

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14579944>

LEARNER SAFETY AT RISK: THE IMPACT OF UNQUALIFIED MATHEMATICS TEACHERS IN SOUTH AFRICA – A CRITICAL REVIEW (2014-2024)

Shakespear M. Chiphambo

schiphambo@wsu.ac.za

Department of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education

Faculty of Education

Walter Sisulu University, **SOUTH AFRICA**

ABSTRACT

This comprehensive review aims to analyse the challenges and implications of placing learners under the supervision of teachers without mathematics qualifications, as highlighted in the literature from 2014 to 2024. The study examined the impact on learner performance, classroom management and safety, teacher confidence and efficacy, institutional policies and recruitment practices, and the role of professional development as a mitigation strategy. This study adopted a comprehensive literature review approach, synthesising findings from peer-reviewed publications between 2014 and 2024 to provide a holistic understanding of the issues surrounding unqualified mathematics teachers and their influence on learners' academic outcomes. The analysis reveals that teachers without formal mathematics qualifications often struggle to effectively deliver instruction, foster conceptual understanding, and maintain a safe and nurturing learning environment. This, in turn, can lead to poorer academic performance and a widening achievement gap between learners taught by qualified and unqualified teachers. The literature also highlights unqualified teachers' low confidence and self-efficacy challenges, which can hinder their ability to employ effective instructional strategies and engage learners actively. Institutional policies and hiring practices prioritising recruiting and retaining qualified mathematics teachers are crucial in addressing these systemic issues. The review further emphasises the importance of professional development and mentorship programmes as a key strategy to mitigate the challenges posed by unqualified mathematics teachers. These initiatives can help enhance teachers' content knowledge, pedagogical skills, and classroom management capabilities, ultimately improving learner outcomes. The findings of this study provide valuable insights for policymakers, educational institutions, and teacher education programmers in developing comprehensive strategies to address the challenges associated with the placement of unqualified mathematics teachers and ensure the academic well-being and safety of learners.

Keywords: Learners, performance, qualifications, teachers.