

Teachers' Perceptions of Pupils' Maladjustment Problems: A Psycho-social Perspective

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ABSTRACT The study explored teachers' perceptions of maladjustment problems manifested by pupils in South African primary schools using the psycho-social lens to view and interpret the phenomena. Thirty-two primary school educators participated in the study. The sample of educators was randomly selected from eight primary schools in the Central Johannesburg district. The survey design adopted combined both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. The study found that teachers who were not adequately trained to deal with maladjusted pupils did not endeavour to implement any interventions to alleviate them. It also revealed that not all maladjusted pupils cause disciplinary problems for teachers as some of the pupils who are unsocial, withdrawn, unhappy, depressed, fearful and nervous do attract very little attention to themselves. In examining the causes of pupil maladjustments the study found that these can be traced to some unfulfilled or thwarted psychosocial needs. Therefore the implementation of intervention strategies is likely to be more successful with adequate training and support for school personnel especially teachers.