

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which disaster preparedness was achieved by learners and educators in schools located in Soshanguve North by sourcing data from principals, educators, learners and school safety committees. The research methodology used in this study to solicit views of school principals, teachers, learners and school safety representatives was a mixed research approach where data was obtained through questionnaires and interviews. The sample of research population comprised of ten schools, five primary schools and five secondary schools around Soshanguve North, Tshwane District. Fifty participants filled out questionnaires, and ten participants responded to interviews. Data collected was computed by means of excel spreadsheet and results were presented in the form of pie and bar graphs with narrative explanations. The study found that possible threats to schools around Soshanguve North included floods, fires and storms. It also emerged that learning areas such as Social Sciences directly cover the teaching of disaster education while Life Orientation and Natural Sciences indirectly cover disaster risk management concepts and principles. Other findings that emerged from the study showed that educators were not trained in disaster management. The surprising finding of the study was that learners tended to be the ones who were aware of disaster preparedness in this study when their knowledge about hazards and disasters acquired at school was assessed. The limitation of the study was that data was only collected from educators and learners through questionnaires completed by educators currently teaching Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and Life Orientation and learners from grade 5-9 only. Interviews were conducted with school principals, educators, and school safety committee representatives only. The contribution of this study to the body of knowledge is to provide a baseline data of what is the current status of disaster preparedness in public schools and encourage more research on the concept of disaster risk reduction in schools by elucidating the gaps that exist. This study therefore raises a further research question of how learners acquired knowledge of disaster preparedness even though their educators had not attended disaster preparedness training.

Concepts: *disasters, hazards, preparedness, risk reduction, education, curriculum*