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Psychosocial impact of war on the social and emotional development of young learners – An integrative review of literature

Abstract

The psychological impacts of war on young learners' social and emotional development are examined in this integrated review. Not only can war and armed conflict have a profound influence on individual children, but they also negatively affect the entire family system. The difficulties associated with relocation, migration, and a to new conditions exacerbate the repercussions of war. Instead of growing and developing in a safe, predictable, emotionally and physically healthy environment, children are faced with war. Children who have witnessed or experienced conflict are more likely to face psychosocial difficulties, which could seriously jeopardise their social, emotional, cognitive, and physical growth. By combining the results of a wide range of studies, the review demonstrates how exposure to armed conflict significantly alters children's and teenagers' developmental trajectories. The results show that trauma-related problems are common, social behaviours have changed, and the foundations of education are being undermined. The review emphasises the necessity for targeted policies and practices that address the unique needs of war-affected youth, advocating for a holistic approach to foster resilience and recovery. Furthermore, the review underscores the importance of creating social interaction and collaborating with international organisations to offer peace education as a subject to bring social cohesiveness to a warring nation.

Keyword: *Psychosocial, war, Social, Emotional, Young learners, development.*

1. Introduction

Any violent armed conflict involving two or more organised groups, such as states, governments, tribes, or militias, is a war. Soldiers and mercenaries, recruited to fight for another nation, frequently participate in wars (Buheji & Buhejeji, 2024). Numerous factors can lead to war, such as the desire to control territory, colonising a less developed country for trade or extraction, or exploiting mineral resources like gold,

diamonds, or oil. War is a terrible and traumatic experience that typically results in severe, long-lasting psychological harm (Buheji & Buhejeji, 2024). Psychologists and counsellors have long been concerned about the impact of the experience on soldiers. Numerous countries, including Ukraine, Afghanistan, Palestine, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Libya, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Sri Lanka, and Cyprus, are experiencing invasions, civil conflicts, and significant population displacements because of unrest.

However, children are undoubtedly the most susceptible to the psychological, social and emotional turmoil that war has on their development, in addition to the physical atrocities, of all the unfortunate individuals caught in the terrible flow of conflict (Gray, 2020). The extent to which war has harmed or continues to harm the "collaterally damaged" children who are still alive cannot be adequately represented by statistics. One of the first things to suffer from social instability is that education is frequently interrupted. Particularly during the early years of life, there are in any case significant changes that occur quickly in the body, mind, and emotions (Limaj *et al.*, 2024). For children to meet significant developmental milestones in domains like language acquisition, executive functioning, perspective taking, emotion management, or social interaction, learning experiences are necessary throughout this period (Tlili *et al.*, 2024). Infants exposed to war conditions and civil unrest are at significant risk of experiencing adverse long-term effects because they may struggle with social-emotional and cognitive development if these crucial encounters are not made by them within the allotted time frames (Seff *et al.*, 2024). Children between six and eighteen are considered young learners in this study.

In 2022, about 43 million minors were forced to flee their homes globally (Mattelin *et al.*, 2024). For instance, children under the age of six make up one of the greatest categories of asylum applicants in Germany, accounting for 20.4% of all applications. Children are deeply and widely affected by war, which can have a variety of adverse effects. These include acute stress reactions, traumatic parent-child separation, particularly if one of the parents is in the armed forces, an increased risk of mental health issues, and fear for their safety and the safety of those they love. Children thus encounter war instead of the safe, predictable, emotionally and physically healthy environment in which they should be growing and developing (Aburn *et al.*., 2016)

The detrimental effects of forced relocation and related risk factors on the mental health and development of older children and adolescents have been extensively studied (Knapcyzk *et al.*, 2024). However, only one systematic review examined forced relocation's effects on preschool-aged children. Although research on young, relocated children has shown significant rates of somatic complaints, disrupted play, sleep issues, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), we are unaware of any studies on the population's developmental results. It is critical to comprehend how war affects young children's development since developmental delays are thought to be a sign of future health and academic issues (Limaj *et al.*, 2024). Consequently, this integrated literature review explored the psychosocial impacts of war on young learners' (6 to 18) social and emotional development. The research question that guides the study is illustrated below.

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2. Research question

This study addressed the following research question:

> *What psychosocial impact does war have on young learners' social and emotional development?*

3. Methodology

To investigate the psychosocial impact of war on young learners' social and emotional development, we employed an integrative review of the literature. Search engines such as the online public access catalogue, Google Scholar, Web of Science, Psych-INFO, Science Direct, Academic Search Elite/EBSCO, Blackwell Synergy, and the Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC) were used to find the literature. The secondary data search was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, and research reports published between 2000 and 2024. Publications that discussed the psychosocial effects of war on the social and emotional growth of young learners in various nations worldwide were found using this online database system. The secondary data was subjected to thematic analysis to provide themes considered for this investigation. To answer the research question, we carefully arranged and discussed the keywords we extracted from the literature about the psychosocial impact of war on the social and emotional development of young learners. The meaning of a theme is the strongest match, subject, concept, thought or topic. An integrative literature review is a distinctive form of research that uses existing literature to create new information (Torraco, 2016). A project's thematic review component aims to improve knowledge of stakeholder behaviour and explore what aspects of present procedures are effective and ineffective (Sirelius, Feutrie, & Werquin, 2005). Therefore, a thematic review was a critical appraisal or formal assessment of a topic or a concept.

4. Findings

4.1 The psychological impact of war on the social and emotional development of young learners

The themes that emerged from the thematic review on the psychological impact of war on young learners' social and emotional development are discussed next.

Muthanna, Almahfali and Haider (2022) reported that the war in Yeman had a substantial, negative impact on education, their findings of which highlighted the ousting and one-sidedness, the use of children as fighters for the future, the dispute of identities among children, the harm of children's mental health, the unfair treatment of education for financial benefits, the standardisation of negative behaviours and the ruining of teachers' dignity. In Ukraine, Davydova *et al.* (2023) reported on the level of anxiety that presently affects the emotional background of adolescents, the relationship between it and the need for communication with peers, and the impact of stress factors on adolescents' relationships with parents. Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022 in a significant escalation of the Russo-Ukrainian war, which had started in 2014. The war is still ongoing to the present day. The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) states that the war in Ukraine has led to devastating consequences for children on a scale and pace not seen since World War II (Topuzov and Lokshyna, 2022). These authors further highlight that an average of over

five children is killed or injured every day in Ukraine and that one in ten schools has been damaged or destroyed. These statistics reflect the extent to which young learners become affected psychologically and socially in war-torn countries.

In their discussion of foreign nationals from the Middle East and North Africa, Stark *et al.* (2021) note that research highlighted schools' critical role in assisting immigrant youth accommodations and promoting their mental, emotional, and social wellbeing. Regarding the assessment of the mental stability of teenagers from the Middle East and North Africa who were born in the United States and those who were born abroad (Seff, *et al.*.,, 2021; Stark, *et al.*, 2021), findings suggest that teenagers may represent a vulnerable group needing targeted and culturally responsive interventions to de-stigmatise mental health and psychosocial wellbeing, boost existing sources of resilience, and encourage help-seeking behaviours. Seff, *et al.* (2021) also drew attention to the paucity of research evaluating the effects of relocation, resettlement, and prejudice on the wellbeing of teenage refugees placed in the United States. Key outcomes for the 176 adolescents surveyed by Seff, *et al.* (2021) incorporated ambition, acts of kindness, compassion and helping behaviours, ability to withstand adversity and bounce back from difficult life events, dejection, worry and where students feel valued, respected, and connected at school. The quantitative survey involving groups of students, caregiver interviews, and qualitative in-depth interviews with people who know what is going on in the community and public or private agency from which Division of Aging and Adult services funded services are authorised were among the methods used to obtain qualitative data, according to Seff, *et al.* (2021). The constant comparative approach and thematic analysis were used to analyse the interview transcripts. To sum up, Seff, *et al.*'s (2021) study emphasised the benefits of friendships and peer-based mentor-ships between American and international students who share common values, beliefs, behaviours, and customs, the significance of thoughts, feelings, and actions curriculum that focuses on the knowledge and skills that value diversity and understand and respond to differences among cultures in educational institutions and the role that gender differences play in the blending of cultures.

Based on the reviewed literature above, it is evident that one of the significant effects of war on learners is that it negatively affects children's mental health. Thus, learners' overall psychological, emotional, and social wellbeing is negatively affected. Thus, this finding implies that there is a need to develop in learners' strategies of resilience so that they can withstand adversity and bounce back from difficult life events, dejection, worry and where students feel valued, respected, and connected at school. Therefore, the study argues that communities should embrace interventions aimed at developing knowledge and skills in learners, which would assist them to gain resilience and overcome adversity.

4.2 The detrimental effects of war on learners' family life

In addition to having a significant negative influence on individual children, war and armed conflict also negatively damage the entire family system. The challenges associated with displacement, flight, migration, and resettlement to new environments exacerbate the repercussions of war (Denov & Shevell, 2019). These procedures may disrupt the systems, resources, and community ties that assist and safeguard families and children. Ultimately, children, including their great-grandchildren, are impacted by this for the remainder of their lives.

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According to Bennouna and colleagues (2019), schools are essential in helping foreign nationals in the United States overcome adjustment difficulties. The persistent high influx of these families fleeing armed conflict worldwide, requires an inclusive plan of action for educational institutions, programmes aimed at improving the emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing of teenagers, compulsory immigration of asylum-seekers (Bennouna *et al.* 2019). The investigation into programmes in developed countries implemented between 2000 and 2019 reported elements influencing how programme activities were implemented and accepted. The study also showed that intercultural interchange, community access, protective attention, constraints on the number of students that can be served within a school building and efficiency were among recurring issues that the evaluated programmes had to deal with. Therefore, knowledge gained from these initiatives suggest many steps that can be taken to solve these issues, such as customising services to each individual and their circumstances, implementing a range of security measures that consider the various levels of social interaction that young people have in their communities, and fostering trust through collaborative efforts with schools, communities, and students.

In South Africa, Theron (2023) conducted a narrative type of knowledge synthesis based on verifiable experience rather than theory to identify and synthesise an existing body of literature on the strength of young immigrant youths living in sub-Saharan Africa. This approach aimed to identify what supports the resilience of these individuals, as well as what may be unique about African routes of children and adolescents' capacity to withstand or recover quickly from difficulties. Research indicates that the social-ecological process underlying the pliability of young learners in sub-Saharan Africa is intricate, involving personal, relational, institutional, and societal skills that enable one to face difficult situations and maintain good mental health, in addition to a disregard for practices or values that may limit resilience. Theron's (2023) findings corroborate two ideas that suggest mental stability of sub-Saharan youths' resilience, modification towards African culture, and that emotionally safe ways support behaviour and development. Burde and colleagues (2015) conducted another thorough analysis of data in the literature to determine which treatments support refugee youths regarding educational access, learning equality, and wellbeing. The authors' objectives are as follows: to evaluate the volume and quality of the available evidence of successful programmes and practices in crisis-affected nations and regions; to find pertinent and strong verification of successful mediation among developing and industrialised nations, and to create psychologically abstract representations of how tasks should be carried out that offer strategies for completing given tasks and natural or established processes by which something occurs to test in subsequent studies (Burde, *et al.* 2015).

Furthermore, Burde, *et al.* (2015) found a lack of compelling evidence, many well-designed observational designs, access, quality, wellbeing, gender analysis, children with disabilities and refugees. In their list of recommendations, the authors recommended funding for an accurate investigation into the learning and wellbeing of refugee youths, including those with disabilities (Burde *et al.* 2015). They also recommended funding for organising studies on lowering the likelihood of disaster in countries with a low standard of living and affected by disputes, as well as continuing to fund well-managed and well-structured community-based education (CBE) and early childhood programmes. Finally, research on these programmes will help identify differences in policies for children from birth to seven years.

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From the reviewed literature above, it can be argued that the detrimental effects of war on learners' family life include challenges of displacement, migration, and resettlement to new physical and social environments that pose adjustment challenges to the persons affected. Thus, resettlements lead to family adjustment problems because of disrupted family systems and the loss of interpersonal support among the members. Families that have faced disruptions leading to migration have resulted in poor physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. Thus, the migrations negatively disrupt the family support systems, including resources, social support and community ties that assist and safeguard families and children. Eventually, children are impacted by displacement for the remainder of their lives, including their great-grandchildren.

4.3 How schools provide positive psychosocial impact and reduce emotional hazards among young people in crises

Literature indicates that there are existing psychosocial support systems that schools could adopt to assist learners affected by wars and other adversities. For example, Tatebe and Mutch (2015) examined various international and independent individuals in New Zealand and various aspects of education-related disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities. Several research gaps regarding education's role in disaster risk reduction were also identified, along with familiar themes found throughout the multi-disciplinary literature. These findings highlight the difficulty of developing emergency management organisations to plan and co-ordinate response, installing warning systems, identifying evacuation routes and preparing emergency supplies and viewpoints it represents. This illustrates how crucial education is for young people learning in conflict areas.

Pacheco, *et al.* (2022) agree with Tatebe and Mutch (2015) that youths are disproportionately affected by natural catastrophes, and that schools are essential to ensuring students' wellbeing. Furthermore, for populations more susceptible to disasters, it might be crucial to develop resilience skills and for schools to consider the psychological impact on students. In their study from 2022, Pacheco, *et al.* provide an evidence-based method for explaining to children and youth how schools can have a positive psychosocial impact in crises. By examining how educational settings are conceived, for example, as a building, for its various roles that structure interaction and behaviour, and as a location that enables the development of young personalities into rightful and competent society members, the authors' paper helped readers better grasp how educational settings reduce emotional hazards among youths. These insights merely highlight the significance of schools in fostering resilience of schools in fostering resilience and helping students in the event of natural catastrophes and armed conflicts. Young learners' effective development and mental health outcomes can be significantly impacted when they endure severe, upsetting events, family financial challenges, abuse and neglect, and exposure to violence.

According to Michalek, *et al.* (2021), therapies that enhance mental health and socio-emotional development are crucial to lessen these consequences. Furthermore, Michalek, *et al.* (2021) argue that 120 million people worldwide have been forcibly relocated, part of whom are refugee children under 18 years. According to conflict journalism, refugee children are remarkably exposed to horrific wartime experiences, which can result in difficult and complex physical and mental health problems. Furthermore, children who are refugees or

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have experienced trauma, displacement, or poverty more seemingly experience mental stress. These children also frequently exhibit higher levels of psychological distress and behavioural issues, and they are more likely than non-refugee children to develop chronic psychopathology, a scientific study of mental illness (Michalek, *et al.*, 2021).

Nyarko (2022) hypothesised that teenagers in Finland experience a variety of pressures, some of which are violent, and which, when combined with rapid developmental changes, leave them susceptible to mental health issues like anxiety or depression. On one hand, the qualitative findings by Nyarko (2022) produced three negative themes, namely, clear, terrible memories, impoverishment of age-appropriate opportunities and self-harm and destructive behaviour, as well as positive themes, namely, increased awareness of life, compassion for life and identification with those suffering. On the other hand, results of the quantitative data reported that a high prevalence of everyday stressful life events was associated with increased levels of depressive symptoms and psychological distress. The results of Nyarko's (2022) study also reported on death and trauma during armed conflicts.

Buheji and Buheji (2024) report on the Gaza conflict and highlight the destruction of infrastructure, which can create a catastrophic collapse in the social interrelated structure, education and healthcare system. Buheji and Buhejeji's (2024) study provides a complete picture of reducing signs of learning and developing more slowly than other children same age. It provides constructive suggestions on how to assist children in war zones. Several efforts have been made to stop the war in Gaza, but it seems the Israeli leaders are not heeding global intervention. However, as of late, and according to Alterman of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (2025), a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas was reached on 17 January 2025, and the agreement was confirmed by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office. It has also been confirmed that the two parties have started to exchange hostages or prisoners of war.

Based on the reviewed literature above, it can be argued that schools could provide psychosocial support to learners affected by war in various ways. First, schools should play a significant role in boosting resilience aimed at helping learners affected by natural catastrophes and armed conflicts. This would comprise psychosocial support mechanisms with techniques enabling learners to develop strong interpersonal skills to help them engage in help-seeking behaviours. In addition, schools could provide structured interaction and behaviour that enable the development of young personalities into rightful and competent society members. Finally, school managers could develop emergency management organisations to plan and co-ordinate response, install warning systems, identify evacuation routes and prepare emergency supplies in case of emergencies.

4.4 The social impact of war on the social and emotional development of young learners

Nearly all countries in the world have ratified the "United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child" (UNCRC), which clarifies children's fundamental rights, including the rights to life, health, and development (UNICEF, 2019). It forbids discrimination and requires the interests of children to be protected. The UNCRC and an Optional Protocol addressing the "Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts" were later adopted by the UN Security Council (Bürgin *et al.*, 2022). This treaty recognises that long-term peace, security, and development are jeopardised when violence against children occurs in such circumstances.

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Consequently, it is believed that subjecting children to war and armed violence violates their fundamental human rights and may have persisting effects on their wellbeing, and capacity for growth from both developmental and psycho pathological perspectives (Bürgin *et al.*, 2022). The following themes emerged from a literature review on the social impact on young learners' development.

4.5 Experiencing an unstable environment and emotional trauma

In a study done in Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University, IOM (2014) revealed that young people's future uncertainty has been made worse by the developing crises in many countries, especially those that have experienced wars in the Middle East. As a result of unemployment and poverty, these young people are now more likely to migrate to stable European countries in search of fresh chances (IOM, 2014). According to IOM (2014), conflicts have worsened the problems that young people in the Middle East face. Even before the conflicts, youth in this area faced significant economic and social challenges, and many governments did not implement efficient social and youth programmes to deal with these concerns. Alotaibi (2021) emphasise that the Middle East, young people's concerns increased on many levels with the start of armed conflicts and their engagement in these wars, leading to grave human rights violations such as brutality and torture. This circumstance makes young Middle Easterners more susceptible to an unclear future (Snoubar & Hawal, 2015). In conflict-affected nations, young people face significant challenges in seeing a stable future due to high rates of unemployment and deteriorating conditions brought on by war (Messkoub, 2008).

Alotaibi (2021) emphasises that youth immigrants from war areas therefore have great expectations for a better future in their new nations; however, because of their experiences in armed conflict contexts, these young people have many difficulties in their new cultures, which may have a detrimental effect on their assimilation. Furthermore, according to Alotaibi (2021), a loss in mental health may result from this group's lack of social support. Because these services and psychosocial support programmes have a substantial impact on the psychological and social wellbeing of young people from war and conflict zones, host communities must offer mental health support services (Stark *et al.*, 2020). These services are essential in helping immigrant adolescents maintain their mental health and psychosocial wellbeing, shaping their prospects for the future (Stark *et al.*, 2021). Young people growing up in armed conflict zones have different perspectives on the future than those who have grown up in safe and stable circumstances, mainly because of wars and armed conflicts and the long-term harm they cause to people and society. Their mental health may be impacted by this disparity, which can also make adjusting to new societies difficult (Alotaibi, 2021). These services are essential in helping immigrant adolescents maintain their mental health and psychosocial wellbeing, shaping their prospects for the future (Stark *et al.*, 2021).

4.6 Persistent discrimination

Youth from war and conflict zones deal with a variety of issues, like racial discrimination in their new country, that call for community-level solutions. As an example, particularly in the wake of the 11 September attacks, young people from the Middle East and North Africa have been subjected to prejudice and harassment (Sutton, 2002). Young people are impacted by wars and conflicts in a variety of ways, both at home and in the host nations where they seek safety, whether as international students or asylum seekers. Professional interventions may be necessary to help this vulnerable population adjust to new societies and make a promising

future due to the combination of continuous conflicts in their countries of origin and concerns in the host country that may worsen their anxiety about the future. Students experiencing future anxiety feel tense and afraid about things that can happen in the future, which can endanger them in social, professional, academic, and financial spheres (Zaleski, 1996).

Additionally, worry fuels pessimism in pupils, which in turn causes recurrent behaviours like emotional instability, introversion, reluctance, and uncertainty. These actions harm students' attitudes and feelings, leading to a depressed mood and self-satisfaction (Alshaer & Kaviani, 2019). However, Alotaibi (2021) argues that several problems that youth from these conflicted areas face, like racial prejudice in their host communities, call for community-level responses. Particularly since the 11 September attacks, young people from the Middle East and North Africa have experienced bigotry and harassment (Sutton, 2002). Young learners' anxiety about the future may worsen due to their home countries' continuous hostilities and difficulties in their new country. Professional assistance is required in this case to assist these vulnerable youth in adjusting and making constructive plans in the new culture for the future.

4.7 The mental wellbeing of young children during and after war

Children who have experience of war are at greater risk of developing depression, anxiety, PTSD, and uncultured behaviours (Betancourt *et al.* 2013). Research from the past few years suggests that gender differences exist in psychological effects of combat trauma (Annan *et al.*, 2011). Fernando *et al.* (2010) affirm that the environment is crucial in helping them adjust psychologically, challenging the idea that war events exclusively cause misery. According to Fernando *et al.* (2010), the evaluations of psychological outcomes among communities affected by conflict are made worse by instabilities of the political environment and poverty has historically received less attention. There is a substantial worldwide impact of migration and war on the mental health of young learners with PTSD and depression, reflecting high rates in conflict-affected nations (Morina *et al.*, 2020). The youth's mental health is further endangered by forced migration and flight, especially for unaccompanied minors who have been separated from their parents (World Health Organization, 2018). Armed conflicts have a significant financial impact on top of their adverse effects on mental and physical health. They also deteriorate fundamental social services, deepen existing rifts within communities, collapse local economies, interrupt education, and limit access to education (Alexander *et al.*, 2010). All in all, there are many hazards associated with war, living in conflict areas, fleeing, and being forced to migrate that can affect a young person's development, physically, mentally, and socially, for the rest of their life (Bürgin *et al.*, 2022).

A study done in New York on high-income countries reveals that the youth impacted by wars and conflicts face extreme challenges that may give rise to the escalated risk of negative mental health and psychosocial wellness, even after some time of being settled in a new country (Fazel *et al*., 2012). According to the same study, the difficulties linked to wars and conflicts may give rise to several difficulties that girls and boys face, including physical and sexual violence, the loss of parents, being conscripted into armed forces, and daily stressors, such as poverty and malnutrition (Benounna *et al.*., 2020). These young people frequently experience uncertainty until their protection status is determined when they apply for asylum in new nations. Many endure imprisonment, forced removal, harassing interrogation, re-traumatising experiences, and family separation during this period (Robjant *et al.*, 2009). Furthermore, education is frequently interrupted as young people are forced to migrate, depriving them of

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their essential sources of resilience and developed health (Dooley, 2017). In the same study, Ellis *et al.* (2010), reiterate that youth refugees consistently underutilise treatments for mental health in their new nations. For various reasons, including transportation problems and lack of knowledge about the educational system, carers find it hard to meet their children's health and education needs (Mendenhall *et al.*, 2017; Short & Boyson, 2012). Furthermore, Thorpe (2017) argues that it is frequently the case that educational and medical establishments lack the funding and linguistic and cultural knowledge required to help students from nations afflicted by violence effectively.

According to Fazel and Betancourt (2017), many young refugees and asylum seekers can be assimilated into their new lives despite many obstacles. Their social settings at various levels provide a variety of promotive and protective elements that assist or lessen the hazards individuals encounter (Fazel & Betancourt, 2017). Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Boothby *et al.* (2006) add that young, forced migrants frequently find strength in their loved ones, society, and the architecture of the environment they find themselves in, even in the absence of individual elements like developmental stage and coping methods. If given the necessary resources and preparation, schools can offer teenagers a secure, welcoming community (Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2007; Trentacosta *et al.*., 2016). Through student engagement, supportive education systems foster school belonging. Academics have increasingly used Bioecological Theory to understand this process (Allen *et al.*, 2018; Fazel & Betancourt, 2017). Similarly, schools can also act as entry sites for the much-needed MHPSS services.

In a study done in Sierra Leone, Fernando (2010) reveals that a combination of everyday pressures and traumatic experiences could be associated with the development of internalising and externalising symptoms in children and adolescents raised in demanding situations. According to Mels *et al.* (2010), adolescents from Eastern Congo who were internally displaced also reported higher rates of exposure to trauma, increased susceptibility to more daily stressors like insecurity than those from non-displaced groups or those who had returned home. Interestingly, Mels *et al.*, (2010) compared to the non-displaced group in Sierra Leone, those who had returned home did not exhibit statistically significant variations in everyday stressors, suggesting that continued insecurity and relocation had a considerable influence. Compared to the current study, Mels *et al.* (2010) identified a larger relationship between traumatic events plus everyday stressors, post-traumatic stress reactions, and internalising symptoms. This finding may be explained by the displaced group's higher levels of continuous insecurity. Lustig *et al.* (2004) posit that these findings are similar to previous research that highlights the important influence of stresses caused by resettlement stresses on refugee children's psychological outcomes in high-income countries. Howard & Hodes (2000) add that it is commonly known that youth from backgrounds of conflict and war are more likely to experience psychological difficulties due to various factors in the community. Fazel *et al.* (2012) posit that adjustment psychology of the resettled young people in high-income and low-income countries is significantly predicted by socioeconomic conditions, family health and cohesion, community integration, and access to education following resettlement.

In a study done in Syria and Iraq, Sheridan and McLaughlin (2014) revealed that exposure to conflict was linked with consistently more severe anxiety symptoms. This association was masked by the anxiety symptoms' generally steady trajectory across the board for the group. According to the same study, Sheridan and McLaughlin (2014) posit that it is likely that

experiencing war increases a person's susceptibility to anxiety in reaction to future stresses. This research emphasises how crucial it is to acknowledge anxiety as a typical and enduring consequence in young refugees as opposed to concentrating just on PTSD. This is important since anxiety in early childhood can have a substantial impact on an individual's development and functioning over the long term (Kendall *et al.*, 2004).

5. Conclusion and implications

This integrative review aimed to analyse the psychosocial impact of war on young learners' social and emotional development. The findings from the review indicate that children and teenagers who are exposed to armed conflict are more likely to experience a variety of trauma-related disorders, such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD. These young students frequently display disturbed interpersonal relationships, heightened hostility, and withdrawal in social interactions, hindering their capacity to build strong social bonds. In terms of education, the unpredictability and trauma brought on by conflict can cause severe learning disabilities and disengagement from learning. The review also highlights the critical role of protective factors such as strong family bonds, community support, and effective educational interventions in mitigating these adverse effects. In addition, this review indicates that environments that offer consistency, safety, and emotional support greatly enhance resilience and recovery.

The findings of this review revealed how urgent policies for the safety and assistance of young learners in conflict areas are needed. This entails offering psychological support services, safe learning environments, and tools to help families maintain stability and normality. Teachers should receive training on identifying and resolving learners' emotional distress and trauma symptoms. Schools use trauma-informed teaching strategies that foster an environment of compassion and understanding. Social-emotional learning (SEL) components that assist children in developing resilience, empathy, and coping mechanisms should be incorporated into curriculum creation. For young learners, the development of community networks and support systems can be a vital source of social and emotional support. The main goals of community initiatives should be to strengthen people's sense of security and belonging. Family-centred interventions are essential because they provide parents and other carers with the tools they need to meet the emotional needs of their children.

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