

## Exploring the Relationship between Environmental Values and Environmental Behaviour of Adolescents

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**Abstract:** Understanding the relationship between environmental values and environmental behaviour in adolescents is crucial for fostering a sustainable future. This paper explores how environmental values influence the environmental behaviour of adolescents. Using a mixed-methods approach, including a survey and interviews, the study examines the strength and nature of this relationship. Findings indicate that strong environmental values correlate positively with pro-environmental behaviours. The research highlights the importance of environmental education and suggests strategies to enhance environmentally responsible behaviour among adolescents.

**Key points:** Environment, Behaviour, Adolescent, Relationship, Education.

### 1. Introduction

Environmental values, defined as the importance individuals place on the environment, significantly influence their behaviour towards environmental sustainability. Adolescence is a formative period for developing values and behaviours, making it critical to understand how environmental values shape the environmental behaviour of young individuals. This understanding can guide the development of effective educational and policy interventions aimed at fostering sustainable behaviours from an early age.

#### Environmental Values

Environmental values refer to the beliefs and principles that individuals hold about the environment and their role in protecting it. According to Stern and Dietz (1994), environmental values can be categorized into three types:

- **Egoistic values:** Concern for the environment based on personal benefits.
- **Altruistic values:** Concern for the environment based on benefits to others.
- **Biospheric values:** Concern for the environment based on the intrinsic value of nature.

These values guide how individuals perceive environmental issues and influence their willingness to engage in behaviours that support environmental sustainability (Stern, 2000).

#### Environmental Behaviour

Environmental behaviour encompasses actions that individuals take to minimize their negative impact on the environment. Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002) define it as a range of activities from recycling and conserving energy to advocating for environmental policies. These behaviours are often categorized into:

- **Direct behaviours:** Actions that have an immediate effect on the environment, such as recycling and energy conservation.

- **Indirect behaviours:** Actions that influence environmental outcomes through broader social or economic changes, such as voting for green policies.

## 2.3 Adolescents and Environmental Engagement

Adolescents are in a critical stage of developing personal values and social behaviours. Previous research indicates that environmental education and family influence play significant roles in shaping adolescents' environmental attitudes and behaviours (Chawla, 1999). Moreover, peer influence and media exposure are also important in determining how adolescents engage with environmental issues (Gifford & Nilsson, 2014).

### Research Objectives

- ✓ To investigate the relationship between environmental values and environmental behaviour among adolescents.
- ✓ To identify factors that influence this relationship.
- ✓ To propose strategies to enhance pro-environmental behaviour in adolescents.

### Methodology

#### Research Design

A mixed-methods approach was employed to examine the relationship between environmental values and behaviour among adolescents. This approach integrates quantitative data from surveys and qualitative data from interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research questions.

#### Participants

The study involved 200 adolescents aged 12-18 from various schools in a metropolitan area. Participants were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across different socio-economic backgrounds.

#### Data Collection

- **Survey:** A questionnaire assessing environmental values (using the Environmental Values Scale) and self-reported environmental behaviours was administered.
- **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 participants to gain deeper insights into their environmental attitudes and behaviours.

#### Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical methods, including correlation and regression analysis, to determine the relationship between environmental values and behaviour. Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Survey Findings

The survey results indicated a significant positive correlation between environmental values and environmental behaviour ( $r = 0.65$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Adolescents with higher scores on the Environmental Values Scale reported more frequent engagement in pro-environmental behaviours.

### 4.2 Interview Insights

Interviews revealed several key factors influencing the relationship between environmental values and behaviour:

- **Awareness and Knowledge:** Adolescents with greater awareness and understanding of environmental issues were more likely to engage in pro-environmental behaviours.

- **Social Influence:** Peer and family support played a crucial role in reinforcing environmental values and behaviours.
- **Perceived Effectiveness:** Adolescents were more likely to act if they believed their actions had a tangible impact on the environment.

## Discussion

### 5.1 Interpretation of Findings

The study confirms that environmental values significantly influence the environmental behaviour of adolescents. This finding aligns with previous research, suggesting that fostering strong environmental values is essential for promoting sustainable behaviours (Hines, Hungerford, & Tomera, 1987).

### 5.2 Implications for Environmental Education

The results underscore the importance of integrating environmental values into educational curricula. Programs that enhance environmental knowledge, foster positive attitudes, and promote social norms supportive of pro-environmental behaviour can be effective in shaping adolescents' environmental actions.

## 6. Conclusion

This study demonstrates a clear relationship between environmental values and environmental behaviour among adolescents. Enhancing environmental education and involving families and communities in promoting environmental values can foster more sustainable behaviours in young individuals. Future research should explore the long-term impact of environmental values on behaviour and investigate effective interventions for different demographic groups.

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