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### Some Solutions to Enhance Environmental Awareness among Students at Tan Trao University

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#### Abstract

Enhancing environmental consciousness among students holds significant importance, not only for the comprehensive education of the new generation but also for disseminating educational values throughout society, contributing to the sustainable development of the nation. Students constitute a substantial force for advocacy and participation in environmental protection; they represent a generation with dreams and aspirations, possessing abundant

capabilities and creative potential. Tan Trao University is actively prioritizing and implementing initiatives to enhance environmental awareness among its student body, aiming to elevate their consciousness and preserve a green, clean living and learning environment. This article investigates the current status and proposes solutions to enhance environmental awareness among students at Tan Trao University.

**Keywords:** Enhancing Awareness, Environmental Protection, University Students

#### 1. Introduction

The current issue of environmental pollution is receiving attention from the Party and the State due to its implications for the development of human life, economic growth, and the cultural and social development of the country. The 13th National Party Congress (2021) explicitly stated: "Strengthening propaganda, education, raising awareness, responsibility, and enhancing the effectiveness of law enforcement in the management of resources, environmental protection, and response to climate change" [1, p.142]. Environmental protection is an urgent task, not only the responsibility of individuals but also of the entire society, especially the younger generation. Currently, Tan Trao University not only excels in education and training but also emphasizes the construction of a green, clean, and beautiful environment. Directives, resolutions, and guiding documents from the Party, Government, Ministry of Education and Training regarding environmental protection have been implemented; movements have been initiated for students and youth to engage in environmental sanitation, tree planting, and waste collection and disposal in all areas within the university campus and in the province. However, the environmental protection awareness of some students is still lacking, and they do not fully grasp the importance of environmental protection. One of the reasons is the lack of a sense of responsibility among students towards environmental protection. Therefore, there is a need for solutions to enhance environmental protection awareness among students to contribute to making the learning and living environment greener, cleaner, and more beautiful.

#### 2. Research History

The research has been the focus of many scientists, approached from various perspectives:

MEHMET ERDOĞAN (2009) conducted a study on "Factors influencing environmental responsibility of students." Doctoral thesis, Middle East Technical University; Joshua W. Busby, University of Texas–Austin (2009) [4] studied "Climate security network: Its significance for the poor"; Jovanović Slavoljub *et al.* (2015) [5] addressed "Student responsibility in development and protection of environmental values." *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 171, 317-322; Mehmet Bozoglu *et al.* (2016) [6] explored "Factors influencing attitudes, perceptions, and environmental protection behavior of students at ONDOKUZ MAYIS University, Turkey." *Fresenius Environmental Bulletin*, 25, 1243-1257; Qihua Li *et al.* (2019) [7] delved into "Key factors influencing environmental value protection in China." *Sustainability*, 11, 304.

Le Van Khoa (2011) in "Environment and Environmental Protection Education" presented general issues regarding environmental science, ecological sovereignty, main ecosystem types, human impact on the environment, and introduced

some documents related to environmental policies and education activities.

Nguyen Nguyen Dan (2011) in the study "Survey of environmental protection awareness among students at Can Tho University" surveyed environmental protection awareness among students at Can Tho University. From there, he evaluated the awareness and analyzed the factors influencing the formation of environmental protection awareness among students at Can Tho University. The author proposed measures to enhance environmental protection activities to improve environmental protection awareness among students.

Nguyen Thi Thuy Huong and Pham Minh Ai (2015) in "Research on some solutions for educating ecological environmental protection awareness for Vietnamese students" deeply analyzed the current ecological imbalance and the necessity of environmental protection education for students.

Dao Thu Hien (2019) in the research "Environmental protection awareness education for university students in Hanoi today" systematized and analyzed theoretical issues related to environmental protection education for university students, the importance of environmental protection education for students; surveyed the current situation of environmental protection awareness education and evaluated the situation of environmental protection awareness among university students in Hanoi to outline the challenges for environmental protection education activities for students; proposed some orientations and main solutions to enhance environmental protection education for university students in Hanoi today.

Pham Thi Dung (2019) in "Organization of urban environmental protection law enforcement in Vietnam today" presented a system of theoretical issues regarding the organization of urban environmental protection law enforcement, urban environmental issues, urban environmental protection laws, general legal enforcement organizations and urban environmental protection law enforcement organizations; the responsibilities of subjects in organizing the enforcement of urban environmental protection laws, especially the role of urban authorities; also clarified the current situation of organizing urban environmental protection law enforcement in Vietnam. From there, proposed directions and suggested solutions to improve the effectiveness of organizing urban environmental protection law enforcement.

Me Thi Nien (2019) in "The current status of educating ecological environmental protection awareness for the people through youth union community activities in Son La city" clarified the role of local social organizations through surveys; the purpose, content, and forms of educating ecological environmental protection awareness for the people through community activities of the Youth Union in Son La city. Through the survey, the results showed the role of social organizations in educating environmental protection awareness for the people is not high.

In general, the above works have researched and approached various issues related to the environment, environmental protection, and environmental education for students and people in different localities. Based on theoretical analysis and practical surveys, the authors have analyzed the current situation and proposed solutions to enhance responsibility awareness in preserving and protecting the environment.

### 3. Phương pháp nghiên cứu

Tác giả sử dụng các phương pháp nghiên cứu lý thuyết dựa trên quan điểm của chủ nghĩa Mác-Lênin, quan điểm của Đảng, chính sách, pháp luật của Nhà nước về bảo vệ môi trường và sử dụng các phương pháp nghiên cứu thực tiễn để khái quát nội dung nghiên cứu như lập bảng hỏi, chọn mẫu, thu thập dữ liệu, tiến hành phân tích, xử lý số liệu, thống kê, phỏng vấn sâu để làm rõ thực trạng, đồng thời sử dụng phương pháp mô tả để đề ra giải pháp nâng cao ý thức bảo vệ môi trường cho sinh viên Trường Đại học Tân Trào.

### 4. Research Findings

#### 4.1 Current State of Environmental Awareness among Tan Trao University Students

Recognizing the importance of implementing party directives and resolutions on education, training, and environmental protection, the Party Committee, Board of Directors, and School Council have diligently pursued research, learning, assimilating, and propagating party directives, state resolutions on environmental protection to disseminate the Party's guidelines, policies, and state laws on environmental protection to the cadres, party members, lecturers, and students within the university. Dissemination, popularization, and legal education, including environmental legal education for students, are conducted through General Law subjects, extracurricular activities, etc.

The faculty of the university has continuously improved their qualifications, specialized knowledge, and professional skills. With increasingly high levels of expertise and regularly nurtured skills, many lecturers have contributed to enhancing environmental protection awareness among students. Many lecturers have actively conducted scientific research, compiled textbooks, written articles for scientific journals on environmental issues, participated in scientific conferences, and guided student research. Lecturers are aware of their responsibility to regularly update and grasp scientific information, understand the Party's guidelines, directions, and state policies and laws on resource management, the environment to serve teaching environmental subjects. Through courses such as Environment and Society; Environmental Education, Environmental Management, Tourism Environment Management and Protection, students understand the current situation, causes, and consequences of environmental pollution and degradation.

The Youth Union and Student Union have identified environmental protection as an important task. The Youth Union Executive Committee has developed specific plans and organized many activities to promote environmental protection, such as the Green Summer Campaign, World Environment Day Campaign, Tree Planting Tet, environmental protection awareness competitions, etc. They organize activities to maintain environmental sanitation within the university campus, such as caring for green trees and ornamental plants, sweeping and collecting waste, cleaning classrooms, desks, and boards.

The Dormitory Management Board has assumed responsibility and made positive contributions to enhancing environmental awareness among students. Dormitory officials have performed well in inspecting, supervising, and reminding resident students to ensure cleanliness in living quarters, maintain the dormitory's landscape, keep the school environment civilized and clean, and urge all resident

students to participate in overall sanitation activities, including cleaning corridors, volleyball courts, lawn mowing, and waste collection. Resident rooms proactively assign members to clean their living spaces, such as doors, fans, balconies, bathrooms, arranging books, beds, and personal belongings neatly, contributing to enhancing students' sense of responsibility, self-discipline, and initiative in building a green, clean dormitory. Survey data on "cleanliness of living quarters" among students shows that 61.4% of students do so "very often," 31.6% "often," and 7.0% "occasionally." Thus, the majority of students are aware of their responsibility to maintain cleanliness in their living quarters and study environment to create the most effective learning environment.

Students enthusiastically participate in local environmental protection activities when the locality organizes events such as the Thanh Tuyen Festival, International Balloon Festival, etc. Tan Trao University students actively promote environmental hygiene awareness, mobilize residents and tourists to enhance environmental sanitation, and participate in waste collection and street cleaning after the festivals. This reflects the proactive spirit and voluntarism of youth union members, club members, and university students. Survey results show that 75.1% actively participate in school and community beautification activities.

Student clubs such as the Social Work Club, Life Skills Club, Communication Club, Youth Research Club, Volunteer Club, etc., contribute significantly to local and university environmental protection. These clubs guide students to live in an orderly, clean, economical manner, know how to classify waste, etc. Youth Union, Student Union, and club leaders are mostly enthusiastic, responsible individuals who regularly promote, encourage, and encourage students to participate in meaningful community activities, beautifying the living environment. Additionally, Youth Union and Student Union regularly show care and encouragement to unleash students' creativity in implementing entrepreneurial ideas related to environmental protection.

Most students express trust and confidence in the Party's guidelines and directions for environmental protection, grasp the legal provisions on environmental protection, and cope with climate change. They have a love and respect for nature and maintain a friendly attitude toward the environment. Through the assessment of environmental protection awareness among students via surveys, 100% of students affirm proper waste disposal, refrain from littering, urinating indiscriminately, plucking flowers, breaking branches, or damaging the common landscape.

These results stem from the attention of the party committee, board of directors, the collective efforts of university officials, lecturers, and the endeavor of students along with the educational concern of families. The university has invested in modern infrastructure, scientifically arranged spacious, well-lit spaces to serve the teaching and learning process. Important social and political organizations for students such as the Youth Union, Student Union have played a significant role in guiding and organizing activities for students, contributing significantly to enhancing environmental awareness among students.

*In addition, there are still some limitations:*

Some environmental protection movements and campaigns by the Youth Union primarily consist of sporadic activities,

lack of focus and regularity, and fail to attract the participation of a large number of students. Disciplinary measures for students who violate regulations are not consistently strict. Enhancing environmental awareness among students through extracurricular activities organized by the Youth Union and Student Union is considered the most effective educational approach, yet it has not been widely implemented.

Currently, the university lacks courses to train students in skills to prevent and respond to unusual weather conditions, natural hazards, and living-friendly environmental skills for students.

The number of lecturers teaching environmental courses is limited, and there are few specialized lecturers, leading to limitations in terms of knowledge, especially practical experience and practical knowledge. Teaching methods still depend on the conditions of facilities such as lecture halls, sound systems, microphones, projectors, etc.

Students still have limitations in terms of awareness, motivation, and have not correctly identified the purpose of participating in environmental protection. Some students lack ideal goals, enthusiasm, and responsibility for themselves and their families, so they are indifferent to community issues such as environmental protection. There is still littering, candy wrappers, and seeds under the floor in classrooms after class, and electric lights and fans are still running even after class hours.

The collaboration between families, the university, and society in educating students on environmental protection is not frequent and close.

*The causes of these limitations:*

In the context of a market economy, rapid industrialization, and urbanization pose many challenges to the environment. Large-scale resource exploitation, rapid population growth, urban development, and increasingly severe environmental pollution hinder students' awareness.

Student movement activities with limited financial resources, mainly mobilized from external funding sources, and relying on students' voluntary spirit, result in modest outcomes.

The university dormitories are deteriorating, and most students rent accommodation outside the dormitories. Therefore, there are limited opportunities for collective learning and activities because rented accommodations are far from the university, so students participate less in extracurricular activities and university campaigns.

Difficulties in ensuring the infrastructure conditions as stipulated by national standards for higher education institutions of the Ministry of Education and Training.

Additionally, the situation is also influenced by some dysfunctional and dilapidated restrooms. Family members still litter indiscriminately, engage in actions that negatively impact the environment, and students emulate these behaviors.

#### **4.2 Solutions to Enhance Environmental Awareness among Students at Tan Trao University**

Firstly, strengthen the leadership of departments, offices, and divisions in promoting environmental awareness among students.

To effectively enhance environmental awareness among students at Tan Trao University, it is essential to further promote the leadership roles of departments, offices,

divisions, centers, and academic units. Management staff, homeroom teachers, academic advisors, and student union officials, who regularly interact with, assist, and educate students, play a crucial role in this effort. To fulfill their assigned responsibilities, beyond mastering the principles and requirements of their roles, staff and lecturers need to deeply understand key environmental issues, the Party's viewpoints, and State laws on the environment and environmental protection. This understanding will enable them to recognize the characteristics and current state of both national and local environments, thereby effectively contributing to environmental protection efforts.

To enhance environmental awareness, staff and lecturers themselves need to undergo training through courses aimed at improving their knowledge and skills in environmental protection, disaster risk reduction, and climate change adaptation.

In addition to integrating environmental protection knowledge into lectures, staff and lecturers should set an example for students, encouraging them to monitor each other's environmental protection efforts. This peer monitoring can lead to timely reminders and commendations for environmentally friendly behaviors and activities.

The university should also establish specific regulations regarding the protection of the classroom environment, school grounds, pathways, dormitories, etc., making environmental awareness a criterion for student assessment and classification. Certain disciplinary violations should result in sanctions related to environmental protection, such as caring for plants or picking up litter within the school area. Through these measures, a sense of environmental responsibility and habit can gradually be instilled in students.

*Secondly, promote the role of student unions and associations in enhancing environmental awareness among students.*

To effectively raise environmental awareness among students, it is essential not only to focus on classroom teaching but also on extracurricular activities. The activities of student unions and associations within the university provide an excellent environment for enhancing students' environmental awareness. These activities include volunteering, field trips, and participation in clubs and youth union activities. These activities help students accumulate knowledge, become aware of current environmental pollution issues, and provide opportunities to express their thoughts and implement their scientific ideas about the environment.

Enhancing the training and professional development of union and association officials is crucial for developing a team of leaders with the qualities and capabilities to direct movements and serve as the core force in raising environmental awareness among the youth at Tan Trao University.

Establishing and improving the organization and activities of student clubs is a vital solution in the comprehensive education program for university students, helping to supplement and develop many necessary skills. Creating student club models that focus on developing environmental protection skills is essential.

The university should organize more field trips and practical visits for students. Visits to factories, enterprises, and nature reserves allow students to witness industrial pollution, biodiversity, and the importance of flora and fauna

firsthand. These experiences help students reinforce classroom knowledge, connect theory with practice, and enhance the sense of responsibility among youth and students towards the country and the environment.

*Thirdly, innovate the content, methods, and forms of teaching*

To enhance environmental awareness among students, it is essential to focus on educational content and programs that are appropriate for the target audience and meet practical requirements. Firstly, students must understand the viewpoints, policies, and laws of the Party and the State. This education can be integrated into the curriculum through courses in political theory and environmental science.

Raising environmental awareness must include educational content on skills for environmental protection. This includes teaching skills for responding to and mitigating natural disaster risks, as well as other essential skills for environmental protection. These skills should be tailored to the student audience so that they are not only well-informed but also capable of creatively applying their knowledge in various situations. Additionally, students who possess a solid understanding and skill set in this area can play a pivotal role in supporting the community and significantly contribute to environmental protection advocacy.

Conveying scientific knowledge about the environment to students can be achieved through organizing classes, training courses, writing articles, publishing on websites, broadcasting on radio, and hosting performances and competitions. Test and exam question banks should include practical application and real-world connection questions to enhance environmental awareness. Students must comprehend the intrinsic value of the relationship between humans and nature and understand the Party's policies and State laws on environmental protection.

Enhancing students' environmental awareness through teaching activities requires leveraging modern teaching tools that facilitate easy comprehension, capture attention, and promote active participation and better retention. The university's website should be regularly updated with essential and beneficial information about the environment and environmental protection activities.

*Fourthly, promote the pioneering role of students in environmental protection*

The pioneering and creative spirit of students in environmental protection activities is demonstrated through their participation in movements and activities both within the university and in the local community. These activities help raise awareness and affirm the leading role of youth and students in mobilizing and educating the public to participate in campaigns such as World Environment Day, Earth Day, Vietnam Sea and Island Week, wildlife protection, and National Clean Water Week.

As a pioneering force in all fields, epitomized by the slogan "wherever needed, there are the youth; wherever difficult, there are the youth," students actively and enthusiastically engage in environmental protection efforts, climate change response, and socio-economic development programs that are linked with environmental preservation in their localities and schools.

Students must be proactive and positive in creative activities and scientific research. Although student participation in scientific research is still in its early stages, it is the highest form of self-motivation, self-learning, and self-improvement. Students should continuously enhance their



knowledge, skills, and the application of science and technology, engaging in scientific research on practical and highly applicable topics that address pressing issues of societal concern.

## 5. Conclusion

Enhancing environmental awareness among students is an urgent issue for the entire society and a responsibility shared by all departments. In the face of current environmental pollution challenges, raising environmental awareness among students contributes to the formation and development of environmental consciousness. In the future, the university needs to promote the creativity and proactivity of students, fostering future generations of workers who are highly responsible towards the environment. To achieve effective results in raising environmental awareness among students, the university must closely adhere to the Party's viewpoints and State laws on environmental protection in the new era. This should be based on the perspective of comprehensive and fundamental educational reform. There must be coordinated efforts between the university and relevant agencies and departments. Additionally, the university should effectively leverage the leadership roles of student unions and associations to change perceptions and habits, and to enhance the awareness and responsibility of students in environmental protection, thereby cultivating future generations with a high sense of environmental responsibility.

## 6. Acknowledgements

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