

HOW WE CAN IMPROVE ECOLOGICAL CULTURE AMONG PUPILS OF 9-11-GRADES

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ABSTRACT

Environmental education and education for the environment today play an important role toward sustainability. Environmental education provided by higher education institutions has an important impact on training and preparing the future generation for a green society. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship among perception, attitude, and environmental behavior of the university students enrolled in different specialization fields (engineering electrical, mechanical, and economic).

Keywords: *environmental education; education environment; attitude; behavior; sustainability, protection, environmental behaviour.*

АННОТАЦИЯ

Экологическое образование и образование для окружающей среды сегодня играют важную роль в обеспечении устойчивости. Экологическое образование, предоставляемое высшими учебными заведениями, оказывает важное влияние на обучение и подготовку будущего поколения к зеленому обществу. Целью данного исследования является изучение взаимосвязи между восприятием, отношением и поведением в окружающей среде студентов университетов, обучающихся в различных областях специализации (инженерная электротехника, механика и экономика).

Ключевые слова: *экологическое образование; образовательная среда; отношение; поведение; устойчивость, защита, экологическое поведение.*

INTRODUCTION

The first environmental initiatives appeared about 200 years ago due to the need to rescue endangered species. Over time, reasons that have imposed nature protection have diversified. Since 1970 there have been clear signs of planet deterioration: Thinning of the ozone layer, global warming, acid rain, and water, air, and soil pollution. People began to understand the need to behave more responsibly towards nature, but the responsibility of man for the protection of the environment is both individual and above all collective: Nature protection engages mutual collaboration

and support on the ground, local, county, national, and especially, international levels. Literature about environmental education (EE) defines it in multiple ways and, for the purposes of this research, we understand EE to be a collaboration of content and pedagogy that engages students in a study of the environment to “encourage behavioral change and action” [1]. In a UNESCO study from 1985 [2], it is shown that students from several developed European countries have attitudes towards the highly developed environment, but the inclination to act to solve environmental issues or to be active in environmental organizations is very low. The rift between the rich ecological awareness of many citizens and lack of involvement in practical environmental protection activities can be overcome by changing the ratio of the share of knowledge to that of practical environmental activities in favor of the latter and through the priority use of specific methods of moral and civic education (method-specific example of educators, eco ethics debate, case analysis, moral conversation, exercise, team co-operation, moral punishment positive or negative, etc.). According to UNESCO [3], in 1987 environmental education was considered as a learning process that enhances people’s knowledge and skills about the environment and the associated challenges, which develop the necessary skills and expertise needed to meet challenges and foster attitudes, motivations, and commitments to inform decisions and take responsible actions (definition also used in 2015 [4] and adapted with the new society orientation). According to the Tbilisi Declaration [5], environmental education is a process aimed at developing a world population that is aware of and concerned about the whole environment and its associated problems and which has the knowledge, attitudes, motivations, commitment, and skills to work individually and collectively toward solutions of current problems and the prevention of new ones [6,7]. Environmental education, as supported by Crohn Kara and Birbaum [8], has been around for over 50 years and has contributed to environmental sustainability by disseminating skills-building information.

THE MAIN PART OF THE ARTICLE

The assessment of environmental education [9] suggests it is rather poor, despite several decades of attention to its importance and the assessment discipline has a short history of environmental education. Shubo Liu and Liqing Guo [10] are among the authors who have paid more attention to environmental education or environmental issues in management education. They expected people to enrich their environmental and ecological value through ecological education, thus changing

people's attitudes. In 1992, for the first time, an international survey conducted by the George H. Gallup International Institute obtained data on a wide range of environmental perceptions and opinions from citizens in 24 economically and geographically diverse nations [11]. Aggregate, national-level scores for a variety of measures of public concern of environmental quality were created and correlated with per capital national product. Although the results vary considerably depending on the measure, overall national affluence is more often negatively rather than positively related to citizen concern for environmental quality—contradicting conventional wisdom [6]. Global concern for the environment and planet health represent, for Dunlap and Mertig [12], a priority taking climate change, the increasing CO₂ footprint, and the reaction of nature against human impact into consideration. Volunteering in the field of environmental protection and preservation is one of the synthetic criteria for assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of ecological education activities. Environmental education by volunteering is the ideal of ecological education globally; volunteering is rare, with less than 1% of the population taking part [8], except for countries such as the Netherlands, Denmark, Great Britain, USA, Canada, Australia, etc., and in the European Union the percent is 4% (European Commission) [5]. Riordan and Last [13] applied a survey to identify students' responses to environmental issues through action, which remain a key area for study. The energy incited by this study was evident in their work, their willingness to talk with researchers informally about their learning, and in the actions they undertook to spark transformation. The results reflect that in our shrinking world, sustaining the environment relies on students becoming problem-solvers, critical-thinkers, and ultimately, change-makers.

DISCUSSION IN THE ARTICLE

There is much debate about whether the foundation of environmental education (EE) is a part of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), whether ESD is a part of EE, or whether the two must be considered as separate entities [14,15]. Schultz [12] in 2002 gave an answer to the question regarding influences of the types of attitudes that individuals within a given culture are likely to develop, the types of environmental behaviors that individuals are likely to adopt, and more generally, beliefs about how to solve environmental problems. Protecting the environment is so important that requirements and standards cannot be too high, and continuing environmental improvements must be made regardless of cost. By transferring the European attitude toward environment Eurobarometer across cultures [14] to

Romania in 2009, Nistor [11,12] made a study about the Romanians behavior regarding the nature and their positive attitude towards the environment. The attitude of the Romanians is similar to the Europeans towards the environment, the relationship between ecology and consumer behavior. The same factors are influencing the behavior of students, namely their attitude to the environment and to the problems related to it such as climate change, the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to use alternative energy, pollution, loss of biodiversity, more efficient use of natural resources, waste management, sustainable consumption, and impact of products on the environment. The current ecological crisis spreads freely on our planets, affecting the unacceptably long biosphere and, implicitly, the living environment. Realizing the huge scale of this phenomenon, decision-makers of world rank and lately, nationally, are trying to establish firm and urgent measures for saving nature, for the preservation of the human environment; measures that are also covered by the education system. Sauv  [10] underscores the concept of sustainable development and has associated with environmental education to promote development models based on the wise use of resources, with concerns for equity and durability [11]. Environmental education, regardless of the manner in which it is connected to sustainable development, must face its own limits. Different conceptions of environment, education, and sustainable development coexist. These conceptions influence the way educators define and practice environmental education. In his study, Biedenweg and Monroe [12] sustain that environmental educators are joining forces with youth and community development professionals, museums, zoos, and botanical gardens and urban green space managers and planners to come up with new practices that reflect societal concerns.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I can say many of these practices occur outside of the classroom, involve youth and elders working together, and engage a diversity of professionals and participants in urban, as well as suburban and rural communities. Jadhav et al. [13] and Raut [14], in their study about the role of the higher education institution from India in environmental conservation and sustainable development, conclude that universities can help to establish sustainable development through the following aspects: Teaching programs, research, and outreach. As environmental sustainability is becoming an increasingly important issue for the world, the role of institutions of higher education in relation to environmental sustainability initiatives is becoming more and more prevalent [15]. Almut Beringer [15] concluded that if the role of

colleges and universities is to educate members of society, then they must be actively instrumental in the sustainability movement. Arjen and Wals [2] explain the need of environmental education which is obviously related to nature conservation education; however, there is an important difference in that it transcends issues of nature, biodiversity, and ecology to also, and foremost, include issues of environmental degradation, environmental health, pollution, and so on that have a lot to do with the way we live, produce, and consume. Biplab Roy [2] and Rajidul Hoque [4], in their study about environmental education and sustainable development in Bangladesh, mention that this topic has been a recent phenomenon which is necessary not only to develop sustainable environment but also to fight with upcoming climate change. The aim of environmental education is to teach and educate the public about the function of natural environments and, particularly, how human beings can manage their behavior and ecosystem. Akinci et al. from Turkey [12] understood that in order to ensure the sustainability of education in the direction of the findings obtained, besides fulfilling the expectations of the economic sector, it is very important to determine and fulfill the expectations of the education students.

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