Study on the Development of Social Emotional Competence of Migrant Children in China from the Perspective of Micro-ecosystem

This article is based on ecological systems theory which studys the character of micro-ecosystems of migrant children who have developed good social and emotional competence in China. The study hypothesizes that the microsystems of migrant children with better social and emotional competence are different from those with poor competence. According to the ecological systems theory, the microsystems of migrant children include activities, roles, and relationships experienced in a direct environment such as home, schools, playgrounds, and so on.

This is a case study collected information by means of interviews and observations. We selected X school for our case study, which is a primary school located in rural-urban fringe zone in Dongli District, Tianjin. This school includes 74.5% of migrant children, ensuring us with enough research samples and value. First, we distributed a questionnaire to measure the whole school students’ social and emotional competence. Then by making use of extreme value, we selected 16 migrant children and divided them into two groups. In one group children’s social emotional ability is better, while in the other is poor. We selected information through interviews and observations and compared the ecological systems between the two groups.

The study find that the microcosmic systems of the two groups not only share similarities but also have significant differences. Two groups share similar family socioeconomic status and school conditions, both groups rarely go to the playground, which means, their physical environments are the same. The differences are mainly in the soft environment. As for migrant children with better social and emotional competence, in the family, their ideas and opinions are respected by their parents who have higher expectations for children and believe they can change the fate with effort. There is a good interaction in family and there are more family-based activities. In the school, their classmates are willing to make friends with them. They usually have some good friends and consider each other is important. They are active to communicate with
the teacher and classmates. They are appreciate and often encouraged by the teacher. But the situation is quite the opposite for migrant children with poor social and emotional competence.

From this study, we can draw following conclusions. Firstly, physical environments are the same, main differences lie in the soft environment, which include environmental atmosphere. Secondly, family environment and school environment of microsystem are different in two groups, in spite of the playground. Therefore, when physical environment appears temporarily hard to change, we should first try to change children’s soft environment of family and school, especially the school environment. The best way is to create a bond between school and family, which is more favorable for the growth of migrant children.