



# Lived Experiences of Learners During Disaster: Basis in Formulating Policies on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

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## Abstract

This study utilized phenomenological research design to capture the lived experiences of participants in disaster preparedness. Ten junior high school learners were purposively chosen as participants of the study from the Division of Aklan. This research undertaking was limited only in capturing the narratives of the participants, difficulties they encountered and their coping strategies during the disaster. In collecting the data, the study used individual interview utilizing the researcher-made interview guide which was validated by the panel of experts. Based on the results, the following themes were generated in the preparation to disaster: they secured their belongings, they secured the house by covering and tying some parts of it, they secured food supplies, they informed and checked their PWD neighbors, they were also securing the animals by putting them in safe place, they stay calm as well and avoid panic, and they applied knowledge gained from drills. The encountered challenges in dealing with disasters include: properties and belongings were damaged, no electricity, struggled financially, trouble in food supply, emotional trauma, and livelihood was damaged. They performed actions to address the challenges during disasters through learning from experience. These learnings served as lesson for them to be careful and to prepare. Part of their preparation is to tie their houses, the trees around them, and secure the important things.

**Keywords:** *Lived Experiences of Learners, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, Policies*

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## **Introduction**

Aklan is not spared from wraths of natural disasters such as typhoons, earthquakes, floods and landslides, and thus, disaster preparedness and response planning are key factors for reducing disaster effects in any society. DepEd is conscientious in the keeping the learners and the schools ready in whatever hazards and calamities that may arise through disaster preparedness education in the school and community.

This phenomenological research aims to explore the lived experiences of learners in disaster preparedness, identify the challenges and difficulties they experienced in dealing with disasters, discover the coping mechanisms of the learners in dealing with challenges and difficulties during disasters, and develop policies/recommendation can be proposed to intensify Disaster Preparedness education in school and community. This study was anchored in the Theory of Planned Behavior of Icek Ajzen (1991) as it posits that attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control influence behavioral intention. Disaster preparedness requires a thorough understanding of the factors that influence performance or nonperformance of disaster preparedness behaviors. The understanding of disaster preparedness behaviors is based on the theory of planned behavior.

## **Methodology**

This study was conducted in Municipality of Banga. The participants of the study were 10 purposively selected Junior High School learners. They were selected through the criteria set such as must be an officially enrolled for the school year 2022 – 2023, must be recommended by the class adviser as a potential DRRM enthusiasts, must have an actual experience with disasters, and learners who are member and non-members of the School DRRM and Emergency Response Team will be highly considered. The main research instrument was the researcher-made interview guide that was based on the statement of the problem was used to collect the necessary information from the learner-participants. Colaizzi's method of data analysis was used in interpreting the qualitative research data gathered to identify meaningful information and organize it into themes or categories. Various ethical considerations were applied throughout this study such as making sure that necessary letters of consent were secured and proper coordination with people who have direct involvement in this study was properly conducted.

## **Findings**

This study found out that the learners have various experiences in disaster preparedness. In preparation to disaster, they experienced securing the properties, watching over the neighborhood, having knowledge through drills, developing awareness through news, preparing a safe place for evacuation, and staying calm. Some of them has no preparation at all. Moreover, this study revealed that the learners have encountered various challenges and difficulties in dealing with disasters such as damages on properties, belongings, and livelihood, electricity interruption, financial struggle, difficulty in food supply, and emotional damage. Furthermore, this study revealed that the learners performed actions to address the challenges and difficulties during disasters such as taking a lesson from experience, learning to prepare for calamity, helping each other, and selling of junks to generate money. Lastly, this study found out that the policies and recommendations to intensify the disaster preparedness education in school and community aimed to benefit both the parents and learners. First, General Orientation: An Introduction to Disaster Preparedness which is the proposed orientation to parents and students of the Introduction to Disaster Preparedness. Second, Typhoon and Flood Preparation which is the proposed seminar and workshop to parents and students of the Typhoon and Flood Preparation. Third, Seminar and Workshop: Flood Control which is the proposed seminar and workshop to parents and students of the Flood Control. Lastly, Seminar and Workshop: First Aid and Basic Life Support which is the proposed seminar and workshop to parents and students of the First Aid and Basic Life Support.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the results, it was concluded that there are various level of disaster preparation performed by the learners. The more preparation they have, the less the damages they experienced from the disasters. Also, the learners have encountered various experiences in disaster. Regardless with preparation or not, no one is spared whenever disasters came. However, those learners who have preparation encountered less fatal damages compared to those who have not prepared at all. Disaster preparedness plays a crucial role in minimizing the impact of disaster. Moreover, the actions taken to address the challenges and difficulties during disasters differ accordingly. It is concluded that the learners have their innate character to survive in disasters at all means of initiative. Furthermore, the policies and recommendations to intensify the disaster preparedness education in school and community aimed to benefit both the parents and learners. It is concluded

that having policies and recommendations empower the knowledge of learners in disaster preparedness.

In addition, this study has the implications on the School Policies where this implied that Disaster Preparedness Education is necessary to be introduced to the learners, an implementing Disaster Preparedness Education would empower the learners with essential skills and knowledge in times of disaster, and that contingency plans on various calamities may be crafted and conform with school policies. Moreover, this study has implications on the Livelihood and Income where the livelihood and income of the families were affected during disasters and that this would serve as an eye opener of the struggles of the learners and their families in disasters in the context of livelihood and income. Lastly, this study has implications on the Government Assistance where this implied the need for government assistance of families affected by disasters.

Furthermore, various recommendations were crafted. First, learners are recommended to empower themselves with knowledge and skills in disasters and disaster preparedness. Second, parents must be empowered with disaster preparedness knowledge and skills. They are the supporter of educational instructions. It is further recommended that parents must participate in school and community-based trainings and seminars related to disasters and disaster preparedness. Third, administrators must intensify the policies in disaster preparedness education in both school and community. They must periodically implement disaster drills. Lastly, it is recommended to conduct future studies related to these factors and related to disasters in wider scope.

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