



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AWARENESS AND ATTITUDES AMONG TEACHER EDUCATORS: AN ASSESSMENT

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Abstract

This study investigates the levels of environmental education awareness and attitudes among teacher educators. Environmental education plays a pivotal role in fostering sustainable behaviors and attitudes among students. Understanding the perceptions and beliefs of teacher educators regarding environmental issues is crucial for integrating effective environmental education strategies into teacher training programs. Through surveys and interviews, this assessment explores the environmental awareness levels, attitudes, and perceived importance of environmental education among teacher educators. The findings provide insights into the readiness of teacher educators to incorporate environmental education into their teaching practices and curriculum development.

Keywords

Environmental education, Teacher educators, Awareness, Attitudes, Sustainable behaviors, Curriculum development.

INTRODUCTION

Environmental education has emerged as a critical component of educational curricula worldwide, aimed at fostering environmental awareness, sustainability, and responsible citizenship among learners. In the context of teacher education, the role of teacher educators is pivotal in shaping the attitudes, beliefs, and practices of future educators regarding environmental issues. Understanding the levels of environmental education awareness and attitudes among teacher educators is essential for informing curriculum development, pedagogical approaches, and professional development initiatives in the field of education.

The importance of environmental education in addressing pressing global environmental challenges, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and resource depletion, cannot be overstated. By integrating environmental education into teacher training programs, educators can equip future generations with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to become environmentally literate and active stewards of the planet.

Teacher educators serve as role models and mentors for pre-service and in-service teachers, influencing their perspectives on environmental issues and their approaches to integrating environmental education into classroom practice. Therefore, assessing the awareness levels, attitudes, and perceived importance of environmental education among teacher educators is critical for understanding their readiness and capacity to incorporate environmental themes into their teaching.

This assessment aims to explore the landscape of environmental education awareness and attitudes among teacher educators through a combination of surveys, interviews, and qualitative analysis. By examining the perceptions, beliefs, and practices of teacher educators regarding environmental issues, this study seeks to identify opportunities and challenges in promoting environmental education within teacher education programs.

The findings of this assessment will contribute valuable insights to the field of environmental education and teacher education by informing curriculum development, policy initiatives, and professional development efforts aimed at enhancing the integration of environmental education into teacher training programs. By fostering a culture of environmental awareness and sustainability within teacher education institutions, educators can play a pivotal role in preparing future generations to address environmental challenges and contribute to a more sustainable and equitable future.

METHOD

The process of assessing environmental education awareness and attitudes among teacher educators involved a systematic and comprehensive approach aimed at gaining insights into the perceptions and beliefs of educators regarding environmental issues. Initially, a structured survey questionnaire was designed to quantify levels of environmental education awareness, attitudes, and perceived importance among teacher educators. This survey instrument covered various aspects, including environmental knowledge, attitudes towards environmental issues, experiences with environmental education, and perceptions of its role in teacher training. The survey was distributed to a diverse sample of teacher educators across different institutions and regions, ensuring representation and diversity. Concurrently, qualitative interviews were conducted with a subset of teacher educators to delve deeper into their perspectives and experiences related to environmental education. These interviews provided nuanced insights into the challenges, opportunities, and strategies for integrating environmental education into teacher training programs. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring themes and patterns in the qualitative data. The integration of quantitative survey data and qualitative interview findings facilitated a comprehensive understanding of environmental education awareness and attitudes among teacher educators. Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the research process to uphold participant confidentiality and integrity. The insights derived from this assessment have the potential to inform curriculum development, policy initiatives, and professional development programs aimed at enhancing environmental

education integration within teacher education institutions.

To assess environmental education awareness and attitudes among teacher educators, a mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews.

Firstly, a structured survey questionnaire was designed to quantitatively measure the levels of environmental education awareness, attitudes, and perceived importance among teacher educators. The survey instrument included items related to environmental knowledge, attitudes towards environmental issues, experiences with environmental education, and perceptions of the role of environmental education in teacher training.

The survey was distributed to a representative sample of teacher educators across different institutions and geographical regions. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity were ensured to encourage honest responses. The survey data were analyzed using statistical techniques to identify patterns, trends, and correlations related to environmental education awareness and attitudes among teacher educators.

In addition to the survey, qualitative interviews were conducted with a subset of teacher educators to gain deeper insights into their perspectives, beliefs, and experiences regarding environmental education. Semi-structured interview protocols were developed to explore key themes identified in the survey, such as the integration of environmental education into teacher training programs, challenges and barriers encountered, and strategies for enhancing environmental education awareness among educators.

Interview participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure diversity in terms of institutional affiliation, academic discipline, and years of teaching experience. Interviews were conducted in-person or remotely, depending on participant preferences, and audio-recorded with consent. Thematic analysis was employed to identify common themes, patterns, and insights emerging from the qualitative data.

The integration of quantitative survey data and qualitative interview findings allowed for a comprehensive understanding of environmental education awareness and attitudes among teacher educators. Triangulation of data sources enhanced the validity and reliability of the assessment, providing a more nuanced picture of the opportunities and challenges associated with promoting environmental education within teacher education programs.

Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for participant autonomy, were carefully addressed throughout the research process to uphold the ethical integrity of the study.

Overall, the mixed-methods approach facilitated a holistic assessment of environmental education awareness and attitudes among teacher educators, informing strategies for enhancing environmental education integration and fostering a culture of environmental sustainability within teacher education institutions.

RESULTS

The assessment of environmental education awareness and attitudes among teacher educators revealed a varied landscape of perceptions and beliefs regarding environmental issues within the educator community. Quantitative analysis of survey data indicated that a significant proportion of teacher educators demonstrated a moderate to high level of environmental education awareness. Many respondents expressed a positive attitude towards environmental issues and recognized the importance of integrating environmental education into teacher training programs. However, the survey also highlighted areas where awareness and attitudes towards environmental education could be further strengthened, particularly in relation to the perceived relevance and effectiveness of environmental education initiatives.

Qualitative analysis of interview data provided deeper insights into the experiences, challenges, and opportunities associated with environmental education among teacher educators. Key themes that emerged from the interviews included the need for more resources and support for integrating environmental education into teacher training curricula, the importance of experiential and hands-on learning opportunities for educators, and the role of leadership and institutional commitment in fostering a culture of environmental sustainability within teacher education institutions.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this assessment underscore the importance of environmental education awareness and attitudes among teacher educators in shaping the future of environmental education initiatives. While many educators demonstrated a positive attitude towards environmental issues, there remains a need for ongoing professional development and support to enhance environmental education integration within teacher training programs. Addressing challenges such as limited resources, competing priorities, and institutional barriers will require collaborative efforts and strategic interventions from stakeholders across the education sector.

Furthermore, the assessment highlighted the potential for innovative approaches, such as interdisciplinary collaboration, community partnerships, and technology integration, to enhance environmental education awareness and engagement among teacher educators. By harnessing the collective expertise and resources available, educators can play a pivotal role in empowering future generations to become environmentally literate and active agents of change.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the assessment of environmental education awareness and attitudes among teacher educators provides valuable insights into the opportunities and challenges associated with promoting environmental sustainability within teacher education programs. By fostering a culture of environmental awareness, responsibility, and action among educators, teacher training institutions can equip future

generations with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to address pressing environmental challenges and build a more sustainable future. Moving forward, continued efforts to enhance environmental education integration, professional development, and institutional support will be essential for realizing the full potential of environmental education within the education sector.

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