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**THE CHALLENGES THAT THE CHILDREN OF MIGRANT PARENTS FACE IN  
SCHOOLS OF KYRGYZSTAN**

КЫРГЫЗСТАНДАГЫ ОРТО МЕКТЕПТЕРДЕ МИГРАНТ АТА-ЭНЕЛЕРДИН БАЛДАРЫ  
ТУШ БОЛГОН КЫЙЫНЧЫЛЫКТАР

ПРОБЛЕМЫ, С КОТОРЫМИ СТАЛКИВАЮТСЯ ДЕТИ РОДИТЕЛЕЙ-МИГРАНТОВ В  
ШКОЛАХ КЫРГЫЗСТАНА

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## THE CHALLENGES THAT THE CHILDREN OF MIGRANT PARENTS FACE IN SCHOOLS OF KYRGYZSTAN

### Abstract

Relevance. This study examines, from the viewpoint of educators specifically, how parental migration influences children's education in Kyrgyzstan. Interviews with instructors at Osh's Zh. Abdurasulov School were used for the study. According to the research, children whose parents migrate abroad encounter a number of difficulties, such as emotional and psychological distress, disruptions in their schooling, and trouble sustaining friendships with their peers. However, extracurricular activities were one way that some students showed resilience, and parental involvement was found to be important. The study suggests a number of tactics for improving educational support, including providing academic flexibility, support groups, counseling services, and awareness raising within the school community. The study emphasizes how crucial it is to support left-behind children's emotional and academic development through a comprehensive approach.

**Keywords:** parental migration, education, Kyrgyzstan, left-behind children, educators' perspectives, emotional support.

### КЫРГЫЗСТАНДАГЫ ОРТО МЕКТЕПТЕРДЕ МИГРАНТ АТА-ЭНЕЛЕРДИН БАЛДАРЫ ТУШ БОЛГОН КЫЙЫНЧЫЛЫКТАР

### ПРОБЛЕМЫ, С КОТОРЫМИ СТАЛКИВАЮТСЯ ДЕТИ РОДИТЕЛЕЙ-МИГРАНТОВ В ШКОЛАХ КЫРГЫЗСТАНА

#### Аннотация

Маанилүүлүк. Бул изилдөө Кыргызстандагы балдардын билим алуусуна ата-энелердин миграциясынын таасирин изилдейт, мугалимдердин көз карашына басым жасалган. Изилдөө Ош шаарындагы Ж. Абдурасулов атындагы мектептин мугалимдери менен жарым-структуралаштырылган маектешүүлөр аркылуу жүргүзүлгөн. Натыйжалар мигрант ата-энелери таштап кеткен балдар кабылган ар кандай кыйынчылыктарды, анын ичинде эмоционалдык жана психологиялык кыйынчылыктарды, окуудагы үзгүлтүктөрдү жана теңтуштары менен мамилелерге тийгизген таасирин ачып берди. Бирок, кээ бир окуучулар кошумча иш-чараларга катышуу аркылуу өздөрүнүн туруктуулугун көрсөтүштү, ата-энелердин катышуусу маанилүү экени аныкталды. Изилдөө ата-энеси жок балдардын билим берүү жана эмоционалдык жактан колдоону камсыз кылуу үчүн комплекстүү мамиленин маанилүүлүгүн баса белгилейт жана саясатчылардын, мугалимдердин жана ата-энелердин биргелешкен аракеттерин талап кылат, алар бул окуучулардын өзгөчө муктаждыктарын эске алган инклюзивдүү стратегияларды иштеп чыгышат.

**Ачкыч сөздөр:** ата-энелердин миграциясы, билим берүү, Кыргызстан, ата-энеси жок балдар, мугалимдердин көз карашы, эмоционалдык колдоо.

#### Аннотация

Актуальность. Это исследование изучает влияние миграции родителей на образование детей в Кыргызстане, с акцентом на точку зрения педагогов. Исследование было проведено посредством полу структурированных интервью с учителями школы имени Ж. Абдурасулова в Оше. Результаты выявили различные проблемы, с которыми сталкиваются дети, оставшиеся без родительского попечения из-за миграции, включая эмоциональные и психологические трудности, нарушения в учебном процессе и влияние на отношения со сверстниками. Тем не менее, некоторые студенты проявили устойчивость через участие во внеклассных мероприятиях, и было установлено, что вовлеченность родителей имеет решающее значение. Рекомендации по улучшению образовательной поддержки включают услуги консультирования, группы поддержки, гибкость в учебном процессе и повышение осведомленности в образовательном сообществе. Исследование подчеркивает важность комплексного подхода к поддержке образовательного и эмоционального благополучия детей, оставшихся без родительской опеки, и призывает к совместным усилиям политиков, педагогов и родителей для разработки инклюзивных стратегий, которые учитывают уникальные потребности этих учеников.

**Ключевые слова:** миграция родителей, образование, Кыргызстан, дети, оставшиеся без родительской опеки, точка зрения педагогов, эмоциональная поддержка.

## Introduction

The issue of parental migration is an important topic in Kyrgyzstan because it is a common practice for many families to depend on it to improve their financial situation. However, this migration trend has a far-reaching impact except just economics. Migration has a significant influence on the education of migrants' children. The comprehensive issues surrounding parental migration's effects on children's education in Kyrgyzstan are investigated in this study. We will take into account the perspectives of educators who are involved in children's education.

Employing qualitative interviews with teachers from the Zh. Abdurasulov School in Osh, spanning grades 8, 10, and 11, we aim to unearth the nuanced educational repercussions of migration. Our goal is to reveal the indirect consequences of migration on children's education and develop informed strategies that can enhance educational support and inclusivity. It is important to understand the obstacles that children come across who are left behind due to parental migration so that we can support them better. This research is especially relevant given the growing recognition of the educational disadvantages these children face.

While existing literature has explored the broader social and psychological impacts of this phenomenon, there is a lack of studies that focus specifically on the educational challenges encountered by these children in Kyrgyzstan. By concentrating on the experiences of students in the Zh. Abdurasulov School in Osh, we aim to contribute unique insights that can enhance the current body of knowledge and offer a localized perspective on this complex issue.

Kyrgyzstan is one of the main Central Asian countries that sends labor migrants. This makes it an interesting place to study this phenomenon. The region as a whole experiences similar migration patterns, so the results of this study could be useful for neighboring countries facing the same challenges.

## Literature Review

This research aims to reveal the parental migration influence on the education of children in Kyrgyzstan. The investigation focuses on the need for a complex approach that embodies emotional support, academic flexibility, and the active participation of parents. Though many challenges exist, the resilience and children's coping mechanisms show their potential for success.

“Labor migration is often the only way out of a difficult financial situation. However, the factor of parental absence leads to many psychological and social problems for the child,” notes Aigerim Arzymatova, a specialist at the Office of the Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic and a participant in the CABAR.asia School of Analytics, in her article. (Central Asia Bureau for Analytical Reporting, 2019)

Children of migrant workers tend to experience problems at school more often than their peers. Low academic performance and sometimes-even lack of access to education.

Monitoring carried out as part of the identification of child labor at the Dordoi market showed that mainly children of both external and internal migrants work at the market. The children's ages ranged from 5 to 14 years. Children of internal migrants experience the same problems as children of external migrants - lack of parental control, lack of access to education, lack of medical care, and exposure to labor exploitation. (Monitoring performed by employees of the Ombudsman's Office, together with the International Labor Organization, the Office of Social Development and the Inspectorate for Minors)

Policymakers, educators, and parents must collaborate and develop strategies to prioritize the academic performance and inclusivity of children left behind. By acknowledging the specific needs

and experiences of these children, Kyrgyzstan can take significant actions toward creating a nurturing and supportive environment, thus fostering their academic growth and emotional well-being.

The editors of kaktus.media conducted a survey among young people whose one or both parents left for migration, leaving them with relatives. (2021)

Remembering, they told how and at what age they were limited in parental care and protection. Most of the children were abandoned at a young age, when they were 2–3 years old. The children then felt unhappy and deprived of attention. They note that these years were terrible.

Some, left with one parent during adolescence, when personal qualities begin to form, may not have found a common language with him upon the return of the other parent. When both parents were away from their children, their relatives humiliated most of them.

Children with both parents working abroad showed the worst results in math and reading, according to an international study by CAPSA (Central Asia Program for Student Assessment) in Kyrgyzstan. The absence of a student's own desk reduces academic performance by more than 2 times.

Growing up without parents affects how a child behaves among his peers or among relatives at home. The child becomes shy, cannot express himself, is afraid of criticism, and does not answer until asked. (Memories of migrant children. What is it like to grow up when your parents are not around. 2017).

This study gives a broader understanding of the influence of parental migration on children's education and provides practical information for enhancing the educational support system in Kyrgyzstan. Future research can investigate particular interventions and policies to address the issues described in this study, leading to a brighter educational possibility for these children.

## Materials and Methods

Qualitative methods are utilized in the study to investigate the influence of parental migration on the education of children in Kyrgyzstan. For uncovering the complex experiences, perspectives, and difficulties faced by educators, teaching children left behind the use qualitative method is ideal. For data collection, semi-structured interviews were employed as the primary method, enabling an in-depth exploration of the topic while remaining adaptable to the participants' stories.

The study engaged educators from the Zh. Abdurasulov School in Osh, specifically teaching grades 8, 10, and 11. This grade selection was strategic, and aimed at garnering insights across various educational phases. The choice of educators was informed by their firsthand experiences with students navigating the challenges of parental migration.

## Data obtained as a result of the study

### 1. Information on the educational institution

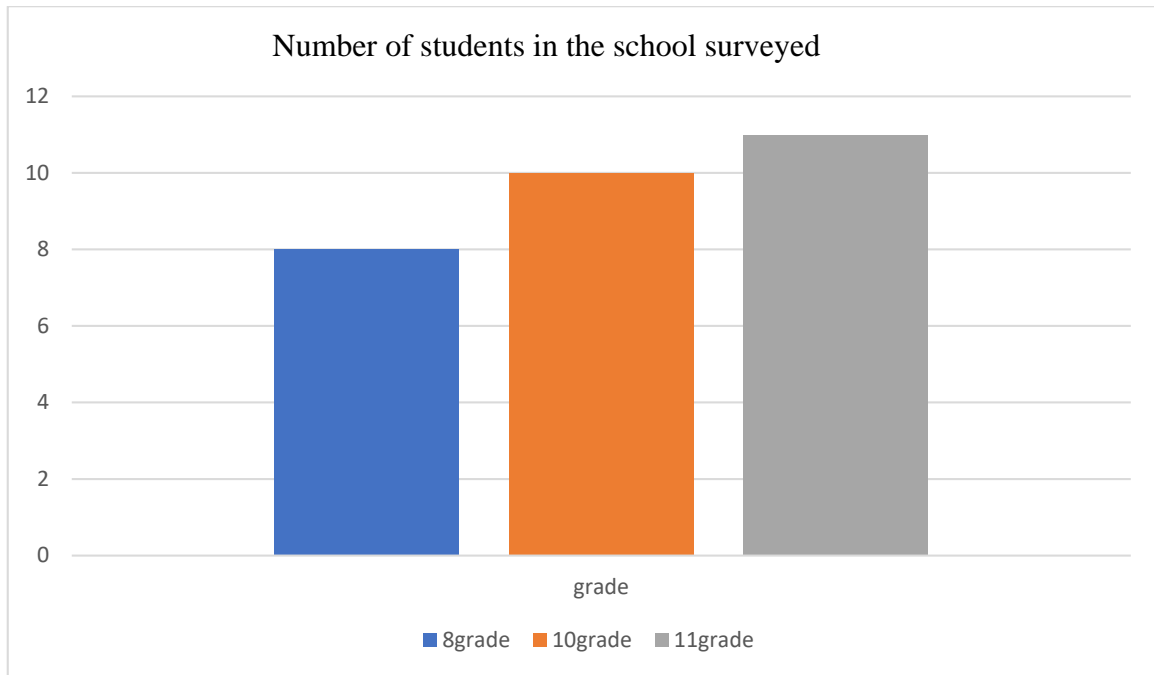
An educational institution in the Uzgen district of Osh region took part in assessing the needs in the field of education. The school is presented to them. J. Abdurasulova.

#### School division by language

language of instruction	number of responses
Kyrgyz	46

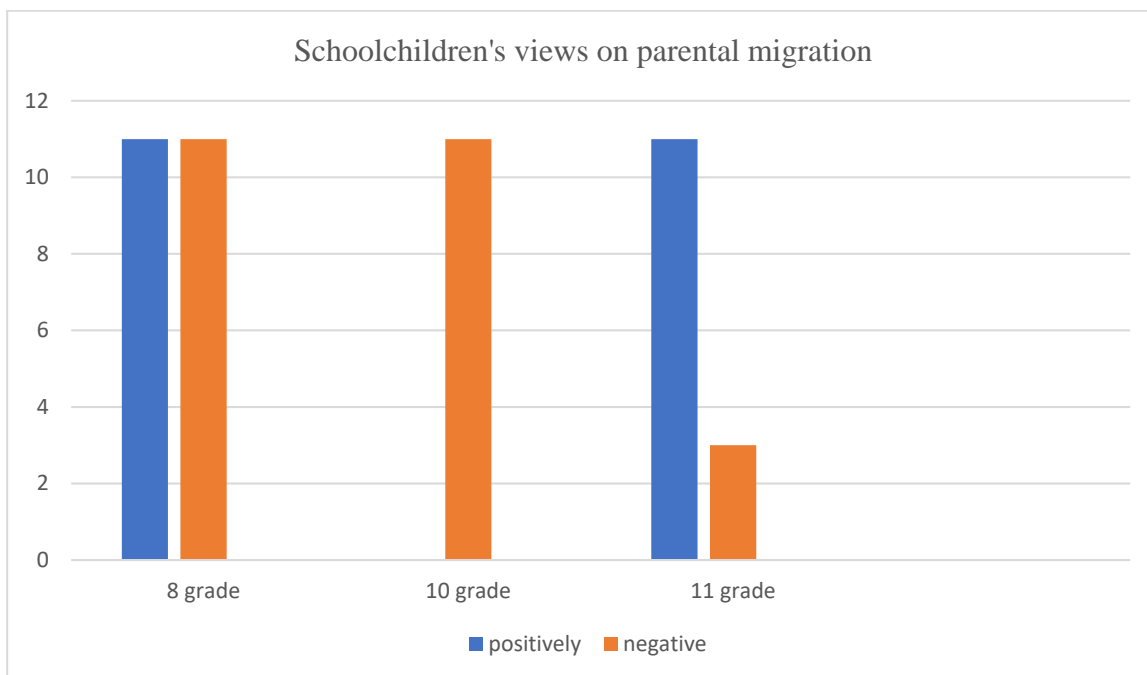
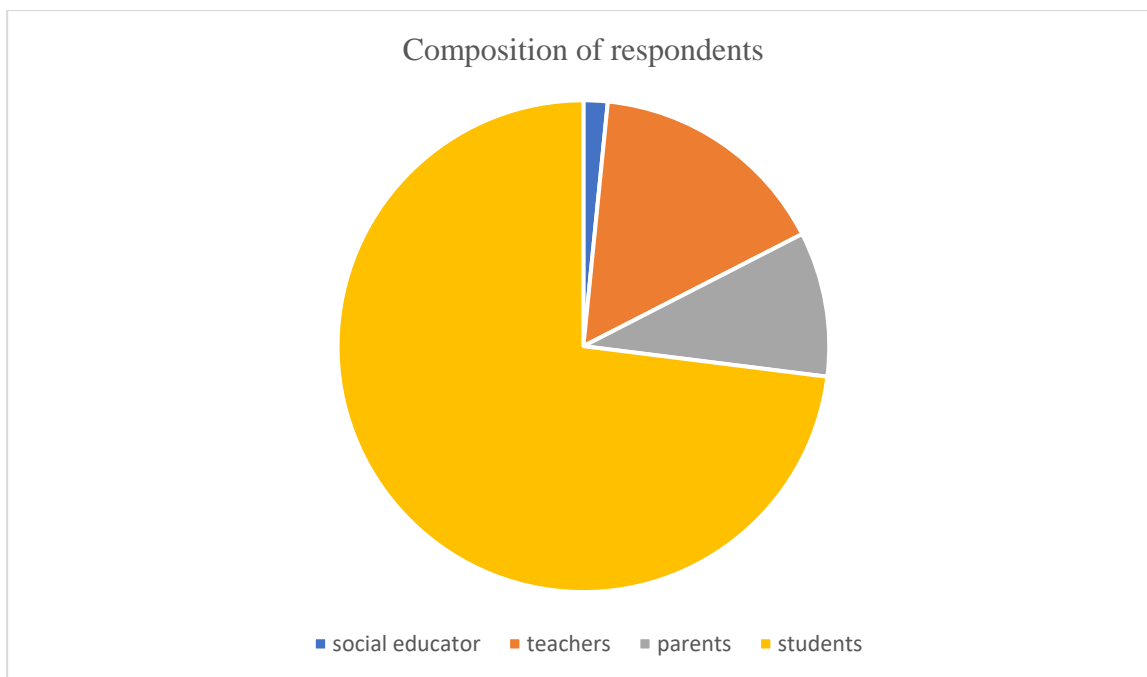
### Dividing the school by shifts

number of shifts	number of responses
1	21
2	25



### Composition of respondents

The total number of respondents who took part in the survey was 46 students, 1 social educator, 10 teacher educators and 6 parents.



**Data Collection**

1. Interviews: We held semi-structured interviews with the participants to understand their viewpoints on how parental migration influences children's education. The interviews were conducted in person, based on the availability of the participants.

2. Informed Consent: We received informed consent from every participant before every interview, which demonstrated that they voluntarily participated in the research. Participants received information about the aim of the investigation; they found that their responses were confidential and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

**Data Analysis:**

We analyzed the qualitative data received from the interviews, which used thematic analysis and is a widely recognized method for organizing themes within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis process consisted of the following steps:

1. **Data Familiarization:** All interview transcripts were thoroughly reviewed to become familiar with the content and context.
2. **Initial Coding:** We generated initial codes for text segments related to the impact of parental migration on children's education.
3. **Theme Generation:** We organized the codes into potential themes, considering patterns and connections in the data.
4. **Review and Refinement:** We reviewed, refined, and defined the themes with supporting evidence from the data.
5. **Data Interpretation:** We interpreted the identified themes in the light of the research objectives and existing literature.

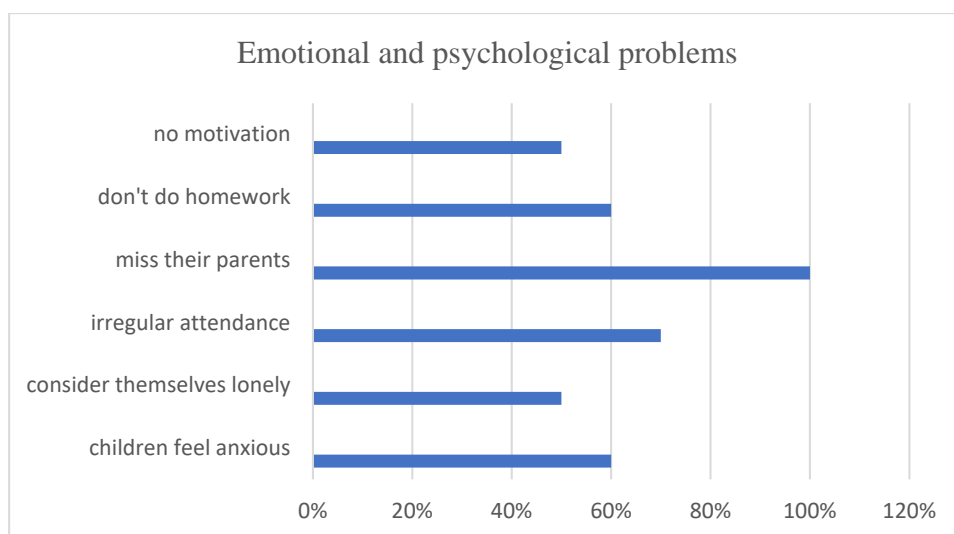
This research work strictly follows ethical principles throughout the research process. We received informed consent from all the participants, and we secured the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses.

## Findings

The research was conducted in Kyrgyzstan to study the effect of parental migration on the education of their children. The study embraced interviewing 10 teachers from grades 8, 10, and 11 at the Zh. Abdurasulov School in Uzgen district of Osh region . The teachers shared their experiences and perspectives on the issue, which were then analyzed. The study revealed four themes:

1. **Emotional and Psychological Challenges:** Teachers spoke about the emotional and psychological difficulties that migrants' children came across. These kids often were anxious, lonely, and abandoned; those issues negatively influenced their lives. One teacher remarked, "These kids often carry a heavy emotional burden. They miss their parents, and it affects their overall well-being."

### Impact of migration on students according to teachers



2. Academic Disruptions: The absence of parents during migration often brings academic disruptions for the children. Teachers reported cases of irregular attendance, incomplete tasks, and decreased motivation, which resulted in poor academic performance. According to one educator, "We notice that their academic performance drops when their parents are away. It's challenging to maintain consistency in their studies."

3. Need for Additional Support: Teachers pointed out the need for additional support structures for kids negatively impacted by their parental absence. They need counseling services at school to help children deal with the emotional problems they face. One teacher suggested, "We need a qualified counselor able to show emotional support to help them go through the challenges they face."

4. Influence on Peer Relationships: The kids' relationships with their peers become challenging due to parental absence. Teachers found out that some children had trouble in making friends, they were feeling different from their peers, and trying to fit in. "These kids often feel different from their peers. They struggle to fit in and build friendships," noted a teacher.

Though children face many problems, at the same time teachers revealed that left-behind kids could show resilience and coping mechanisms. They said that some kids actively participated in extracurricular activities, such as sports and clubs to deal with their emotions. "It's remarkable to see how some of these children find solace in their interests and talents," remarked a teacher.

Teachers emphasized the importance of maintaining parental involvement, even from a distance. They encouraged parents working abroad to stay connected with their children through regular communication. "When parents make an effort to stay in touch and show interest in their children's education, it makes a significant difference," shared an educator.

Educators have made some recommendations to better support kids affected by parental migration, based on recent findings. These recommendations focused on providing access to counseling services within their schools, organizing support groups for children just to share their experiences, offering flexibility in academic assignments and exams to accommodate students' circumstances, and raising awareness in the school about the problems that left-behind children faced.

These findings demonstrate the necessity for a comprehensive approach to address the educational problems caused by parental migration in Kyrgyzstan. They show that it is very important to provide not only academic support but also emotional and psychological help for these kids. Additionally, one can not underestimate the role of parents, even from a distance, in their children's education.

## Discussion

The research highlights the impact of migration of parents on the education of children in Kyrgyzstan from the perspective of educators. The research findings bring up a few key topics elicited from the interviews, which have great implications for the education system in the country.

One of the important findings is the emotional and psychological challenges experienced by kids left behind by their migrant parents. These issues, such as feelings of loneliness and abandonment, can negatively affect their educational progress. Therefore, it is crucial to provide emotional support entities such as counseling services or support groups within the school setting to help these children so that they can cope with their emotions.

Another issue is academic disruptions; they reflect irregular attendance and decreased motivation. These disruptions can be harmful to the educational well-being of these kids. Therefore, schools must be flexible in academic tasks and exams to take into account their unique circumstances.



Additionally, communication between teachers and parents can help reveal struggling children early and provide targeted corrections.

The research also reveals the challenges faced by left-behind children in establishing peer relationships. It is essential to create a welcoming atmosphere where these students can feel a sense of belonging and acceptance among their peers. To foster connections among students peer support programs and initiatives can also be explored.

Children can be encouraged by schools to take part in extracurricular activities that provide a sense of belonging, trust, and accomplishment, which alleviates the challenges. Sure, schools can play an important role in promoting and facilitating such activities. Additionally, it is crucially important for migrant parents to regularly communicate with their children, show interest in their academic progress, and extend emotional support. Teachers advocate for implementing counseling services, and flexible academic policies within schools to address the needs of these challenging kids. A more empathetic and supportive environment can be created by raising awareness among the school community about the challenges faced by left-behind children.

## Conclusion

The study advocates for the need for a comprehensive approach that includes emotional help, academic interventions, and active participation of parents. Noteworthy, children show resilience and coping mechanisms despite the challenges faced.

It is necessary for our policymakers and educators, as well as parents to collaborate and develop strategies to improve the educational well-being and inclusivity of left-behind children. Kyrgyzstan can make significant efforts towards providing a nurturing and supportive environment, by recognizing the unique needs and experiences of these students to foster their academic growth and emotional well-being.

This research highlights the broader understanding of the influence of parental migration on children's education providing practical insights for developing the educational support system in Kyrgyzstan. To address the challenges outlined in this study future research is necessary to explore specific interventions and policies, which lead to a brighter educational future for these children.

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