

ARTICLE

THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN THE FORMATION OF ECOLOGICAL CULTURE OF STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The ecological crisis, which so suddenly attacked the human habitat, made significant adjustments in the relationship between nature and man. It forced to reconsider all the significant developments of human civilization, and made actual the social and environmental problems at all levels: regional, national, and global [1,2,3]. In this regard, the problems of ecology, as a result of human's consumer attitude towards the entire natural system, are today among the most discussed topics in research papers, in the media space, and in scientific discourse. And there is a reason for that. The thoughtless, unlimited satisfaction of the growing needs of population has led to an irreversible change in the properties of landscapes, the depletion and loss of minerals, the disappearance of many species of animals and plants. At the moment, unsolved problems in the field of ecology reflect the reality of the twenty-first century. The resolution of the environmental issues depends not only from the level of development of production, science and technology, but on the ecological culture of population, on understanding the sources, the essence and the ways out of the current crisis situation, on everyone's participation in preserving natural resources, minimizing waste products. Based on the research of the state of students' environmental consciousness, the role of environmental education is considered in the article as a factor in the formation of culture, moral standards with regard to nature, and overcoming the environmental crisis. The data obtained allowed to substantiate the conclusions about the need for fundamental changes in educational programs, toughening of legislative provisions in the field of environmental management, as a mechanism of counteraction to the extinction and death of civilization.

INTRODUCTION

KEY WORDS
environmental policy,
social and
environmental problems,
environmental culture,
student youth.

Since the 20th century, environmental problems became pervasive and avalanche-like, putting humanity on the verge of ecological catastrophe, threatening the existence of civilization. It is no coincidence that during the last 30 years not only the recognition and active discussion of the problems, associated with environmental degradation, has been observed in the international community, but many national states became more active in the field of environmental safety, joining their efforts to eliminate the damage, caused to nature. [1]

The key position, determining the survival of the planet, is in immediately solving the existing problems in the environment. In this regard, it is significant to use all possible channels for the formation of a civilized human approach to the environment, personal responsibility for the preservation of the habitat and the available natural resources, by conscious limiting of material needs. [2,3]

Modern environmental problems are closely related to the problems in the social sphere, which continuously arise in the social environment. For example, progressively growing human diseases are largely associated with worsening changes in the ecological space of the planet. Thus, over the past two decades, the greenhouse gas emissions in the world have almost doubled, and carbon dioxide to the greatest extent contributes to a widening of ozone holes. This has led to an increase in the temperature of the earth's surface and an increase in sea level. In this regard, each country must significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In recent years, government and non-profit organizations have been actively developing programs to decrease energy efficiency, and to reduce carbon emissions [4]. The problem of food, soil pollution, land damage, reduction of fresh water, pollution of the World Ocean, epidemics, environmental disasters and the emergence of areas of environmental disasters, and many other problems are associated with the degradation of the natural environment.

One of the ways to overcome the ecological crisis is associated with the ecological culture, as the perception and attitude of the individual to the world. In this regard, the sustainable and safe development of any state to a significant extent is determined by the effectiveness of environmental education of all groups of the population and, first of all, the younger generation [5-11].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted at the Kazan Federal University in 2018. Its purpose was to determine the information needs of students for environmental information. The questionnaire method was used in the study. The respondents of Kazan (Volga region) Federal University were the experimental base of the research. The survey was conducted in March 2018. The total sample size was 240 people for the quota sample. It represented various categories of young people, depending on age, demographic characteristics and the kind of vocational training. The major part of respondents consisted of the second-year and fourth-year students of humanitarian and socio-economic direction, of which: 31% are boys, 69% are girls. The age structure of the respondents is presented in [Table 1]:

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Table 1: The age structure of the respondents

No	Age	Number of respondents	%
1.	Second-year students (18-20)	120	50
2.	Fourth-year students (21-23)	120	50
	Total	240	100

Processing of the results was carried out using the software package Microsoft Office Excel.

The methodological base consists of monographic and complex sociological studies, which allow to have a full picture of the formation of the current type of ecological culture among students.

RESULTS

An important task of the study was to determine the level of interest of students in environmental issues. According to the results, only 6% of respondents are not interested in environmental issues. Young people's concern about the situation in the environment is mainly connected with the state of health. Every second respondent (52%) note that he is interested in the impact of ecology on human health. Apparently, these data are largely due to the environmental situation in the Republic of Tatarstan. The significance of health in the youth consciousness of the region is confirmed by another result: 41% of respondents noted, that they are interested in the problem of covering a healthy lifestyle in the media.

One of the objectives of the study was to identify the level of environmental literacy of students. It was determined using the following questions: "State your sources of information, which cover environmental problems", "Do you have enough information about the ecology, published in social and political media?" and "Would you like to know more about the state of the environment in the region?". According to the data obtained, the largest number of students surveyed - more than two thirds (68%) - receive information from electronic versions of newspapers and magazines, 18% of respondents noted such source as television and 8% - radio [Table 2].

Satisfaction with obtained information was revealed by the question "Do you receive enough information on ecology from the media?" The results show that there are problems in the awareness of students about the current environmental situation. Almost two thirds of respondents (64%) noted that only sometimes they are satisfied with the published information on the environment; 25% of students answered that "there is no necessary information", and only 11% expressed their satisfaction, underlining the variant of answer "often".

Table 2: Distribution of answers to the question "State your sources of information, which cover environmental problems"

No	Variants of answers	Number of answers	%
1.	TV	44	18
2.	Radio	19	8
3.	Electronic versions of newspapers and magazines	163	68
4.	I am not interested in environmental issues	14	6
	Total	240	100

The level of environmental culture and literacy of students was also controlled by the question: "What publications, covering the environmental problems, do students read?" The data obtained allow to suggest that students do not often read the publications of environmental content. The magazines "GEO" and "National Geographic" attract the greatest interest of the respondents (29% and 22%, respectively).

Thus, the results of survey show that the majority of students are not interested in using specialized publications on environmental issues, but are content with publicistic information. However, according to the results obtained, the students are not indifferent to the situation in the environmental field. Answering the question: "Who should deal with environmental problems?", half of the respondents (49%) answered "every person"; 39% of students had the answer "government"; and 12% - "specialists in the field of environmental protection".

DISCUSSION

The majority of students find it difficult to define the term "ecology". This indicates a low level of environmental literacy of students. In part, it is caused by the unsatisfactory awareness of young people about the environmental situation in the region. These studies confirm the conclusion that students are satisfied with the quantity and quality of information, already available on environmental issues and problems.

However, according to the results obtained, the students are not indifferent to the current environmental situation. They are worried about the problems, arising in human environment, and that was noted by an absolute majority of respondents. Young people concern about the impact of ecology on health, on the conditions, necessary for a healthy lifestyle. Recognizing the importance of awareness by young people of the problems in the development of environment, it is necessary to form the students' attitudes for their own participation in the preservation of natural resources, and in solving environmental problems.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that the majority of students are concerned about the changes, occurring on the planet, but not many people are ready to take action and participate in restoring the ecological balance, recovering of damage, caused to nature. Many studies have focused on identifying the factors, which can effectively stimulate environmentally balanced attitude of people to nature, in order to promote pro-ecological behavior, and the formation of appropriate models of human activity. The results show that ecological beliefs, values, attitudes of a person are the factor, which effectively influences the ecological behavior of people.

Effective use of media can play a crucial role in the adoption and implementation of measures, aimed at solving environmental problems. Most people receive information about climate changes through the media. Survey data show the pattern, that people primarily rely on the media to obtain information about global environmental problems. [11]

Media has a very significant influence to the audience. This is important to apply in solving the environmental problems, and in recovering of damage, caused to nature. At the same time, the practice of mass media using confirms an indirect influence on the behavior of the environment through social norms, since it can have the form of social pressure and increase the intentions of population. Television news about state affairs and documentaries about the ecological state of the environment have a significant impact. Latest achievements in environmental knowledge predict policy support, aimed at reduction of pollution through the perceived risk of a global crisis.

The impact of environmental messages from traditional media and the Internet have a positive impact on society's attitude to the environment through the mechanisms of ecological values, orientations and intentions of people. The effective use of various types of media can positively influence the adoption of timely environmental measures.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest.

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