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# A psychosocial perspective on school readiness for migrant children: a case study in a public secondary school in Krugersdorp, South Africa

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# A PSYCHOSOCIAL PERSPECTIVE ON SCHOOL READINESS FOR MIGRANT CHILDREN: A CASE STUDY IN A PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL IN KRUGERSDORP, SOUTH AFRICA



UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
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A Research Report

By

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

Johannesburg, June 2020

## DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Master of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree, part degree or examination at this or any other university.



24th day of June 2020

Sarah E. Blessed-Sayah

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this research report to my parents, Dcn & Mrs Blessed-Sayah, for their unwavering support throughout my study period. May your lights keep shining beyond the distance that lighthouses can ever reach.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge my supervisor, Dr Ian Moll, for his clear intellectual guidance and unwavering support throughout this study.

I am grateful to Dr Edna Bosire and Christine Mwebesa for continuously encouraging me on this academic journey. Beyond words can describe, I acknowledge your tremendous contributions toward the completion of my study.

To the principal, deputy principal, School Governing Board (SGB) as well as teachers of Public Secondary School PQR, I am thankful for your immense contribution and participation in this study.

I am also thankful to my siblings, Deborah, Caleb, Grace and, Oyilenaan for cheering me up all the way to the completion of this study.

Above all, I am eternally grateful to my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ for giving me the grace to start and complete this study. Indeed, “in Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28, English Standard Version).

## ABSTRACT

This study focused on a psychosocial perspective of school readiness for migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR in Krugersdorp, South Africa. The main aim of the study was to discover what school readiness means for teachers and parents in the context of both psychological and social development for migrant children in South Africa. Consequently, the study focused on a psychosocial approach to school readiness related to migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa. The specific questions that this study sought to answer were what teachers' and parents' perceptions of school readiness are; what the psychosocial challenges faced by migrant children in relation to school readiness are and; what strategies are in place to address some of the psychosocial challenges faced by migrant children in relation to school readiness.

This study employed a qualitative research design using a case study method. The researcher collected data using a semi-structured interview guide. Participants were recruited using non-probability sampling methods including purposive and convenience sampling. A total of 13 participants were recruited and they consented to participate in the study. The participants included 7 teachers and 6 parents of migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR. All interviews were conducted in a private room at the school following successful appointments with participants. All interviews were audio-recorded and, the researcher drafted detailed field notes following each interview. Audio-files were transcribed by the researcher and, transcripts were read and re-read to identify common patterns and emerging themes in relation to meanings as well as understandings of school readiness as provided by study participants. Data were analysed using a constant comparative method of qualitative analysis within a grounded theory approach. Verbatim quotations were used to illuminate the key themes.

The findings of this study suggested that both teachers and parents of migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR seem to explain school readiness from a traditional viewpoint (which places the responsibility of preparedness for school on the child). Factors such as social challenges that were revealed to be particular to migrant children and their being prepared to start school at grade seven or even to move to tertiary institutions seemed not to be considered at first instance. The study also revealed that migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR faced both social and psychological challenges in relation to their readiness for school. Also, the study found that the strategy in place to address the psychosocial challenges faced by migrant children was limited.

In conclusion, this study argues that; in order to explain school readiness for migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa, the challenges ranging from children's lack of proper documentation to parental issues such as uncooperativeness, have to be put in perspective while considering the cognitive levels of preparedness for school. The study suggests that there is a dire need for the conceptualisation and explanation of the issue of school readiness from a perspective that integrates both cognitive and or psychological factors with the real-life situation or context of the lived experiences of the migrant children community in Public Secondary School PQR.

***Key Words:*** *School readiness, migrant children, teachers, migrant parents.*

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# CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

## 1.1 Introduction

In recent times, the use of the phrase 'school readiness' or 'being ready for school' has become commonplace. Parents, teachers, schools, and governments have become concerned about ensuring that *all* children, at every level of schooling, begin as 'ready'. As a result, varying notions exist which seek to explain school readiness using different measures to determine 'how ready' children are. However, with the varying notions of *all* children, there seems to be little or no attention paid to the social life and circumstances of a certain group of children known as migrants. Within South Africa, where ambiguity lies in the explanation of *every* child and *illegal* or *foreign* persons, migrant children's readiness for school seems to go beyond conceptions that focus solely on the individual. School readiness levels, for migrant children in the South African context, extend to their surrounding circumstances which may impede chances or opportunities for being ready for school. In order to gain understanding of the particular experiences of migrant children within South Africa in relation to school readiness, it was expedient to find out the perceptions of parents and teachers of migrant children on school readiness. This study also generated an encompassing approach in order to understand school readiness in the context of the migrant children.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

'School readiness' has become a cause for concern within schools, among parents, across policy documents and within the domain of inclusive education. This concern is illustrated within South African schools where the testing of children for school readiness is constantly

questioned (Sherry & Draper, 2013). Although the South African Schools Act, Act 84 (Republic of South Africa, 1996) clearly states that children may not be excluded from getting formal access into school on the basis of a 'school readiness' test, the policy provides that assessment is essential *should* a child wish to start school *early*. However, regardless of the wide range of diversity within South African classrooms, an explanation of school readiness seemed not to be with reference to the specific context and experience of diverse students. The focus has thus been limited to the basic (individual competence based) conceptualisation of the phenomenon.

School readiness has been contextually conceptualised through varying lenses including age and maturation, socio-economic backgrounds, cognitive, emotional and moral levels of development as well as readiness of the child, school and family (Sherry & Draper, 2013). However, there seems to be no consensus on the definition of school readiness (Blair, 2002; Dotterer et al., 2012; Karoly et al., 2005) and, although existing definitions vary depending on the lens through which the levels of readiness are explained, there seems to be a few conceptualisations of school readiness that considers the variance in backgrounds of children. School readiness determinant levels as shown by recent studies, put forward a 'one size fits all' approach that is used to judge the readiness of children who are of school going age (Barnes & Slate, 2013). According to the United Nations through the Sustainable Developmental Goals – SDGs (United Nations, 2015), by 2030, "*all* girls and boys have access to *quality* early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are *ready* for primary education" (p. 21).

In establishing the context of this study, it is notable that, across the different parts of the world, individuals as well as families move from one country to another in search of better opportunities and other reasons. Some of the time, the individuals and families migrate without legal documents and this poses social challenges for the individuals and families (James, 1997). In the South African context, 'black' nationals from neighbouring and distant African countries move to areas within the South African borders as a result of war, hunger, educational opportunities and other 'supposed' opportunities (Akanle et al., 2016; Crush & Peberdy, 2018; Crush & Williams, 2018; Landau et al., 2005; Mobius, 2017). Sometimes, these individuals move with their children or are of school going age and are exposed to the challenges of getting the basic needs for survival as well as the right to not just basic but quality education (van Blerk & Ansell, 2006).

Consequently, the call for 'readiness' for school as a set goal for the United Nations is seemingly, an arduous task which requires in depth understanding. Though the task to ensure readiness seems arduous, an understanding of school readiness that considers a 'holistic model' of education which recognises and addresses the multiple and complex learning, social and emotional needs of migrant children within South Africa (Arnot & Pinson, 2005) may be functional in achieving the set goal. Also, a few studies (Erasmus et al., 2016; Sherry & Draper, 2013) have shown that school readiness has been explained in relation to disadvantaged children of which migrants belong, but there seemed to be no sufficient research on a psychosocial approach to understanding what school readiness means in their context. It was therefore expedient to understand what school readiness means in the context of both psychological and social perspectives. Also, there was a need to identify a psychosocial approach to understanding and intervening in school readiness levels in relation to migrant children.

## 1.3 Research Questions

The overall question posed was, what is the understanding of teachers and parents of "school readiness" for migrant children in South Africa? To address this question, the following sub-questions emerged:

- What are teachers and parents' perception of school readiness?
- What are the psychosocial challenges faced by migrant children in relation to school readiness in Krugersdorp, South Africa?
- What strategies are in place to address some of the psychosocial challenges faced by migrant children in relation to school readiness in Krugersdorp, South Africa?

## 1.4 Aims of the Study

This study aimed to discover what school readiness means for teachers and parents in the context of both psychological and social development for migrant children in South Africa. Consequently, the study focused on a psychosocial approach to school readiness related to migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa. In specific terms, the aims were to:

- Explore teachers and parents' perception of school readiness.
- Find out the psychosocial challenges faced by migrant children in relation to school readiness in Krugersdorp, South Africa.
- Document the strategies that are in place to address some of the psychosocial challenges faced by migrant children in relation to school readiness in Krugersdorp, South Africa.

## 1.5 Justification of the Study

Countries including the United States of America, Australia and Ireland with an increasing number of migrant children, have conducted studies on school readiness. These studies have shown that, in determining school readiness levels for historically disadvantaged groups (of which migrant children belong), factors beyond cognitive abilities and generalised individual expectations need to be considered. Also, the 4th goal by the United Nations Sustainable Developmental Goal which is quality education involves ensuring students acquire knowledge and become global citizens (United Nations, 2015). Thus, if South Africa wants to fully achieve the 4th Sustainable Developmental Goal (SDG) by 2030, in-depth explanation and understanding of what readiness means in the case of migrant children must be considered.

This study sought to generate useful *insights* that can be used by schools and the South African government to understand what school readiness means for migrant children within her borders. This study further sought to offer useful suggestions on a psychosocial approach to determining school readiness levels for migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa. Thus, this study is not only important to school boards and the government but also to future researchers focusing on school readiness, specifically in relation to migrant children.

## 1.6 Definition of Key Terms

In establishing the context of this study, the following key terms are defined accordingly:

***Migrants*:** refer specifically to individuals who have moved across international borders to other countries.

***Migrant Children*:** refer specifically to children who have moved across international borders to other countries**.** For the purpose of this study, they refer to children from other African countries that have moved into the borders of South Africa.

***School Readiness*:** refers to a child being socially as well as psychologically ready to begin secondary school.

***Psychosocial*:** refers to an interaction between psychological factors and social contexts. While psychological factors include cognitive abilities, individual behaviour and emotions, social context imply cultural or environmental contexts within with individuals are situated.

***Disadvantaged*:** refers to children who are not provided with the opportunities considered to be favourable in order to achieve in the school environment.

***Public Secondary School*:** refers to a government owned secondary school. In this study the secondary school is specifically in the Gauteng province of South Africa and is considered as a Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) school. For the purpose of this research, the school where this study was conducted will hence be named *Public Secondary School PQR*.

***Case Study*:** refers to a comprehensive investigation of a single occurrence that is chosen either because it is typical or can be used to understand similar circumstances.

***Phenomenology*:** refers to the scientific study of experience that attempts to explain human consciousness, especially in the context of getting prepared to start the schooling process, in its lived immediacy

## 1.7 Layout of the Study

The structure of this report consists of five chapters and they are presented as follows:

### *Chapter One*

This chapter gives a background to the study which includes an introduction to the study; a statement of the problem from which this study evolved; the aims of the study as well the research questions posed; a justification for the study; an explanation or definition of key terms within the study and; a detailed layout of the study.

### *Chapter Two*

Chapter two of this report provides a review of related extant literature to the aims of the study. The outline of this literature review is presented in the order as stated below:

- Meaning and Nature of School Readiness
- The Situation of Migrant Children in Relation to School Readiness
- Teachers' Perceptions of School Readiness
- Parents' Perceptions of School Readiness
- Challenges Faced by Migrant Children in Relation to School Readiness
- Intervention for the Psychosocial Challenges Faced by Migrant Children in Relation to School Readiness

In addition to the presentation of related extant literature, the theoretical framework of the study is also given in chapter 3 of this report.

***Chapter Three***

The methodology of this research is presented in chapter three of this report. In line with the research methodology, the chapter consists of an introduction to the overall content of the section; the research paradigm; the research design used which was a qualitative case study method; a detailed description of the research site including a visual representation of the school area; the method of sample selection and the criteria for the selected target population; the method employed for the collection of data as well as its analysis and; ethical considerations for the study.

***Chapter Four***

This chapter outlines the analysis, presentation of the results from the data collected as well as a discussion of coded themes. These coded themes (referred to as case themes) address the research questions posed which were on teachers and parents' perception of school readiness for migrant children; the psychosocial challenges faced by migrant children in relation to school readiness in Krugersdorp, South Africa and; strategies that are in place to address some of the psychosocial challenges faced by migrant children in relation to school readiness in Krugersdorp, South Africa. The chapter begins with an introductory section and moves on to the description of the socio-demographic characteristics of the study participants. Hereafter, the case themes are carefully presented using major headings. Following from the discussion of case themes, an analysis of the findings is reported.

### *Chapter Five*

Chapter five of this report, which is the concluding chapter, presents a summary of the study's findings, discussions and conclusions, limitations of the study and, suggestions for future studies on the topic of school readiness for migrant children in relation to a psychosocial approach.

# CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a general overview of school readiness on a global pedestal as well as in South Africa. The extant literature as given here discusses what school readiness has been conceptualised as from the early 90s up until the recent 21st century. A need to begin from earlier conceptualisations of school readiness emanated from the apparent importance of understanding the development of school readiness over time. The literature also presents the situation of migrant children in relation to school readiness as well as teachers and parents' perceptions of school readiness specifically for migrant children. In addition, the literature presented in this section, focuses on the challenges faced by migrant children as it relates to school readiness and, interventions for the psychosocial challenges that these migrant children face. Finally this chapter describes the theoretical framework that guided the study including how the framework links to the research questions posed.

## 2.2 Meaning and Nature of School Readiness

Over the years, the nature and meaning of school readiness has developed from a simple definition to more complex understandings. According to Brenner (1957), school readiness was earlier conceptualised as a specific trait which was variously the size of the child, chronological age of a child, ability to read, count, and relate well with other children. These conceptions of readiness explained the phenomenon as determined by only one factor. Moving forward, school readiness was then described as a collection of single-traits and thereafter, as the child being totally developed. Total development is expressed as physical, mental, emotional and social development of the child (Brenner, 1957) and, is viewed as a holistic

conceptualisation of school readiness. In later years, Lewit and Baker (1995) considered school readiness as the school being ready to enrol children regardless of their language, income or gender at a particular age. However, this view of enrolling children at a specific age linked closely to the 'single-trait' conceptualisation. A shift from this single-trait view of readiness was considered by Meisels (1998) when he suggested an integrated approach, referred to as interactionist, to describe school readiness. Within this paradigm of interactionism, school readiness is conceptualised as bi-directional because it places emphasis on child development while recognising that the perceptions of individuals in the child's environment shape the content of what is taught, learned, and valued. School readiness is hence viewed as a product of the interaction between a child's prior experience, his or her inborn traits, maturational level, as well as a holistic view of his or her environmental and cultural experiences (Meisels as cited in Meisels, 1998). This consideration represented a shift from an explanation of development and or learning abilities from a medical model to a social model. This social model according to Oliver (1996) focuses on the social and or cultural context of individuals rather than on an individual child's 'problem'. For, Gallagher (2004) argues that through the social model of inclusion, a platform is provided for individuals that have been *labelled* 'disabled' by the *society*, to redefine themselves through meaning making.

Drawing from an integrated approach in more recent times, although there is no consensus on the definition of school readiness, Snow (2006) defines school readiness as "[…] the state of child competencies at the time of school entry that are important for later success" (p. 9). De Feyter and Winsler (2009) also refer to the concept as a set of physical, emotional, social, language, behavioural, and cognitive skills that work in an integrated manner to help a child perform well in school. These definitions imply that the child is mandated to have certain basic competencies in order to be 'prepared' for school as well as become successful as a student.

Such basic competencies include physical well-being, sensory-motor development (Sherry & Draper, 2013; Van Biljon & Longhurst, 2011), emotional well-being and social development (Romano et al., 2010), communication skills (Roberts et al., 2011) and cognitive development which enhances all other competencies (Welsh et al., 2010). In illustrating the basic competencies for school readiness, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) in Ireland (2009) used figure 2.1 below.

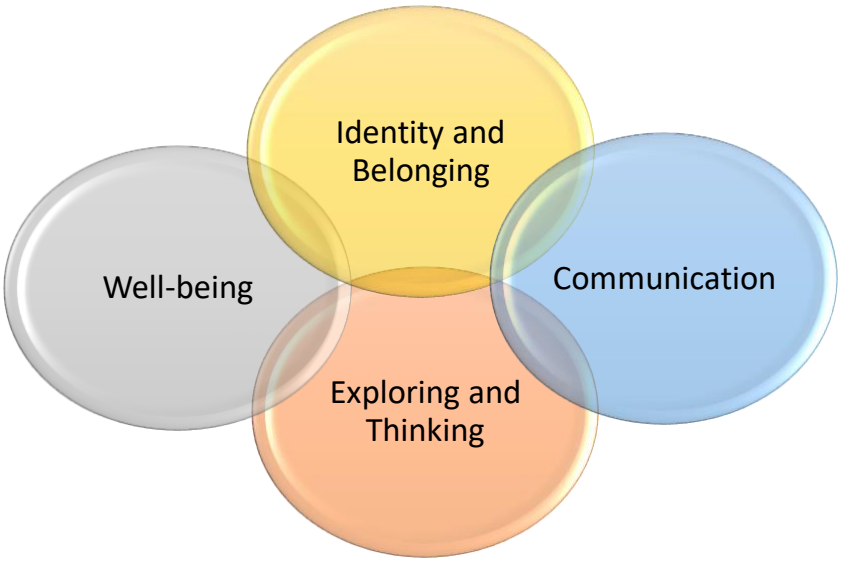



*Figure 2. 1: Basic Competencies for School Readiness Adapted from NCCA (2009)*

Although the basic competencies may be explained as 'single traits', however, figure 2.1 above exemplifies an integration of the competencies which does not depict an isolation of skills, knowledge or values in the determination of readiness levels in children. This is therefore not just a collation of single traits but, an integration of the inherent traits, maturational level, environmental and cultural experiences (Meisels, 1998). Drawing from an integrated approach which reflects an interactionist viewpoint of school readiness, Dockett and Perry (2009) suggest that school readiness should be explained as a relational concept. A relational construct of readiness according to Dockett and Perry (2009) involves readiness of the child, school and community. This three-fold meaning of school readiness is deemed to ensure an integrated approach to getting children ready to start school at different levels even as areas for possible

change are identified. In agreement to Dockett and Perry (2009), Sherry and Draper (2013) argue that school readiness can be conceptualised from the viewpoint of the child, school, family as well as the social context of the child.

However, research in recent times still focus on identifying and assessing school readiness from the viewpoint of the child. As a result, tests that monitor the cognitive development levels of children in relation to how ready they are for school are carried out. Farran (2011) argues that all the explanations of school readiness entail assessments of children before entry into school to *verify* their relative level of readiness. According to Csapó et al. (2014), a bid to test children's readiness levels through the creation of instruments for assessment including observational protocols, and test batteries have evolved. These instruments test on the basic competencies for readiness (Merrell & Bailey, 2008) which are illustrated in figure 1.0. In consonance with assessment of school readiness levels, Csapó et al. (2014) propose the use of online technology to test children using a measuring scale of key skills for future learning. These skills include speech and sound discrimination, understanding the meaning of words in relation to other words, basic counting skills as well as the ability to reason inductively. Interestingly, studies including Richter et al. (2016) as well as Du Plessis and Gerber (2012) within South Africa have indicated that it is important to use psychometric assessments and National Benchmark Tests (NBTs) to envisage the future outcomes of children at lower and higher educational levels respectively. The study carried out by Richter et al. (2016) employed instruments including Bayley Scales Infant Development (BSID); Griffiths Mental Development Scales (GMDS); Behaviour Screening Questionnaires (BSQ); and Raven's Coloured Progressive Matrices (RCPM). The aforementioned instruments were used to further assert that psychometric tests are a key to determining later functioning of the child at school.

The use of tests in assessing children's readiness levels often entails assessing *deficits* in the children, which are things they cannot yet do or do not know (Farran, 2011). Du Plessis and Gerber (2012) agree as they note that the NBTs fail to take cognisance of the possibilities that lie ahead for the students because it only focuses on competencies which are similar to the psychometric tests administered at lower educational levels. From the results of these psychometric tests and within the South African secondary school system, quick 'fixes' or 'solutions' are made available to ensure that the deficit within the children's mental capacity can be resolved (Farran, 2011). Consequently, no consideration is made for the social life of the child which refers to an explanation of school readiness from a social model which situates children's readiness levels within their specific contexts which is illustrated in figure 2.2.




*Figure 2. 2: Social Model of School Readiness Adapted from Simplican, Leader, Kosciulek and Leahy (2015)*

A study recently conducted by Walker and MacPhee (2011) shows that in determining how 'ready' a child is for school, the social context of the child needs to be considered. According to Walker and MacPhee (2011), policies that demonstrate commitment to both cognitive and socio-emotional competencies of school readiness should be implemented and research using such policy models should be conducted in order to determine an appropriate explanation of

readiness that is context based. Worthy of note is that, Walker and MacPhee (2011) found that the social domain is significantly important in the explanation of school readiness levels for children. This position taken by Walker and MacPhee (2011), aligns with Carlton and Winsler (1999) position on the need to take an approach toward school readiness that highlights the context and moves beyond isolated assessments and tests for predetermining children's readiness for school. By contrast to isolated tests and assessments, a specific context approach of implies that "school readiness assessments must attend to the pattern or profile of competencies in multiple areas that children bring to school, particularly in relation to *socially* and culturally diverse subgroups" (Guhn et al., 2016, p. 96, my emphasis). In the context of the proposed study, school readiness refers to a child being socially as well as psychologically ready to begin secondary school.

### 2.3 The Situation of Migrant Children in Relation to School Readiness

Regardless of the psychometric tests, and NBTs that are conducted within South Africa to determine the level of readiness for school among children, there seems to be some groups of children, specifically migrants, within the borders of South Africa that are not readily accounted for in the determination of readiness levels. According to the United Nations' International Organization for Migration (2004), migrants are defined as people who have moved or are moving to other countries or regions "to better their material or social conditions and improve the prospect for themselves or their family" (p. 40). For the purpose of this study, the definition of migrants refers specifically to individuals who have moved across international borders to other countries. In South Africa, the number of migrants is increasing (Akanle et al., 2016; Crush & Peberdy, 2018; Crush & Williams, 2018; Mobius, 2017). While the number of migrants increases, the number of children who move with migrant parents and

or on their own into South Africa also increases. Linking the increasing number of migrant children to education, the Section 29 of the South African Bill of Rights (1996) offers *everyone* the right to basic education and, the South African Schools Act (SASA), Act 84 (Republic of South Africa, 1996) makes it mandatory for every child to attend school from age 7 till the student attains age 15, or grade nine, whichever occurs first. However, the South African Immigration Act No. 13 of 2002 (Republic of South Africa, The Presidency, 2002) decrees that instruction by a learning institution to an 'illegal foreigner' is an offence. Moreover, the Immigration Act No. 13 of 2002 (Republic of South Africa, The Presidency, 2002) clearly states that any illegal foreigner found on the premises of a learning institution will be presumed to be receiving instruction and by implication, has committed an offence. In a study that focused on the barriers for a group of migrant children in South Africa which was conducted by Crush and Tawodzera (2011), a legal contradiction between the SASA, Act 84 (Republic of South Africa, 1996) of 1996 and South African Immigration Act No. 13 of 2002 (Republic of South Africa, The Presidency, 2002) was reported. The study showed that school boards and principals are constantly caught amid ambiguous regulations from the Departments of Education (the SASA, Act 84 [Republic of South Africa, 1996]) and Home Affairs (South African Immigration Act No. 13 of 2002 [Republic of South Africa, The Presidency, 2002]).

Consequently, according to a report on the *Implementation of Migrant Children's Rights in South Africa* compiled by Palmary (2009) for the United Children's Fund (UNICEF), only a few migrant children are reported to be in school. In addition, the report (Palmary, 2009) shows that in comparison to accompanied migrant children, 65% of unaccompanied minors within South Africa are especially vulnerable to being out of school. Although certain parts of South Africa seem to display a better outlook on the formal enrolment of these migrant children, studies show that it is as a result of the presence of Non-Governmental Organisations such as

the ‘three to six’ by the Roman Catholic Religious Sect. The Palmary (2009) report also indicates that the high rate of out of school migrants may be due to the negative attitudes towards those around the borders of South Africa.

> For example, in Komatipoort, we had been told by service providers that at one point all children without a birth certificate had been told to leave the school and a *school principal* reported being told by *police* that he would be *fined* if *migrant children* were *found* in the *school* (Palmary, 2009, p. 26, my emphasis)

Recognising the difficulty in accounting for the exercise of rights of migrant children in reality, the determinants of the level of readiness which go beyond ‘tests’ among the group need to be reconsidered. In line with the need to re-evaluate the readiness level determinants for the migrant children, it seems that limited studies within the South African context have considered research in this area. This research is, thus, one of the few that focused on a psychosocial perspective on the problem of school readiness for migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa. Other countries including the United States of America, Australia, some European countries such as Ireland, have conducted studies that considered the problem of school readiness in relation to migrant children. Some of the studies include Borgna and Contini (2014); Crosnoe (2013); De Feyter and Winsler (2009); Han et al. (2012); Koury and Votruba-Drzal (2014); Neidell and Waldfogel (2009).

### 2.4 Teachers’ Perceptions of School Readiness

Although there seems to be only a few studies that have considered teachers’ perception of school readiness (Kotaman, 2014) especially for migrant children, the description of school readiness is considered by teachers to entail certain skills as well as expectations from the

school, family and in some cases, the government. In a qualitative study conducted by Noel (2010), it was found that teachers considered school readiness from the perspective of the child being socially and emotionally prepared for the learning environment. Agreeing with the results from Noel (2010), Hatcher et al. (2012) found that teachers viewed school readiness from the perspective of a child being socio-emotionally mature to begin school. An excerpt from Hatcher et al. (2012) interview with a teacher explains the importance of socio-emotional maturity as an expected "…continuum of social emotional growth" (p. 6). In addition, the teachers interviewed in the study by Noel (2010) noted that the experiences of children prior to school enrolment play a crucial role in ensuring that children are prepared for school. Another perception of readiness by teachers includes the child's capability to take responsibility for himself or herself and, be able to communicate to him or herself as well as with others (Noel, 2010).

Regarding the ability to communicate as a sign of being ready for school, Hatcher et al. (2012) also note that teachers considered the ability to spell one's name as being 'ready'. Moreover, teachers view readiness in the light of specific school related skills such as the ability to listen and take instructions, work in a group and co-operate with others Hatcher et al. (2012). A study by Kotaman (2014) which employed a phenomenological approach toward the analysing of data found that teachers considered school readiness as a child being self-confident and able to express one's self. This perception of teachers on what school readiness means from Kotaman's (2014) study correlates with the findings from Noel (2010) as well as Hatcher et al. (2012) and also indicates that teachers expect children to be enthusiastic about learning in order for them to be certified 'ready' for school. However, Kotaman (2014) notes that teachers were fixed on the view that children are also ready for school if the children were not familiar with certain 'school-based' forms of knowledge. Some of the teachers from Kotaman's (2014) stated that

students who came from different education systems sometimes gave teachers difficulty for a host of reasons. For instance, one of the teachers revealed that it was preferable if children did not know letters of the alphabet and arithmetic because difficulty may arise in adopting a new school's system of learning when the children have learned under a different school environment (Kotaman, 2014).

Focusing on the role of the school in ensuring that children are ready for school, studies have shown that teachers recognise the importance of the school's role. A study conducted by Noel (2010) established that teachers in explaining readiness, emphasise the need for schools to enrol children regardless of their backgrounds. According to Brown and Lan (2015), "[t]eachers appear to place more emphasis on their role in preparing students for success in school…" (p. 11). In placing more emphasis on the role of teachers, Noel (2010) states that teachers are often under pressure to teach in certain ways that are considered appropriate by the society. Hence, teachers also perceive readiness from the lens of the community as what is deemed necessary to be 'ready' by the society. Noel (2010) gives an excerpt from an interview with a teacher to substantiate the perception of teachers concerning the role of the community in getting children ready for school.

> *As a community, we need to consider what we want our children to be like. Do we want happy children who can help create a better world? Then we need to support families to create those environments for children … Parks and other positive community facilities should be designed to support families. There should be green areas in communities. People will love their communities and feel ownership of them* Noel, 2010, p. 33, emphasis as in original).

This perception of school readiness from the lens of the community draws on the bi-directional view of readiness as given by Meisels (1998).

## 2.5 Parents' Perceptions of School Readiness

Remarkably, Belfield and Garcia (2014) note that the role of parents in ensuring school readiness for their children cannot be overemphasised. However, the researchers (Belfield & Garcia, 2014) note that research has paid little attention to the perception of parents on school readiness and what expectations inform their views on readiness for school. A few studies including Barbarin et al. (2008) have identified some differences in parents' beliefs about school readiness. The study by Barbarin et al. (2008) established that most parents explained school readiness in terms of the children's ability to identify numbers, letters of the alphabet and basic literacy skills. Similarly, using quantitative methods to analyse the responses of parents, Puccioni (2018) found that parents described school readiness as being able to count, identify letters of the alphabet, hold pencils properly, write one's name and pretend to read books. These findings correspond with the findings on teachers' belief on school readiness from other studies including Hatcher et al. (2012) and Noel (2010). However, many parents did not include inferential skills such as creativity, problem-solving, and recognizing patterns (Barbarin et al., 2008).

Additionally, Perry and Dockett (2011); Puccioni (2018); as well as McGettigan and Gray (2012) established that parents explained school readiness as being socially and emotionally mature. The socio-emotional maturity refers to the ability to co-operate with others, take instructions and being sensitive to the feelings of other children (Hatcher et al., 2012; Puccioni, 2018). This understanding of parents about school readiness is closely related to teachers' perception as found by other studies including Noel (2010) as well as Hatcher et al. (2012). However, the above-mentioned studies were not conducted in the context of South Africa; from extant literature, there seems to be no recent study within South Africa that has considered the perception of parents on the meaning of school readiness and, none related to migrant children.

## 2.6 Challenges Faced by Migrant Children in Relation to School Readiness

The challenges faced by migrant children in relation to their level of school readiness seem to have not been sufficiently researched (Mathur & Parameswaran, 2012). According to Tavassolie et al. (2018), only a few studies have investigated migrant children in relation to their level of school readiness. In line with the aforementioned, some studies have shown that migrant children are faced with challenges which in turn, affect their readiness for school. According to Crosby and Dunbar (2012), migrant children are most times characterised as a *vulnerable group* in relation to the concept of school readiness as a result of various unique challenges linked to adjusting into new communities and concomitantly, unfamiliar education systems. The vulnerable group links to Cowles' (1967) definition of disadvantaged children which he describes as a group of children who are not provided with the opportunities considered to be favourable in order to achieve in the school environment. Moreover, Mathur and Parameswaran (2012) posit that "the transient lifestyle of their families and, in many instances, the undocumented status of their parents, contributes to the disadvantages that young migrant children bring with them to… school" (p. 7). For Matsumoto (2013), educational disadvantages for migrant children can be approached from multiple angles. However, within the South African context, there are very limited or perhaps, no studies that have focused on the challenges faced by migrant children in relation to their experiences of school readiness.

Some studies from other countries that have researched on the prevailing challenges that migrant children face in relation to the phenomena include Tavassolie et al. (2018); Mathur and Parameswaran (2012) and; Crosnoe (2013). Drawing from the limited extant literature, Tavassolie et al. (2018) argue that migrant children within and beyond the United States of America are faced with challenges which comprise of their parents having to negotiate and

complete extensive paperwork in order to enrol their children in government owned schools (Hu & Szente, 2010) that are either tuition free or relatively affordable. Grouping the challenges faced by migrant children in relation to school readiness, Mathur and Parameswaran (2012) and Crosnoe (2013) suggest themes which include socio-economic status; health status; cultural beliefs; family dynamics; school involvement as well as; literacy and language skills. Regarding socioeconomic status, Crosnoe's (2013) study established that majority of immigrant families were below the poverty line. In consonance with Crosnoe's (2013) finding, Anderson (2018) argues that poverty is a major predictor of negative psychological stress on children and their parents (especially among migrants). Blair and Raver (2015) also suggest that poverty is associated with reduced opportunities for learning and so, reduced opportunity for children to be 'ready' for school. Congruently, Isaacs (2012) notes that one of the social and or context-based factors that affect the readiness of children for school include poverty. This social factor is further compounded by poor parenting behaviours, parents' education, maternal depression and, prenatal exposure to tobacco and, these incessantly affect the readiness level of children for school (Isaacs, 2012).

Considering the theme of health status, Mathur and Parameswaran (2012) note that poor health and barriers to quality health care demonstrate a correlation with poverty and have a powerful influence on the level of school readiness for migrant children. Sadly, in the South African context, according to Statistics South Africa's (2017) report on individuals living below the upper-bound poverty line (R992 per person per month), in 2015, children (ages 0-17) account for the highest population living in poverty with a 66.8 percentage. Consequently, more than 13 million children living in South Africa (including migrant children) are at risk of leading an unhealthy childhood development trajectory (Statistics South Africa, 2017). Linking the challenge of accessing quality health care to the transient lifestyle of migrant parents and how it negatively affects their children's readiness for school (Mathur & Parameswaran, 2012),

within the South African context, Crush and Tawodzera (2014) explain a major challenge. They (Crush & Tawodzera, 2014) argue that, a significant obstacle for migrants in accessing public healthcare facilities is the deprivation from treatment for individuals with lack of proper documentation. On the contrary, various policy documents including section 27 of the South African Bill of Rights, for example, states that *everyone* (including immigrants) has the right to access healthcare facilities. Additionally, Article 27 of the Refugees Act 130 (Republic of South Africa, 1998) clearly states that refugees in South Africa are to be given the same rights of access as everyone else in the country. This contradiction between policy and reality further aggravates the challenges faced by migrant children as related to their readiness for school within the South African context.

The challenge of cultural beliefs and family dynamics as explained by Mathur and Parameswaran (2012) explains how the social-cultural perspectives and family experiences of migrant children's environment pose a challenge to their readiness for school. Cultural values which can impede individual expression and engagement with the environment serve as barriers to getting children ready for school (Crosnoe, 2013; Mathur & Parameswaran, 2012). Also, the level of involvement of schools in getting children prepared for school can pose a challenge for migrant children as well as the literacy and language skills of the migrant children. However, there seems to be no sufficient research conducted on psychosocial challenges faced by migrant children in relation to school readiness within the South African context.

## 2.7 Interventions for the Psychosocial Challenges Faced by Migrant Children in Relation to School Readiness

With seemingly little or no research on psychosocial challenges faced by migrant children in relation to school readiness within the South African context, researched interventions are rather limited. Hence, the interventions reported in this literature are based on findings from studies carried out in the United States of America as well as other European countries. According to a study conducted by Crosnoe (2013) regarding the role that schools can play in getting children ready for school, he proposes an early investment in educational programs for migrant children who live below the USA poverty line which is currently given as those who live below $1.90 daily (World Bank Group, 2018). The assumption is thus that providing early education programs for migrant children would alleviate the negative effect of poverty and aid in getting migrant children ready for school. Nevertheless, considering the percentage of children living below the upper-bound poverty line in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2017), challenges may arise in providing adequate educational programs for migrant children.

Furthermore, Crosnoe (2013) explains that an intervention from a health perspective aids in alleviating some of the problems faced by migrant children in relation to school readiness. In Crosnoe's (2013) study, it is suggested that policies regarding the protection of immigrants (especially illegal ones) to get free access to quality healthcare should be put in place. However, within the South African context where ambiguity exists between policy documents and reality, more research is deemed necessary to find out what health interventions can be implemented to ensure that migrant children are not continually disadvantaged and so, not ready for school.

## 2.8 Theoretical Framework

### *2.8.1 Theories Relevant to this Study*

This study was guided by the theory of social constructivism as explained by Bruner (1996), which was suggested in a study conducted by Carlton and Winsler (1999) as well as, a phenomenological theory drawn from the work of Jackson (1996). The theory of social constructivism allows for an explanation of the readiness of a child for school, based on his or her situatedness in the society. Bruner (1996) posits that "…however much [an] individual may seem to operate on his or her own in carrying out the quest for meanings, nobody can do it unaided by [his or her] culture's symbolic systems" (p. 3). This theory of social constructivism according to Harré (1992) goes beyond the boundaries of existing views which are *reductive* to a culturally as well as historical background. The reductive views refer to psychological theories of learning that focus on and reduce every explanation of learning *only* to cognitive abilities (mental deficits) or behaviours (behavioural deficits). Following from the aforementioned, the theory is based on the demands of a particular cultural system on its members as well as, the *construction* of *meanings* that ensure expected outcomes (Bruner, 1996). Thus, Carlton and Winsler (1999) suggest that social constructivism has possibilities for a better understanding of school readiness because the theory is a shift from the radical maturationist perspective which focuses on only cognitive abilities of the child.

Phenomenology according to Jackson (1996) refers to "the scientific study of experience. It is an attempt to describe human consciousness in its lived immediacy…" (p. 2). Phenomenology is also posited to "seek a corrective to forms of knowledge and description that, in attempting to isolate unifying and universal laws, lose all sense of the abundance and plenitude of life" (Feyerabend as cited in Jackson, 1996, p. 7). It allows for a thorough description of the lived experiences of a particular group of individuals and provides a platform for the explanation of

a phenomenon in the specific context of the group of people. With the theory of phenomenology still being relevant in recent times, Brinkmann and Friesen (2018) acknowledge that the theory allows for the elucidating of lived experience of individuals (in this instance migrant children), particularly in the caring professions including education. Moreover, it also provides opportunities for articulating concepts in close relation with actual practice (Brinkmann & Friesen, 2018). As a result, beyond the determination of standard criteria for school readiness, the situatedness of migrant children was influential in approaching the meaning of the phenomenon.

### *2.8.2 Relevance of the Theories to this Study*

Social constructivism was significant to this study because it permits an understanding of the importance of the social context in determining what school readiness entails for migrant children. According to Ring et al. (2016), the theory of social constructivism in explaining school readiness locates readiness in the social as well as cultural context of the child. In keeping with this view, the cultural experiences and beliefs of the community where a school is located determine conceptions of readiness for that specific context. Consequently, the meaning of school readiness in relation to migrant children (within Krugersdorp, South Africa), was not considered as a single trait of cognitive skills which are located within the individual but, was linked to the socio-cultural situatedness of the child. This socio-cultural situatedness of the migrant child within Krugersdorp, South Africa revealed what counts as readiness in relation to schooling.

Regarding the theory of phenomenology in relation to this study, a platform to understand 'migrant children's lived experiences' in relation to getting ready for school at any level was raised. Following from the aforementioned, the social challenges of migrant children were not generalised constructs but were viewed as experiential which in turn, played out how 'ready' for school they can get. Also, the challenges and circumstances that migrant children go through or face in the South African context are varied and diverse. Thus, their internalisation of externally learned skills and or reconstruction of taught skills from the environment, explicitly, to consolidate their thinking (Bruner, 1996) defer based on their lived experiences (Ring et al., 2016) and, a theory that explains this difference was useful. Additionally, migrant children in South Africa struggle with their lived experiences and social-cognitive requirements for being ready for school. Such dialectical struggle incessantly affects their 'readiness for school at any level of study. As a result, the theory of phenomenology which allows for an explanation of their struggle was key in understanding how 'ready' the migrant children are or can be for schooling at any level. The integration of both theories for the purpose of this study is depicted in figure 2.3.

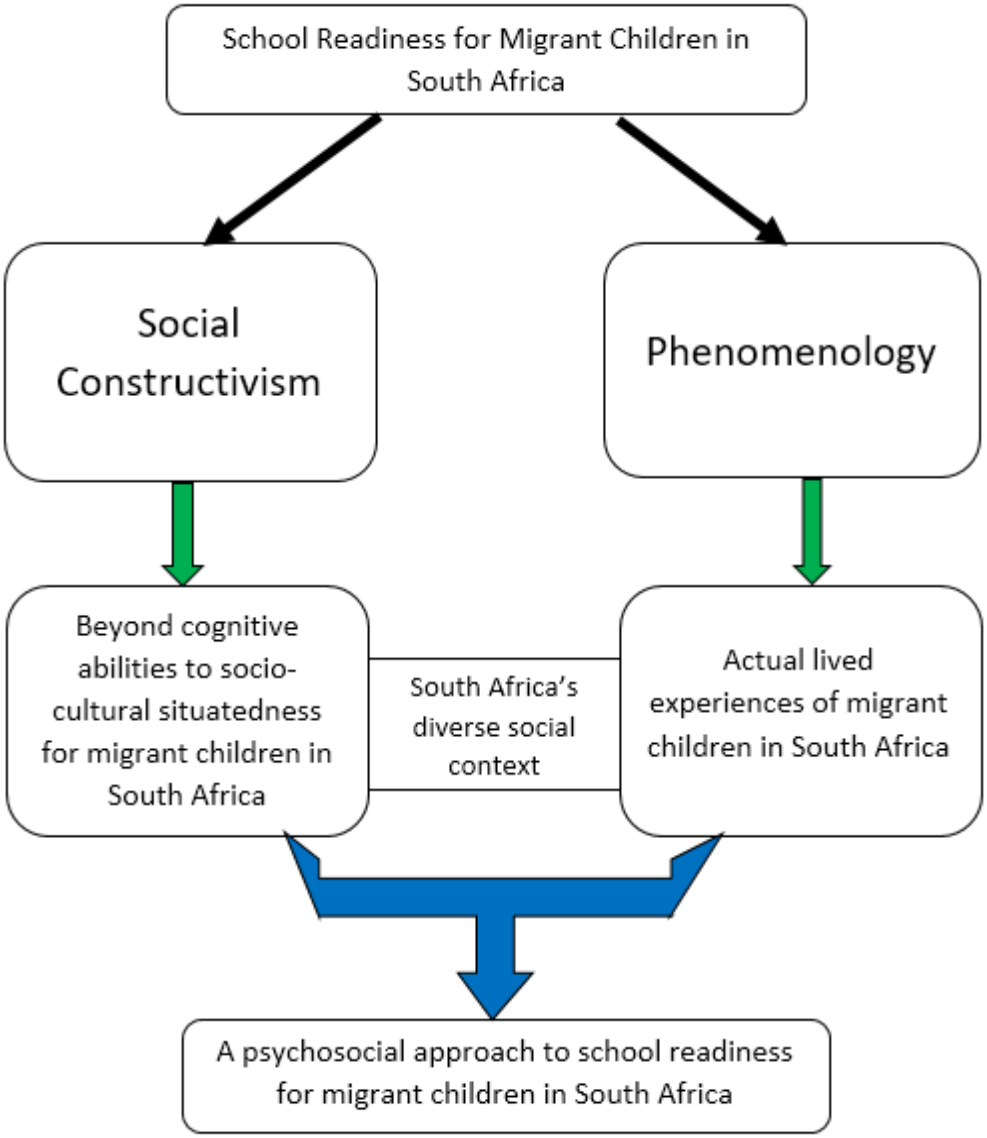



*Figure 2. 3: The theoretical framework for the study adapted from Bruner's theory of Social Constructivism and Jackson's theory of Phenomenology*

# CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a description of the research methodology employed for the purpose of the study. Thus, the section begins with an explanation of the research paradigm; research design used and extends to an account of the research study site. The chapter also includes the study population, sampling selection method and criteria for selection; methods used for the collection as well as processing and analysis of data. In addition, the strategies used to ensure the dependability of this study are included. Finally, ethical considerations for the study which include ethical clearance for the study, confidentiality, as well as anonymity are also considered in this section.

## 3.2 Research Paradigm – Interpretive

One major aspect of this research is the paradigm or lens from which the study draws its theoretical framing as well as methodology. A paradigm is explained as a group of views that determine action (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) and within research, distinct set of beliefs inform the methodology employed. Researchers including Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) have identified research paradigms (also referred to as theoretical paradigms) to be positivist and post-positivist; interpretivist or constructivist; transformative and; pragmatic. Each of these theoretical paradigms represents certain ways of knowing and making sense of the world. However, in establishing the context of this study, the theoretical paradigm which gives a broad framing of the research is interpretive.

The interpretive paradigm is characterised by relativism toward the understanding of 'truth' implying multiple truths about what reality is (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This relativity of truth establishes the subjectivity (emic – insider's view) of knowledge and ways of knowing which, allow for the interpretation of everyday experiences as well as, the values individuals attribute to these occurrences (Collis & Hussey, 2009). Interpretivism thus goes beyond objective explanation of events and moves into subjective, social constructs of truth and knowledge.

Further to the aforementioned, this paradigm informs theories such as social constructivism and phenomenology which have been considered relevant to this study. These theories allowed for an explanation of the role of the social and specific lived experiences in understanding what school readiness means in relation to migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa. Hence, this study was guided by an interpretivist paradigm where a case study method and in-depth semi-structured interviews' technique to critically gain understanding of factors beyond psychological perspectives to what school readiness entails, focusing on migrant children (see figure 3.1). Quite importantly, the criteria for quality of the study (data gathered from this study as well as its analysis), based on the interpretivist paradigm features include; "trustworthiness, credibility, transferability and confirmability" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 13). The framework for this study's methodology which depicts how the research paradigm overarches the entirety of the study is seen in figure 3.5 which is at the end of this chapter.

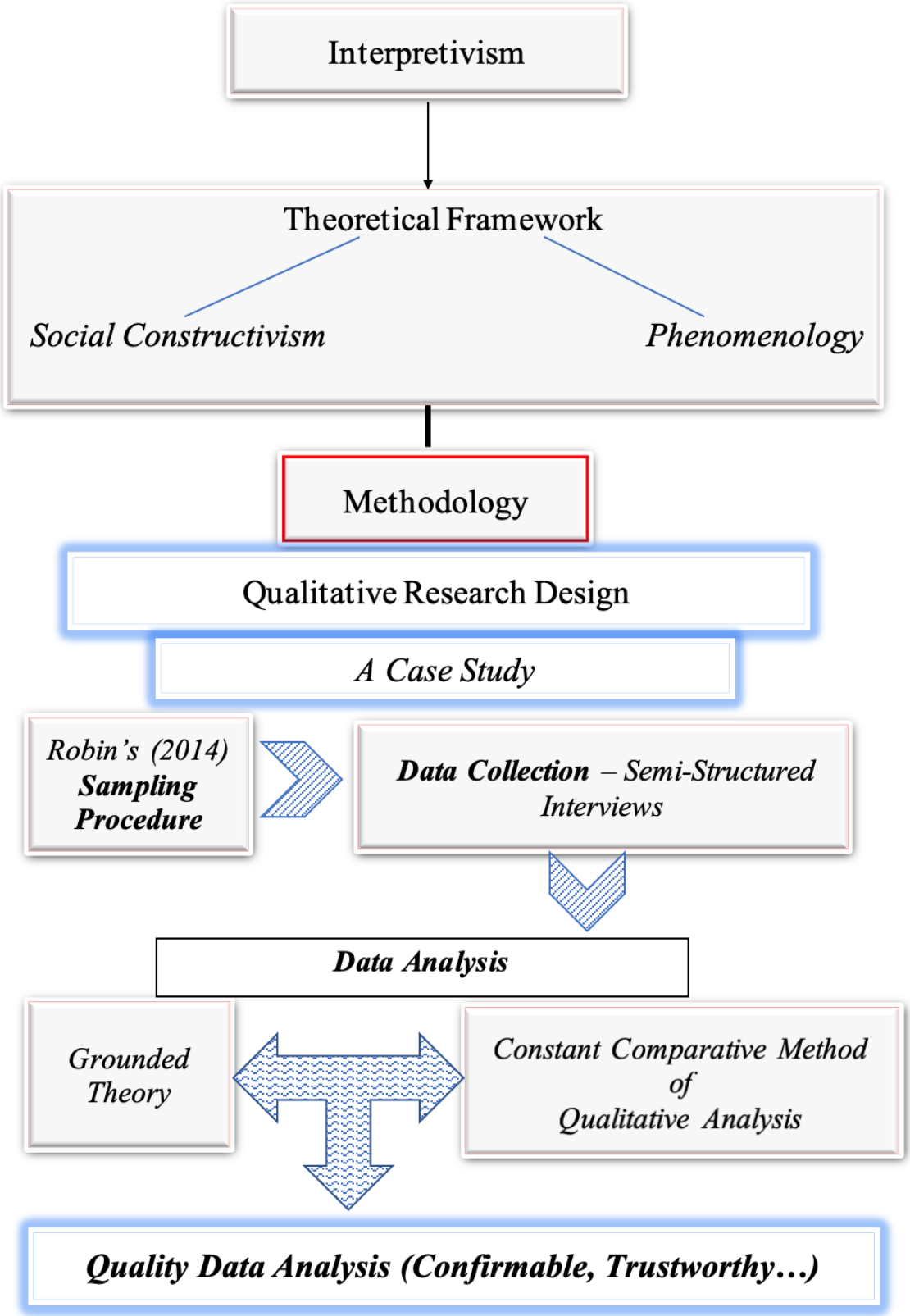



*Figure 3. 1: Detailed methodological framework in relation to the theoretical framework of the study developed by the Author, 2019.*

### 3.3 Research Design

The study used a qualitative research approach, specifically employing case study design. This approach was useful because there was a need to understand contextual conditions that are relevant to the concept that was studied (Yin, 2014). The contextual condition in specific terms refers to, the purpose of this study which was to *generate* an understanding of the phenomenon – school readiness – in the given context of migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR in Krugersdorp, South Africa. Thus, the design provided an in-depth understanding of the aims of the study because it encompasses an intensive and rich collection of data which also strengthened the reliability of the research (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2014). Therefore, a case study design enabled a closer link with actors (both parents and teachers) who had relevant information that helped to elucidate the key objectives of this study, especially on the meaning of school readiness from a psychosocial perspective. The research method used semi-structured individual interview formats which provided a deep understanding of the research questions, using an interview schedule. Notably, an establishment of patterns for psychosocial challenges faced by migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa as well as interventions for the identified challenges, in relation to school readiness emerged.

### 3.4 Case Study

A case study of Public Secondary School PQR in Krugersdorp, South Africa was used to get detailed information about school readiness for migrant children. Yin (2014) recognised that a case study explores an ongoing experience or phenomenon surrounded by a real-life context. A case study is considered expedient when there is a seemingly undetachable and evidential link that exists between the occurrence or concept and context (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014). In keeping with the aforementioned, after conducting a review of extant literature, Creswell

(2013) describes key components of a case study. One of the components includes the identification of a specific case which for this research was a public secondary school in Krugersdorp, South Africa. This research qualified as a case study because it was bounded by a single secondary school in a given area (Merriam, 2009). In addition, the need to provide a detailed understanding of the phenomena (Hu & Szente, 2010) in relation to the case is a key component of a case study. For this research, detailed information of a psychosocial perspective of school readiness for migrant children in the chosen school has been provided. Moreover, in concluding the findings, assertions were made regarding the consideration of a psychosocial perspective of school readiness for migrant children within Public Secondary School PQR in Krugersdorp, South Africa.

### 3.5 Research Site

This study was conducted at Public Secondary School PQR located in Krugersdorp on the West of Johannesburg (depicted in figure 3.2 as retrieved from Maphill [2011]), roughly 34km from the city centre. Public Secondary School PQR was purposefully selected as the research site because it has a sufficiently large intake of foreign migrant students based on its location and surrounding communities. Purposeful selection of a research site is determined by the peculiar characteristics of participants relevant to the study (Etikan et al., 2016). As a result, an in-depth study of the phenomenon under consideration, in relation to migrant children within Public Secondary School PQR served as a case study whose findings *can* be transferred to studies on other *similar* contexts. This transferability (to be distinguished from generalisability) refers to a case-to-case analysis of the findings in which the detailed implications of this case are carefully considered (Tracy, 2010) to determine the degree to which the results of the case can be applied to understanding another cognate context (Barnes et al., n.d.). According to the 2001

and 2011 South African population census, 83% of the total number of *migrant residents* within that area were from countries other than South Africa (Mogale City Local Municipality, 2016). Krugersdorp is under the Mogale City municipality and has a good number of public schools of which Public Secondary School PQR belongs.

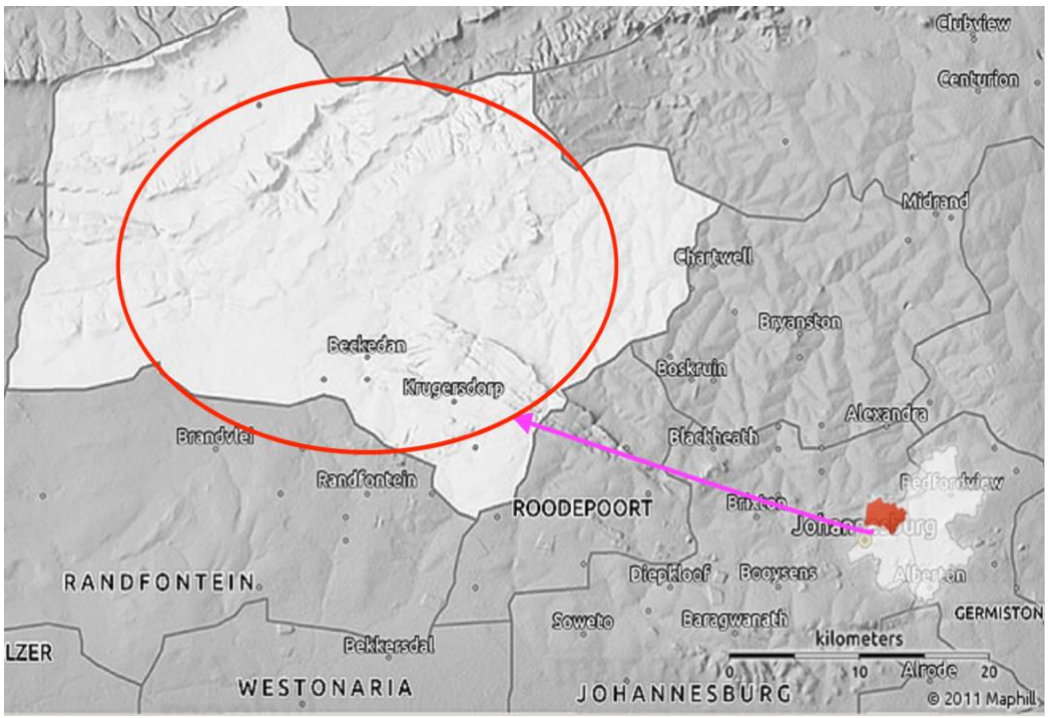



*Figure 3. 2: Gray panoramic map of Krugersdorp retrieved from Maphill (2011)*

According to the Department of Basic Education (2019), the school is a quintile two (no fee paying) institution and has about 1327 students. Worthy of note is that just opposite Public Secondary School PQR is a small community of shack houses (refer to figure 3.3) that is occupied by migrants from other neighbouring countries.




*Figure 3. 3: Picture of Public Secondary School PQR's Neighbouring Community*

## 3.6 Sampling

Having adapted Robinson's (2014) four-step strategy for sampling selection, this study defined its target population; decided on its sample size; devised a sample strategy; and sourced for its participants.

### *3.6.1 Study Population*

According to Newby (2014), the study population, which is also known as target population, refers to the total number of people that meet the conditions of the research focus. The study population is hence defined by the phenomenon or questions which a particular research raises. In accordance with this study, the study population included all parents and teachers of migrant children who attend Public Secondary School PQR in Krugersdorp (see figure 3.4). The reason for involving parents and teachers of migrant children in the stated school was because of the

sensitivity of the group of children that the study sought to find out about. Thus, the need to consider their teachers (who deal with the migrant children at school) as well as their parents (who understand and live within the community with the migrant children), was considered in the determination of the target population. The total number of teachers within the school as noted by the Department of Basic Education (2019) is 45. However, determining the *actual* number of teachers and parents of migrant children was challenging because of the level of sensitivity of the group of individuals involved in the study. Convenience sampling was thus considered appropriate in the selection of participants.

### *3.6.2 Sample Selection and Sampling Criteria*

For the purpose of this study, the sample size comprised of 7 teachers and 6 parents of migrant children from Public Secondary School PQR. A non-probability sampling method known as convenience sampling was used to select the participants. According to Etikan et al. (2016), this sampling method is useful where individuals from the *target population* that meet certain realistic criteria, including being available at a given time and or the *willingness to take part*, are included for the purpose of the research. Following from the aforementioned, parents and teachers of migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR who found it convenient and were willing to take part in the individual semi-structured interviews totalled thirteen (n=13). The criterion used for selecting participants was premised on the fact that the teachers who teach migrant children are in constant communication with them at school and have an understanding of their level of readiness for school. The parents of migrant children understand the social environment in which their children reside and were able to give a detailed and in-depth explanation of the factors challenging their children. Data collected from the participants represented different viewpoints of both teachers and parents on the problem of school

readiness in Krugersdorp, South Africa. The participants were only contacted on receipt of ethical clearance and appointments suitable for participants were made for semi-structured interview sessions which took place within the premises of Public Secondary School PQR.

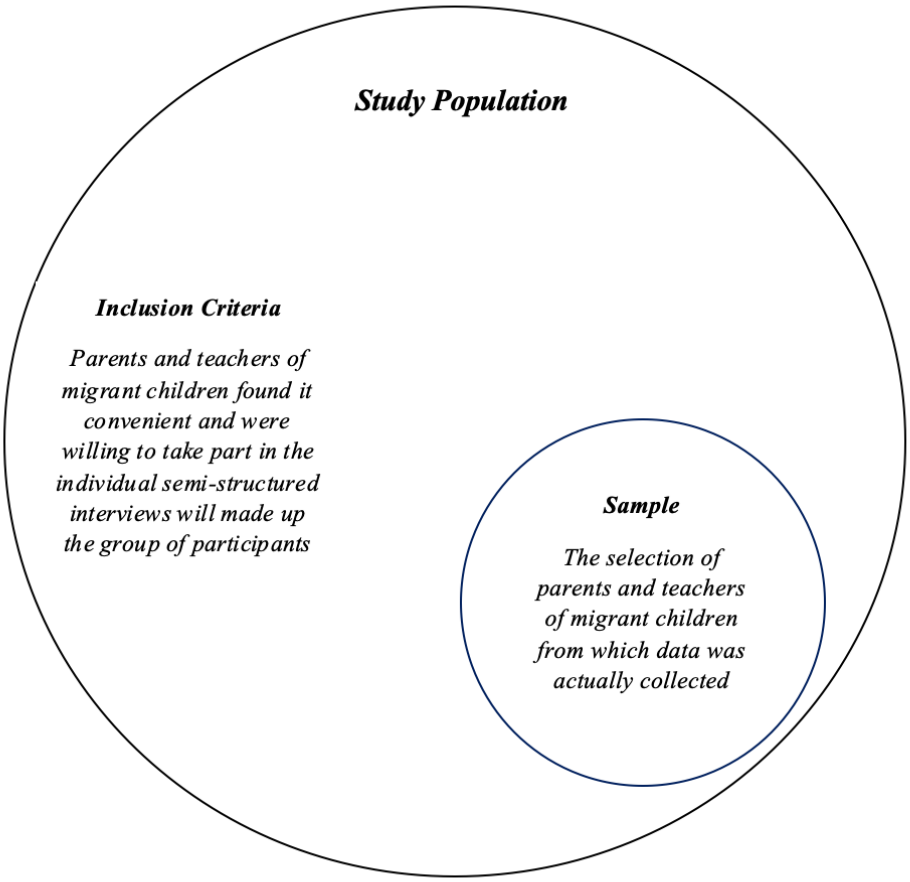



*Figure 3. 4: Sampling – Study Population and Selection Criteria Adapted from Robinson (2014)*

## 3.7 Method of Data Collection

Data collection is the process of gathering information from identified participants that are relevant to the study. Merriam (2009) notes that in order to gather data for a qualitative study, the data collection instrument has to be sensitive to underlying meanings. In keeping with this, the researcher served as the main instrument of data collection (Merriam, 2009) while employing a collection technique known as semi-structured interview. This technique was expedient for the development of an in depth understanding and engagement with the aims of the research as well as, the underpinning paradigm of this study. Some of the benefits of being the primary instrument for data collection included the opportunity to gain an understanding of meanings "through nonverbal as well as verbal communication[;] process information… immediately[;] clarify and summarise material[;] check with respondents for accuracy of interpretation[;] and explore unusual or unanticipated responses" (Merriam, 2009, p. 16).

### *3.7.1 Semi-Structured Interviews*

A semi-structured interview as explained by Merriam and Tisdell (2015) created a platform for me to act in response to emerging standpoints, opinions as well as lived experiences. These emerging ideas served as intensive and eye-opening views on the focus of the research which was school readiness for migrant children. Accordingly, a semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix A) was used as a guide to gather the perception of school readiness on an individual basis, from both groups of participants. The inclusion criteria for selecting the parents and teachers of migrant children were realistic standards which were developed based on a convenience method of sampling. These criteria assisted in the gathering of insightful views on the experience of school readiness for migrant children in the case of Public Secondary School PQR.

### 3.8 Data Processing and Analysis

Having obtained consent from the teachers and parents of migrant children who participated, all interviews were audio recorded using a recording device. Data collected from the semi-structured individual interviews were transcribed verbatim while retaining meanings as provided by the participants. The transcripts were read and re-read to give a clear understanding of the data and identify or code patterns, as well as initial theme classification. Data were analysed using the constant comparative method of qualitative analysis (CCMoQA). The CCMoQA is used in keeping with a grounded theory approach according to Glaser (1965). Stages including open coding, axial coding and selective coding were followed keeping the elements of grounded theory for data analysis in mind. Open coding refers to the initial stage of coding in the analysing of data using a grounded theory; axial coding refers to second stage of coding during which central categories are identified while; selective coding refers to the final stage of coding where the phenomena being considered is linked or related to the emerging categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2007; Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009). Hence, using this constant method, data was coded while taking into consideration each incident in the data into as many possible categories, over and again (*open coding* as explained by Corbin and Strauss [2007]), then, identified as well as compared each coded category with previous incidents in the same category (axial coding as explained by Corbin and Strauss [2007]); the researcher constantly, even concomitantly, engaged in the process of analysing, comparing and, abstracting from the data. Key emerging themes were identified and, all the transcripts were revisited to ensure that no data had been left unclassified. The 'no data left unclassified' refers to the *saturation of data* which according to Given (2016) as well as Birks and Mills (2015), is the point at which no new theme emerges from any added data. The constant comparative method was hence important for a consistent and progressive building up of facts (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In keeping with this approach, the researcher was able to *inductively* (Merriam,

2009) gather meanings from participants themselves in relation to their context as opposed to the literature. The facts in this study are the *actual statements* from the respondents and, exemplary quotes were used when reporting findings for this study and were also compared with what has been reported in the literature.

### 3.9 Quality Criteria

In employing a qualitative approach, the need to ensure trustworthiness of the findings, through a clear outline of the process that was followed to collect and analyse the data as well as the reason for each choice is required (see sections 3.7 & 3.8). Moreover, the need to ensure dependability which is contingent upon trustworthiness is required. This need is noted by Merriam (2009) who explains that "qualitative research also has strategies for establishing the authenticity and trustworthiness of a study, strategies based on worldviews [a particular research paradigm] and questions congruent with the philosophical assumptions underlying this perspective" (p. 211). Some of the strategies include prolonged engagement and persistent observation; triangulation; peer review or debriefing; negative case analysis; clarifying researcher bias; member checking; rich, thick description; and external audits (Creswell, 2013). These strategies ensure that issues of trustworthiness are carefully considered within qualitative research approach.

Although Creswell (2013) notes the above-mentioned validation strategies for qualitative research, he recommends that researchers make use of at least two when considering certain delimitations including time frame. In accordance, this study made use of strategies including *triangulation*; *rich, thick description;* and *peer review*.

### 3.9.1 Triangulation

Triangulation involves the use of more than one data collection method, more than one data analysis method or the use of more than one theory or lens to corroborate a research study (Creswell, 2013; Tracy, 2010). However, it should be noted that triangulation is not a strategy for validating qualitative research studies but, a substitute for validation (Merriam, 2009). For the purpose of this study and in keeping with the case study approach that the study employed, the use of social constructivism and phenomenology theories allowed me to critically consider the rigor of the data collected as well as its consistency within the specific context of the case. Thus, this study combined the explanation of how knowledge is socially constructed and the manner in which individual lived experiences enhance or hamper the school readiness of migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa. Additionally, triangulation was achieved through the collection of data from *two* groups of participants being teachers and parents of migrant children within Public Secondary PQR. Hence, the data collected were not a single-minded view of what school readiness means; the psychological and social factors faced by migrant children in relation to their getting prepared for school; and the interventions provided.

### 3.9.2 Rich, Thick Description

Drawing from Stake (2010), "[a] description is rich if it provides abundant, interconnected details, and possibly cultural complexity, but it becomes *thick* description if it offers direct connection to cultural theory and scientific knowledge" (p. 49). Thus, a rich, thick description allows for deep and detailed information. This description permitted me to consider the transferability of the study. However, it should be noted that this study, as stated in the limitations (see chapter 1), was bound by a single case study therefore, its transferability is dependent on similar situations as with the study.

### 3.9.3 Peer Review

Peer review is also referred to as *debriefing* (Creswell, 2013) or *peer examination* (Merriam, 2009). This strategy for quality check in qualitative research entails an external reviewer checking the process of a study to ensure that a thorough process including the defining of case themes as well as the drawing of theories from the analysed data has been efficiently decided upon. In keeping with the intricacies of this strategy, the initial findings from the analysed data were shared with my supervisor who independently reviewed my results and together, we held a meeting to discuss the preliminary findings, and any discrepancies were rectified during this period. This process has been labelled, 'peer debriefing sessions' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

## 3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations made for this study included seeking permission from relevant authorities for the conducting of the research; informed consent of participants, anonymity, confidentiality; and access to data.

### *3.10.1 Permission Obtained from Relevant Authorities*

This study obtained approval to carry out this research from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) and from the Non-Medical Human Research Ethics Committee within the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

### *3.10.2 Informed Consent, Anonymity, Confidentiality and, Access to Data*

The ethical issues as explained by Patton (2002) that were considered during the conducting of this study include getting and ensuring informed consent from and of the participants; anonymity; confidentiality and; protection of data collected. The protection of the intended participant's rights was guaranteed by means of a written informed consent (Patton, 2002) which was obtained from each study participant. The respondents were also informed of their freedom to participate or withdraw from the study at any point they did not feel comfortable with some questions, without any negative implications. Anonymity was maintained by avoiding names and other personal identification information while, privacy and confidentiality were maintained by conducting the interviews in a conducive and quiet environment. Regarding the protection of data collected, audio recorded interviews as well as transcripts were stored on a password protected computer and, only the researcher had the password to the computer.

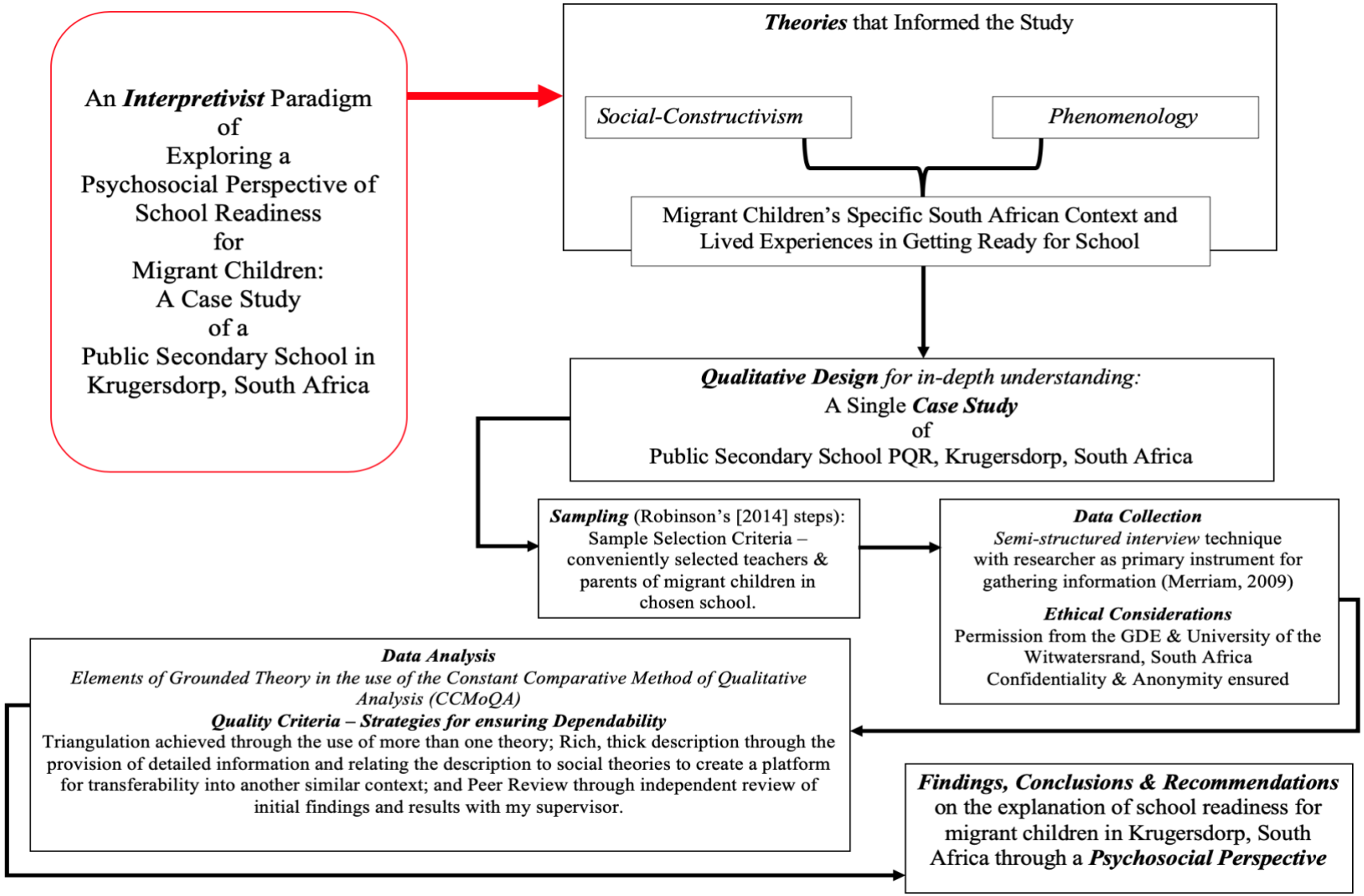



*Figure 3. 5: Study's Conceptual Framework that depicts how the research paradigm overarches the entirety of the study*

# CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and or results from the data collected and analysed. The study focused on what teachers and parents of migrant children understand school readiness to mean for migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa. This chapter begins with a report on the socio-demographic characteristics of the study participants in their separate groups (teachers and parents). This section is followed by key findings that emerged from this study under the following broad themes: the meaning of school readiness; opportunities for migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa; and challenges faced by migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa. The themes are discussed respectively in this chapter.

## 4.2 Socio-Demographic Information for the Study Participants

The study participants comprised of two groups; teachers working with migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR and, parents of migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR. The number of teachers in this study was seven (n=7); this included three males and four females. The age range was from 25-50 years and about half of the teachers had taught for about 1-10 years while others had been teaching for over twenty-one years. All the teachers who participated alluded to the fact that they have consistently taught migrant children every school year. A particular teacher noted she has always taught migrant children as a teacher in Public Secondary School PQR.

*"I have always had migrant children in my class these five years" (Teacher 4).*

Table 4.1 shows a summary of the socio-demographic characteristics of teachers who participated in the study.

***Table 4. 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Teachers***

| | **Frequency (N=7)** | **%** |
|---|---|---|
| ***Gender*** | | |
| Male | 3 | 42,9 |
| Female | 4 | 57,1 |
| ***Age Group*** | | |
| 25 - 30 | 3 | 42,9 |
| 35 – 40 | 2 | 28,6 |
| 45 - 50 | 2 | 28,6 |
| ***Teaching Experience*** | | |
| 1 - 10 years | 3 | 42,9 |
| 11 - 20 years | 1 | 14,3 |
| 21 - 30 years | 2 | 28,6 |
| ≥ 30 years | 1 | 14,3 |
| ***Experience of Teaching Migrant Children*** | | |
| 1 - 3 years | 1 | 14,3 |
| 4 - 6 years | 5 | 71,4 |
| 7 - 9 years | 1 | 14,3 |

The parents of migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR who participated in this study totalled six (n=6); this included 3 females and 3 males. They ranged from the age of 35 to 50 years old. While most of the parents acknowledged that they have been in South Africa for over 10 years, others avoided giving answers to the question. The subtle avoidance may have been because of the presumed stigma that accompanies being labelled a foreigner and or the fear of being 'found out' by the immigration authorities. Their countries of origin include Lesotho, Democratic Republic of Congo as well as Botswana. More than half of the parents

reported having about 1 to 2 children enrolled in Public Secondary School PQR, few reported having more than 3 children who attend the school. One parent revealed

> *"I have been in South Africa since 2007… I am in 50s… I am married, and I have got 3 children… have both sexes, I mean the first is a boy …the firstborn is a boy and the two are girls… the first is now in grade 8. And the second is in grade 6" (Parent 1).*

Table 4.2 shows a summary of the socio-demographic characteristics of parent participants.

***Table 4. 2: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Parents***

| | **Frequency (N=6)** | **%** |
|---|---|---|
| ***Gender*** | | |
| Male | 3 | 50,0 |
| Female | 3 | 50,0 |
| ***Age Group*** | | |
| 35 – 40 | 3 | 50,0 |
| 45 - 50 | 3 | 50,0 |
| ***Country of Origin*** | | |
| Lesotho | 2 | 33,3 |
| Botswana | 1 | 16,7 |
| Democratic Republic of Congo | 1 | 16,7 |
| Others[1] | 2 | 33,3 |
| ***Number of Years Lived in South Africa*** | | |
| 12 - 15 years | 6 | 100,0 |
| ***Number of Children in Public Secondary School PQR*** | | |
| 1 - 2 children | 4 | 66,7 |
| 3 - 4 children | 2 | 33,3 |

[1] 'Others' refer to parents who were not willing to disclose their countries of origin.

### 4.3 Findings/Results

In keeping with the data analysis procedure that was employed for this study, the coding process began at the open coding stage through to an axial coding stage (representing the key themes of the study which is illustrated in table 4.3).

***Table 4. 3: The Coding Stages for the Study***

| Representative Phrases from Participants | Open Coding | Axial Coding |
|---|---|---|
| "...body activities, physical activities using their hands, [and be able] to read and write." (Teacher 6). | Cognitively prepared to start school | Meaning of School Readiness |
| "...so yes they need to be ready mentally, they need to be ready emotionally, they need to be ready psychologically as well…" (Teacher 1). | Psychologically prepared for school | |
| "...the school *must* be ready for her…" (Parent 5). | The school being ready | |
| "...and also educators must come with their lesson plans outlined to the learners what we call the assessment plan" (Teacher 1). | The teachers being ready | |
| | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| "...it's because they grew up in this community, so they end up adapting…" (Teacher 2). | Living within the community | Opportunities for Migrant Children |
| "…those ones from Mozambique, because they are majority here, I realise that they go together as a group" (Teacher 5). | Being with migrant peers in school | |
| "…you know that children learn fast with their environment of people who are speaking the language" (Parent 1). | Ability of young children to grasp new language | |
| "…sometimes we find the donations especially from social grants and other business-people" (Teacher 5). | Support from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) | |
| | | |
| "...if you don't have your permit then you are not ready to study here" (Parent 5). | Lack of proper documentation | Challenges Migrant Children Face |
| "…it has to be the fact that language is a barrier to some of them" (Teacher 3). | Language barrier | |
| "I think they have to constantly deal with other learners calling them foreigners…" (Teacher 3). | Issues of transition and adaptation (Discrimination) | |
| "…it's useless for a child to come to a school… as a child who is a foreigner… to come to school, they don't have the necessary documents…" (Teacher 2). | Inability to access further education | |
| "…their parents normally do not bring in their own documentation in fear of being deported…" (Teacher 4). | Parental issues and uncooperativeness | |
| | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| “Schools go to an extent of where we invite home affairs yearly" (Teacher 1). | *In Existence*: school liaises with the South African Department of Home Affairs to assist migrant children who have incomplete or no legal documentation | Strategies: Now and Beyond |
| | | |
| “...diversity needs to be incorporated in schools, they need to teach learners about different cultures, race, languages… (Teacher 3) | *To be considered*: school can and should incorporate cultural diversity within the school | |
| “I think we need social workers in school… I think it’s very simple…" (Teacher 2) | *To be considered*: Gauteng Department of Basic Education (GDE) should employ social workers and psychologists to be within school premises | |
| "…we as parents we have to teach them…" (Parent 4). | *To be considered*: parents should teach their children how to read and write in order to get prepared for school | |
| "…make sure that their children have proper paperwork” (Parent 5). | *To be considered*: parents have to liaise with the South African Department of Home Affairs for the proper documentation of their children | |

The findings of this study are thus presented under four broad themes. These include:

1. Meaning of school readiness
2. Opportunities
3. Challenges
4. Strategies

### 4.3.1 Meaning of School Readiness

One of the objectives of this study was to find out parents' and teachers' understanding of school readiness. The findings from the study revealed that both teachers and parents hold certain views about what school readiness means. One of the views of school readiness is about *children being prepared to begin school*. Teachers explained school readiness as the child being 'totally' prepared to start school. The preparedness ranged from being cognitively to psychologically ready. Cognitive preparedness includes being at the appropriate developmental age or level to grasp grade level concepts. One participant clearly stated that:

> *"…the children must not jump any grade for holistic development. So, school readiness is when for example, age 4 and 5 and 6 is still in a preschool, then 7 is grade 1. If you take a 5-year-old to grade 1, somewhere he's going to suffer. So, he has to go through all the process from grade R she is 5, 6 years old. Then at 7, she starts grade 1, primary school" (Teacher 6).*

In giving further explanation to how children need to be cognitively ready for school, the participant made reference to the ability to read, write as well as complete certain activities. The teacher continued:

> *"[The child must be able to do] body activities, physical activities using their hands, [and be able] to read and write." (Teacher 6).*

While cognitive development was considered important for most participants, some others expressed the importance of being psychologically prepared for school. In line with this consideration, a participant explained that:

> *"By being ready it means that they will be able to cope like with our education system" (Teacher 7).*

The view of children being able to 'cope' with the education system in South Africa was further explained by another participant who revealed that children are required to be mentally and emotionally ready to start school because beginning high school is regarded as transitioning from one phase (schooling level) to another. The participant narrated that:

> *"Yes, I believe they must be ready to start especially the new grade because remember it is also a transition phase. They are moving from a primary level where they were doing grade seven….so yes they need to be ready mentally, they need to be ready emotionally, they need to be ready psychologically as well…" (Teacher 1).*

On the other hand, parents' perception of school readiness encompassed school being ready and or prepared to receive children. This meaning was a strong view held by both groups of participants and thus, was considered a key description of what teachers and parents understand as school readiness. Remarkably, while some participants expressed the meaning of 'the school being ready' in terms of structures (resources, administration), others described the meaning in terms of the availability of teachers and their preparedness. Expounding on the view of schools being prepared in terms of structure, one parent said that:

> *"The schools give textbooks so they must be here before school starts" (Parent 5).*

These textbooks refer to a part of the resources that Public Secondary School PQR has to constantly provide because they are a quintile 2 school. Following on the provision of appropriate resources, a teacher noted that:

> *"There should be stationery because us [the school] is a non-fee [paying] school we need to provide stationery to the learners to a certain extent as well. We need to provide*

*textbooks to them so those are some of the basic things which are needed…" (Teacher 1).*

In addition to the provision of resources, schools are also required to prepare for children at an administrative level. Although parents held this view lightly, teachers strongly held on to this view. One teacher argued that:

*"let's just say for grade 8, it's the work from admin. Then, that's where they check if they are required to be at the school" (Teacher 5).*

In agreement, another teacher explained saying:

*"school readiness means the school's preparation in terms of how they cater for needs of the kids that are coming in either in the current year or the year to follow" (Teacher 4).*

Regarding a description of school's being ready in terms of the availability of teachers and their preparedness, a participant who seemed quite particular about her point, clearly stated that:

*"the teachers too must be here to start school" (Parent, 5).*

In like manner, another parent strictly mentioned that:

*"they must help them… help the kids" (Parent 2)!*

Other participants alluded to the view that teachers have to be prepared to teach children in order for the school to be considered ready. One teacher explained that:

*"I still believe from our side we also need to meet as educators and assess our preparedness. How prepared are we to start teaching on day one… educators must*

*come with their lesson plans outlined to the learners what we call the assessment plan" (Teacher 1).*

The findings on the meaning of school readiness seem to have similarities and differences between both groups of participants. In similar terms, both groups seem to view school readiness from a child-centred perspective. In varying terms, while the teachers also considered school readiness from the view of teachers being ready, the parents did not highlight the same view. These findings on the meaning of school readiness as understood by teachers and parents of migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR suggests certain assumptions which will be explained in the chapter that presents the discussions raised from the findings. With an explanation of school readiness as given by the study participants, certain opportunities for migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa to be ready for school emerged from the study. The next key theme is thus focused on the opportunities available for migrant children to be considered ready for school.

### 4.3.2 Opportunities for Migrant Children

Findings from the study revealed that there were opportunities that migrant children were provided with in the community which facilitate their being ready for school. These include living within the community; being with peers in school; children's ability to grasp new language; as well as support structures in the form of feeding programs and provision of school uniforms are available for migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR to aid their readiness for school.

***Opportunity 1 – Living Within the Community:***

During the interview sessions, participants narrated that one factor that favoured the migrant children in relation to their being prepared for school in Krugersdorp was the fact that they had mostly gotten used to the community and living amongst other locals. A participant noted that:

> *"…it's because they grew up in this community, so they end up adapting…" (Teacher 2).*

To clearly explain this point, some participants alluded that because the children had attended feeder primary schools, and concomitantly lived within the specific school area, it was easy for the children to fit into the expectations of being prepared for school in South Africa. One teacher explained that:

> *"…any migrant learners that come to our school they come from our feeder schools of which I get to be under the impression that they have been prepared to survive in this environment, but we haven't had learners that comes let's say maybe directly from Lesotho and into our school" (Teacher 1).*

Remarkably, although teachers spoke about the migrant children living within the community as an opportunity, parents spoke about living within the community from their end. Some parents mentioned that living within the community gave them an opportunity to adapt to the South African system as well as, give them a sense of support regardless of the difficulties they faced. One participant explained that:

> *"It makes me feel better as if I am at home now. At least I have got sisters and brothers whom I didn't know that I am trying to make… friendship with them and then I would like to know better about them" (Parent 4).*

### *Opportunity 2 – Being with Migrant Peers in School*

Another opportunity that participants spoke about was that of migrant children being with their peers in Public Secondary School PQR. This opportunity encourages the migrant children to walk as well as work together in their own groups without fear of intimidation or discrimination. One teacher explained this by stating that:

> *"…those ones from Mozambique, because they are majority here, I realise that they go together as a group. It is very rare to find a South African one mingling with those from Mozambique. When they go, they go together as a group" (Teacher 5).*

This opportunity seemed to be a source of unprecedented support for migrant children to meet up with the expectations of being prepared to begin a new school year. Following from the support, participants noted that learning and or being prepared for school was possible for their students. One parent revealed that:

> *"they don't feel ashamed because they learn with peers and they learn fast…" (Parent 1).*

In the same vein, another parent agreed with the above mentioned as she expressed the possibilities of migrant children being able to cope at school because of the presence of peers. This parent stated that:

> *"It's also helping my daughter to cope with the situation and then to cope with the schoolwork and then to cope with anything that might be bothering her" (Parent 4).*

### *Opportunity 3 – Ability of Young Children to Grasp New Language*

From the interview sessions with the teachers and parents of migrant children, this study has found out that the ability of children to grasp new languages serves as an opportunity for migrant children within Public Secondary School PQR.

> *"you know that children learn fast [in an] environment of people who are speaking the [same] language [they need to learn]" (Parent 1).*

For this particular participant, migrant children, specifically the ones whom he was in constant contact with, demonstrated this ability by their everyday show of new vocabulary in English and the dominant local South African languages that were learned in school and the community at large. The participant stated that:

> *"You see that even my kids when they come from school… they come with words in IsiZulu that I don't know. They ask me a question that I don't know… What is Siyabonga [thank you]??? I don't know what it means… You don't know, it means thank you" (Parent 1).*

Although this was not largely mentioned by majority of the participants however, the mention of this opportunity was agreed upon by other participants. Some teachers explained that the ability to learn language easily, stemmed from the fact that, most migrant children were determined to learn and become better prepared for school than their counterparts. Thus, the need to learn the language of instruction was expedient. One teacher said that:

> *"… but, for them, even if it is difficult, you can see they are willing to learn, they go [the] extra mile, even if they don't understand, they will come to me on a free lesson or during after school to require more. And then even if you give*

*them homework, they do apply it even if they are wrong…, you can see that they are trying" (Teacher 5).*

***Opportunity 4 – Support from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)***

This study also found that children in Public Secondary School PQR were opportune to receive support from the Gauteng Department of Education through the district office as well as from Non-Profit Organisations (NGOs). Although this was noted by only teachers, this opportunity was considered as an important aspect considering the socio-economic context of migrant children in the area. One form of support that was noted is a school feeding program executed by the Gauteng Department of Education. This feeding program allows for children in Public Secondary School PQR, of which migrant children belong, to have access to food parcels as well as lunch regardless of where they are from. A participant mentioned that:

*"… government provides food for them so it should be I am ready to go and learn and this is how I am going to prepare myself to learn" (Teacher 1).*

Another participant added that:

*"the school is offering food to the school children at break… and then every Friday, they…we're giving them the food package… every Friday" (Teacher 5).*

The other form of support that was mentioned was the provision of school uniforms for students who attended Public Secondary School PQR which are provided by NGOs. One teacher explained that:

*"...sometimes we find the donations especially from social grants and other business people, they donate uniforms. When they donate uniforms, we check learners who are wearing a torn one especially for winter, and then we provide them a new uniform" (Teacher 5)*

The donation of uniforms was seen to reduce the seemingly unbearable physical challenges that migrant children face in Krugersdorp, South Africa including the lack of financial capacity to afford school uniforms.

### 4.3.3 Challenges that Migrant Children Face in Relation to their Being Prepared for School

One of the questions this study sought to answer was what challenges (psychological and social) migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa face which affect their being prepared or ready for school. The findings of this study indicate that the challenges faced by migrant children as revealed by both groups of participants in the identified area include the following:

1. *Lack of proper documentation*
2. *Language barrier*
3. *Issues of Transition and Adaptation (Discrimination)*
4. *Inability to further education*
5. *Parental Issues and Uncooperativeness*

Following from the identified challenges, each one is explained in detail below.

### *Challenge 1 – Lack of Proper Documentation*

The challenge of lack of proper documentation was one of the *major* challenges highlighted by both parents and teachers of migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR. This challenge was explained from varying viewpoints including the lack of documentation for the children as well as for the parents. Quite importantly, the lack of proper documentation seemed to be an underlying challenge for most of the other identified challenges that affect the readiness of migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa. One parent stated that:

> *"Some of the challenges is you want to go to your country and have [get] some permit… if you don't have your permit then you are not ready to study here" (Parent 5).*

Although some participants were hesitant to admit that migrant children who attend the school had no proper documentation to be admitted, others freely spoke about the challenge with the understanding that school readiness cannot be explained in isolation to the stated challenge. A participant who had initially refuted the presence of migrant children revealed that:

> *"…I can tell you now that over 90% of the learners that do come especially in the township schools like this they don't have the whole paperwork. There is no study permit… some of them they don't even have passports… we only know they are born in the foreign countries but there's no documentation which makes it even more difficult for us in the school" (Teacher 1).*

Beyond the fact that the migrant children do not have legal documents, the challenge becomes more visible when the children have to register for external examinations such

as the grade 12 final examination. At this point, most of the children are forced to remain in school or just quit. In stating this, one teacher said that:

> *"the biggest problem that we are seeing with migrant children is that they do not have enough paperwork. So, when it comes to registering them it becomes an issue" (Teacher 4).*

With this apparent difficulty, the decision to quit *seems* to be the best option available for migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR. A respondent noting this decision explained, using the example of a migrant child, that:

> *"They didn't…he didn't… he didn't have an ID document, so she ended up having to stop coming to school… I think it's one of the challenges… IDs… that we have mostly" (Teacher 2).*

Focusing on this decision, the study found that it was a more arduous task for the grade 11 and 12 migrant children to decide what to do as some of these students, although determined to attend school, are constantly being faced with the reality of having incomplete legal documentation. A parent expressed this view by stating that:

> *"especially when they have to write their finals, they don't have ID's that's the problem for them" (Parent 2).*

Without any holding back, another participant (a teacher) duly noted that:

> *"Some of the learners, they do not have IDs. Some of the learners don't have birth certificates, they come in from outside. So, we have a grade 12 learner who is supposed to write prelim, does not have her papers" (Teacher 7).*

In agreement to the statement of the other participants, a participant responded by saying that:

> *"as I am busy with the grade 12 preliminary entries that learner, his name is there but there is just no documentation to assist him to get a passport" (Teacher 1).*

However, the teachers were of the opinion that there seems to be no clear way of facing this challenge because the laws which guide the country on immigration has to always be adhered to. One teacher with an apparent despondent voice explained that:

> *"But then there's nothing that we can do you know it is policy, policy, policy… the schools are open for everyone by the way. For anybody coming from wherever but now they want those papers to be present there and there's nothing we can do in terms of that… You cannot write anything, you don't have an ID, you don't have anything. So, can you see it's the problem? So, how can they be ready now to perform well at school???" (Teacher 7).*

***Challenge 2 – Language Barrier***

Another major challenge faced by migrant children that affects their readiness for school is that of language barrier. From the findings, majority of the teachers raised this issue as an impediment in being prepared for school even at the high school level.

In specific terms, six out of the seven teachers who participated in the study highlighted language barrier as a challenge facing migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa.

This language barrier cut across an understanding of English language as well as the other widely spoken local language in the area where the school is located. Regarding English language, one teacher strongly stated that:

> *"Especially in English because they don't know English. They don't because, I think they know Portuguese or something like that which is difficult. Yes, for our local languages like Zulu, Sepedi and others, they can answer you but when it comes to English, it becomes difficult. At least, for Maths, you know Maths is Maths, there's less English and they know Maths, but I think on other subjects where they have to elaborate in English, that's where it becomes a problem. Even though sometimes, if there is a question that needs a reasoning, yes, they can do the calculation right but at the end when they have to specify then you can see that their English is bad" (Teacher 5).*

Another teacher clearly stated that:

> *"it has to be the fact that language is a barrier to some of them. Some of them cannot really encode language in English or speak English, okay, some of them and unable to even write in English. So they come from maybe in a different country, they may be the language they might be familiar with is Portuguese,*

*and they don't know other languages, or they don't know English, particularly…" (Teacher 3).*

In terms of the difficulty in communicating using local languages, some teachers noted that this barrier was obvious in the reading and writing aspect of the languages. One teacher mentioned that:

*"… first year it becomes a problem in terms of medium of instruction but then, the problem comes out when the child should… is supposed to now choose the home language he or she is supposed to do… But then, it becomes a problem now in reading and writing, constructing a sentence and such" (Teacher 7).*

On the other hand, some teachers explained the challenge of language barrier through explaining how code switching is necessary, but the migrant children lose out on subject content because they do not understand the local language being used for the code switch. A teacher said that:

*"in terms of language, it has always been a barrier because some of the kids have to be…had to drop out mid-year because of the language barrier. For instance, we normally use code switching during our lessons because to get points across. So, for most migrant learners, if they do not understand what I am saying in English, it becomes a challenge when I have to code switch into a native language" (Teacher 4).*

Remarkably, although the teachers focused on the migrant child's language barrier, parents viewed this challenge on the part of both the child and the parents. On the part of the parents, a participant recounted the difficulty in joining the South African school system because of her lack of understanding of the local language of instruction used in school. The parent explained that:

> *"I faced challenges when I started my standard grade. I was doing my grade eight at North West province, in North West province I didn't know Afrikaans" (Parent 4).*

Another parent revealed that he had a no understanding of English language when he migrated to South Africa.

> *"And my own English was a poor English you understand because coming from French background in South Africa were English is spoken so it was like a problem" (Parent 1).*

Following from the language barrier on the part of the parents, the migrant children are also faced with the same challenge. One of the parents who participated in the study explained this challenge by saying:

> *"…If your child is from outside the country, he cannot understand or speak the local language and that's a big problem because in school you have to read and write. How can you write a language that you don't know?? You can't really learn if you don't know the language" (Parent 5).*

Another parent in further explaining the challenge expressed that:

*"when they fail its mostly on home languages because it is a requirement in the township schools that you do your home language. So, they will try to fit in and change their home language. Either they do Setswana or they do IsiZulu at the end of the day, they will fail that subject because they will try to fit in with everyone else maybe in their class" (Parent 3).*

***Challenge 3 – Issues of Transition and Adaptation (Discrimination)***

One other challenge expressed by the teachers and parents of migrant children who participated in the study was an issue of migrant children transitioning and adapting into the South African environment and schooling system. This challenge was explained as the children having difficulty in having a sense of belonging and, expressing themselves as who they really are. A teacher mentioned that:

*"I think in general it might be that sense of belonging because you know how school kids are…you know how they are… if you are different it becomes something they can use to mock you" (Teacher 2).*

In agreement with the teacher participants, parents also gave the same view of their children having difficulty in fitting into the schooling environment. One parent said that:

*"I think it's a problem of them trying to fit in with the other learners… I think somehow, they feel bad because they are not expressing themselves fully according to who they are" (Parent 3).*

With the difficulty in gaining a sense of belonging, the need to deal with other students using derogatory terms to address these migrant children was also identified. In clear terms, one teacher reported that:

> *"I think they have to constantly deal with other learners calling them foreigners or beings interfering towards them using certain language that is not acceptable for them, calling them names" (Teacher 3).*

Moreover, the challenge of transitioning and adapting for migrant children also raised the issue of discrimination. This issue of discrimination although mentioned by teachers, was strongly highlighted by parents of migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR. One parent specifically said that:

> *"I think one of the challenges they are facing most is discrimination" (Parent 3).*

Another parent revealed saying that even on a personal note, she was treated differently.

> *"I experience differential treatment from the community and the school" (Parent 4).*

Beyond a lack of sense of belonging, the participants further explained that the difficulty in fitting into the school system brings about psychological effects on the migrant children. In reporting this, a teacher noted that:

> *"Some might commit suicide to end their lives. That is the fact… because now… even in grade 12, I am worried…" (Teacher 7).*

Interestingly, a parent also took note of this challenge as one of transitioning from their home country to South Africa by stating that:

> *"some of them or many are coming from a trauma zone… they don't have any support… unfortunately they came here to start the school like that without being counselled, without counselling" (Parent 1).*

More so, in identifying the psychological effect of the challenge of fitting in, one teacher said that the migrant children sometimes displayed poor behaviour to feel a sense of belonging. The teacher explained using a recent example of one of the migrant children being taught saying that:

> *"this kid had behavioural problems…like he was very naughty, he was very disruptive in class and when I spoke to him I learned that the only reason he was doing so much wrong in class was because he was trying to be liked or something like that. So in his mind, he thought…if others – kids – could like me then they would just ignore the fact that I am not like them… anything like that. So I think that psychologically that was one of the things that I faced. Ermmm… it's either a kid would either be withdrawn in class or they would be just too much of misbehaviour because they are just trying to… migrate from the fact that "I am different from the rest" or they might just start holding back because they think they don't fit in…" (Teacher 2).*

***Challenge 4 – Inability to Access Further Education***

The challenge of migrant children knowing that they will be unable to further their education to a higher level was found to be another key factor that affects their readiness for school amongst the teacher group of participants. One teacher noted that:

> *"it's useless for a child to come to a school… as a child who is a foreigner… to come to school, they don't have the necessary documents, they do grade 8, 9, 10, 11. When they get to grade 11, they need to register for the Matric exams. Now there's no…I don't even have an ID…I don't even have it, how am I going to write my Matric if I don't have it" (Teacher 2)?*

This challenge, according to the teachers who participated in the study, is one which brings about the lack of reason to be prepared for school because the migrant children do not see the importance of being enrolled for school without the hope of completion and or moving to tertiary institutions. A teacher explained, using the example of a current grade 12 migrant child, that:

> *"So, this grade 12 learner is writing at the moment but there are no papers… there's no permit… there's nothing. What's going to happen to that girl next year? She won't be able to the university" (Teacher 7).*

As a result of the seemingly impossible chance of joining a tertiary institution, it was reported that most migrant children cease from performing well in school. To buttress this view, a teacher said that:

*"Some yes, they do excel but after they realise that in matric it becomes a problem, some they even drop out because they don't see the point because at the end of the day, they might not even get their certificates" (Teacher 5).*

***Challenge 5 – Parental Issues and Uncooperativeness***

This challenge, although noted only by teachers seemed to be of importance to understanding a psychosocial perspective to school readiness for migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa. The teachers reported that a number of parents (of migrant children), experience unemployment and low quality of life as a result of lack of documentation and concomitantly, fail to support their children in being ready for school.

*"…their parents normally do not bring in their own documentation in fear of being deported. So, we always have a challenge of having to turn the kids back home to bring their documentation" (Teacher 4).*

Regarding a low quality of life, one teacher with a raised voice denoted that:

*"if their parents work and majority of those who are working, they are domestic workers were the food is just a hand-to-mouth, nothing much" (Teacher 5)!*

Worthy of note is that one teacher expressed the uncooperativeness of parents as failing to follow up on their children's school performance regardless of the migrant child being ready for school or not. The teacher strictly said:

*"So, even if he is not ready, he must be registered at school. . It will be the duty of the parent to make a follow up every time on the child's school work and then*

*it is the duty of the parent to see to it if the child needs extra help, that's where it is the duty of the parent to communicate with the school" (Teacher 6).*

In addition, following from the parental issues, some teachers reported that the children who were not supported by their parents resolve to being absent from school. A teacher explained saying:

*"I don't know what happened… but she just stopped coming to school at all because there was no one who was working at home and because no one had an ID…" (Teacher 2).*

With all the aforementioned challenges (which can be regarded as either social or psychological), some strategies – with some already in place – were suggested by both group of participants to assist migrant children overcome the challenges that affect their being ready for school at various levels of schooling.

### 4.3.4 Strategies

The third objective of this study was to find out what strategies are in place to address the identified challenges. The findings from both groups of participants of this study indicated only one strategy that is already in place to address some of the social as well as psychological challenges faced by migrant children in relation to migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa. However, the participants made recommendations for tackling the identified challenges. Thus, this section on strategies focuses on what already exists as well as, recommendations made by the study participants.

The strategy already in place as highlighted by participants, specifically the teachers, is that the school liaises with the South African Department of Home Affairs to assist migrant children who have incomplete or no legal documentation. This assistance is however limited and bounded by what the law permits in relation to immigration. From the manner in which some of the participants responded, it was quite apparent that this strategy is much more about 'doing the right thing' as expected by the 'law'. In explaining what transpires, one teacher said that:

> *"Schools go to an extent of where we invite home affairs yearly. They come to school twice to assist the learners without documentation but for them to be able to be assisted… So yes the best that we can do is invite home affairs and invite parents to come and be there… see if they can find any amicable solution to whatever that is the challenge" (Teacher 1).*

Although inviting the Department of Home Affairs seemed to be the only existing strategy identified by the participants, both groups (teachers and parents), were quick to make suggestions about what can be done to assist migrant children in getting ready for school in their specific, given context. One of the recommendations that was made by teachers and parents is that the school can and should incorporate cultural diversity within the school. This incorporation was suggested through the use of events such as Heritage Day to teach about diversity in nationality as well as promotion of oneness amongst the students in Public Secondary School PQR. A particular teacher proposed that:

> *"diversity needs to be incorporated in schools, they need to teach learners about different cultures, race, languages, so that even the other learners, they understand that it's not just about me. It's not just about the language I speak, it's not just about how I*

*do things, I also need to understand that there's other people that might be different from me, and there's absolutely nothing wrong with that" (Teacher 3)!*

In like manner, a parent suggested that:

*"During the Heritage Month, what we could do when we have those is that each and every culture will come and perform their culture so that if they are more exposed to those activities, I think they will express themselves and maybe by seeing how the other learners receive it, it will also give them confidence" (Parent 3).*

Another recommendation which was made by teachers was that the Gauteng Department of Basic Education (GDE) should employ social workers and psychologists to be within school premises for the migrant children who are facing both social and psychological challenges that affect their preparedness for school. One teacher incessantly spoke about this need to employ "professionals" saying that:

*"I think we need social workers in school… I think it's very simple…we need social workers in school. So, we need psychologists we need social workers who could deal with these kids because, honestly, in as much as teachers are trying, we are not trained to deal with the psych of a child honestly. So, you can only do so much, but they need professionals that they can speak" (Teacher 2).*

In a bid to dispel the excuse of employing "professionals" being a costly suggestion for the GDE, the teacher insisted that:

*"…it's very easy…I don't think…I don't think it will cost them anything. If anything, it would try to fix them problems that teachers are facing. I think they need help from the district and everyone else because, eish…there's a lot… because it's … it's not only*

*about… with the teachers their role is not only teaching, they're dealing with other things… there's also admin so the school can only do so much" (Teacher 2).*

The recommendation that parents should teach their children how to read and write in order to get prepared for school, was also put forward by the parent participants. Explaining this point, one parent said:

*"You can help them with reading… You can teach them at home how to read, how to write" (Parent 2).*

Some other parent in agreement stated that:

*"…we as parents we have to teach them, and we should have to monitor them all the time" (Parent 4).*

While another parent, further to what other parents had suggested, appealed that in teaching migrant children how to read and write (especially in English), parents need to encourage as well as ensure that their children speak English – which is the language of instruction at school – at home. In the words of the parents:

*"…parents who are foreigners to speak English if they've known how to speak English at home and they allow the children to read English books and not speak local language at home because it can be like stopping them to improve the small that they are learning at school" (Parent 1).*

In thinking about the uncooperativeness of parents, one parent recommended that parents have to liaise with the South African Department of Home Affairs for the proper documentation of their children. The parent said that:

*"parents should be the ones who stand up and make sure that their children have proper paperwork" (Parent 5).*

With the strategy already in place and recommendations made by participants, there may seem to be a viable solution to the social and psychological challenges face by migrant children. It is however expedient to discuss the findings of the study in the light of extant literature to establish its correlation with other studies and the theories that informed the study. The next chapter thus focuses on the discussion of the results.

# CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

## 5.1 Introduction

This study sought to develop a psychosocial perspective to understanding school readiness for migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa. In keeping with this objective, the study focused on teachers' and parents' perceptions of school readiness; determining the psychological and social challenges faced by migrant children in relation to their being prepared for school; and finding out what strategies are in place to address the psychosocial challenges faced by migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa. The summary of the findings is given below in table 5.1 below.

*Table 5. 1: Summary of Findings*

| **Key Themes** | **Summary of Findings** |
|---|---|
| Meaning of school readiness as understood by teachers and parents of migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa | • *Children need to be cognitively prepared for school.*<br>• *Schools need to be prepared to receive children.* |
| Opportunities for migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR | • *The opportunity of living within the community before starting school.*<br>• *Migrant children being with other migrant peers in school.*<br>• *The ability of the young migrant children to grasp English and South African local languages.*<br>• *Support from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).* |
| Psychological and social challenges faced by migrant children in relation to their preparedness for school | • *A lack of proper documentation for migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR.*<br>• *A language barrier faced by migrant children including not understanding local South African languages and English language.*<br>• *Issues of transitioning and adapting into the South African schooling system including the lack of a sense of belonging and a challenge of discrimination.*<br>• *Migrant children's inability to further their education to a higher level of study.* |

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategies in place to address the challenges face by migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa in relation to their readiness for school | In existence<br><br>• *The school liaises with the Department of Home Affairs to assist migrant children who have incomplete or no legal documentation.*<br><br>Participants' Recommended Strategies.<br><br>• *Public Secondary School PQR needs to incorporate cultural diversity within the school through the promotion of multiculturalism during events such as Heritage Day.*<br><br>• *The Gauteng Department of Education should employ professionals including social workers and psychologists to be within the school.*<br><br>• *Migrant parents need to teach and or assist their children in speaking, reading and writing to get prepared for school.*<br><br>*Migrant parents need to liaise with the Department of Home Affairs for proper documentation of their children.* |

This chapter hence presents discussions and conclusions based on the findings and relates them to extant literature as well as the theoretical framework of the study in correspondence with the study aims. Furthermore, limitations to the study and suggestions for future research are outlined within this chapter.

## 5.2 Discussion and Conclusions

This study sought to understand the meaning of school readiness as perceived by teachers and parents of migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR, Krugersdorp, South Africa. Findings from this study show that both teachers and parents explained school readiness from a traditional viewpoint; referring to the preparedness of the individual child cognitively and the preparedness of the school with resources. Although the parents seemed more particular about the school being prepared to receive their children, in general, little attention was paid to the environmental factors that can affect the 'meaning' of school readiness for migrant children. Regardless of environmental factors, the teachers and parents still expect migrant children to be prepared to start school and this is a *deficit view* of what school readiness means. Marking a *distinct shift* in the explanation and understanding of school readiness from a deficit view, Carlton and Winsler (1999) note that this deficit view is embedded within issues of exclusion based on ethnic background and, in this case, of migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR. Although Carlton and Winsler's (1999) study was conducted in a school for younger children, it is apparent that the underlying explanation cuts across different levels of the educational ladder. Hence, there is seemingly no account for the social processes of the migrant children in the case of Public Secondary School PQR. In more recent times, studies including Gullo (2018) have alluded to the importance of explaining school readiness beyond a deficit viewpoint. Additionally, this finding gives an explanation of the concept of school readiness from an information processing theory. The theory explains mental functioning as what the individual is capable of completing cognitively without any regard for the social factors that may impede the completion of mental tasks (Swanson, 1987). Thus, in line with this study, the participants have expressed their understanding of school readiness as the capacity of children to complete expected mental tasks without considering other factors that can cause a delay in

the development of mental or intellectual capacity. Yet, findings from this study illuminated how other contextual factors such as lack of proper documentation, language barrier, influence the migrant child's preparedness for school. These findings are in congruence with a study conducted by Brown and Lan (2015) as well as by Farran (2011) and Puccioni (2018). By implication, rather than an explanation that incorporates the specific context of the migrant child, the meaning of school readiness, in this case, still places the responsibility on the child to be prepared for school.

The second emerging theme of this study was the opportunities that are available for migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR. These opportunities include being with other migrant children in the school; support from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) as well as; living within the community before beginning school. Remarkably, these opportunities from the findings reveal that consideration has to be made for the current framework for describing school readiness to include a specificity of what factors can increase the level of readiness of historically disadvantaged groups (in this case, migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR, Krugersdorp, South Africa). Recent literature including Sabol and Planta (2017) explains that care of children actively encourages school readiness levels. Care, in this instance, refers to the provision of basic needs and opportunities for the betterment of the living conditions of the migrant children in the stated area. By implication, in order for migrant children at Public Secondary School PQR to be better prepared for school, the need for the provision of more opportunities for them is necessary.

The third theme that emerged from this study is closely linked to the second objective which looked at the psychological and social challenges faced by migrant children, and how they influence school readiness at any level. These findings revealed that the major challenge that migrant children have to deal with is the lack of proper documentation. Both groups of participants incessantly spoke about this challenge as the one which embodies most of the other challenges that migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR face. In agreement with the existence of this challenge is the findings of a study conducted by Crush and Tawodzera (2014) in the South African context, and Mitchell (2015). Crush and Tawodzera (2014) reported that all the migrants who participated in their study pointed out that enrolling children without paperwork was an arduous task in South Africa. Beyond the challenge of lack of proper documentation was the language barrier that serves as a hindrance to migrant children's readiness for school. Some participants were of the opinion that children had the ability to grasp new languages faster as compared to adult migrants within South Africa.

However, majority of the participants revealed that a lack of understanding of English language (for migrant coming from non-English speaking countries) and local South African languages presented a bridge between the migrants and preparedness for school. This challenge was even compounded by the fact that South Africa has 11 official languages, namely: Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, English and Afrikaans, and locals decided whichever language they chose to speak (Broeder et al., 2002; Desai, 2016). This finding was also noted by Şeker and Sirkeci (2015); Mitchell (2015); as well as in a South African study conducted by Crush and Tawodzera (2014). Additionally, the challenge of an inability for migrant children to further their education after high school or any grade within high school was highlighted. Majority of the teachers reported that this challenge resulted in the unwillingness of migrant children to learn what is expected of them because it seemed like

there was ‘no future’ in continuing with school in the current South African context. In congruence with these findings on the challenges faced by migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR is a report given by Hernandez and Napierala (2012) where they found that despite the fact that migrant children may be resilient, about 25% of them were *unable* to complete high school. In describing the theoretical implication of this finding, it is worthy to note that experiences of school readiness are constantly shaped by specific contextual factors (New et al., 2015). In this case study conducted in Public Secondary School PQR, the context-based factors include but are not limited to the lack of proper documentation as well as a language barrier for migrant children. Hence, in line with the theory of social-constructivism and phenomenology, the migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR cannot be expected to ‘meet up with the expected requirements’ of being prepared for school without first considering their lived experiences. For, the specific and context-based challenges that migrant children face are not distant from the environment in which they find themselves and, this gives distinct social reality for the migrant child in Public Secondary PQR in getting ready for school.

The fourth theme which relates to the third question this study sought to answer was what strategies were in place to address the challenges faced by migrant children in relation to their school readiness level in Krugersdorp, South Africa. Most teachers noted that there was only one strategy already in place which is that, the school liaises with the Department of Home Affairs to assist migrant children without complete documentation. However, the teachers as well as parents made recommendations for addressing the identified challenges. Most recommendations made were born out of the peculiarity of the challenges faced by the migrant children in Public Secondary School PQR. This peculiarity is in consonance with the explanation of the specificity of context that needs to be understood. Quite importantly, the

strategies included the school governing body and management organising cultural programmes which are in line with the vision, mission and values of the school[2]. In a bid to suggest strategies, it needs to be noted that "more recent resurgence of interest in phenomenology can perhaps be understood in the context of its potential contribution to *re-thinking* our *understanding* of the *complex phenomena* we encounter in the dynamic, and sometimes confronting, world in which we find ourselves in this 21st century" (Dall'Alba, 2009, p. 7, my emphasis). In agreement with the aforementioned, Dotterer, Iruka, and Pungello (2012) have argued that strategies put in place must be context based.

The theories of social constructivism (as suggested by Carlton and Winsler [1999]) and phenomenology were thus useful in finding an integration between cognitive expectances and the specific social context of the migrant child to explain their school readiness levels. The need to rethink what school readiness means in the specific context of a group of children (migrant children) and within their lived experiences (being in Krugersdorp, South Africa and mostly, without complete legal documentation), brings about an integrated explanation of the phenomenon. Reiterating Carlton and Winsler's (1999) stance on the use of social constructivism, there was a better understanding of what school readiness should be explained as for migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa. Within this better understanding, a notion of what, in specific terms, challenge the preparedness of migrant children for school based on their lived experiences, had to be studied.

[2] I read through the vision, mission and values of the school during my first visit to the school.

It is, therefore, evident that a lack of documentation which is the lived experience of the migrant children in Public Secondary PQR incessantly affects how ready for school they can be within the South African context where, the Immigration Act of 2002 (Republic of South Africa The Presidency, 2002) stipulates that paperwork is compulsory for being admitted into any educational institution of which high schools belong. The South African School's Act 84 (Republic of South Africa, 1996) on the other hand, allows for the right to be educated at the basic level of education. With this legal contradiction and having identified the challenges faced by migrant children, it is evident that school readiness for migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa cannot be explained in isolation to contextual factors and their specific lived experiences.

### 5.3 Limitations to the Study

The main limitation of this study was a degree of discomfort on the part of the study participants (especially the parents of migrant children). There was a degree of sensitivity in terms of the questions asked in relation to the immigration and or social status of the community-based informants. Consequently, a limitation to this study was getting the informants (parents) to give their opinions on the challenges faced by migrant children in South Africa. However, with a convenient space and an assurance of confidentiality, this limitation was overcome.

In addition, I, as the researcher, acknowledge that the study was limited to a single case and I clearly state that the findings and or outcomes cannot be superficially generalised to other migrant children within South Africa or Africa as a whole. Also, limitation in the sample size is acknowledged. However, qualitative research does not aim at having representative samples

or producing generalizable findings. Instead, the intention is to generate an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon and *explore* 'transferability' to other contexts (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003). Thus, future studies utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods should be conducted to confirm and or build on this current research.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that having acted as the primary instrument of data collection, my philosophy and values may have resulted to bias in reporting the findings. However, triangulating the findings from both teachers and parents helped confirm the findings. In addition, periodic meetings and discussions with my supervisor during data collection and analysis helped overcome this challenge.

### 5.4 Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the findings of this study, the following are suggestions for future research on a psychosocial perspective on school readiness for migrant children. Firstly, reiterating the fact that the sample size was relatively small, and the study was limited to a single case study, it will be expedient to conduct research that uses multiple case studies as well as, increases the sample size to gain more understanding of school readiness for migrant children.

Secondly, this study did not include migrant children as participants thus, excises what their perceptions of school readiness is. Following from this, a study that will focus on the migrant children as study participants will be key in further explaining what school readiness means for them as well as come up with an integrated approach (being psychological or cognitive and

social). This will also help to confirm or refute what parents and teachers think about school readiness.

Thirdly, further research on the opportunities available to migrant children in relation to their preparedness for school is an area that needs to be delved into not only in South Africa but, also in other contexts with an increasing number of migrants.

Finally, based on the fact that some participants incessantly mentioned the difficulty in addressing the challenge of a lack of proper documentation for migrant children, I suggest that a study which will focus on how policies and legislative texts contribute to and or challenge the preparedness of migrant children for school be conducted in South Africa.

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## APPENDIX A: WITS APPROVAL LETTER FOR PROPOSAL

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

PERSON NUMBER: 1714302

**16 September 2019**

Miss Sarah Enaan-Maseph Blessed-Sayah
Cc Dr Ian Moll

Dear Ms Blessed-Sayah

**Results for the Masters Research in Education**

I am writing to inform you that the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the Senate has considered your proposal entitled *"A Psychosocial Perspective on School Readiness for Migrant Children: A Case Study in a Public Secondary School in Krugersdorp, South Africa"* and recommended that you should be admitted to candidature subject to corrections suggested by the reader.

**Corrections must be addressed to the satisfaction of the supervisor.**

**Kindly liaise with your supervisor regarding the contents of the reader's report, the readers report was emailed to your supervisor.**

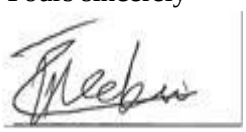
I confirm that **Dr Ian Moll** has been appointed as your supervisor.

Your attention is drawn to the Senate's requirement that all higher degree candidates submit brief written reports on their progress to the Faculty Office once a year.

**Please note that higher degree candidates are required to renew their registration in January each year.**

Please keep us informed of any changes of address during the year.

Yours sincerely



Thabo Makuru

Faculty Officer

Faculty of Humanities

Education Campus

Tell: 011 717 3018

Private Bag 3, WITS 2050, South Africa | T +27 11 717 4007 | E help.humanities@wits.ac.za | www.wits.ac.za/humanities

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## APPENDIX B: SCHEDULE OF QUESTIONS FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR TEACHERS

1. How long have you been teaching for?
2. What do you think school readiness is?
3. How long have you consistently taught migrant children for?
4. What are some social challenges faced by migrant children?
5. What are some psychological challenges faced by migrant children?
6. Do you think that the social and psychological challenges faced by migrant children affect their readiness for school?
7. What are some strategies that are / can be put in place to address the social challenges faced by migrant children in relation to school readiness?
8. What can be done to address the psychological challenges faced by migrant children in relation to school readiness?
9. Do you think that the school has any role to play in addressing the challenges faced by migrant children to ensure that they can cope with being ready for school?

## APPENDIX C: TEACHER'S INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Sir / Madam,

My name is Sarah Enaan-Maseph Blessed-Sayah and I am a Masters student in Education at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project, and I am investigating the problem of school readiness through a psychosocial perspective. The aim of this research project is to find out what school readiness means for teachers and parents in the context of both psychological and social development as well as focus on a psychosocial approach to school readiness in relation to migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa.

As part of this project I would like to invite you to take part in an interview. This activity will involve a single interview where you will be answering questions about school readiness and will take around 30 minutes. With your permission, I would also like to record the interview using an audio recorder.

You will not receive any direct benefits from participating in this research, and there are no disadvantages or penalties for not participating. You may withdraw at any time or not answer any question if you do not want to. The interview session will be completely confidential and anonymous as I will not be asking for your name or any identifying information, and the information you give to me will be held securely in a password locked computer and not disclosed to anyone else. I will be using a pseudonym (false name) to represent your participation in my final research report. If you experience any distress or discomfort at any point in this process, we will stop the interview or resume another time.

If you have any questions at any time during the research process, feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email Shaun.Schoeman@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Enaan-Maseph Blessed-Sayah

Sarah Enaan-Maseph Blessed-Sayah, 1714302@students.wits.ac.za

Dr. Ian Moll, Ian.Moll@wits.ac.za

**APPENDIX D: TEACHER'S CONSENT FORM**

**Title of project:**
A psychosocial perspective on school readiness for migrant children: A case study in a public secondary school in Krugersdorp, South Africa

**Name of researcher:** Sarah Enaan-Maseph Blessed-Sayah

I ……. agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve.

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous YES NO (please circle)

I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in her research report YES NO

I agree that the interview may be audio recorded YES NO

I agree that the information I provide may be used anonymously by other researchers following this study YES NO

Name of Teacher: ……

Signature: …….. Date: ……

**APPENDIX E: SCHEDULE OF QUESTIONS FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR PARENTS**

1. What's your age range?
2. What's your highest level of education?
3. Where are you originally from?
4. When did you move to South Africa/ how long have you been in South Africa?
5. What made you move to South Africa?
6. What challenges have you and do you face?
7. Did you move with your children to South Africa when you initially moved here?
8. How many children do you have?
9. How old is/are your children?
10. How many attend this school?
11. What do you think school readiness is?
12. What are some social challenges faced by your children?
13. What are some psychological challenges faced by migrant children?
14. Do you think that the social and psychological challenges faced by migrant children affect their readiness for school?
15. What are some strategies that can be put in place to address the social challenges faced by migrant children in relation to school readiness?
16. What can be done to address the psychological challenges faced by migrant children in relation to school readiness?
17. Do you think that the school has any role to play in addressing the challenges faced by migrant children to ensure that they can cope with being ready for school?

## APPENDIX F: PARENT'S INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Sir / Madam,

My name is Sarah Enaan-Maseph Blessed-Sayah and I am a Masters student in Education at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project, and I am investigating the problem of school readiness through a psychosocial perspective. The aim of this research project is to find out what school readiness means for teachers and parents in the context of both psychological and social development as well as focus on a psychosocial approach to school readiness in relation to migrant children in Krugersdorp, South Africa.

As part of this project I would like to invite you to take part in an interview. This activity will involve a single interview where you will be answering questions about school readiness and will take around 30 minutes. With your permission, I would also like to record the interview using an audio recorder.

You will not receive any direct benefits from participating in this research, and there are no disadvantages or penalties for not participating. You may withdraw at any time or not answer any question if you do not want to. The interview session will be completely confidential and anonymous as I will not be asking for your name or any identifying information, and the information you give to me will be held securely in a password locked computer and not disclosed to anyone else. I will be using a pseudonym (false name) to represent your participation in my final research report. If you experience any distress or discomfort at any point in this process, we will stop the interview or resume another time.

If you have any questions at any time during the research process, feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email Shaun.Schoeman@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Enaan-Maseph Blessed-Sayah

Sarah Enaan-Maseph Blessed-Sayah, 1714302@students.wits.ac.za

Dr Ian Moll, Ian.Moll@wits.ac.za

**APPENDIX G: PARENT'S CONSENT FORM**

**Title of project:**
A psychosocial perspective on school readiness for migrant children: A case study in a public secondary school in Krugersdorp, South Africa

**Name of researcher:** Sarah Enaan-Maseph Blessed-Sayah

I ……. agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve.

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous YES NO (please circle)

I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in her research report YES NO

I agree that the interview may be audio recorded YES NO

I agree that the information I provide may be used anonymously by other researchers following this study YES NO

Name of Parent: ……

Signature: …….. Date: ……

**APPENDIX H: PRINCIPAL'S LETTER**

6th May 2019

Dear Principal

My name is Sarah Enaan-Maseph Blessed-Sayah and I am a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am doing research on a psychosocial perspective on school readiness for migrant children in South Africa. My research involves investigating teachers and parents' perception on the experience of school readiness for migrant children in South Africa through conducting semi-structured interviews with teachers and parents at your school. These semi-structured interviews will hold for about 30 minutes on an individual basis to ensure that confidentiality and privacy are maintained.

The reason why I have chosen your school is because your school has a good number of foreign students who reside in the Mogale Municipality area of the western part of Johannesburg. Also, your school is known for its unwavering assistance to all students regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds.

I am inviting your school to participate in this research on what school readiness means for teachers and parents in the context of both psychological and social development for migrant children in South Africa.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

The names of the research participants and identity of the school will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Enaan-Maseph Blessed-Sayah

27 St. Andrews Road, Wits School of Education,

Parktown, Johannesburg.

sblessedsayah@yahoo.com; 1714302@students.wits.ac.za

## APPENDIX I: GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION APPROVAL LETTER

GAUTENG PROVINCE
Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

### GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

| | |
|---|---|
| Date: | 05 June 2019 |
| Validity of Research Approval: | 04 February 2019 – 30 September 2019<br>2019/66 |
| Name of Researcher: | Blessed-Sayah S.E |
| Address of Researcher: | Vistaero Apartment, 12 Mitchell Street |
| | Berea |
| | Johannesburg |
| | 2198 |
| Telephone Number: | 064 053 3399 |
| Email address: | 1714302@students.wits.ac.za |
| Research Topic: | A Psychosocial Perspective on 'School Readiness' for Migrant Children: A sace study of a School in Krugersdorp, South Africa. |
| Type of qualification | Master of Education |
| Number and type of schools: | One Secondary School |
| District/s/HO | Johannesburg West |

***Re: App roval in Resp ect of Req uest to Conduct Research***

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has beengr anted for the research to be conducted.

05/06/2019

**The following conditions apply to GDE resear h. The researcher may proceed with the**



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**Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management**
7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

**above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:**

1. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
2. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.*
3. *A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
4. *A letter / document that outline the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.*
5. *The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.*
6. *Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.*
7. *Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.*
8. *Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.*
9. *It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.*
10. *The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.*
11. *The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.*
12. *On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.*
13. *The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.*
14. *Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.*

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

.....

Mr Gumani Mukatuni
Acting Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 05/06/2019



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