

THE PERCEPTION OF RISKS AMONG 9TH GRADE STUDENTS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY IN THE LISBON METROPOLITAN AREA

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ABSTRACT

In the 9th grade, the subject of risks is addressed within the geography discipline. However, this approach tends to be superficial, outlining only the distinctions between natural and mixed risks without adequately delving into their implications on territories and society and which preventive measures should be adopted. Faced with this significant limitation, it is imperative to understand the level of awareness among students regarding risks, particularly those that may manifest in their residential areas. This exploratory research aims to understand 9th-grade students' perception of risks, particularly in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area.

The Lisbon Metropolitan Area, located on the west coast of Portugal, encompasses the capital city (Lisbon) and totals eighteen municipalities. It is notable for its large population aggregation, totaling 2 870 208 residents, making it the most populated area in the country. In addition to the high population concentration, especially in certain municipalities, this area is exposed to risks such as floods, earthquakes, coastal erosion, and rural fires.

A comprehensive and structured questionnaire was developed to achieve the proposed objective, addressing issues that explore students' awareness of risks in their residential areas. This questionnaire was carefully designed to cover different aspects of natural and mixed risks and their implications and preventive measures. The sample was selected based on convenience criteria, involving over 180 students from various schools located in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area. The questionnaire was administered consistently and standardized to ensure the quality and uniformity of the collected data.

The results demonstrate that most students lack adequate awareness of risks. Rural fires, floods, heatwaves, and urban floods were identified as the main perceived risks. Although most students feel minimally prepared to react to these risks, there are gaps in knowledge and adequate preparation, especially regarding less-mentioned risks. It is concluded that informing and involving students, primarily through practical exercises, is essential for their awareness and risk preparation.

Keywords: Perception, risks, education, teaching, Lisbon metropolitan area.