Volume 24 Issue 26
Originally issued as G5

Global Journal of human-social science: G
Linguistics & Education
Volume 24 Issue 5 Version 1.0 Year 2024
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

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GJHSS-G Classification: *LCC: LC3736.V4, LB1060*

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Abstract- The objective of this article is to explore ethical issues surrounding Venezuelan migrant students in Peru's education system by examining stereotypes against them, evaluating the system's impact on their well-being, and understanding equal opportunity provision aligned with non-discrimination principles. A systematic literature review methodology was employed, with data extracted and synthesized thematically into key areas like stereotypes, well-being impact, and equal opportunities. Results revealed persistent negative stereotypes contributing to marginalization, psychological issues stemming from discrimination with limited mental health support, and practical barriers like administrative hurdles and financial constraints impeding educational access. The article concludes that providing equal educational opportunities, combating discrimination, and ensuring access to mental health resources for Venezuelan students is essential to uphold their fundamental human rights and foster an inclusive society that values cultural diversity. Therefore, supporting their academic success is a vital investment in building a more equitable and culturally rich nation.

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I. Introduction

The Venezuelan migrant crisis has presented significant challenges for host countries like Peru in ensuring equitable access to fundamental rights and services, particularly in the realm of education. Despite the Peruvian government's efforts to receive and integrate Venezuelan children and adolescents, numerous barriers persist that impede their full enjoyment of the right to basic education. The high costs associated with education in Peru, coupled with socioeconomic inequalities, often leave migrant families struggling to secure school placements for their children, especially in the private sector, where they lack the financial means to afford tuition fees.

Alarmingly, in a report regarding the situation of the Venezuelan students in Peru by the Ministry of Education (MINEDU) conducted by Galvez & Villanueva (2022), it is pointed out that the school delay among Venezuelan students at the primary and secondary levels has been gradually increasing over the years. In 2016, “the percentage rose to 2.7% of the total number of Venezuelan students enrolled in regular basic education, and by the year 2022, the percentage increased to 4.6%” (p. 2). This alarming statistic is largely attributable to economic hardships faced by migrant families, as well as a lack of familiarity with the Peruvian educational system, which jointly contribute to impeding access to educational opportunities.

While the fundamental right to basic education for children and adolescents is established in international human rights frameworks, the realization of this right is often obstructed by external factors beyond the control of guardians or parents, such as limited school vacancies or accessibility constraints to specific educational programs. Underlying these practical barriers lies a more insidious challenge, the pervasive presence of stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination towards the Venezuelan migrant population within the Peruvian education system.

Prejudice, as defined by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2010) as a 'bias that devalues people due to their perceived membership in a social group” (p. 3), reinforces discriminatory attitudes and behaviors directed towards specific groups. These inherent prejudices often stem from entrenched social norms and cultural perceptions that tend to perpetuate and amplify stereotypes, further marginalizing certain groups within society. Consequently, prejudice and discrimination in educational environments can manifest in various forms, from subtle biases to overt acts of exclusion, ultimately undermining the fundamental principles of equity and inclusion that should govern the educational system. Negative stereotypes and distorted perceptions about certain groups of students can lead to discriminatory practices that limit their access to equitable educational opportunities and fair treatment within academic institutions.

In light of these multifaceted challenges, this report aims to explore the ethical issues surrounding the Venezuelan migrant student population within the Peruvian education system. Specifically, the objectives are threefold: first, to recognize and examine the stereotypes and prejudices that exist against Venezuelan students; second, to evaluate the impact of the education system on the overall well-being of these students; and third, to understand the extent to which the system ensures equal opportunities for Venezuelan students aligning with the fundamental principles of non-discrimination and the right to education.

II. Literature Review

Alcazar and Balarin (2020) conducted a study that aimed to analyze the educational inclusion of

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Venezuelan migrant children and adolescents in Peru, focusing on the challenges and barriers within the educational system. To achieve this objective, a qualitative analysis was undertaken based on data from the Educational Institution Management Support Information System, surveys, and interviews with various institutions. The results illuminated the existence of discrimination, stereotypes, and cultural integration difficulties that adversely impact the mental health and well-being of migrants. In conclusion, the study underscored the necessity of promoting awareness and inclusion in schools in order to cultivate an equitable and welcoming educational environment for all migrant students.

Building on this research, under the framework of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in collaboration with the Development Analysis Group (GRADE), Alcazar and Balarin (2021) conducted a report that aimed to analyze the inclusion of Venezuelan migrant children and adolescents in the Peruvian educational system through a mixed methodological approach, predominantly qualitative. The results highlighted the presence of stereotypes, discrimination and violence towards Venezuelan students in Peruvian schools, evidencing resistance in enrollment, xenophobia and lack of institutional responses. It was concluded that there is a need to promote an inclusive and respectful school environment to ensure equal opportunities and well-being for all migrant children.

In addition, Rueda (2021) carried out a study aimed at interpreting the discourse of Peruvian teachers regarding the school situation of Venezuelan migrant students, identifying expressions linked to the formation of subtle prejudice. A phenomenological approach was used, conducting in-depth interviews with primary and secondary school teachers. The results showed that teachers recognize strengths such as free public education but also limitations like the high demand for vacancies and a lack of knowledge about Venezuelan culture. As proposals, they suggested pre-orientation programs, teacher training, spaces to express Venezuelan culture, and the use of inclusive language. The study concludes that fostering interculturality is essential for the effective integration of Venezuelan students.

In line with these efforts, the Ministry of Education (MINEDU) (2021) elaborated a guide for directives called "Orientations for Community Management Oriented to Inclusion and Intercultural Dialogue of Populations in the II.EE." in order to promote the inclusion and respect for cultural diversity in educational institutions, with a focus on the Venezuelan migrant population in Peru. The guide highlights the challenges faced by Venezuelan children in the Peruvian educational system, such as curricular adaptation, stereotypes and discrimination. It also emphasizes the need to implement awareness-raising strategies, intercultural education and promotion of dialogue to ensure equal opportunities and an inclusive educational experience for all students, regardless of their origin.

From the Ministry of Education (MINEDU), Galvez and Villanueva (2022) prepared a report aimed at analyzing the main educational indicators of Venezuelan students for the period 2016-2022, corresponding to Regular Basic Education (EBR). This analysis is based on the information available in the educational statistical information systems of the Statistics Unit (UE) of the Ministry of Education. The report reveals an increase in school delay rates among Venezuelan students, posing challenges in terms of educational integration and system quality. It also shows that this growth trend will continue, highlighting the need for measures to support the educational process of this growing student population.

Moreover, Save the Children (2022) carried out a study which aimed to identify gaps in Peruvian educational policy, analyze the situation of these youth within the education system, and propose improvements for their inclusion. Through a methodology including surveys, focus groups, and interviews, challenges such as the lack of regulatory documentation and limited access to school vacancies are evident. The conclusions highlight the need to implement an integration and emotional support approach from educational centers to promote the development and social integration of this migrant population.

At a regional scale, Summers, Crist, and Streitwieser (2022) examined the educational responses to the Venezuelan migration crisis in Colombia, Peru, and Chile, analyzing the barriers that Venezuelan migrants faced in accessing education at all levels. Through a comparative analysis based on data, public policies, academic literature, and official sources, educational opportunities offered to Venezuelan migrants in these three recipient countries were explored. The results revealed numerous challenges, such as lack of documentation, limited spaces in schools, cultural barriers, and xenophobia.

Lastly, Yalta and Lovon (2023) undertook a study aimed at scrutinizing the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion within the Peruvian educational system concerning Venezuelan migrant students, by elucidating interpretative repertoires and linguistic as well as discursive strategies. In pursuit of this objective, the researchers methodologically analyzed journalistic texts and written discourses sourced from digital newspapers in Peru, which delineated the educational portrayal of Venezuelan migrants. The findings suggest that the Peruvian educational system lacks inclusivity towards Venezuelan migrants, with the discourse on inclusion primarily existing at the level of theoretical propositions rather than being manifest in concrete actions or practices.

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III. Methodology

This report applied a systematic review of the literature to examine the educational obstacles faced by Venezuelan students in the Peruvian context. The aim was to collect existing research on the educational challenges encountered by the Venezuelan migrant children and adolescents in Peruvian schools. The data extraction and synthesis process were conducted thematically, categorizing findings into key areas such as stereotypes and prejudices against Venezuelan students, the impact of the education system on their well-being, and the extent to which equal educational opportunities are ensured for this population, aligning with the principles of non-discrimination and the right to education. This thematic categorization allowed for the identification of common themes, patterns, and gaps in the existing literature, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the educational challenges faced by Venezuelan migrant students in Peru.

IV. Results

a) *Stereotypes and Exclusion of Venezuelan Students in the Peruvian Education System*

Traditionally, expressions of prejudice have been characterized by violent acts or overt attitudes of rejection towards the migrant group by the local population (Rueda, 2021). However, Venezuelan students in Peru face a more subtle form of discrimination through negative stereotypes and perceptions within the education system. The educational integration process of Venezuelan children and adolescents is influenced by prejudices and stereotypes, which often result in acts of discrimination, either openly or subtly (Alcazar and Balarin, 2021). As Yalta and Lovon (2023) state,

> the discrimination to which they are subjected due to the generalization of stereotypes is replicated in a Peruvian educational system that has many deficiencies. In addition, migrants who are educated may be perceived negatively or unwelcome, hindering their social inclusion (p. 224).

One manifestation of this discrimination is verbal aggression and stereotyping. Such behaviors create a hostile environment that negatively impacts the students' ability to integrate and succeed academically. According to Alcazar and Balarin's (2021) UNICEF/ GRADE report, Venezuelan families identified situations in which Venezuelan students were subjected to verbal aggressions and stereotypes, being qualified as

> troublemakers, dangerous, liars or thieves, and, in the case of women, they were even linked to an alleged promiscuity through sexist comments. They pointed out that this coincided with the stereotypes disseminated by the media through negative news about the Venezuelan population. (p. 100).

The same report revealed that a small number of adolescents and parents interviewed pointed out cases in which some teachers held prejudices toward migrants, using generalizations based on stereotypes. This resulted in Venezuelans being labeled as "thieves, criminals or dangerous people in front of their classmates" (Alcazar & Balarin, 2021, p. 103). These harmful labels contribute to an environment where discriminatory behaviors are normalized and perpetuated by both peers and authority figures within the educational system.

Negative perceptions of migrant students extend to the broader educational community. The Ministry of Education (MINEDU) (2021) has evidenced that members of the educational community perceive that migrant students could cause disorder and conflicts in the school. These perceptions can lead to exclusion and an unwillingness to admit Venezuelan students, with the purpose of preventing complications in school coexistence. In this sense, Venezuelan students are in a complicated situation: although the State seeks to integrate them into society, there are discourses that exclude them. These children and adolescents face discrimination not only because they are foreigners, but also because of stereotypes that suggest that they do not have the academic level or the necessary technology to study in Peruvian schools. (Yalta & Lovon, 2023).

The consequences of these stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes are significant. The systemic nature of this discrimination creates barriers that are both direct, such as exclusion from educational opportunities, and indirect, such as the internalization of negative stereotypes and the psychological toll of being marginalized. As reported by Save the Children (2022), "9.9% of the [Venezuelan] population is currently not enrolled in school due to exclusion or discrimination by a school director" (p. 35). Furthermore,

> From a total sample of 633 households, 48.8% of the minors under their care did not experience any type of abuse. Conversely, 23.5% reported experiencing verbal abuse, and 20.9% indicated that they did not know if the minors had experienced any type of abuse. Only 4.1% reported experiencing physical and verbal abuse. (p. 49).

Compounding these issues, some teachers believe that priority should be given to Peruvian applicants over Venezuelan ones when assigning school vacancies. This opinion is echoed by some parents and family members who have expressed a similar view (Rueda, 2021). This preference for Peruvian students over Venezuelan migrants further marginalizes and excludes Venezuelan children from the education system. This exclusion is not just a matter of resource allocation but also reflects deeper societal prejudices and xenophobic attitudes.

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b) Mental Health Challenges Among Venezuelan Students In Peruvian Schools

Venezuelan migrant students in Peru face significant challenges that negatively impact their overall well-being. One major issue is the discrimination and xenophobia they encounter in the education system, which takes a heavy psychological toll. This persistent discrimination not only undermines their sense of security and belonging but also exacerbates the stress and trauma associated with their migration experience. As Alcazar and Balarin (2021) note, "migrants face a heavy emotional burden due to the often traumatic migration process they have experienced" (p. 19). According to the Center for Psychosocial Care (CAPS) (2022), in its diagnosis of the mental health situation of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Lima and Tumbes, "community leaders identify that the main mental health issues in children and adolescents are depression (50%) and anxiety (44%), in addition to the presence of suicidal ideation in adolescents (13%)" (p. 18).

In this regard, this emotional burden, compounded by experiences such as intense bullying stemming from stereotypes and prejudice, can trigger episodes of distress and lead to school dropout, adversely affecting interpersonal relationships (Yalta & Lovon, 2023). In fact, Venezuelan migrant students in Peru face elevated dropout rates and a deficit in socioemotional support from schools (Summers et al., 2022). The discrimination, stereotypes, and cultural integration challenges in schools endanger the emotional well-being of these migrant children and adolescents. Furthermore, the lack of culturally sensitive mental health services and supportive counseling in schools exacerbates these challenges, leaving many students without essential coping mechanisms.

Beyond the mental and emotional strain, Venezuelan students in Peruvian schools also face practical barriers to their education. Many lack access to secure environments and personal safety to pursue their studies, forcing some to drop out and support their families by securing basic necessities instead (Summers et al., 2022). Venezuelan adolescents also feel constant pressure to prove they are different from the stereotypes attributed to them (Alcazar and Balarin, 2021). Therefore, the exclusion of migrant children and adolescents from the education system increases their risk of exposure to child labor situations, consequently affecting their physical and emotional well-being (Save the Children, 2022).

c) Lack of Equal Educational Opportunities for Venezuelan Students in Peru

The Venezuelan migrant population in Peru faces significant barriers to accessing equal educational opportunities. One major challenge is the lack of institutional programs and specific strategies implemented by teachers to address the academic gaps faced by Venezuelan students in adapting to the Peruvian educational system (Alcazar and Balarin, 2021). As highlighted in an interview conducted by Alcazar & Balarin (2020) with various educational institutions,

> the interviewed actors pointed out the lack of preparation of teachers and schools in general to deal with situations arising from the difficulties of integrating the migrant student population, the prejudices on the part of the national population, and, in general, the cultural and prior educational differences between the two groups (p. 19).

In addition, enrollment in Peruvian schools is hindered by various obstacles. These challenges stem from systemic issues, including bureaucratic hurdles in obtaining necessary documentation, limited access to consulate services, and financial constraints due to the substantial fees associated with enrollment. According to a study carried out by Summers et.al (2022) “70% of Venezuelan migrants in Peru identified accessing the formal education system as the largest barrier” (p. 102). Furthermore,

> Venezuelan migrants frequently encounter challenges in obtaining the required documentation for school enrollment, face restricted access to consulate services, and struggle to afford the substantial fees associated with enrollment. While Peruvian school administrators have the authority to use discretion to enable enrollment without documentation, this often leads to instances of discrimination and implementation of detrimental policies. (p. 102)

Furthermore, lack of information and timing of arrival exacerbates the difficulties in accessing educational opportunities. There is a gap between the school-age population in the country and the number of available vacancies in educational centers (Save the Children, 2022). Additionally, families often do not have the necessary information regarding school locations and enrollment processes (MINEDU, 2021).

Despite efforts toward inclusion, support mechanisms are not consistently implemented during enrollment by school directors, potentially due to lack of awareness, ineffective communication, or intentional discriminatory behavior. Moreover, as noted by Save the Children (2022),

> to date, there is no single enrollment system or comprehensive strategy oriented towards the migrant population. For this reason, parents or guardians must approach educational centers to request vacancies, but they are exposed to not securing spots, facing refusals, or encountering barriers related to the requirement of presenting documentation for the enrollment process. Additionally, they may even become victims of discriminatory acts by the personnel involved in the process (p.15).

This fragmented approach to enrollment not only undermines the rights of migrant children to access education but also perpetuates systemic inequalities within the education system. Without concerted efforts

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to address these structural barriers and ensure equitable access to education for all, the potential of migrant students will continue to be stifled, and broader societal inequalities will persist.

V. Discussion

The results expose deeply ingrained societal prejudices and stereotypes that pose formidable obstacles for Venezuelan migrant students seeking equitable access to education in Peru. These negative perceptions are not mere isolated incidents but rather symptomatic of systemic issues rooted in cultural biases, xenophobia, and a lack of intercultural understanding. The normalization of harmful stereotypes, such as labeling Venezuelan students as troublemakers, criminals, or academically deficient, perpetuates a vicious cycle of marginalization and exclusion that extends far beyond the educational realm. It reinforces broader societal inequalities, fuels discrimination, and perpetuates a narrative that dehumanizes and "others" this vulnerable population. Dismantling these deep-seated biases requires a multidimensional approach that challenges societal norms at all levels, implements comprehensive awareness and sensitivity training, and fosters a culture of acceptance, empathy, and respect for cultural diversity.

The psychological toll of persistent discrimination, coupled with the trauma of migration and displacement, creates a perfect storm of mental health challenges for Venezuelan students in Peru. The constant exposure to microaggressions, hostility, and the internalization of negative stereotypes can lead to a range of issues, including depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, post-traumatic stress disorder, and even suicidal ideation. These mental health concerns not only impair academic performance and educational attainment but also have far-reaching consequences for overall well-being, personal development, and social integration. Alarmingly, many Venezuelan children and adolescents lack access to culturally responsive mental health services and counseling within the school system, leaving them without the necessary coping mechanisms or avenues for emotional healing and support. Addressing this critical gap requires a comprehensive approach that integrates mental health support into the educational framework, including specialized training for educators, access to bilingual counseling services, and the promotion of inclusive, trauma-informed, and supportive school environments that foster a sense of belonging and emotional safety.

Practical barriers, such as administrative hurdles, limited school vacancies, and financial constraints, create significant obstacles that disproportionately impact Venezuelan students' access to educational opportunities. These challenges are not merely logistical inconveniences but rather reflect a broader systemic failure to prioritize and accommodate the needs of this vulnerable population. The fragmented and inconsistent approach to enrollment policies further exacerbates these issues, creating a confusing and opaque system that disadvantages migrant families, many of whom may lack familiarity with the local educational system or face language barriers. Overcoming these obstacles requires a concerted effort to streamline enrollment processes, increase school capacity through strategic resource allocation, and implement targeted financial assistance programs, such as tuition waivers or subsidies, to ensure that no child is denied access to education due to circumstantial factors beyond their control.

While efforts have been made to promote inclusion and intercultural dialogue within the Peruvian education system, the results suggest that these initiatives have yet to translate into widespread and tangible changes on the ground. The disconnect between policy and practice highlights the need for a more comprehensive and sustained approach that addresses the root causes of discrimination, inequity, and systemic barriers. Mere rhetoric or surface-level interventions are insufficient; genuine transformation requires a deep commitment to challenging societal norms, fostering intercultural understanding, and implementing systemic reforms that dismantle barriers and create an inclusive and supportive environment for all students, regardless of their background or circumstances. This may involve revising curriculum and teaching practices to incorporate culturally responsive pedagogy, providing ongoing professional development for educators, and establishing accountability measures to monitor and evaluate progress toward equity and inclusion goals.

Ensuring equal educational opportunities for Venezuelan migrant students is not merely a matter of policy or resource allocation; it is a moral and ethical imperative that reflects the fundamental values of inclusivity, equity, and human rights. By addressing the multidimensional challenges outlined in the results, the Peruvian education system has the opportunity to lead by example, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to social justice, non-discrimination principles, and the protection of the most vulnerable members of society. In doing so, it can create a ripple effect that extends far beyond the confines of the classroom, shaping a more inclusive, equitable, and socially cohesive society for generations to come. Ultimately, investing in the education and empowerment of migrant youth is an investment in the future prosperity, resilience, and cultural richness of the nation, as these students possess immense potential to contribute to the social, economic, and cultural fabric of their host communities.

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VI. Conclusions

One of the most pervasive issues is the persistence of negative stereotypes and prejudiced attitudes toward Venezuelan students within the educational community. The damaging stereotypes depicting Venezuelan children and adolescents as troublemakers, criminals, or academically inferior contribute to a climate of marginalization and exclusion. These biases not only erode students' feelings of belonging and self-esteem but also perpetuate discriminatory attitudes that hinder their access to equitable educational opportunities.

Moreover, the persistent experience of discrimination, compounded by the trauma of migration and displacement, can precipitate various psychological challenges, such as depression, anxiety, and even thoughts of suicide. A significant number of these students lack access to culturally sensitive mental health services and counseling within the school environment, depriving them of crucial support systems for coping and emotional recovery.

Furthermore, Venezuelan students face numerous practical obstacles hindering their access to education, including administrative complexities, restricted school capacity, and financial limitations. These barriers not only highlight systemic inequalities but also emphasize the urgency of targeted interventions and policy adjustments to guarantee equitable access to educational opportunities for every child, irrespective of their background or situation.

Despite efforts to foster inclusion and intercultural dialogue in the Peruvian education system, tangible changes on the ground remain elusive. There persists a gap between policy aspirations and practical implementation, underscoring the necessity for a holistic, sustained strategy to tackle the underlying causes of discrimination, inequity, and systemic obstacles.

Finally, by addressing the multidimensional challenges outlined in this study, the Peruvian education system has the opportunity to lead by example, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to social justice, non-discrimination principles, and the protection of the most vulnerable members of society. Supporting the education and empowerment of migrant youth is a commitment to fostering the future prosperity, resilience, and cultural tapestry of the nation. These students have significant potential to enrich the social, economic, and cultural dynamics of their host communities.

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