

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

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The paper 'School instability in South Africa: a Systematic Review of Reflections and Experiences for a way forward' deals with highly relevant and severe issue of school violence in KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa which disrupts process of education and implies overall school instability. The scope of the issue is primarily illustrated by deriving data from already published studies and by referring to different scholarly sources such as recommendations of teachers, as well as personal experiences of authors.

Despite the topic is indisputably socially relevant and also valuable subject matter of research, the paper exhibits severe flaws which should not be present in a case of stringent scientific analyses. It lacks clear focus, proper methodological design, consequent application of analytical protocols and clear empirical inputs. Rather than, for instance, conducting series of interviews with diverse types of relevant stakeholders, organizing focus groups, or implementing comprehensive analysis of available secondary data, the paper is anchored in 'a range of scholarly sources, personal experiences of authors, and recommendations provided by teachers in select KwaZulu-Natal schools' (p. 14). However, a reader is not provided with data on which sources, which teachers in which schools, i.e. we do not have insights of research methods, size of a sample, sampling procedure(s), and other information indispensable for any convincing scientific work. Leaning on personal experience and impressions without a strict logic of sampling, i.e. decision who the relevant respondents are, is very likely to be source of serious biases.

Furthermore, there is also a shortcoming of theoretical basis of the paper. Namely, although as the main theoretical ground Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is mentioned, in practice is not clearly demonstrated how particular propositions and elements of the theory is connected with empirical environment of schools in KwaZulu-Natal province.

The quality of language communication is satisfactory as the manuscript has proper dose of technical complexity while still being accessible to the wider audience. There is additional issue concerning bibliography since there are some references appearing in the list, which were not mentioned in the text (for instance, Abbot, Cobb, etc.), as well as the bibliography is not organized in alphabetical order.

Probably the most valuable feature of the paper is attempt to provide recommendations how to mitigate issue of school violence, but it seems that they are more based on general impressions of the authors than they are stemming out from consistent scientific analysis and/or results of the conveyed discussion. In fact, the overall intonation is way too much 'normative' than strictly 'analytical'. Regarding the latter, there are many claims which are not sufficiently elaborated

neither theoretically nor empirically, but are represented as propositions which perhaps should be taken for granted; here are some examples: 'The pedagogical and professional development emphasis, regardless of the discipline, should be rooted in the principles of Ubuntu' (p. 12); 'The adoption of Ubuntu by educational institutions results in the cultivation of a well-behaved learners population' (p. 12), etc.

In sum, the manuscript exhibits certain merits, but it urges for major revisions which should address above stated serious remarks, as well as overall coherence of the article should be elevated. The authors are encouraged to implement those extensive interventions.