

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

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The paper provides an extremely interesting and insightful literature review on school instability in South Africa, leading to important recommendations. However, it is unclear from the report whether this qualifies as a systematic review. If a systematic review was indeed conducted, its methods (e.g. search terms and sources, screening and selection method, quality appraisal and data extraction, synthesis) and results (e.g. numbers and features of papers included) should be described following PRISMA reporting guidelines (Page et al., 2020) prior to the synthesis and briefly in the abstract. If the review was not conducted as a systematic review, this should be removed from the title and it should be acknowledged that the scientific value of the report is reduced, though remaining an interesting account of part of the existing literature.

It also appears that the review includes international policies and literature together with South African literature, once again suggesting that the report might be more than a general discussion rather than a systematic review of literature/policies specific to South Africa.

Additional comments:

- Several points or news items lack references (e.g. the last three sentences of the first paragraph, the first few of the third paragraph, the first paragraph under "Reported instances of community protests and robberies", the last few sentences of the "Inter-factional conflicts" paragraph, etc., and most evidently the whole section on Ubuntu-- see for example Bannink, Nalugya & van Hove, 2019, though not directly relevant to South Africa-- and the section on technological advancements)
- In Figure 1, the label "Sources of violence" does not seem appropriate for "Missed school because unsafe"
- Significance of differences and/or confidence intervals would be important to indicate, especially in Figure 3
- In Table 1, please indicate that the acronyms are for provinces