists to provide professional interventions, including case management and group work. In addition, schools should leverage big data technologies to build intelligent service platforms that integrate online and offline service scenarios. By offering diversified formats such as live-streamed courses, interactive seminars, and online consultation services, schools can improve service accessibility and interactivity, encourage parents to shift from passive participation to active engagement, and promote the transformation of family education guidance services from a supply-driven model to a demand-driven model. This transformation will significantly enhance the precision and effectiveness of guidance services for different types of families.

4.2. Strengthening support for special groups and enhancing guidance services for left-behind children and other vulnerable populations

To address the multiple practical challenges faced by family education guidance services for rural left-behind children and other special groups, schools can strengthen resource allocation, activate participation mechanisms, and optimize service provision to build a foundational support system tailored to these populations, promoting a shift toward professionalized and targeted guidance services. At the resource level, it is necessary to improve funding and material support by including dedicated funds for family education guidance for left-behind children in regional education budgets, coordinating minor protection funds from departments such as civil affairs, the Communist Youth League, and the Women's Federation, and filling gaps in service tools and activity funding. Regarding teacher professional development, schools should establish a tiered and categorized professional growth system. Collaborating with universities, research institutes, and professional social service organizations, schools can offer customized training on family education theory, parent-child communication interventions, child psychological counseling, and guidance for raising special groups, alongside practical exercises and case supervision, to comprehensively enhance teachers' knowledge and practical skills in family education guidance. For parent engagement, schools should establish incentives and guidance mechanisms, using multiple approaches such as in-person seminars, online community communications, and home visits to correct guardians' "emphasis on care over education" mindset. Incentives may include parenting point systems (for learning, school-home interaction, volunteer work, parent-child evaluations) and recognition programs like "Civilized Family" awards to increase guardians' participation and cooperation. For boarding schools, schools should increase life guidance staff and recreational resources, enrich extracurricular activities for left-behind children, strengthen self-care skills training, and ease difficulties in adapting to collective living.

Furthermore, in accordance with national and Guangxi local policy documents [6], schools should assign experienced and caring mentors to children in need, pair them with high-achieving peer partners, and organize participation in practical activities such as labor education, STEM education, field trips, cultural and artistic programs, clubs, interest groups, and volunteer services, enriching their cultural life and reducing electronic device addiction. On professional and collaborative development, schools need to address gaps in psychological services by deploying full-time school psychologists or on-site social workers through targeted staffing, special appointments, or school-community partnerships, establishing closed-loop systems for psychological screening, dynamic monitoring, and crisis intervention to provide professional technical support for family education guidance. Schools should also break single-source service models by collaborating with courts and procuratorates for parent education and legal awareness programs, partnering with healthcare institutions for physical and mental health guidance, and involving social work agencies to deliver professional and individualized guidance, forming a cross-departmental resource integration and coordinated service network [3].

In addition, schools can connect with multiple resources from civil affairs, education, and the Women's Federation, mobilizing retired teachers, "Civilized Family" members, social workers, and university student volunteers to carry out one-on-one mentoring for left-behind and vulnerable children, including during long breaks such as winter and summer vacations. This support can provide life assistance, emotional care, academic tutoring, and psychological guidance for children, and offer family education guidance and parental support services. Finally, by creating individual profiles based on guardianship type, academic weaknesses, psychological characteristics, and family needs, schools can implement differentiated and precise guidance, integrating both universal and specialized support. This approach aims to establish a robust, professionally sufficient, and demand-matched model of family education guidance services for special groups.

4.3. Strengthening training and supervision to enhance teachers' professional competence and effectiveness in family education guidance

Schools should comply with relevant laws, regulations, and policy documents such as the *Family Education Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China* and the *Opinions of the Ministry of Education and Thirteen Other Departments on Improving the School–Family–Society Collaborative Education Mechanism*. Family education guidance services should be incorporated into overall school work plans and teacher professional development programs, and teachers' competence in family education guidance should be included in performance evaluation systems. Schools must clarify institutional guarantees, division of responsibilities, and implementation procedures for this work, while increasing financial investment to cover material procurement, expert consultation, teacher training, and performance incentives. This will facilitate the deep integration of family education guidance services into routine school operations [7]. In accordance with the Ministry of Education's *Guiding Opinions on Strengthening Family Education Work*, family education guidance services arranged by schools should be counted as part of teachers' official workload. At the same time, schools should strengthen teachers' recognition of the value of family education guidance and emphasize that such competence constitutes an essential component of professional development for high-quality teachers in the new era, thereby enhancing their motivation to engage in guidance activities [8].

In addition, schools should establish a diversified training and supervision system. By leveraging experts and practitioners from universities, research institutes, and relevant social organizations, schools can obtain professional support for planning family education guidance work and strengthening team development. Schools should also collaborate with health departments to provide training on mental health knowledge, thereby improving staff members' capacity to identify psychological problems. Teachers should be encouraged to utilize national digital platforms, such as the National Smart Education Platform for Primary and Secondary Schools, to access authoritative family education resources during their spare time—especially during winter and summer teacher training periods—to continuously enhance their professional knowledge and skills. Furthermore, schools may expand training channels through commissioned training programs and external professional training opportunities. Education authorities at all levels should incorporate family education guidance training into national, provincial, and municipal teacher training programs, with universities, teaching research institutions, and professional social service organizations serving as training providers.

Training and supervision activities should adhere to both demand-oriented and practice-oriented principles to improve service quality. Schools should adopt a "focused and high-quality" and "pilot-to-scale" approach while strengthening family-centered care and differentiated guidance [9], thereby enhancing service effectiveness. To achieve this goal, schools should regularly conduct surveys, interviews, and other needs assessments to monitor family education guidance needs among parents and training needs among teachers at different career stages. Based on these findings, training content should be systematically designed. Training priorities should focus on addressing urgent and complex issues encountered by parents in raising children and by teachers in guiding parents. Grounded in relevant laws and policies related to family education and child welfare protection, training programs should provide tiered and categorized instruction on social work professional methods, needs assessment techniques, activity planning, and service effectiveness evaluation. In addition, training should address key themes such as strengthening awareness of the Chinese national community, promoting border stability, and protecting minors. Particular emphasis should be placed on providing targeted training related to parenting education, guardianship capacity enhancement, family culture development, ethnic unity, and life safety education for special groups, including left-behind children, disadvantaged children, border-region children, and children from divorced families. These measures will

contribute to the professionalization and long-term sustainability of school-based family education guidance services.

4.4. Improve supporting safeguard measures and clarify employment standards and on-campus service support guidelines for social workers

The target populations of social work intervention in school-based family education guidance services include, but are not limited to, students, parents, teachers, schools, and the surrounding communities. During the service process, interventions are carried out based on the actual conditions of service recipients, using one or more integrated social work methods such as casework, group work, community work, social work administration, social work supervision, and social work research. For example, casework methods can be used to provide individualized and precise guidance for individuals or families facing difficulties; group work methods can be applied to offer group counseling for parents with shared needs or similar challenges, such as parent-child relationship enhancement groups and parenting support groups; community work can assist schools and their surrounding communities in fostering a supportive environment that values family education and expanding volunteer teams dedicated to family education services. Social work administration can translate relevant policies into concrete services and provide recommendations for policy improvement; social work supervision can offer professional guidance to teachers and volunteers who lack experience or encounter challenges; and social work research methods can be employed to scientifically assess service needs and effectiveness while summarizing best practices and typical experiences.

To address the current shortage of human resources and insufficient service capacity in school-based family education guidance, educational administrative officials and school administrators at all levels can be targeted for advocacy and professional orientation on school social work. This will help clarify the differences between social workers and other personnel such as homeroom teachers, psychological counselors, and volunteers in terms of service philosophy, methods, and functions, while highlighting the unique value and irreplaceable role of professional social workers. Such efforts can enhance the intrinsic motivation of educational authorities and schools to actively introduce professional social work forces into family education guidance services, thereby supplementing existing service teams with professionalized and institutionalized external support.

Although relevant laws and policy documents have been introduced to define and support the participation of social workers in family education guidance services and promote the development of school social work, these provisions are largely advocacy-oriented and lack detailed and operational implementation guidelines. As a result, barriers to effective policy implementation persist. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a comprehensive support and safeguard system within the framework of national and Guangxi regional policies to facilitate social workers' entry into schools to provide family education guidance services. This includes clearly defining employment qualification standards, salary and remuneration structures, service entry procedures, and service content specifications, thereby providing institutional support for effective social work intervention. For instance, relevant departments such as social work administration, education, civil affairs, finance, and human resources and social security may jointly formulate implementation measures for the establishment and management of school social work positions in Guangxi. These measures should incorporate school social workers into the key job development framework within the education sector, specify staffing quotas, qualification requirements, recruitment procedures, and job responsibilities, and adhere to principles such as "position allocation based on actual needs, integration of full-time and part-time roles, priority for stationed school-based services, and regional coordination". Priority should be given to assigning full-time social workers in border schools, schools in ethnic minority regions, boarding schools, and schools with large populations of left-behind children. Cross-school joint employment within counties and coordinated

deployment through township or subdistrict social work stations should also be encouraged. Furthermore, an employment model characterized by "education authority coordination, school utilization, agency supervision, and civil affairs oversight" should be implemented, alongside secured funding, sound compensation systems, and sustainable investment mechanisms.

Regarding pathways for introducing social work talent into school-based family education guidance services, schools with adequate resources may utilize various approaches such as government procurement of services, commissioned service arrangements, and project-based collaboration. Through these mechanisms, social work service agencies can conduct in-depth research and actively implement professional interventions, including behavioral correction, parent-child relationship improvement, and family follow-up guidance. Schools may also engage social workers to provide training and professional supervision for teachers and volunteer teams involved in family education guidance, thereby enhancing service coverage and effectiveness. Schools with limited financial resources may strengthen collaboration with higher education institutions by inviting universities to assign outstanding social work students to undertake internships in primary and secondary schools, incorporating family education guidance services into their practical training. This approach can achieve mutually beneficial outcomes for schools, universities, and students alike.

4.5. Implement funding guarantee mechanisms to support the development and service upgrading of family education guidance teams

Although the *Family Education Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China* clearly establishes the government's primary responsibility for funding family education guidance services, and the *Five-Year Plan for Guiding and Promoting Family Education (2021–2025)* jointly issued by the All-China Women's Federation, the Ministry of Education, and other departments calls for increased financial investment and the inclusion of family education guidance services in annual fiscal budgets at corresponding levels, significant gaps and practical challenges remain in implementation. Relevant studies have also indicated that funding mechanisms should adopt a diversified support model characterized by "government leadership, school-based supplementation, and societal support". The government plays a leading role in the provision of family education guidance service systems and should fulfill its responsibilities by improving the legal framework, increasing financial investment, building professional service teams, strengthening supervision and evaluation, and establishing scientific operational mechanisms [10]. In addition, relevant laws and policies should specify the minimum proportion of family education funding within government fiscal revenues at all levels [11]. While increasing government investment, authorities should also collaborate with social institutions, charitable organizations, and other social actors to mobilize additional funding and establish special-purpose family education funds. These funds would support schools in forming professional guidance service teams, providing specialized training, conducting regular performance evaluations, and implementing related activities. Furthermore, financial allocation should follow the principles of universality and equity protection, prioritizing fiscal support for economically underdeveloped and educationally disadvantaged regions, particularly central and western areas, as well as county-level, township, and rural regions [5]. Other research suggests that customized provision represents an optimal model for government procurement of family education guidance services. This requires establishing an integrated institutional framework characterized by coordinated vertical and horizontal governance, forming parallel procurement units, and creating internal functional bodies such as comprehensive procurement offices, funding coordination agencies, supervision and evaluation units, project management offices, and coordination agencies, alongside key mechanisms including demand customization, decision customization, and supervision and evaluation customization [12].

Therefore, in the broader context of advancing law-based educational governance and strengthening coordinated family–school–community education, promoting the legalization and institutionalization of funding guarantees for school-based family education guidance services requires a systematic approach grounded in legal enforcement, supported by detailed policy implementation, sustained by diversified funding channels, and ensured through supervision and accountability mechanisms. At the level of legal and policy implementation, regional funding management regulations for school-based family education guidance services should be formulated based on national and local legal and policy frameworks related to family–school collaboration and family education. These regulations should clearly define funding categories, allocation standards, disbursement procedures, and performance objectives. Family education guidance funding should also be integrated with per-student public expenditure frameworks, establishing mechanisms for stable growth and regionally differentiated support. Fiscal transfer payments should prioritize rural areas, underdeveloped regions, and schools serving vulnerable populations to reduce disparities in resource allocation.

While strengthening the government's primary responsibility for funding, it is also necessary to broaden funding sources through multiple channels, including government procurement of services, charitable donations, partnerships with social organizations, and coordinated use of school operational funds, thereby establishing a stable and sustainable diversified financing structure. At the same time, key indicators such as funding guarantees, operation of parent schools, and service coverage rates should be incorporated into educational supervision systems and balanced quality assessment frameworks for compulsory education. Through strengthened supervision and accountability, both government agencies and schools can be held responsible for fulfilling their statutory obligations. Entities that fail to perform required duties or that misuse or inefficiently utilize funds should be subject to corrective supervision and accountability measures. Through the coordinated application of legal enforcement, institutional regulation, diversified funding provision, and performance-based supervision, persistent issues such as insufficient and unstable funding can be effectively addressed, thereby providing strong support for the normalized, inclusive, and professional development of school-based family education guidance services.

5. Conclusion

In summary, this study, based on an investigation of school-based family education guidance services in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, analyzes both the practical challenges facing these services and potential strategies for their improvement. The high-quality development of family education guidance services in schools within ethnic minority regions requires not only addressing current challenges—such as insufficient alignment between service content and family needs, inadequate support for special groups like left-behind children, limited teacher competence in professional guidance, the absence of supportive measures for social worker integration, and shortages in dedicated funding—but also relies on coordinated efforts among multiple stakeholders, including families, schools, communities, and government agencies. The traditional single-school service provision model is insufficient to meet the diverse and precise needs of families. Only by establishing a collaborative supply system led by schools, leveraging the complementary strengths of multiple stakeholders [13], can resource integration be enhanced, special group support strengthened, teacher training and supervision effectively implemented, supportive measures improved, and funding mechanisms secured. Such an approach will continuously enhance the inclusivity, professionalism, and effectiveness of family education guidance services, thereby promoting the holistic development and well-being of students, consolidating the foundation of family happiness, and injecting sustainable momentum into

the high-quality development of education and social stability in ethnic minority regions of central and western China. Future research may expand from new perspectives, such as cross-regional comparative studies to examine differences and commonalities in family education guidance services across various ethnic minority regions in central and western China, in order to extract replicable and scalable best practices; or from a digital empowerment perspective, exploring the application and optimization of information technology in family education guidance services in ethnic minority regions; or from a policy implementation perspective, analyzing deviations and improvement pathways in the execution of existing policies, further refining the research framework.

Funding project

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