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AWARENESS AND PREPAREDNESS AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TOWARDS FLOOD IN SULAIMANIYAH CITY, NE/IRAQ

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Abstract

Climate change has led to long-term global shifts in weather patterns across various regions, posing a significant threat to multiple societal and economic sectors. Understanding students' perceptions is crucial for assessing their awareness and preparedness regarding flood risks. Recently, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq has experienced several floods, causing structural damage and loss of lives, including students. This exploratory study evaluates primary school students' knowledge about floods and their perception of flood risks as hazards. The study employs a qualitative analysis framework, systematically evaluating collected data through a multi-stage process: reviewing responses, implementing manual coding, developing thematic categories, and interpreting data for comprehensive analysis. A survey on flood management was conducted among 693 students aged 11-15 years from seven different schools in Sulaimaniyah City. The analysis is categorized into three key aspects: actual knowledge, perception, and self-preparedness. Findings indicate that students' actual knowledge of flood risks is low. Most students have not encountered flood hazards, and while they acknowledge some level of risk, they lack appropriate preparedness. Therefore, future training on flood management is recommended. Additionally, a supplementary survey was conducted among students in Erbil City (northern Iraq) to examine the aftermath of a past flood, specifically the flood in December 2021. Results show that flood awareness and preparedness among students improved considerably after the event. This research aims to develop policy recommendations for school safety in Kurdistan and Sulaimaniyah, contributing to global school safety research through strategic emergency response planning.

Key words: chi-square, emergency preparedness, flood awareness, risk perception, school safety

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