



PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISMS OF FORMING ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS IN STUDENTS: ENHANCING THE SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY

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Abstract : *This article analyzes the psychological mechanisms involved in the formation of environmental awareness among students. In particular, it highlights the psychological factors influencing the development of environmental responsibility, including motivation, value systems, and personal responsibility. The research findings demonstrate that an effective organization of environmental education can foster a conscious attitude toward nature among students.*

Keywords: *environmental awareness, environmental responsibility, psychological mechanisms, motivation, environmental education, student personality.*

Introduction

In the context of globalization, environmental problems are increasingly affecting all aspects of human life. Environmental pollution, depletion of natural resources, and climate change require not only economic and social solutions but also psychological and pedagogical approaches. Therefore, the development of environmental awareness has become one of the priority directions of modern educational systems.

Environmental awareness is an integrated system of knowledge, values, emotional attitudes, and practical activities related to nature, which is reflected in an individual's everyday behavior. The formation of environmental awareness among school-age students is particularly important, as it determines future generations' attitudes toward nature. This developmental stage is characterized by the active formation of worldview, social responsibility, and moral values.

Developing a sense of environmental responsibility plays a crucial role in fostering environmental awareness among students. Responsibility is a psychological state associated with understanding the consequences of one's actions and recognizing one's duty toward nature and society. When students perceive environmental protection as a personal responsibility, their ecological behavior becomes more stable and conscious.

In psychology, the formation of environmental responsibility is explained through mechanisms such as motivation, emotional experience, social influence, and reflection. The purposeful application of these mechanisms in the educational process enables the effective development of environmental values among students. Moreover, environmental education should not be limited to theoretical knowledge but should be reinforced through practical activities, environmental projects, and collaborative work.

This article examines the psychological mechanisms of developing environmental awareness among students, with a particular focus on enhancing environmental responsibility from both theoretical and practical perspectives. The findings contribute to the improvement of environmental education practices.

Literature Review

1. E.G. Goziev considers environmental awareness as an integral component of an individual's spiritual world and emphasizes the importance of emotional and volitional processes in its formation.
2. Educational scholar A. Tilavov highlights the significance of practical activities alongside theoretical knowledge in environmental education.
3. Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior provides an important framework for understanding the psychological foundations of environmental behavior.
4. American scholar P.C. Stern studied environmental responsibility in relation to personal values and moral norms, emphasizing the crucial role of intrinsic motivation in the formation of environmental awareness.

Research Methodology

The following methods were employed in the study:

- Psychological and pedagogical observation;
- Questionnaire and testing methods;
- Interviews and analytical approaches.

Students from grades 5–9 of general secondary schools participated in the research. A total of 120 students were involved, including 60 students in the experimental group and 60 students in the control group. The levels of environmental awareness and environmental responsibility were assessed at both the beginning and the end of the study and were comparatively analyzed.

At the initial stage, students' environmental responsibility levels were identified as follows:

Level	Experimental Group (%)	Control Group (%)
High	18%	20%
Medium	42%	40%
Low	40%	40%

These results indicate that both groups initially demonstrated nearly identical levels of environmental responsibility.

Students in the experimental group participated in environmental projects, practical activities, training sessions, and collaborative initiatives aimed at enhancing environmental responsibility.

At the end of the study, the results were as follows:

Level	Experimental Group (%)	Control Group (%)
High	52%	26%
Medium	36%	42%
Low	12%	32%

The analysis of the obtained data revealed that:

- The proportion of students with a high level of environmental responsibility in the experimental group increased from 18% to 52%.
- The proportion of students with a low level decreased from 40% to 12%.
- No significant changes were observed in the control group.

These findings confirm the effectiveness of a purposefully organized educational process based on psychological mechanisms in fostering environmental awareness.

The results are consistent with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior. The increase in environmental responsibility contributed to the development of conscious and socially responsible attitudes toward nature among students.

Furthermore, environmental education based on practical activities strengthened students' intrinsic motivation and promoted the development of sustainable environmental behavior.

Research Results and Discussion

The research findings indicate that the systematic application of psychological mechanisms in environmental education significantly enhances students' sense of responsibility. Practical activities, environmental projects, and group-based learning increase student engagement and encourage conscious environmental behavior.

Conclusion

This study aimed to identify and evaluate the effectiveness of psychological mechanisms for enhancing environmental responsibility in the process of developing environmental awareness among students. The results demonstrate that a systematic and goal-oriented approach to environmental education significantly improves students' environmental awareness.

At the beginning of the study, environmental responsibility among students was predominantly at low and medium levels, while the proportion of students with a high level ranged between 18% and 20%. By the end of the experiment, educational

activities based on psychological mechanisms such as motivation, emotional influence, reflection, and collaborative engagement increased the proportion of students with a high level of environmental responsibility to 52%, representing a substantial positive change.

Additionally, the percentage of students with a low level of environmental responsibility decreased from 40% to 12%, whereas no comparable changes were observed in the control group. These results confirm the effectiveness of specially designed psychological and pedagogical interventions in fostering environmental awareness.

The findings suggest that environmental education should not be limited to theoretical instruction. Instead, students should actively participate in practical activities, environmental projects, and collaborative tasks that strengthen their personal responsibility. In particular, understanding environmental protection as a personal duty contributes to the sustainable development of environmental behavior.

In conclusion, when environmental awareness is developed through psychological mechanisms, students' environmental responsibility can be significantly enhanced. The results have important theoretical and practical implications for improving environmental education systems, promoting environmental culture among students, and fostering conscious attitudes toward nature in future generations.

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