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Éducation environnementale – Maroc – COVID-19 – Représentations – Comportements
écologiques – Élèves – Durabilité – Approches pédagogiques – Santé environnementale –
Démarche hypothético-déductive



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN MOROCCO: PRACTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPTUAL AND OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORKS AND THE INTERSECTING IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ENVIRONMENTAL PERCEPTIONS AND BEHAVIORS

Abstract:

In a global context marked by the worsening of ecological crises—climate change, biodiversity loss, and ecosystem pollution—environmental education (EE) emerges as a strategic lever for transforming mindsets and behaviors, aiming to shape conscious citizens capable of acting for sustainability. It is within this dynamic that the present thesis is situated, offering a critical, systemic, and empirical analysis of environmental education in Morocco.

The work is structured around two complementary components. The first, at the national level, analyzes the conceptual, institutional, and operational foundations of EE based on a sample of 720 actors (ministerial representatives, teachers, local authorities, NGOs). It examines their perceptions, practices, and constraints, while exploring pedagogical approaches, the diversity of educational tools, and the barriers hindering their effective implementation in schools and across territories.

The second component consists of a case study involving 433 secondary school students in Fès, Sefrou, and Tangier. It explores the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their representations, environmental and health-related knowledge, and behaviors before, during, and after the crisis. The objective is to understand how such a global event can act as a catalyst for ecological awareness among youth, while questioning the sustainability of these changes.

The methodology adopts a rigorous mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analyses (descriptive statistics, Chi-square tests, ANOVA, principal component analysis, clustering) and qualitative analyses (thematic analysis using NVivo).

The results reveal several major findings: uneven appropriation of EE principles among different actor profiles; insufficient inter-institutional coordination; fragmented use of pedagogical tools; and generally strengthened ecological awareness among students during the pandemic, though fragile without post-crisis support.

The study emphasizes that while the pandemic acted as an accelerator for adopting eco-responsible behaviors, this dynamic is highly dependent on the educational context, the level of guidance, and the availability of spaces for expression (clubs, debates, local initiatives). It also highlights the limited perception of environmental risks associated with certain medical wastes (masks, syringes, vials), revealing a need for better-integrated health education within EE.

In conclusion, this thesis calls for a rethinking of environmental education in Morocco to make it more contextualized, inclusive, and territorially grounded. It recommends stronger synergy between educational and institutional actors, greater use of digital tools as pedagogical levers, and the integration of lessons learned from the pandemic into future educational strategies. It also aims to provide concrete, decision-support elements to guide educational and environmental policy in Morocco.

Key Words:

Environmental education – Morocco – COVID-19 – Perceptions – Ecological behaviors – Students – Sustainability – Pedagogical approaches – Environmental health – Hypothetico-deductive approach