
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION: FORMATION OF A RESPONSIBLE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ENVIRONMENT AMONG YOUTH

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ABSTRACT:

This article aims to analyze the level of environmental awareness among school students in Uzbekistan and to identify effective methods for its development. The study is based on a survey conducted among students of the Presidential School. The results show that while students are aware of environmental issues, their practical involvement remains limited. The authors argue for the integration of environmental education as an essential component of the school system.

Keywords: Environmental awareness, environmental education, youth, school, survey, environment, sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

“We don't have to engage in grand, heroic actions to participate in the process of change. Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world.”- Howard Zinn

One of the most serious problems facing humanity today is the global ecological crisis associated with the disruption of the ecological balance. Climate change, biodiversity loss, air and water pollution, land degradation, and waste are becoming increasingly serious. The global scientific community emphasizes that these threats are directly caused by human activity. In such a situation, raising environmental awareness and culture in society is of strategic importance in order to ensure environmental safety and achieve sustainable development.

In particular, representatives of the younger generation - schoolchildren - play a special role in acquiring ecological values, forming ecological literacy and responsibility. After all, the more ecological culture develops from a young age, the more stable and deep a conscious attitude towards the environment will be. Therefore, it is becoming an urgent issue to provide environmental education in educational institutions, to familiarize students with global and local environmental problems, and to organize projects and practical activities that encourage them to solve them.

This study aims to study the level of environmental awareness among students in schools in Uzbekistan, identify existing problems and identify effective ways to form an ecological culture. As part of the study, a survey was conducted among students, analyzing their environmental

knowledge, daily habits, participation in environmental activities at school, and civic position. This article puts forward relevant scientific conclusions and proposals based on these analyses.

"The future depends on how we live today. Love for nature is love for our own life." This motto means that environmental awareness is an integral part of human life. Preserving nature means making responsible decisions not only for the environment, but also for ourselves and our future.

METHODS

This study was conducted based on a social survey among students studying at the Presidential School. The survey was conducted with the participation of 50 students (25 girls and 25 boys) aged 14–17. Participants participated in the study voluntarily and anonymously. The study was conducted to determine the level of environmental awareness among schoolchildren in Uzbekistan, to identify existing problems and to develop proposals.

The survey questions were prepared and distributed online using the Google Forms platform. The research methodology was built on the basis of a quantitative approach.

The survey covered the following four main areas:

1. Level of knowledge about environmental issues: Participants' understanding of global and local environmental issues (climate change, plastic pollution, air and water quality degradation);
2. Personal environmental habits: Practical actions such as waste sorting, energy and water conservation, and reducing the use of plastic products;
3. Status of environmental education at school: Frequency of participation in environmental lessons, campaigns, clubs, and projects;
4. Willingness to participate in environmental initiatives: Students' social responsibility, sense of involvement in ideas related to nature conservation, and civic position.

The questions were in closed (variable), semi-open, and open formats, and participants were also given the opportunity to freely express their opinions. The collected data were coded in Microsoft Excel and analyzed using descriptive statistics tools. The data were systematized in the form of diagrams and percentages. The principles of confidentiality, consent, and voluntariness were strictly adhered to throughout the study.

The research methodology is based on modern research standards in education for sustainable development. This method is recognized as one of the most reliable, convenient and effective approaches to determining the level of environmental awareness.

RESULTS

The results of the study showed that although environmental awareness exists among students, it is not sufficiently deep. The following are the main observations:

General environmental knowledge: 82% of the students surveyed stated that they have a general idea of environmental problems. However, 34% of them do not consider this knowledge to be "deep". This indicates the need for systematic education and wider information on environmental literacy of students.

Personal environmental practices: Only 40% of students have the habit of sorting waste at home. On the contrary, 60% have not established this practice. This indicator shows the influence of family environment and infrastructure.

Environmental activities at school: Only 25% of students reported participating in environmental clubs at school. This number indicates the need to increase the volume of environmental education activities in schools.

Preparing for an environmental initiative: 70% of students said they were ready to actively participate in environmental protection. However, many of them noted that there were no specific opportunities, projects, or volunteering platforms in this regard.

III The following are displayed in the form of a bar graph:

Indicators	Percentage (%)	Color
Educated	82%	Green (🌿)
Not knowledgeable	34%	Yellow (🌱)
Separates waste at home	40%	Green (🌿)
Does not separate waste at home	60%	Red (❤️)
Participates in environmental clubs	25%	Blue (💧)
Ready for environmental initiatives	70%	Purple (💜)

DISCUSSION

The results of the study confirmed that there is a general awareness of environmental problems among young people (82%), but this knowledge is not fully reflected in practical actions. For example, only 40% of survey participants sort waste at home, and only 25% participate in environmental clubs. This indicates that the formation of environmental awareness depends not only on the level of knowledge, but also on practical experience.

According to researchers, for an environmental education system to be effective, it must be interactive and participatory. To form ecological habits in students, schools should actively organize ecological projects, competitions, open classes, and initiative clubs. In particular, real activities within the school ecosystem - waste separation systems, energy-saving practices - are important.

Also, the fact that 70% of students are ready for environmental initiatives indicates that there is a positive psychological basis for developing their environmental awareness. Therefore, it is

necessary to use this intrinsic motivation of young people and create opportunities for them to participate. Encouraging initiatives and environmental volunteering activities have a positive impact on the minds of young people.

“The Earth is not ours, we are the Earth’s.” This aphorism deeply expresses the philosophy of ecological consciousness and reminds us of humanity’s responsibility towards nature. It has also always been at the heart of the concept of sustainable development.

CONCLUSION

Forming environmental awareness among young people is not only an educational process, but also a valuable investment in a sustainable future. The study showed that students of the Presidential School are aware of and not indifferent to environmental problems, but the necessary conditions and incentive systems for their full participation in practical activities are insufficient.

Young people are ready for environmental initiatives (70%), but to turn this readiness into real activity, platforms are needed that support their participation. Schools are the main mediators in this regard, and can guide students towards active environmental citizenship through environmental projects, interactive lessons, competitions and environmental clubs.

Therefore, environmental education should be established not only as a separate activity, but also as an integral and systematic component of school education. Through active participation, practical exercises and projects aimed at local environmental problems, young people will acquire not only environmental knowledge, but also personal responsibility for environmental protection. At this point, a slogan came to mind: “If we protect the environment today, it will protect us tomorrow.” This slogan reflects the spiritual and moral basis of environmental activities and calls on young people to take conscious action.

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