

An investigation of basic environmental knowledge, attitudes, and practices of secondary and high school teachers in Swaziland

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ABSTRACT

Establishment of teachers' basic environmental knowledge, attitudes and practices is critical in an attempt to ascertain teachers' preparedness to teach environmentally related topics in their disciplines. The study was, therefore, an attempt to investigate and establish basic environmental knowledge, attitudes and practices of secondary and high school teachers in Swaziland. The study relied on a questionnaire survey to collect data. The survey was complemented by key informant interviews and observations. The findings revealed that there is a high level of environmental knowledge among teachers and they also have positive attitudes towards the environment. However, teachers of science related disciplines exhibited a higher level of environmental knowledge and more positive attitudes towards the environment than teachers of non-science disciplines. The level of environmental knowledge between teachers who are degree and non-degree holders was comparable but teachers who are degree holders exhibited more positive attitudes towards the environment than non-degree holders. The level of environmental knowledge and attitudes were found to differ according to gender; male teachers were more knowledgeable and had a more positive attitude towards the environment than female teachers. On the overall teachers were found to be encouraging a wide range of environmental activities and practices in schools. The most common were collection of waste and planting of vegetation within the school premises. The merging issues from the findings indicate a low level of preparedness among teachers to teach environmental related topics in their various disciplines. There was an apparent gap between the impressive levels of dismal failure of teachers to define environmental education. This implies a need to translate the knowledge and attitudes into tangible environmental education aptitudes among the teachers. Moreover, an effort needs to be mounted to improve the level of environmental knowledge and attitudes among female teachers and those who are non-degree holders.

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