SUMMARY

Student, teacher, school, and environmental characteristics constitute the fundamental building blocks of a nation’s education system. Knowledge about these characteristics can help stakeholders in a nation’s education system to improve its quality. However, understanding how these characteristics impact upon an education system remains a major challenge in many countries.

This study developed a national educational assessment model capable of generating knowledge about student, teacher, school, and contextual characteristics of the Bhutanese education system. The study used a cross-sectional survey and a focus group interview to collect data. One thousand five hundred students, 60 teachers, and 60 school principals, selected by using a two-stage cluster sampling method, participated in the survey. Three people, based on a purposeful sampling method, from the Ministry of Education of the Royal Government of Bhutan participated in the focus group interview.

Results from the study indicated that students’ demographic profile, motivation, self-beliefs, self-regulation, and learning preferences, as well as their experience with ICT, homework, classroom management, and school climate were related to their achievement. Similarly, teachers’ demographic profile, professional development, appraisal and feedback, and self-efficacy correlated with student achievement. Further, teachers’ experience with school climate, classroom management, teaching, homework, and tests also related to student achievement. However, school policies and practices, climate, resources, and educational leadership had a modest bearing on student achievement. Finally, the analyses of contextual data showed that Bhutan has a great opportunity for stimulating the performance of its education system further by considering and implementing more national-level, research-based interventions.

Overall, an emerging theme from the study indicates that teaching and learning are most effective when student, teacher, school, and contextual characteristics in a nation’s education system complement one another. This theme underscores the importance of considering these characteristics when developing and sustaining national educational policies and interventions.