

An Assessment of Environmental Literacy, Behaviors, Attitudes and Lifestyle Factors of College Students

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Abstract

Objective: Evaluate associations between environmental literacy, attitudes, sustainability behaviors, health, and lifestyle factors among undergraduates.

Participants: A convenience sample of 345 students at a mid-sized, rural university completed the survey fall 2019.

Methods: Descriptive statistics, correlations, and exploratory factor analysis were used to evaluate data.

Results: Participants indicated a moderately high likelihood of engaging in pro-health and pro-environment attitudes and behaviors. Sustainability knowledge was lower, with an average score

of five of ten. Of five scales (10 pairs), seven pairs were significantly correlated. Principal axis factor analysis identified five underlying factors: liberal/progressive views, individual eco-friendly practices, personal health, healthy lifestyle, and waste reduction.

Conclusion: Correlational analyses indicated students who value health and engage in healthier behaviors also value the environment. While most agreed environmental sustainability is important, recycling behaviors and sustainability knowledge were mediocre. Understanding underlying factors to environmental attitudes and behaviors can drive intervention strategies to move students to action.