

Towards a Greener Tomorrow?

Environmental Attitudes Among Young Generation – State of the Research

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Abstract: Understanding the social and economic consequences of environmental change represents a critical challenge for contemporary researchers. As highly educated individuals with access to information, young people will play a key role in decision-making on environmental issues. The article aims to review and systematise existing knowledge while presenting recent findings on young people's environmental attitudes. A total of 225 English-language scientific and popular science publications were analysed. The article also provides a comprehensive literature review on the concepts of environmental attitudes, measurement scales, and interpretative theories, including the New Environmental Paradigm, the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the Value-Belief-Norm Theory, and cultural frameworks. Young people are politically and socially active, advocating for causes aligned with their beliefs, which are shaped by formal education and information from social media. They emphasise ecological practices and demonstrate proactive engagement in addressing environmental challenges. Their future-oriented perspective reflects a strong sense of responsibility towards nature. However, environmental attitudes do not always translate into pro-environmental behaviours. The study also highlights cultural differences in environmental perceptions among young people. Future studies should include developing regions, particularly Central Asia and Africa, where research remains scarce despite growing environmental concerns. Understanding young people's environmental attitudes will enable better adaptation of educational programmes, policies, and approaches to nature perception, ensuring alignment with specific cultural contexts.

Key words: *environmental attitudes, young generation, national culture, environmental values, measurement*

1. Introduction

The social and economic implications of environmental changes constitute one of the most pressing contemporary research challenges. These issues present significant difficulties for governments and societies worldwide (Matczak, 2000; Lundholm, 2011; Rising et al., 2022). The study of attitudes towards the natural environment emerged as a significant area of academic inquiry in the 1960s, reflecting a growing recognition of its importance within the scientific community (Oppenheim, 1966). Systematic research began in the 1970s, leading to the formalisation and conceptualisation of this area of study (Dunlap and Van Liere, 1978; Gray, 1985; Kaiser, Woelfing, and Fuhrer, 1999; Schultz, 2001; Stern et al., 1999; Stern and Dietz, 1994; Thompson and Barton, 1994; Wiegel and Wiegel, 1978, among others).

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