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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

Blessed-Sayah, Sarah Enaan-Maseph

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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.*