

Iryna Melnyk

Vinnitsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University
Doctor of Philosophy, Senior Lecturer

Department of Psychology and Social Work (Ukraine)

IraMelnyk@i.ua

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5340-8358>

Vadym Podorozhnyi

Vinnitsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University
Doctor of philosophy, Senior Lecturer

Department of Psychology and Social Work (Ukraine)

vadym.podorodzhnyi@vspu.edu.ua

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0004-6853>

Factors of environmental awareness formation in students

The relevance of the study is due to the understanding of the impossibility of solving environmental problems only by technical means and the need for worldview changes in this regard. Today, the problem of environmental awareness belongs to the so-called global socio-philosophical problems studied by world and national philosophy. In today's conditions, it is important to study the dynamics of environmental consciousness, which is seen as a holistic phenomenon that requires a person to have an active attitude towards nature and himself.

The main function of ecological consciousness is to ensure optimisation of relations in the society-nature system, prevention of a global environmental catastrophe, and resolution of the global environmental crisis. Therefore, we cannot underestimate the importance and necessity of developing environmental awareness in the younger generation.

Environmental knowledge is of particular importance for university students as future environmental managers. After all, mastering any profession should be based on the priority role of environmental knowledge and relevant skills, which will allow them to predict the consequences of their professional activities. In addition, it helps to involve students in creative cognitive activities. However, the awareness of modern youth about environmental issues is fragmented and undifferentiated; they are better aware of global environmental problems than of the problems of their local area. A significant number of students consider themselves uninvolved in solving environmental problems. Therefore, the necessary conditions for developing students' environmental awareness should be: understanding their own responsibility for the state of the environment and their dependence on it; developing a system of values that includes nature; developing practical skills and a certain behavioural strategy.

In this context, it is important not only to understand the concept of "environmental awareness" and its structural elements, but also to search for factors that influence its formation in students. After all, only by understanding the specifics of the process of forming environmental awareness in students, it is possible to solve the problems faced by young people on the way to understanding their own place in the world, building environmental behaviour, etc.

Keywords: *environmental awareness, emotional component, cognitive component, behavioural component.*

Formulation of the problem. It is difficult to imagine the life of a modern person without the achievements of scientific and technological progress. Over the past decades, scientists from around the world have made many discoveries, some of which have become real breakthroughs in their field and for humanity as a whole. However, along with the development of science and research, other problems have

arisen that are becoming more acute every day. These problems relate to environmental degradation, pollution and massive destruction of flora and fauna.

Thus, with each new achievement, humanity has been putting itself higher and higher on the evolutionary hierarchy. Against the backdrop of this exaltation of his own power, man destroyed more and more living things around him. Therefore, it is quite obvious that natural disasters occur in the world every day. And man cannot control it. Therefore, there is an urgent need to restructure relations with the environment, to understand its role and the consequences of irreparable damage caused by humans. The task is not only to acquire environmental knowledge, but also to form one's personal attitude to the environment, an understanding of one's place in the human-environment plane, readiness to take actions that preserve the environment or readiness to refrain from actions that harm the environment, to support or not support environmental policy, environmental measures, etc. Thus, a person needs to form and develop environmental awareness. In modern conditions, the formation and development of environmental awareness is extremely important for all inhabitants of the planet, but the most conscious category of the population that consciously approaches this process and understands its importance is young people.

Analysis of recent research and publications. In the psychological literature, there are several main approaches to the study of environmental awareness. The key among them are anthropocentric, nature-centric and ecocentric, which are aimed at forming the type of environmental consciousness and self-awareness of the individual that corresponds to them. Representatives of the anthropocentric approach define environmental consciousness as an understanding of the relationship between humans and their environment and an assessment of the possibility of influencing this relationship in order to meet one's own needs (K. Romanova, A. Liovochkina, T. Kulyk). Within the framework of the nature-centred approach, the main value is nature, and the individual's activity is aimed at serving nature and its development, while the needs of the individual are not significant (V. Panov, H. Bilyavsky, R. Furdui). The ecocentric approach and the type of ecological consciousness assumes that in the relationship between humans and the environment, the emphasis should be on harmony, interconnection, interaction and mutual development (V. Vernadsky, A. Schweitzer).

In addition to the above, there are other approaches in the psychological and pedagogical literature that substantiate the content of the concept of "environmental awareness". Thus, environmental consciousness is understood as: an independent form of social consciousness, a set of views, theories, emotions that reflect the problems of the relationship between society and the natural environment in terms of their optimal solution in accordance with the specific needs of society and natural capabilities (E. Girusov); a set of generalised ideas about nature, beliefs and ideals that reflect and determine a person's attitude to nature, its laws, and relevant assessments of interrelationships with it (M. Vasiliev, A. Kochergin, Y. Markov); the level of mental reproduction of the natural and artificial environment, one's inner world, self-reflection of the place and role of a person in the biological, physical, and chemical world, as well as self-regulation and filling this reproduction with ecological content (V. Skrebets).

Despite the considerable number of works and approaches to the study of the problem of environmental consciousness, it is still extremely relevant. After all, there is currently no unified understanding of the essence and content of the concept of "environmental consciousness", the factors that influence its formation are not sufficiently described, etc.

The purpose of the article is to present the results of an empirical study aimed at identifying the main factors influencing the formation of environmental awareness among students.

Outline of the main material. The category of environmental awareness is one of the key concepts of environmental psychology. Thus, according to M. Skladanovska, the concept of "environmental consciousness" should be understood not just as an attitude to nature and a set of ideas about the relationship within the "human-nature" system, but as a higher level of development of human consciousness and self-awareness, its worldview aspect, which largely corresponds to the concept of "environmental" and is characterised by the awareness of life as a great value for any creature [2].

According to O. Saltovsky, environmental consciousness is the reproduction by people of environmental living conditions and relations between society and nature in the form of environmental theories, ideas, and perceptions that reflect the attitude to nature in a given historical era [6].

It is worth noting that it is environmental awareness that reflects the unity of society and nature, an understanding of the common future and the definition of a person's own place in the ecosystem. In addition, the level and type of a person's environmental awareness affects his or her behaviour towards the environment, the choice of actions that may harm the environment or those that minimise negative environmental impact. Therefore, the state of the environment directly depends on the level and type of environmental awareness of the population. The level of environmental awareness, as well as the content of its elements, can change throughout a person's life, so the main task of forming environmental awareness, according to N. Negruts, is to develop creative thinking in a person that would allow him or her to set and implement goals that reflect the real relationship between man and nature, using the full range of available knowledge.

The formation of environmental awareness is a long process that involves the formation of its three main elements: behavioural, emotional and cognitive. The behavioural element includes readiness for individual actions and attitudes to support (or not support) social proposals. The emotional element is personal, subjective assessments of the individual, his or her own vision of the human-environment system. The basis of the cognitive element is theoretical (professional, scientific) and practical (gained from everyday experience of contact with the environment) knowledge [4].

Thus, we can speak about the formation of environmental consciousness if there is: environmental knowledge (a system of scientific knowledge aimed at understanding processes in the environment; perception of oneself as a part of nature, awareness of nature as a national and public domain and the ability to predict the consequences of various impacts on it) environmental thinking (level of knowledge, culture, understanding of environmental phenomena, conscious attitude to nature, ability to make adequate, reasonable decisions in relation to the natural environment); environmental beliefs (intellectually grounded, emotionally experienced, morally conscious attitude to reality; principles, life position, which guides the individual in his/her activities); environmental responsibility (ability and opportunity to consciously, purposefully, voluntarily care, foresee, comply with the requirements of activities in the natural environment).

Given the above, it is appropriate to note that the most complete formation of the structural elements of environmental awareness occurs during the student years, because unlike other age periods when the foundation of environmental awareness is laid, it is during studenthood that it becomes conscious. During this period, knowledge about the world around us is expanding, especially in the context of science, and the amount of information that a person has and can use is increasing. Accordingly, the individual's worldview expands, which allows for a different perspective on the familiar, including their own attitude to the world and the environment.

That is why, taking into account the results of the theoretical analysis, we conducted an empirical study of the factors of environmental awareness formation in students. The study involved 267 students of Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University. To achieve the research goal, we developed a questionnaire aimed at identifying the main factors that influence the formation of students' environmental awareness. The questionnaire included mostly closed-ended questions about attitudes towards the environment, the level of consciousness of nature, and what influences this attitude. In the process of analysing the results, we identified four main groups of factors that, according to the respondents, influence the formation of environmental awareness. The results are presented in the figure below.

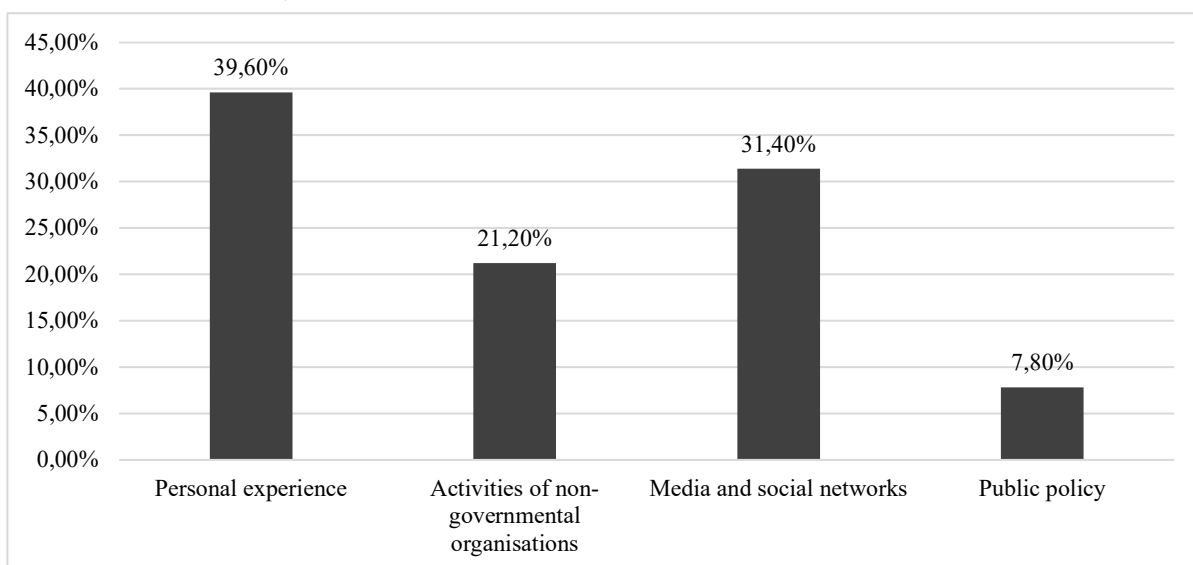


Fig. 1. Groups of factors that influence the formation of environmental awareness among students
(based on the results of the survey)

As can be seen from the diagram, 39.6% of respondents believe that personal experience influences the formation of environmental awareness. This group of factors includes family upbringing, which lays down certain values and patterns of human behaviour from an early age. And the initial level of formation of important elements of environmental awareness will directly depend on how much time and attention parents paid to forming a positive attitude towards nature and environmental behaviour in their children. In addition, each person has a specific personal experience of contact with the environment and environmental problems. This experience forms the basis for practical knowledge, personal attitude to the environment and a certain readiness for action.

A somewhat smaller number of students (31.4%) believe that the media and social media influence the formation of environmental awareness. In their opinion, the media play an important role in raising public interest in environmental issues, in disseminating information about environmental problems, natural disasters, their causes and consequences, expert opinions on how to prevent such consequences in the future, etc. The media are able to promptly disseminate environmental information among the general public, shape public opinion and attitudes towards certain environmental issues, phenomena, etc.

As for social media, they allow for faster dissemination of environmental information, promotion of environmental trends, and increase in the number of people aware of and interested in solving environmental problems. And it is social media that allows not only to disseminate and receive up-to-date information on the environmental situation not only in our country but also around the world, it also allows us to communicate with different people, share our own experiences, learn from the experience of other people and other countries in preserving the environment, etc.

Almost a quarter of the respondents (21.2%) indicated that the activities of non-governmental organisations influence the formation of environmental awareness. After all, non-governmental environmental organisations play an important role in raising public awareness of environmental problems and ways to solve them. This is done through the dissemination of information, development of online courses, manuals, booklets, videos, trainings, conferences on environmental issues, which in turn raises public awareness of environmental problems and ways to solve them, and increases the number of people interested in environmental issues. Respondents noted that NGOs' activities in one way or another create a public demand for state changes, which has a certain impact on the formation of environmental awareness among citizens, not only young people.

According to 7.8% of respondents, environmental awareness is significantly influenced by public policy, where education and awareness-raising activities are key to the formation of environmental awareness and its cognitive element. Equally important is the adoption of legislative rules of conduct, obligations, restrictions, prohibitions, procedures for liability for environmental offences, the establishment of taxes, fees for the use of natural resources and for emissions. These measures, according to the students, form a value-based attitude to the environment, raise public awareness of the impact of certain actions on the environment and the importance of preserving it. However, regulations and educational activities alone are not enough to create environmental awareness. For this purpose, the state needs to create the appropriate infrastructure and other opportunities for the population to fulfil their environmental responsibilities. The availability of the necessary resources and means directly affects the readiness of the population to take real action to preserve the environment and reduce their personal negative impact.

Conclusions and Prospects for Further Research. The problem of the essence of environmental consciousness of the individual is a promising and relevant area of psychological research. The emergence and development of an individual's environmental consciousness is determined by changes in the reality surrounding him or her (both changes in the natural environment and transformations in other spheres of human existence: society, culture, economy, etc.) Human interaction with the world around us can take place at different levels of our existence: planet, biosphere, technosphere, society, etc. The understanding of the living environment and human activity at these levels determines the formation of environmental awareness.

As for the factors that influence the formation of students' environmental awareness, it is formed under the influence of its structural elements - behavioural, emotional, cognitive. Environmental awareness is influenced by culture, traditions, personal needs and experience, values of the environment in which young people grow up and live, etc.

In view of the above, we see prospects for further research in the development and substantiation of a theoretical model of environmental awareness of the individual in the period of growing up, as well as in the study and comparative analysis of the level of environmental awareness in adolescents and adults.

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