

Effect of Environmental Education on Attitude Change of Male Inhabitants in Mirabad Village within the vicinity of the Ghamishloo national park and wildlife refuge

Introduction: Today, most of the existing environmental problems are rooted in the lack of necessary awareness and cultural weakness in the field of human-nature communication, and it is considered a kind of cultural problem. Therefore, it requires national and international determination to strengthen the culture of environmental protection at the level of different sections of society. This study investigates the impact of environmental education with a biodiversity approach, emphasizing wildlife conservation, on the attitudes of rural men in Mirabad village, located near the Ghamishloo National Park and Wildlife Refuge in Iran.

Material and Methods: Using a semi-experimental method with pre-test, post-test, and follow-up designs, the research targeted 746 male residents, with a sample of 50 participants. Data were collected through a validated attitude survey questionnaire, and repeated measures variance analysis was employed for data analysis. The results indicate that environmental education significantly influenced attitudes in areas such as cultural and environmental awareness, livelihood and regional economy, and ecological functions. However, education did not have a significant impact on attitudes related to agriculture, animal husbandry, and environmental laws and regulations.

Results and Discussion: The results suggest that while environmental education can effectively change attitudes towards biodiversity and wildlife conservation in certain domains, its effectiveness varies across different aspects of rural life. The study highlights the importance of integrating environmental education into rural development strategies to foster a culture of conservation and sustainable living. It also underscores the need for tailored educational programs that address specific local contexts and challenges. The research contributes to the broader discourse on the role of education in promoting environmental stewardship and sustainable development in rural areas.

Conclusion: By focusing on the unique challenges faced by communities living near protected areas, the study offers insights into how education can be leveraged to enhance conservation efforts and improve the quality of life for rural populations. The findings advocate for a more nuanced approach to environmental education, one that considers the socio-economic and cultural realities of rural communities. This study underscores the potential of education as a tool for fostering positive environmental attitudes and behaviors, ultimately contributing to the preservation of biodiversity and the sustainable development of rural regions.

Keywords: Environmental education, Attitude change, Biodiversity, Ecosystem, Ecological function