

IC - (21078) - ENVIRONMENTAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR IN KAZAKHSTAN: UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECT OF PERSONAL AND POLITICAL VALUES

Fatikha Agissova¹; Elena Sautkina¹

1 - National Research University Higher School of Economics

Background and objectives

The state of the environment in Kazakhstan, a post-Soviet country located in Central Asia (population – 18.78 million, GDP per capita – US \$9,731 (The World Bank, 2019)), is showing alarming tendencies due to a deterioration of land resources, pollution, and an increasing water scarcity caused mainly by oil, gas and metal extraction. These problems, aggravated by climate change-related risks, pose a large threat to numerous aspects of people's lives. There is a scarce amount of literature on predictors of environmental attitudes in Kazakhstan, most of them focusing on sociological aspects. Therefore, the current study is aimed at filling this gap through investigating the socio-psychological predictors of environmental attitudes and pro-environmental behavior in Kazakhstan.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

Data were collected using an online survey (N = 305) in early 2020.

The survey included the scales of personal values, political values, new environmental paradigm (NEP), environmental concern, pro-environmental behaviors (littering, recycling, environmental citizenship, community action), and socio-demographic variables.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

- The value of Security was the strongest predictor of both Environmental Concern and NEP, overshadowing the effect of traditionally accepted value dimensions of Self-Transcendence and Self-Enhancement.
- Environmental Concern was also positively predicted by personal value of Self-Direction and negatively – by political value of Free Enterprise. NEP was positively predicted by values of Universalism and Benevolence, as well as by political value of Civil Liberties.
- Environmental concern was a strong predictor of all pro-environmental behaviors included in the study.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

Results of the current research contradict the previous findings of studies mostly conducted in Western countries, concluding that it is not just altruistic caring or political liberalism that drives people to act, but the simple concern for their security. There is a need for further research in the developing countries that are experiencing environmental impacts.

Palavras-chave : personal values, political values, environmental concern, new environmental paradigm, pro-environmental behavior, Kazakhstan, post-Soviet states