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# A comparative analysis of legal frameworks governing risk management in school facilities in selected BRICS+ and SADC countries

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**ABSTRACT**
The aim of this paper is to establish a comparative analysis of the legal frameworks that govern the risk management in school facilities in selected BRICS+ and SADC countries. The author has been concerned with the ineffective management of school facilities which seem to be gradually accepted as one of the most important contextual factors of education quality, school safety and resilience. In line with this concern, it can be deduced that the effectiveness of appropriate legal frameworks that regulate risk management in teaching and learning environment have improved to be of paramount importance to various pedagogies on social justice and accountability. Drawing from philosophies of comparative, international education and legal interpretivism, the study employed a qualitative comparative research design grounded in document analysis to analyse the policies and regulatory standards associated with school facilities management. The findings reveal inter alia, the significant disparities in how the countries conceptualise and implement risk management obligations within their individual education systems. Though some BRICS+ countries, especially South Africa, Brazil, and India have codified comprehensive policies for facilities management, many SADC member states remain stuck in operating within disjointed enforced regulatory administrations. The article advocates for the integration of consistent risk management strategies into national education lawmaking, supported by regional co-ordination efforts aligned to Sustainable Development Goals 4, 10 and 13 for global footprints in school safety.

**KEYWORDS**
School facilities; legal frameworks; comparative and international education; risk management; BRICS+ and SADC; policy implementation; sustainable development goals.

## INTRODUCTION

### Introduction and background to the study

Effective maintenance and management of school facilities are primarily important factors for providing quality education and safer school environment. In many schools across various contexts, varied risks related to school facilities are encountered. These factors include human factors and an assortment of environmental hazards that could potentially compromise continuity of teaching and learning and the safety of learners and staff. Maxwell (2024) argues that these risks call for a strong legal framework and well-coordinated risk management strategies to ensure that school physical and psychosocial environments remain equitable, conducive and resilient. To this end, Shaik-Peremanov (2025) espouse that in both BRICS+ and SADC countries, the point of intersection between facility management, education policy and legal regulation has become progressively crucial in light of international concerns about accountability, school safety and sustainability in education systems. In many developing countries, including those within the BRICS+ and SADC blocs, school facilities often reflect broader socio-economic inequalities (Wolhuter et al., 2020). In addition, perpetual and inadequate maintenance, poor structural design, as well as deficient compliance with building regulations subject learners and teachers to inevitable risks. However, Nkedishu et al. (2025) assert that retroactive governance, well-structured legal systems and clear organisational responsibilities, have been proven to mitigate any risks, thus promoting sustainable school environments. Stephen et al. (2020, p.187), argue that "school facilities policy is intended not only to standardise infrastructure practices in schools but also to ensure that school facilities are fit for purpose and conducive to teaching and learning, as well as other school activities". Therefore, in examining how diverse national legal frameworks model and implement risk management in school facilities can probably provide important insights into both areas requiring reform and best practices.

For this reason, this comparative study investigates the extent to which BRICS+ and SADC countries adjust in their legal approaches, to school facilities maintenance and risk mitigation as well as prevention. It examines statutes, the policies and organizational mechanisms that underpin safety and maintenance, and to a larger extent, accountability in school facilities. In addition, the study seeks to understand how these national frameworks are enforced at local and national levels, and how international trends in risk governance influence regional educational policies. By comparing these two geopolitical and economic groupings, the study aims to identify lessons that can be learnt to strengthen school facilities administration, improve safety standards, and advance equitable learning conditions across various socio-legal contexts.

### Problem statement

This study is underpinned by a comprehensive problem statement guided by three most important sustainable developmental goals (SDGs) as published by UNESCO. These SDGs are, firstly, SDG 4, which speaks to the provision of quality education**,** with an emphasis on equitable, inclusive, and safe learning environments. Secondly, SDG 10 demands the reduction of systemic

and structural disparities, deep inequalities in the quality, safety, and resilience of school facilities, which are persistent across BRICS+ and SADC countries, respectively. For instance, Brown and Eyenghe (2022) confirm that learners in rural and informal as well as socio-economically disadvantaged communities continue to be subjected to schools characterised by insufficient infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms with poor ventilation, appalling ablution facilities, and inadequate safety measures. Such circumstances undermine meaningful learner educational participation and achievement (Duffy, 2025). Additionally, these circumstances further constitute systemic violations of the right to education and the right to safe and dignified learning environments, as articulated in international human rights instruments (Edeji, 2025)

Thirdly, the accelerating impacts of climate change, which is central to SDG 13, have intensified the educational inequalities by increasing schools' exposure to, in other instances, floods, droughts, storms and unrelenting long-term infrastructure dilapidation (Mfon, 2024). Although several vulnerable BRICS+ and SADC countries have adopted climate adaptation, Chirisa and Nel (2022) argue that infrastructure development policies and disaster risk reduction and school facilities remain inadequately integrated into national and provincial climate resilience strategies**.** Consequently, Raikes et al. (2022) assert that climate risk functions as a multiplying factor of educational and social inequality which excessively affects learners and teachers in historically disadvantaged and high-risk contexts as well as disturbing access to quality education. To this end, it can be concluded that a fundamental problem lies in the disconnect between policy commitments and legal and their expected implementation in practice. According to Beco and Sisay (2025), legal frameworks pertaining to school facilities, risk management and safety measures exist in both regions, but they are frequently disjointed across sectors. This means that they are unevenly enforced and restricted by inadequate institutional capacity and large financial resources (Fila et al., 2023). In addition, such enactment inequality suggests a broader governance challenge that hampers the enforcement of equity-focused, rights-based and climate-responsive methods to school facilities. As a result, responses to policy are frequently reactive and technocratic, unable to address the epistemic inequalities and accountability discrepancies that SDGs 4 and 10 seek to overcome, and the pre-emptive risk reduction underscored by SDG 13 (Fukuda-Parr, 2023; Gennusa, 2025).

Generally, there is a paucity of comparative, cross-regional evidence examining how legal and governing frameworks in BRICS+ and SADC countries cooperatively undermine or advance the interconnected SDGs of quality education, reduced inequalities, and climatic action in the management of school facilities. The research in public discourse frequently treats school facilities risk as an inaccessible technical issue and not as a social justice and human rights concern rooted within unequal development trajectories and climate vulnerability. As such, policymakers' ability to draw valuable lessons beyond contexts is therefore limited with regard to the alignment of national frameworks with supranational development agendas, and more importantly, to prioritising the most vulnerable learners. Without such an analysis, global education systems risk spreading infrastructure-related injustices and climate vulnerability, and

most risky, undermining governments' human rights commitments and their obligations to sustainable development. Therefore, this study seeks to address this persistent lacuna by critically testing the alignment between pertinent law, policy and practice, with the aim of enhancing more equitable and resilient governance of school facilities with accountability.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Conceptual framework

This study is underpinned by a comparative conceptual framework (CCF) that investigates the relation between risk management and legal frameworks in school facilities management in designated BRICS+ and SADC bloc countries. Osegbue et al. (2025) argue that the CCF presumes that the enforceability of legal frameworks, their existence, and coherence play a role in shaping institutional conceptualization for managing risks within school facilities, which successively influence the functionality and safety as well as the sustainability of school facilities. According to Khaskheli et al. (2023), legal frameworks comprise of the primary independent variable, which include education-based legislation, building and infrastructural regulation, occupational health and safety regulations, risk reduction policies, and learner protection as well as social justice instruments. In addition, the frameworks constitute marginal safety standards, provide mechanisms for accountability and also delineate institutional responsibilities. This study further considers the interplay between national frameworks and international standard instruments such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The study further appreciates the role of systemic and contextual factors as alleviatory variables that have an influence on the implementation and effectiveness of both risk management practices and legal frameworks, respectively. These systemic and contextual factors could include economic susceptibility, governance structures, institutional leadership, rural-urban disparities and political firmness. Haryono et al. (2024) argue that such contextual factors are in particular, significant in comparative analysis, since they assist in explaining variations in the implementation of policy and the outcomes within BRICS+ and SADC countries regardless of the presence of common legislative provisions.

This framework is underpinned by systems theory, which conceptualises school facilities as integrated within interrelated legal, school governance, and organizational systems; risk management theory, which stresses proactive identification and mitigation of dangers; and a human rights-based approach, which shapes safe school environments as a requirement for equality in education and social justice (Masekela et al., 2024; Rejekiningsih et al., 2025). To this end, through this framework, the study provides, as articulated by Kikasu and Dorasamy (2025), a comparative analytical lens for establishing how institutional and legal arrangements in BRICS+ and SADC blocs shape school facilities outcomes and risk management practices.

### Global overview

Osegbue et al. (2025) aver that globally, the efforts for the management of potential risks in school facilities is progressively shaped by policy and legal frameworks with an intent of

safeguarding learners, teachers and the immediate school communities. However, Ali (2024) argues that in both developing and developed contexts, the governments accentuate that well-maintained and safe school facilities are foundational to the understanding of the right to quality education and to effective teaching and learning. According to Section (24) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996, p.10), "Everyone has a right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being; and to have the environment protected, for the benefit of the present and future generations …." Furthermore, as alluded to earlier, there is a plethora of international instruments, for instance, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and UNESCO's guidelines on education safety that emphasise the states' obligations to render safe and secure as well as inclusive learning environments. Accordingly, a number of countries have adopted the obligatory standards covering school facilities, occupational health and safety, disaster risk management, environmental sustainability and protection of children (Dangol, 2022; Oyenuga, 2024; Paci-Green et al., 2020).

Despite all these international interventions, significant disparities are persistent across the globe in the execution and social control of these frameworks. Marchettini and Maino (2015) assert that high-income countries frequently benefit from robust governance, systematic risk assessment protocols, and adequate funding for all categories of maintenance and compliance. Conversely, low- and middle-income countries often face systemic challenges related to ageing infrastructure (Nhlapo, 2022), resource constraints, ineffective administration and a lack of institutional capacity. Developing and emerging economies and regions such as BRICS+ and SADC exemplify this direct contrast, wherein progressive commitments to policy coexist with irregular enforcement at school level (Wolhuter et al., 2020). As a result, Majlingova and Kádárglobal (2025) contend that scholarship is increasingly calling for context-sensitive and comparative conceptualization to understand how legal frameworks and risk management practices can be reinforced to advance equity, safety, and resilience in school facilities globally.

**Legal and policy context in BRICS+ countries**

*Brazil*

In Brazil, there are two major national frameworks: firstly, the Plano de Transformação Ecológica, which, according to Worker and Palmer (2020) is a government-wide blueprint for sustainable development and an effective strategy for economic transformation that integrates, amongst others, the climate, industry, innovation, low-carbon growth, and job opportunities. Secondly, the Plano Brasileiro de Inteligência Artificial (PBIA), a reliable strategic national framework in Brazil guiding artificial intelligence (AI) expansion, governance, ethical use, and infrastructure investment with synchronized ministries and public/private roles (Prasad et al., 2024). Brazil is currently holding the rotating BRICS presidency and advancing paramount cooperation across economic, political, and society-driven pillars.

*Russia*

The country prides itself with three highly effective national frameworks. Its governance system is extremely centralized with various national strategic significances set by constitutional decrees and federal development plans with the focus on economic modernization and import substitution, energy and defence industrial base and digital governance and cybersecurity (Blockhin & Kuvalin, 2023). Furthermore, Cvetković and Andrić (2023) claim that these national frameworks are normally defined through 'multi-year' strategic documents and national programmes which are highly common in the government of Russia. According to Ryabkov (2025), Russia plays a pivotal role in global governance reform and security dialogue within the BRICS nations.

*India*

Napitupulu et al. (2024) indicate that India's national governance framework is defined by a multi-sectoral Five-Year Vision frameworks and a various sector-specific policy roadmaps rather than a single overarching strategic document. The authors further highlight the fact that cardinal initiatives include, *inter alia*, Digital India, which intends to develop digital infrastructure, improve service delivery to the general public and promote digital inclusion. There is also a 'Make in India', with the purpose of enhancing industry competitiveness; investment; manufacturing capacity; and public education; skills development and emerging AI and technology policies designed to strengthen innovation and human capital. Generally, India's governance approach incorporates features of central strategic planning with fundamental coordination and enforcement by the Indian governments, with reliance on targeted policy programs to drive development priorities (Napitupulu et al., 2024). As explained in the other countries above, within the BRICS framework, India places a very strong emphasis on technology cooperation, trade facilitation, and collaborative development agendas, positioning itself as an advocate for inclusive growth, innovation-driven development, and South–South cooperation (Burrell et al., 2023).

*China*

The national governance framework of China is anchored in an extensively institutionalised planning system founded on successive five-year plans within the 14th and forthcoming 15th Five-Year Plan cycles, which incorporates socio-economic, technological and the objectives of the environment across national and provincial governments respectively (Chen et al., 2025). In addition, at the centre of this approach lies the Dual-Circulation Strategy, which seeks to enhance domestic demand while maintaining strategic engagement with international markets, supported by robust innovation and AI policies aimed at enhancing technological self-reliance and global competitiveness. The authors further posit that these priorities are supplemented by comprehensive "green transition frameworks that promote the development of renewable energy and low-carbon growth". In the context of BRICS', the Republic of China leads in co-ordinating economic cooperation and supporting institutional mechanisms. According to Agarwal and Kumar (2023), the related supporting institutional mechanisms refer to financing of infrastructure and actively promoting the growth of BRICS through the BRICS+ initiative. The

intent of the initiative is to widen collaboration among emerging and developing economies respectively (Rodrik & Stiglitz, 2025).

**Legal and policy context in SADC countries**

A comparative summary of Southern African countries such as Namibia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Botswana and Mozambique (Maritz et al., 2024), disclose distinct national trajectories and shared regional characteristics shaped by, *inter alia*, governance, history and economic capacity. Although South Africa prides itself with the most industrialised and diversified economy, supported by comparatively developed institutions and infrastructure, Plagerson (2023) contends that it continues to face systemic social inequalities and adverse service delivery challenges. In various municipalities, waste management and road infrastructure are both non-existent and dilapidated. Honde (2024) opines that Namibia and Botswana on the other hand, though smaller in population, demonstrate a comparatively stabilized governance and very effective public-sector management. In addition, Botswana is cited for her judicious financial management and policy consistency. Contrary to other SADC countries, Mozambique and her counterpart, Zimbabwe have both experienced prolonged political instability and economic hardship (Mhlanga & Ndhlovu, 2021). This means that these two contextual factors have an impact on the infrastructural development, effectiveness of institutions and the delivery of requisite service. In summary, it can be surmised that across these SADC countries, there are common social justice issues that are serious impediments to the development of the countries. Furthermore, the impediments include social inequality, lack of resources and vulnerability to environmental as well as economic shocks. Nevertheless, Van Aswegen and Drewes (2024) argue that the differences in policy implemention, organizational strength and transformation priorities, determine the varying outcomes across the SADC region.

**Synthesis of literature**

Makala et al. (2025) opine that there are noteworthy differences highlighted by different researchers alongside clear convergence points across BRICS+ and SADC countries. According to Shawoo et al. (2023), these differences are apparent in the depth of policy coherence, economic capacity and institutional maturity. For instance, in BRICS+ countries, stronger government capacity and greater investment in infrastructure are exhibited. However, in many SADC countries, constraints pertaining to policy implementation gaps, inadequate resources and dependence on external funding are faced (Makala et al., 2025). Furthermore, Righettini and Lizzi (2022) concur that governing approaches differ vastly, for example, approaches in BRICS+ states are often characterised by more centralised and strategic approach, compared to the more decentralised governance and skewed implementation of frameworks in SADC countries.

Despite the identified challenges above, there are convergence points between the two blocs. Prabhakar (2025) claims that these convergence points relate to the fact that both BRICS+ and SADC countries underscore in inclusive development. Additionally, inclusive development promotes equality, equity and social justice as fundamental policy imperatives particularly in sectors such as risk management, education and infrastructure development. Furthermore,

Siddiqui (2025) contends that literature encapsulates the need for fortified regional cooperation, capacity building and policy harmonisation to attend to common challenges like inequality, climate risks, and institutional vulnerability. Above all, although governance and capacities differ, both groups indicate a growing conjunction around similar developmental priorities and reform agendas. Moreover, the literature (Hansohm & Koblianska, 2025) reveals several disparities in regulatory compliance, implementation capacity and risk assessment across both BRICS+ and SADC countries. To this end, Diaconu (2024) argues that .in terms of regulatory compliance, disparities often develop from weak social control mechanisms, poorly harmonised statutory frameworks, and to a large extent, limited evaluation and monitoring systems.

Regarding risk assessment, the literature reveals inadequate consolidation of systematic risk analysis into policy planning and operational practice as key challenges. Risk assessments are often reactive rather than being proactive, coupled with limited use of data-driven instruments. There is also deficient consideration of emergent risks of the 21$^{st}$ century such as climate change, infrastructure failure, and societal instability. These gaps are, to a large extent, deeper in SADC contexts. For instance, there is data paucity and shortage of technical skills which restrict effective risk identification and mitigation. In addition, implementation capacity remains a major weakness across the two blocs. BRICS+ countries face, as alluded to earlier, challenges relating to co-operation across numerous levels of state and sectors, while SADC countries often have a challenge of human resource shortages and limited financial means. In essence, the literature highlights the need for stronger regulative coherence, integrated risk assessment frameworks and sustainable capacity-building initiatives to translate policy intent into effective practice.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study adopted a qualitative comparative research design (Thomann & Maggetti, 2020) grounded in policy and document analysis (Morgan, 2022) to investigate the governance and legal frameworks relating to school facilities management within selected BRICS+ and SADC countries. Data was drawn from a sizeable range of secondary sources such as journal articles, academic book chapters and research reports from 2016 to 2026, including national education policies, legislative instruments and facilities management guidelines. Sources older than 10 years were excluded from this study. A purposive sampling technique (Obilor, 2023) was employed to identify representative countries from both BRICS+ and SADC countries, with an allowance for substantive cross-regional comparison. Data was analysed by using thematic (Finlay, 2021) and content analysis (Lindgren et al., 2020) strategies, with exceptional attention given to policy directives, mechanisms for enforcement and the underlying governmental structures that shape the compliance to, and implementation of the policies. The researcher read the documents carefully to become familiar with the content. Multiple readings were done to gain a comprehensive understanding of the information presented. Important ideas, concepts and recurring issues were noted to help the researcher develop an initial

understanding of the data. Furthermore, data was coded by identifying and labelling significant words, sentences, phrases or sections of the text that related to the objectives of the study. Pieces of information that were similar, were assigned the same code to enable easier organisation of data and compare information across the various documents. The researcher interpreted the identified themes by explaining their meaning and significance to the study. The interpretation involved examining how the themes related to one another, comparing the findings with existing literature. This stage allowed the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions from the analysed data.

Validity was ensured by selecting authentic documents, representative, credible and relevant to the objectives of the study. Reliability in document analysis refers to the consistency and dependability of the research process (Skjott-Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019, p.9). To this end, reliability was ensured by using standardised document analysis procedures as discussed in the previous paragraph. Furthermore, the researcher was consistent in the application of coding rules in order to minimise the possible subjective interpretation, thus enhancing the consistency of findings.

**Ethical standards**

Ethical considerations (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2020) in this study were addressed firstly, by obtaining an ethical clearance certificate (NWU-01104-25-A2) from Edu-REC ethics committee of the North West University. Secondly, it was through the use of publicly available legislative frameworks and policy documents, and the researcher made sure that there were no human participants involved and thus issues of consent and confidentiality did not arise. Thirdly, high academic integrity was upheld through acknowledgement of sources used in the manuscript. Forthly, accurate and transparent analysis was done, and plagiarism was at all costs avoided. Lastly, this study was conducted with cultural sensitivity (Manolaki et al., 2020), cognisant of the diverse political, legal and socio-economic contexts of BRICS+ and SADC countries with deliberate avoidance of normative judgements that could decontextualise and misrepresent national policy frameworks of the countries under study.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings and discussion in this study are divided into two parts. The first part focuses on the BRICS+ countries while the second part focuses on the SADC countries. To this end, the analysis of BRICS+ countries revealed that the management of school facilities was broadly guided by statutory regulations, extensive national policies and distinctly selected enforcement agencies that set minimum standards for risk management, infrastructure and safety. This finding is in line with Agi and Ereme's (2018, p.697) assertion that "educational laws and their proper implementation are the basis of effective and efficient management of school facilities which includes the physical and spatial enablers of teaching and learning". Furthermore, the authors emphasise, *inter alia*, school management teams, teachers and learners, and physical school facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, workshops and toilets.

The frameworks were often integrated within broader education strategies and national development, which enable the alignment of school facilities planning and long-term socio-economic objectives (Kehinde, 2023). Noteworthy is a fundamental strength across some BRICS+ countries characterised by the presence of comparatively robust legal compliance systems. Worker and Palmer (2020) corroborate this finding by emphasising that this strength is supported by strong state intervention and significant public investment in school facilities, which facilitate the setting of requisite standards, periodic upgrading of school facilities and monitoring of progress.

However, regardless of the existence of well-drafted policies, evidential weaknesses persist, especially in relation to irregular implementation across different regions, by and large to urban–rural disparities and bureaucratic complexities that inhibit decision-making and enforcement of policy directives and frameworks. This finding is supported by Statistics South Africa in 2019 which indicated that despite South Africa being amongst Africa's most technologically advanced countries, it finds it difficult to manage the significant urban-rural disparities. Furthermore, in some instances, overlapping of institutional mandates and constricted local-level capacity further restrain effective risk management, resulting in visible gaps between policy and practice. The finding is corroborated by Taylor (2021) who opines that actors with well-intentioned goals for policy improvement often fail to address the possibility that policy-makers are driven by malicious motivations rather than beneficial or disinterested ones. Additionally, the goals of learning may extend beyond the identification of best practices.

The findings pertaining to SADC countries revealed that policy and risk management frameworks for school facilities are basically guided by national education legislation, school infrastructure development plans and school safety regulations that prescribe the roles and responsibilities of central and local authorities. These findings are confirmed by Celestin et al. (2024) who assert that the frameworks emphasise to a large extent, decentralised governance, allocating significant roles to the provincial, district and school level authorities in the strategic planning, effective maintenance, and management of school facilities. A key strength in this context (SADC) is the decentralisation approach, corroborated by Celestin et al. (2024) who contend that the approach has potential to enhance local reactivity, with the support of supranational funders and development partners who contribute to school facilities development and initiatives for mitigating risk. However, these systems are affected by unrelenting weaknesses, predominant chronic underfunding, restricted technical and administrative capacity at district levels, and ineffective monitoring and enforcement strategies. Accordingly, Celestin et al. (2024) confirm that compliance with school facilities standards and safety are often compromised, and risk management practices remain inconsistent and more reactive instead of being preventive across various SADC education systems.

**Comparative analysis**

There are fundamental similarities and contrasts in the integration of legal and risk management frameworks in the two regions.

**Similarities**

- The two regions show commitment to providing safe, healthy and inclusive learning environments. (Evident in their national education laws, school facilities standards, and safety measures).
- There is an increased alignment with international safety and infrastructure standards, and the importance of strengthening implementation capacity.
- Emerging trends across both regions include growing recognition of risk management as an integral component of education governance

**Contrasts**

- There are notable differences that emerge in terms of legal sophistication, funding levels, and monitoring capacity.
- BRICS+ countries generally demonstrated more comprehensive and institutionalised legal frameworks supported by stronger state financial backup and more formalised compliance mechanisms. The SADC countries on the other hand, tend to operate within less resourced systems, with greater reliance on decentralised governance structures and external funding model for support.

There are key lessons to be learned which highlight the need to bridge the gap between policy and practice as well as enhance monitoring and promote context-sensitive approaches that balance central oversight with local capacity building.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that collectively, the findings highlight the importance of strengthening governance coherence, improving implementation and oversight, and fostering regional collaboration to enhance sustainable and equitable school facilities management. In addition, across both regions, persistent challenges include gaps between policy intent and implementation, uneven monitoring capacity, and resource constraints at local levels. BRICS+ countries generally benefit from more sophisticated legal systems, stronger state investment, and clearer enforcement mechanisms, while SADC countries demonstrate strengths in decentralised governance and regional and donor-supported initiatives. Finally, it is concluded that the analysis of BRICS+ and SADC countries reveals a shared commitment to establishing safe and functional school learning environments through legal and risk management frameworks, albeit with varying levels of effectiveness.

*Policy recommendations*

Based on the findings, several policy recommendations emerge.

- Firstly, there is a need to harmonise legal and regulatory frameworks at a regional level to promote common standards for school facilities safety and risk management while allowing flexibility for national contexts.
- Secondly, establishing formal intergovernmental collaboration mechanisms can facilitate cross-border learning, coordination, and the sharing of best practices in infrastructure planning and compliance.
- Thirdly, targeted capacity-building initiatives should be prioritised to strengthen technical, managerial, and governance competencies in school infrastructure risk management, particularly at sub-national and school levels.
- Finally, policymakers should encourage the adoption of data-driven monitoring and evaluation systems to improve oversight, enhance accountability, and support evidence-based decision-making in the management of school facilities.

**Future research**

It is suggested that future research should move beyond policy analysis and explore implementation outcomes at school and community levels. Future research should examine how legal and risk management frameworks translate into everyday practice. There is a dire need to investigate community-level resilience strategies, including the roles of school governing bodies, district offices, and community partnerships in mitigating infrastructure risks and responding to emergencies. It is anticipated that such research would provide deeper insight into contextual factors that influence effectiveness, highlight locally grounded innovations, and inform more responsive and sustainable approaches to school facilities management across BRICS+ and SADC contexts.

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