CLIMATE CHANGE: AWARENESS, PRACTICES OF STUDENTS AND THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AT ANDIJAN LAW COLLEGE

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Abstract

Climate change and environmental sustainability are key global challenges, requiring cooperation and commitment from governments, institutions and individuals. This study explores the environmental beliefs, attitudes and practices of Andijan Law College students in Uzbekistan. The aim of the research is to understand how environmental awareness translates into behavior, and the role of institutional support. The study is a type of quantitative descriptive research. A questionnaire was distributed to 50 students using the simple random sampling technique. This study seeks to determine the level of students' understanding of green economy, renewable energy and the environment education and their involvement in sustainable activities. The results also show that, although students have a moderate level of understanding of environmental issues, there is a gap between knowledge and action, with most in favor of renewable energy with only a minority practicing sustainable habits. There is also a lack of institutional support for environmental programs or curricula. The conclusion drawn from the study is the need to improve environmental education, institutional policies and student engagement for sustainability, which will support the long-term production of environmentally responsible graduates and sustainable development in the institution at large.

Keywords: Climate Change, Environmental Sustainability, Green Economy, Renewable Energy, Environmental Awareness, Sustainable Practices

INTRODUCTION

Climate change is arguably the most important environmental issue facing our world in the twenty-first century. Its impact on environmental, social and economic systems is far reaching. Global warming, extreme weather events, biodiversity loss, and resource depletion can all be observed. Some of these problems may cause difficulties in the natural environment and for human well-being and sustainable development. Environmental sustainability is responsible interaction with the environment to avoid depletion and degradation of natural resources and allow for their long-term sustainability. It is closely related to the concept of sustainable development, which is defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations. More recently, international treaties such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), have called for a coherent approach to environmental issues internationally, nationally, and locally.

Knowledge, and education, are important factors in environmental sustainability. Those who have knowledge about environmental problems are more likely to engage in actions such as recycling, conserving energy, and reducing consumption. However, the gap between knowledge and actions is such that it is possible to know about environmental problems and not do anything about them. Barriers include lack of infrastructure, lack of institutional support, and the lack of motivation.

Education has a role in promoting environmental awareness. Schools and colleges have an important role in supplying responsible future citizens with knowledge and skills in environmental conservation. Furthermore, universities can improve students' values and attitudes towards the environment by including environmental education in the university curriculum and supporting environmental practices on campus. Law and governance students will be the decision-makers and implementers of the future, and should be empowered to make the necessary changes to environmental policy and regulation. In Uzbekistan, environmental sustainability has become an important focus of

policy making, linking national development with global sustainability objectives. The "Uzbekistan - 2030" strategy sets priorities for Uzbekistan's development, including the promotion of sustainable economic growth, the protection of the environment and the well-being of the population. Achieving these goals requires action by all members of society, including educational institutions and their students.

However, despite the increasing focus on environmental sustainability, there is limited academic research on the level of environmental awareness and practices among students at law education institutions in Uzbekistan. Understanding the factors affecting student perceptions, attitudes, and behavior is essential to implement effective education programs and policies to promote environmental sustainability in the country. The objective of the study is to examine the awareness, behavior, and institutional support for environmental sustainability. The research will explore the importance of awareness, behavior, and institutional support to environmental sustainability among students of Andijan Law College and investigate the interrelationship between these variables. The study will aim to identify the gaps and provide recommendations for improving environmental sustainability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Environmental sustainability and climate change have been the subjects of an important body of literature, conceptualizing them as multi-dimensional, entailing environmental, social, and economic. One of the more often quoted definitions is from Jeffrey Sachs (2015), which consists of a set of related goals for a balanced and inclusive approach towards environmental protection and economic development. Sachs believed that climate change should be treated as a developmental issue requiring aligned policies and institutions across multiple sectors.

Also, Amartya Sen (1999) stressed the importance of human capabilities, arguing that development should be thought of as the process of giving people the freedoms that allow them to live more meaningful lives, with access to a clean and healthy environment. He advocates for the idea that environmental sustainability is intimately connected to the well-being of humans. From an environmental viewpoint, the economist Nicholas Stern argued in the Stern Review (2007) that climate change caused economic damage, and that avoiding environmental damage today is more cost effective than making costly adjustments later. To avoid climate change, sustainable practices and more advanced technologies are needed, according to the Stern Review.

Likewise, Elinor Ostrom (2009) argues that in the case of resource commons as well, successful management is only possible if users organize themselves and build a set of rules governing their behavior. According to Ostrom, user engagement, interest, and institutional support, all at the local level, help to sustain common resources. Research highlights the role of education in sustainability. A UNESCO report has noted the importance of environmental education in shaping attitudes and behaviors that support sustainability. Environmental education can have positive effects on student sustainable behavior. However, attitudinal change does not always translate into behavior change for students. Research suggests that while people may be aware of environment-related problems, they do not change their behavior accordingly.

Practices such as Uzbekistan's reference to international policy priorities like SDGs in their national development strategy "Uzbekistan - 2030", also show how developing countries are ensuring that the global policies/agreements and priorities are taken into account in national strategies for sustainable development. But, obstacles remain such as lack of awareness, inadequate institutional backing and implementation mechanisms. Furthermore, research in youth and sustainability has demonstrated that youth hold positive environmental attitudes, particularly on renewable energy sources and climate change actions. However, youth are not always engaged in environmental sustainability practices due to lack of opportunity and resources available within the institutions and programs that target youth. General results in the literature suggest that for sustainable success, a combination of awareness, education, institutional support, and policy is necessary. However, in practice, an increase in awareness does not always lead to corresponding changes in student behavior. Unlike previous studies, this one

focuses exclusively on students from Andijan Law College to analyze how awareness, practices, and institutions influence sustainability.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To explore the awareness of the students of Andijan Law College about the environmental sustainability practices in their institution. To assess students' knowledge of climate change and environmental sustainability. This objective seeks to assess the extent to which students understand the concepts of green economy, renewable energy and environmental protection, so that we can determine whether students have basic knowledge or specialist knowledge of sustainability. To look at whether students apply environmental knowledge such as recycling, energy conservation, and participation in environmental activities, and to see how large the gap between knowledge and behavior is. The objective was to analyze the effect of institutional education on students' environmental knowledge and activities, and whether exposure to environmental education increased sustainable engagement This has been repeatedly tested regarding institutional support towards sustainability This goal provides a framework for understanding the contribution of the college to sustainability in its policies, programs and curriculum, and identifying institutional strengths and weaknesses. to recognize areas of greatest concern and offer recommendations. The purpose here is to highlight barriers such as lack of awareness, infrastructure or institutional engagement and to propose concrete measures for improving sustainability practices.

ETHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative and descriptive research design to investigate the environmental awareness and sustainable practices of students. The study was conducted among first- and second-year law students enrolled at the Andijan Law College (Andijan Technical School of Law) in Uzbekistan. Law students were specifically selected as a target group due to their direct involvement in governance, policy, and lawmaking, which are closely tied to environmental sustainability. The fifty students were chosen from a larger population through simple random sampling, a statistical method in which every element in the population has an equal chance of selection. This reduces bias and strengthens the overall reliability of the data.

Primary data were collected from:

- A structured questionnaire has close-ended questions.
- Informal interviews (to gain further insights into student perceptions)

The questionnaire asked questions about:

- Awareness of environmental concepts
- Recycling, energy consumption, sustainable practices
- Attitudes toward climate change
- Institutional support and education

Secondary data was obtained from:

- Academic journals
- Government reports
- Studies and policies on sustainability have
- Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed with descriptive statistics, including:

- Percentage analysis
- Tabular representation

Responses were then categorized (e.g. Yes/No, High/Moderate/Low) and tabulated to allow for comparison between groups and identification of possible patterns, trends, and relationships between variables (e.g. awareness and behavior).

- Ethical Considerations
- Participation was voluntary
- Responses were kept anonymous

- The data was used exclusively for research purposes.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected from **50 students of Andijan Law College** was analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. The findings are presented in the following tables with detailed interpretation to identify patterns, relationships, and key insights regarding environmental awareness and sustainability practices.

- **Table 4.1: Awareness and Knowledge of Environmental Sustainability**

Question	Yes (%)	No (%)
Know about green economy	60	40
Aware of climate change	72	28
Support renewable energy	70	30
Received environmental education	50	50

Interpretation (Analytical)

Table 4.1 examines students' awareness and knowledge of environmental sustainability concepts. The results indicate that awareness is relatively moderate but not comprehensive. While 72% of respondents are aware of climate change and 70% support renewable energy, only 60% are familiar with the concept of a green economy. This suggests that students are more exposed to general environmental issues rather than specific sustainability frameworks. A critical observation is that only 50% of students have received environmental education. This directly affects their depth of understanding. The variation between awareness of climate change (72%) and knowledge of the green economy (60%) highlights that students are more informed about commonly discussed global issues rather than policy-oriented or economic aspects of sustainability. From an analytical perspective, this table shows that awareness is **fragmented rather than holistic**. Students recognize environmental problems but may lack a structured understanding of sustainability as a system involving economic, social, and environmental dimensions. This finding suggests that improving environmental education within the academic curriculum is essential. Without formal education, students rely on informal sources such as media, which may not provide comprehensive knowledge.

- **Table 4.2: Students' Sustainable Practices**

Practice	Yes (%)	No (%)
Practice recycling	45	55
Save electricity (turn off lights, etc.)	62	38
Reduce plastic use	48	52
Participate in environmental activities	40	60

- **Interpretation (Analytical)**

Table 4.2 focuses on students' actual engagement in sustainable practices. The data clearly reveals a gap between awareness and behavior. Although a majority of students are aware of environmental issues (as shown in Table 4.1), their practical engagement is significantly lower. Only 45% of students practice recycling, while 55% do not, making it one of the weakest sustainability behaviors. Similarly, participation in environmental activities is low at 40%, indicating limited active involvement in sustainability initiatives. This suggests that students are passive supporters rather than active participants. Energy-saving behavior shows relatively higher engagement (62%), which can be explained by its simplicity and economic benefits. Actions like turning off lights require minimal effort and do not depend heavily on external infrastructure. In contrast, recycling and environmental participation require facilities, organization, and institutional support, which may be lacking.

From a deeper analysis, this table highlights a **behavioral gap**:

- Awareness is higher than action
- Easy behaviors are adopted more than complex ones

- Institutional dependency affects participation

This confirms that awareness alone does not ensure sustainable behavior. Practical engagement depends on external factors such as infrastructure, accessibility, and institutional encouragement.

- **Table 4.3: Institutional Support for Environmental Sustainability**

Institutional Factor	Positive (%)	Negative (%)
College promotes sustainability	48	52
Availability of recycling facilities	35	65
Environmental programs/events	42	58
Sustainability in curriculum	50	50

- **Interpretation (Analytical)**

evaluates the role of institutional support in promoting environmental sustainability. The results indicate that institutional efforts are generally weak or inconsistent. More than half of the students (52%) believe that the college does not actively promote sustainability. The situation is even more critical regarding recycling facilities, where 65% report negative availability. This lack of infrastructure directly explains the low recycling rates observed Environmental programs and events are also perceived as insufficient, with 58% of students indicating a lack of such initiatives. This suggests that students are not being provided with enough opportunities to engage in sustainability-related activities. The equal distribution (50%-50%) in curriculum integration reflects inconsistency in environmental education. Some students receive exposure, while others do not, which contributes to uneven awareness levels

CONCLUSION

This study examined the level of awareness, sustainable practices, and institutional support related to environmental sustainability among students of Andijan Law College. The findings highlight that while students demonstrate a moderate understanding of environmental issues such as climate change and renewable energy, there remains a significant gap between knowledge and practical implementation. The analysis revealed that a majority of students are aware of climate change and support renewable energy initiatives. However, fewer students actively engage in sustainable practices such as recycling, reducing plastic use, and participating in environmental activities. This indicates that awareness alone is not sufficient to ensure environmentally responsible behavior. The presence of this knowledge-action gap is a critical challenge that must be addressed through both educational and institutional efforts. Another important finding of the study is the limited role of institutional support in promoting sustainability. Many students reported that environmental programs, recycling facilities, and sustainability initiatives within the college are either insufficient or inconsistently implemented. This lack of institutional involvement directly impacts students' ability to practice sustainable behaviors. For example, low recycling participation can be linked to the absence of proper facilities and organized systems within the institution.

Furthermore, environmental education was found to be unevenly distributed among students. Only half of the respondents indicated that they had received formal education on environmental topics. This inconsistency contributes to varying levels of awareness and limits the development of a comprehensive understanding of sustainability concepts such as the green economy. The study emphasizes that achieving environmental sustainability requires a combined effort from individuals and institutions. Educational institutions, particularly law colleges, play a crucial role in shaping future policymakers and legal professionals. Therefore, integrating environmental education into the curriculum, promoting sustainability initiatives, and providing necessary infrastructure are essential steps toward fostering environmentally responsible behavior. In conclusion, while there is a positive trend in awareness and attitudes toward environmental sustainability among students, practical engagement remains limited. Strengthening environmental education, enhancing institutional support, and encouraging active student participation are key strategies for bridging the gap between knowledge and action. By addressing these challenges, educational institutions can contribute significantly to climate change mitigation and the development of a more sustainable future.

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