



## ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS OF THE STUDENTS OF AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITIES IN POLAND AND UKRAINE

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### Abstract

The article presents the practical foundations of environmental education in selected agricultural universities in Poland and Ukraine. Comparative analysis of environmental awareness of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Agricultural and Forestry Technology students was carried out. An important part of work is devoted to the analysis of the results of empirical studies that were conducted between 2004-2009 among students and lecturers of examined faculties of universities in both countries. The obtained results indicate different level of formation of environmental awareness by students in both countries, both in terms of the interest in environmental issues and environmental knowledge. The results of these studies confirmed that the level of environmental awareness of students of Polish universities high than in Ukraine, which may be explained by the more environmentally-oriented learning process in Polish universities. In particular, it is advisable to use modern teaching methods and techniques to activate the students and encourage them to work independently.

**Keywords:** environmental awareness, agriculture universities of Poland and Ukraine, environmental education, modern teaching methods

## **INTRODUCTION**

One of the contemporary forms education of society is environmental education. Protection of the natural environment is the main problem demanding solution from the world community. Environmental risk can escalate dramatically. People must understand the necessity of creating a new global civilization based on environmental awareness. Exists are needed for the development of good living conditions for humanity. An important role in environmental education of future specialists has such components: environmental awareness, environmental knowledge of students, environmental and methodical preparation of academics for the tasks of environmental education in higher education. The main issue pursued by conducting trials was to explain the possibility of effects of the educational process on the formation of environmental awareness of the students on selected Polish and Ukrainian agricultural universities.

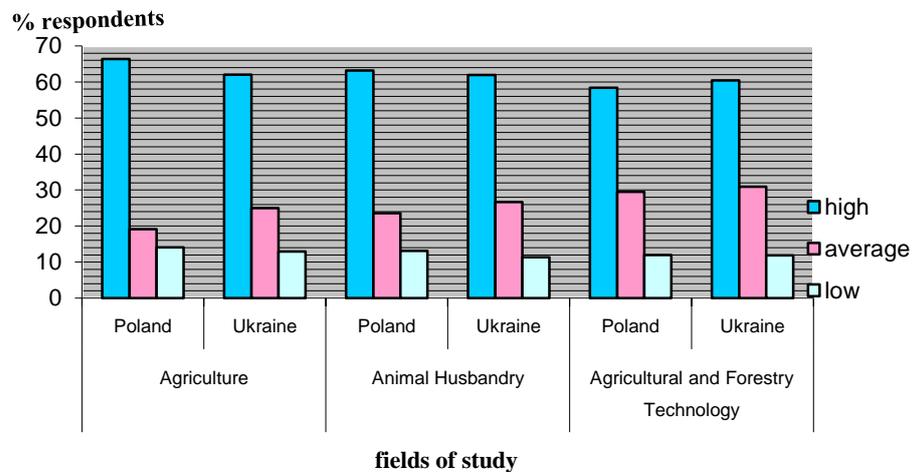
## **METHOD**

The research was carried out at Polish and Ukrainian universities. Questionnaire studies were carried out among the students of 2 and 3 years first degree studies agriculture directions (Animal Sciences, Agriculture, Agricultural and Forest Technology) together 720 persons – 360 students from the Polish universities and 360 students from the Ukrainian universities. The study aimed to collect the data as a basis for diagnosing levels of such categories as interest in environmental problems and possession of the basic environmental knowledge, what are in whole have allowed to compare levels of environmental awareness. Some questions of the survey related to determining the level of interest in the environmental problems. It was assumed that interest in environmental problems is one of the main motivations to study at the agriculture university, because it means studying the high number of biological and natural science, including environmental protection and business impact of the activities at the condition of nature. Several questions allowed explaining the level of environmental knowledge. As a result of these studies information was accumulated about the causes of established difference in the levels of environmental awareness between the respondents at the Polish and Ukrainian agriculture universities.

## FINDINGS

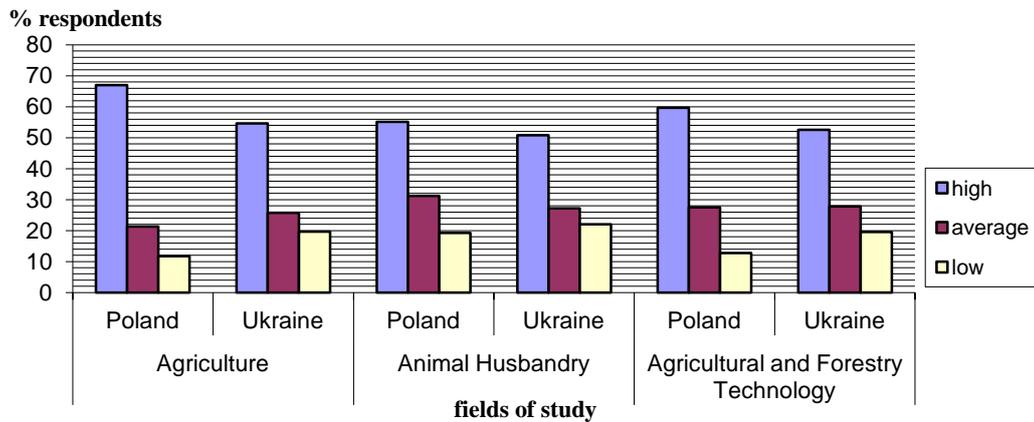
Based on the responses of the students it can be concluded that students of all examined faculties of universities in both countries have a high level of interest in environmental problems (on the average nearly 70%). Average and low levels are in relatively small proportion and cannot be considered as the decisive indicator of the general state of interest (Fig.1).

Fig. 1. Levels of interest in environmental issues among the surveyed students



In terms of basic environmental knowledge agriculture students of Polish universities are higher than students of Ukrainian universities. It is connected with educational program which included quite a lot (almost 40%) subjects about environmental contents. In the second place are Agricultural and Forestry Technology students of Polish universities. A similar level of basic environmental knowledge was possessed by students of Animal Husbandry of both countries. Low level of basic environmental knowledge is similar in all faculties of both countries and is within the 11.7 to 22% (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2. Levels of basic environmental knowledge of the surveyed students



## DISCUSSION

The discussion of results aims to verify the hypothesis that the level of environmental awareness of the surveyed students of Polish agricultural universities is higher than of respondents of Ukraine universities. For instance studies of Cichy (2005), by which the main task of environmental education is to raise awareness for environmental protection and sustainable development objectives. Many researchers consider levels of public awareness in Poland and Ukraine in sufficient. For example, Tuszyńska (2008) reports that condition of society environmental education is still unsatisfactory, it requires permanent educational activities of various public institutions.

The research of Puchala (2010) show that the interest in the environmental issues of natural sciences (chemistry, environmental protection, biotechnology) students are almost twice than that of secondary pupils. Their knowledge of environmental questions is generally satisfactory overall, but not sufficient in respect with more detailed questions. In terms of practical actions pupils and students demonstrate their readiness and willingness to engage in environmental activities, which is not always possible (for example, lack of waste containers). The presented results show that raising level of societies environmental awareness can be achieved by correctly carried education. The effectiveness of efforts to improve the environment largely depends on the environmental awareness.

Ślodyczk (2005) argues attitudes to environmental protection which arise from the consciousness shaped by the levels of environmental knowledge are important. According to

research of Bobrzynska (2004) carrying out practical activities to environmental protect contributes to the increasing of environmental awareness, knowledge and interest in environmental problems. The most important task of education is to develop among the population skills of practical solving theoretical environmental knowledge in the workplace and residence. Less attention should be given to the transfer of theoretical knowledge and more on developing of practical skills (Tuszynska 2007). Selected above statements can be theoretical basis to research levels of environmental awareness of students of Polish and Ukrainian agricultural universities.

## **CONCLUSION**

Following this study and generalization of questionnaires responses showed strong influence of the educational process on environmental awareness of students. Results of this research demonstrated a higher level of environmental awareness among examined students of Polish agricultural universities than respondents in Ukrainian universities.

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