



Individual Submission Summary

Rethinking the path to gender equality in education in Eastern and Southern African (ESAR) post-conflict countries: A systematic review

In Event: *Issues of gender in peace-education in conflict-affected regions in Africa*



Wed, March 25, 8:15 to 9:45am EDT (8:15 to 9:45am EDT), Hyatt Regency Miami, Floor: 3rd, Foster II
Proposal

Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was adopted by the United Nations member states in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that everyone enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. However, with eleven more years left to achieve these goals, recent evidence indicates that the progress is slow and therefore, 2030 might not be a reality (Adebayo, 2019; UNESCO, 2019). Furthermore, the gap in gender inequality is widening globally, negating the aims of the SDGs on education which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Therefore, it is important to examine approaches to gender inequality in education in line with the principles of the SDGs especially in some Eastern and Southern African countries (ESAR). ESAR countries present an interesting context because according to UNESCO (2019) global education monitoring report, many countries in the ESAR are very unlikely to achieve the Education 2030 agenda because of challenges which include inadequate educational funding, poor institutional facilities, volatile national economies, lack of quality teachers, and an absence of quality education. Hence, the purpose of this review was to comprehensively examine and synthesize current evidence that can be used to improve gender equality in education in ESAR post-conflict countries.

Significance of the study

Currently, there is a gap in the literature synthesizing gender equality in education in ESAR post-conflict countries. Given the potential importance of reducing gender equality in education, we aimed to build upon existing frameworks and research that (1) described the current state of gender equality in education in ESAR post-conflict countries and (2) described the interventions suggested or used to improve gender equality in ESAR post-conflict countries. The synthesis provided by this study will be useful to researchers, policy makers and concerned educational stakeholders working on gender inequality in post-conflict countries.

Research Questions

Our systematic review for this paper was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the current state of gender equality in education in ESAR post-conflict countries?

2. What are the interventions suggested or used to improve gender equality in ESAR post-conflict countries?

Methodology

This review employed a systematic examination and synthesis of the current literature describing gender equality in education in ESAR post-conflict countries. We used an integrated knowledge translation (Graham et al., 2006) approach for this systematic review with a multidisciplinary team including knowledge synthesis methodologists, and experienced researchers. We followed the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI Joanna Briggs Institute, 2014) approach for systematic reviews of both quantitative and qualitative research, PRISMA (the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & PRISMA Group, 2009) and ENTREQ (Enhancing Transparency in Reporting the Synthesis of Qualitative Research) (Tong, Flemming, McInnes, Oliver, & Craig, 2012). A comprehensive search strategy, using controlled vocabulary and keyword terms related to gender equality in education in ESAR was conducted in relevant databases, and grey literature sources (such as ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global database), World Bank and UNESCO database. 80 articles were reviewed for our preliminary study. Team of five reviewers independently screened titles and abstracts for inclusion, followed by the screening of full text of potential articles to determine final inclusion. Data were extracted independently, and cross-checked with second reviewers. The synthesis included quantitative summaries and qualitative analysis using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Through this process, we summarized the current state of evidence around gender equality in education in ESAR post-conflict countries as well as areas that require further research.

Theoretical Framework

We used liberal feminism as our theoretical framework for this study. This theory focuses on the idea that stereotyping and discrimination made women have less chance to be educated (Yokozeki, 1998). The theory proposed that women should have an equal educational opportunity with men. In relation to our study, we posited that there should be an equal educational opportunity for boys and girls in school.

Preliminary Findings

Study quality was assessed using standardized Joanna Briggs Institute critical appraisal tools. Eleven themes emerged from our review and they include teachers' roles in the structural transformation of societies, particularly in post-conflict contexts; Education as both a silent victim of a violent conflict and an instrument of conflict prevention and reconstruction in post-conflict societies; inadequate teaching and learning materials in addressing gender inequalities; an intergenerational lack of understanding of the importance of education; the lasting effects of gender inequality in education; disparities in access to education as a result of child marriage, pregnancy, child labour; initiatives by the government to reduce the gap on gender disparities; inadequate educational funding; poor institutional facilities; volatile national economies; and lack of quality teachers.

Discussion and Conclusion

In synthesizing the literature that described gender inequality in education in ESAR post-conflict countries, there is no doubt that gender inequality is as a result of many challenges faced within the educational system and conflicts in this region. These

challenges include the low value placed on education by the society, the perception that education is not significant and the lack of educated and qualified teachers. Although several ministries of education in ESAR have come up with targeted policy initiatives, such as alternative Basic Education programs, “Back to School” campaigns and accelerating the construction of classrooms and schools to foster quality education and reduce gender disparity; there is still a lot of work to be done, given that there is still a significant gender gap. It is important to extend the research further to acquire a deeper understanding of the benefits and deficiencies of various components needed to ensure that gender disparity is eradicated. As well as, conduct additional comparative studies to identify any effective approaches that have been implemented by the government of other regions in Africa.

Authors

Bodunrin Ifeoluwa Akinrinmade, Florida State University



Mame Diara Ndiaye, Cornell University



Ademola Alabi Akinrinola, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



Glory Rita Ovie, University of Calgary



Seun Adebayo, National University of Ireland Galway

