Review of: "School instability in South Africa: a Systematic Review of Reflections and Experiences for a way forward"

Monica Radu[1]

1 Southeast Missouri State University

Significance of Topic: School Instability

Recognizing the impact of school instability on students, the paper sheds light on the importance of addressing this issue to promote positive educational experiences. By highlighting the potential barriers and challenges associated with school instability, the authors bring attention to the need for interventions and strategies that can enhance stability within educational settings. However, the authors' writing style exhibited some clarity issues that could benefit from improvement. There were instances where the arguments could have been more precise and coherent. In addition, it would be beneficial to make it explicit in the abstract that this manuscript is a literature review and that the authors derive recommendations to enhance school stability based on their analysis of existing literature.

Introduction

The introduction effectively establishes the context for the reader to grasp the significance of education beyond its primary function of facilitating learning. It elucidates the broader importance of education by highlighting its latent functions and societal implications. The introduction demonstrates how education extends beyond the mere acquisition of knowledge and skills. It delves into the deeper societal impacts of education, such as its role in socialization, cultural transmission, economic development, and social mobility. Through this approach, the introduction sets the stage for readers to recognize the multifaceted nature of education and understand its broader implications. By going beyond the manifest functions of education, the paper highlights the various ways in which education influences individuals, communities, and societies as a whole.

Theory

I found Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory to be highly relevant to this paper, as it offers a valuable framework for comprehending the impact of school instability on academic activities within educational settings. In the context of school instability and academic activities, Bronfenbrenner's theory allows for an examination of the various ecological systems that impact students' educational experiences. This includes analyzing the microsystem (individual interactions and relationships within the school), mesosystem (interactions between different microsystems, such as home and school), exosystem (influences from external settings, such as neighborhood or community), and macrosystem (broader cultural and societal influences). By utilizing this framework, the paper explores how school instability affects academic activities across these different systems. It enables an analysis of how changes in school environments, such as frequent

transitions or disruptions, can disrupt relationships, create instability in social networks, impact instructional quality, and influence student engagement and achievement.

School Stability

Under the heading "School Instability," I suggest that the authors provide a clearer and more precise definition of what they mean by this term. By providing a concise and explicit explanation of school instability, readers will have a better understanding of the concept being discussed in the paper. Additionally, it would be helpful for the authors to specify the scope and duration of school instability they are focusing on and if they are exploring school instability at the individual or aggregate level. Are they examining short-term disruptions, such as temporary school closures or truancy or long-term issues like chronic school transitions or expulsions?

Corporal Punishment in Schools

As someone from the United States, I have limited familiarity with the prevalence of corporal punishment in public school settings. Therefore, I would have appreciated a more comprehensive background on this topic to gain a better understanding of its prevalence and historical context within educational settings. For example, it would have been beneficial to receive additional information regarding the extent to which corporal punishment is practiced in schools, both nationally and globally. This could include statistics, studies, or reports highlighting the prevalence and regional variations of its use. Understanding the historical trajectory of corporal punishment in schools would provide valuable insights into its origins, changes over time, and the social, cultural, and legal factors that have influenced its acceptance or rejection.

Recommendations

In the recommendations section, it would have been helpful to establish a connection back to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. By explicitly linking this theoretical perspective to the proposed recommendations, the paper could highlight how adopting an ecological systems approach can pave the way for promoting greater school stability in the future. For example, the paper could emphasize the importance of considering the various levels of influence and interaction within the educational ecosystem. Recommendations could highlight the significance of interventions that address multiple systems, such as the microsystem (individual students, teachers, and school staff), mesosystem (interactions between school and home environments), exosystem (community and neighborhood factors), and macrosystem (broader policies and cultural influences).

Drawing on Bronfenbrenner's theory, the recommendations could propose strategies that promote collaboration and coordination among these different systems. This could involve initiatives aimed at enhancing communication and partnerships between schools and families, implementing supportive policies at the community level, and fostering a positive and inclusive school culture.

Summary

The authors' focus on the topic of school instability is important, as the manuscript addresses a significant concern that

can have adverse effects on students' educational outcomes. I appreciate the authors' attention to this topic and their proposed measures aimed at improving school stability. Moving forward, I highly recommend revising the manuscript for clarity, as it would significantly enhance its quality and effectiveness.