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School Effects of Attachment Break in Context of Economic Migration of Parents

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Abstract: *Romania is going through a period of economic transition, subject to the pressures of globalization that affect the evolution of the family, at the micro social level, structurally, from the behaviour and relational point of view. The continuous process of changes in the labour market, the inefficiency of the association between vocational training and job satisfaction, the financial difficulties felt by most families but also the challenge of modernity have emphasized the phenomenon of migration in the last decade. The departure of parents who have to work abroad has become a worrying phenomenon with a higher incidence in the eastern half of the country. It has got complex effects on the evolution of the family, especially on the children left at home with one of their parents or their tutors. Nowadays, the studies show more and more situations of neglect in which children become victims and suffer emotionally and physically. They also suffer various abuses, they are exploited through work or sex. In schools, there is a new profile of special educational requirements (not deficiencies), the profile of children left at home without parental support. It is worrying the migration phenomenon seen as a value model by the young generation and its negative effects at school level: decrease of motivation for learning or school abandonment. The present study discusses a review of the current scientific literature objectively, which examines the impact of breaking attachment relationships between children and parents on socio-emotional development and school outcomes. The Romanian society knows an important socio-economic phenomenon, which has grown since 1990: migration. In 2017, a study carried out at the request of the Romanian Government recorded more than 85,000 children left home alone with one of the parents or without parental supervision. We aim to analyse what effects at school and socio-emotional level have the loss of attachment ties having as moderators the gender of the migrant parent, the duration of the separation, the age at which the separation occurs. When these relationships are interrupted, the child's emotional development is affected, his emotional balance having repercussions in his social life. The purpose of this study is to identify, monitor the dimensions of the phenomenon in intensely affected areas (Braila and Galati counties), the psycho-pedagogical aspects of children with migrant parents exposed to situations of vulnerability, marginalization and to propose a program of educational strategies in order to optimize school motivation. The main objective of the research is to identify, evaluate and involve them into adaptive actions that have as their objective the rebalancing of the socio-affective relations of the children, the counselling and the granting of psycho-pedagogical support.*

Keywords: *migration, parental support, attachment*

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1. Introduction

Romanian society, like the Eastern European ones, is experiencing an important socio-economic phenomenon, which has grown after 1990, in the context of globalization: Migration for economic purpose. Parents' departure to work abroad has caused difficulties, suffering, delays in the process of increasing and developing their children at home. The parent-child attachment links have been damaged by separation. The lack of communication, parental supervision, physical networking and parental activities has had negative psychological-social effects, affecting the educational outcomes of children left at home. Separating the child or adolescent from at least one migrant parent means breaking the attachment links with effects in psycho-social, cognitive, physical development. In 2017 a study carried out at the request of the Romanian Government registered over 85 000 children left home with only one of their parents or without parental supervision; at the end of december 2019, the number of romanian children with both parents who went abroad for work was 15 858, 3% less than at the end of 2018 according to the data recorded by the national Authority for the Protection of children's Rights and adoption (ANPDCA) and the total number of children with at least one migrant parent was 86 263. Many research has shown that emigration of at least one parent has had negative effects on the psycho-social development of children left at home leading to behavior poor school performance and poor performance. The problem of children left at home after the parents' emigration has become complex for the people or authorities who took care of them (other parent, grandparents, other family members, school, social workers). Numerous studies by UNICEF, UNESCO have highlighted the international scale of the phenomenon and the negative impact on children. It is interesting to identify the effects of breaking ties of attachment by the migration of parents on school performance with the same variables the genus of the parent left, type of attachment, duration of separation, age of first separation, educational adaptability or difficult subjects.

2. Theoretical and empirical reasoning

Parent-child attachment theories have been studied for a long time (Bowlby, 1970; Bowlby, 1973) reviewing the age categories from infant to adult (Ainswoth, 1978; Main, et al., 1985), attachment link creating psychological structures that offer people throughout their lives adaptive capabilities, safety, trust in relation to the representative adult attachment figure (Bretherton, 1992, Fearon et al., 2016). Previous studies have suggested that attachment styles can be fluctuated over the life, but until the end of childhood the primary attachment to the parent (Allen, 2008; Fraley & Davis 1997; Hazan & Zifman, 1999, Mayselessx, 2004). After adolescence the parent remains the figure of the atsament but the hierarchies of attachment expand and develop according to the primary model Schachner et al., 2008; Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997).

Scientific literature includes numerous studies on migration that we can classify according to research results. Numerous research focused on the effects of migration was carried out mainly in Asian countries (Lam & Yeoh, 2019; Meyerhoefer & Chen, 2011; Mu & van de Walle, 2011; Yang, 2008; but also in the States of USA and Mexico (Alcaraz et al., 2012; Bollard et al., 2011; Edwards & Ureta, 2003). Studies show the positive aspects of migration on the economy of the host countries: Raising the income of immigrants' families (Alcaraz et al., 2012, Anghel et al., 2016; Antman, 2010; Hanson & Woodruff, 2003), avoiding child labor exploitation (Beegle et al., 2006) improvement of the educational situation of children left at home by attending school due to the rise in living standards (Macours & Vakis, 2010). Thanks to remittances, children have increased access to education and are likely to enter higher education (Vanore et al., 2015). International migration was strongly supported by developed countries because the international workforce has brought growth to the labor market, economic and industrial development in the host countries. Literature points to how parental migration can have positive effects on the quality of learning of children left at home by improving health, increasing life expectancy, improving weight scores the most important being the correlation between school performance and family income (Dahl & Lochner, 2012). Similar results

were achieved on small children with migrant parents from Guatemala and China (Carletto et al., 2011).

On the other hand, many studies highlight the negative impact of migration on the remaining children in the countries of origin. This literature describes the negative consequences of the departure of one or both parents on those left at home through attachment, separation and loss issues (Hu & Gan, 2008). The children of emigrants have had negative effects on school: Lower motivation for learning, aggressiveness or early school leaving (Chen & Jiang, 2019; Reyes, 1997). Some studies have investigated the empirical correlation between parental migration and mental health of children left at home (Graham & Jordan, 2011; Wang et al., 2015, Zhao & Yu, 2016; Zhou et al., 2005). Studies have highlighted immediate psychosocial effects on children affected by migration who have lost study hours to participate in household work (Amuedo-Dorantes & Pozo, 2010; Bollard et al., 2011; Lahaie et al., 2009). They tried feelings of abandonment (feelings such as rejection and loss that cannot be compensated by remittances or gifts, many of the children lived at a later stage, fear, anger, resentment, failure to properly manage relations with foreigners) (Feeney, 2008). The children who are avoided consider themselves undignified and unacceptable, beliefs caused by the rejection of primary care. More recent research has shown that the success of a stable attachment is also possible with the relationship with more reference persons (Ainsworth 1967; Chambers et al., 2000). Important studies consider that boys are more affected than girls who stay at home (Zhang et al., 2015) and especially young children up to 9-10 years. Other studies contradict results that have shown that girls are more likely to be affected by parental migration (Meyerhoefer & Chen, 2011). Another study reports that paternal migration increases the risk of school drop-out, especially for rural girls (Giannelli & Mangiavacchi, 2010). Other research shows that boys more than girls tend to neglect school if the migrant parent is the father (Antman, 2011; Kuépié, 2018). There is, however, little research that distinguishes between the effects of migration on school adaptation by the type of migrant (Antman, 2013). A poll found that migration of mothers significantly increases the risk of vulnerability to physical or sexual abuse and aggression (Brown, 1993).

3. Study assumptions

Hypothesis 1

Parental migration reduces the educational performance of children left at home.

Lack of parental figures, communication with school through attendance at meetings with teachers, supervision of school education, communication and physical networking are often the causes of children's educational demotivation (Lahaie et al., 2009).

Hypothesis 2

The school adaptation of children varies according to the type of migrant parent.

The study "the single-home phenomenon" conducted by CJRAE Tulcea in 2010 highlights the alteration of the affective-emotional state of children (passionate, defiant, indisciplined, even hostile and earrings. The lack of father or mother is felt differently by children depending on the type of attachment they developed before emigration.

Hypothesis 3

The younger the separation from the migrant parent, the greater the child's adaptive difficulties in the school environment.

There are many situations where young school children are difficult to manage the negative, strong emotions experienced in the context of parental migration, with moments of fear, often crying, moments of apathy, demotivation, retirement, causes of adaptive school failure (Ratelle et al., 2004; Zhou et al., 2018).

The directions in which our research is directed are: Identifying data on the migrant parent: Gender, length of separation, educational level; identifying the style of attachment of emigrant children; identifying difficulties in adapting to school, identifying issues related to the communication of children with migrant parents; identification of previous school situations by analyzing school documents; identify aspects of school adaptation: integration into the school group, collection at school level, behavioral indicators.

3. Research methods

Participants and the procedure

A mixed (qualitative) research shall be undertaken to test the assumptions; the research population is represented by Romanian children aged 6 to 14-15, enrolled in primary and secondary education, who have at least one immigrant parent. The research sample is selected from the research population, from primary and secondary schools, from the urban and rural areas, from the counties of the South-East region, which are heavily affected by the phenomenon of migration. Copies of the selected sample shall be retained whose parents or legal representatives have accepted to participate in the study. Children whose teachers do not accept study participation shall also be removed from the sample.

Our study is a major input to the data collected from emigrant parents and professionals working with their children: Teachers, advisers. An important source used in our empirical analysis is the statistical situation reported at the end of 2019 by the national Statistics Institute and the national Agency for Rights and Child Protection regarding the number of children from Romania who have at least one emigrant parent. The data is corroborated by a survey conducted by Gallup International and Soros Foundation (Toth et al., 2007).

To identify the style of attachment of 11- 15-year-old children, we use adapt the Attachment style question, (Feeney & Ryan, 1994). The Commission also has to use the best-case and best-case information for the calculation of the total number of new and used aircraft, as well as 1994. The type of attachment of children from the first years of school is established using a method of completing some pre-prepared stories in the play. (Bretherton, et al., 2005). To identify school difficulties, closed and open question questionnaires that are filled in in the presence of the researcher or teachers are managed to students. The questionnaire is structured in 3 parts: Personal data, feedback on school activity, data on autonomy in school preparation. The verification of the hemi shall be carried out using factorial analysis, the internal consistency of Cronbach Alfa with Jamovi is measured.

Migrant parents are interviewed to identify the relationships between children and parents and the level of transnational communication. Interviews are conducted with maternal emigrants and paternal emigrants who agreed to the survey. To eliminate search errors interviews will be recorded audio with the agreement of the interviewees. Interviews shall be transcribed, coded and interpreted.

For the testing of the latter assumption, the moderation procedure with the attachment style and the genre of the migrant parent is used as moderators, the measurements are made by linear regression and multiple regression, the internal validity being verified in Jamovi.

4. Research limits

The study has its limitations, both through the researcher's bias, the relatively small number of participants or the method of selecting the sample, the sincerity of respondents to the questionnaires and to the interview.

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