THEORETICAL SUBSTANTIATION OF YOUTH EDUCATION IN THE FIELD OF NATIONAL DEFENCE BASED ON ECOLOGICAL APPROACH

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Introduction

The current geopolitical situation in the world, and especially in Europe, highlights the sustainability of each society and country in the present dimension and sustainable development in the future. The ability of the society of the future to develop itself, to provide for the sovereignty of its country, to strengthen its economy, to raise its level of prosperity, to preserve and enrich its culture, without prejudice to the interests and needs of other peoples and countries for self-determination, is shaped and developed in today’s schools and universities as the next generations are learning and studying there. They will be managing the country in the future, taking care of sustainable development of the society, the economy of their country, its security and defence, being at the heart of our country’s future society.

Therefore, innovations in the content of general secondary education in Latvia are needed by introducing a new subject of National Defence Training in schools. At present, everything is being done to implement National defence training as a compulsory subject in secondary education institutions from the 2024/2025 school year (Valdība apstiprina ziņojumu ..., 2021).

Research Aim

The aim of the research was: to substantiate the diversity of ecological approach manifestations in the education of young people in the field of national defence.

Materials and Methods

1. study, analysis, and evaluation of scientific literature (method of theoretical research);
2. reflection of the authors’ experience (empirical research method).

Results

1. Substantiation of the country’s sustainable development from the point of view of human ecology.

Sustainability and sustainable development are among the key concepts of human ecology, including educational ecology.

Key findings on national sustainable development can be found in the UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development (Education for Sustainable Development, 2012): 1) all activities at the international level should be in line with the interests and needs of each country; 2) any kind of war is destructive in nature and therefore runs counter to sustainable development and actions aimed at sustainability; while peace, development, and environmental protection are interrelated and inseparable concepts.

2. Ecological approach in the substantiation of the Latvian national defence education content and learning environment.

One of the manifestations of the ecological approach in education is environmental education, which is the didactic basis for education for sustainable development.

There are three basic principles of educational work, which are also called guidelines (Katane, 2007):

- **Education about the environment.** In order to promote the readiness of school youth for national defence, the history of Latvia occupies an important place in the content of the National Defence Training. The content of National Defence Training also concerns the study of the surroundings, the specific territory in both theoretical and practical studies and its reflection in topographic maps. The psychological resilience and ICT competence of young people is also important, especially in the context of hybrid warfare in the information environment/spaces, so young people need to be well informed about the processes in the global and national information and technology environment/spaces.

- **Education in the environment.** The acquisition of the content of the National Defence Training for School Youth (secondary school students) and also the 3-level curricula of the Youth Guard is planned in both indoor lessons (theoretical studies) and outdoor lessons (practical training), thus the indoor and outdoor education environment can be updated.

Studies show (Berczina, 2020; Kreija-Gaikste & Katane, 2021) that the content of National Defence Training has several dimensions: civil, military, informative and psychological. In turn, in human ecology, incl. the ecology of education, based on an ecologically multidimensional approach, several environmental dimensions are distinguished, which many authors also call environmental components and also environmental contexts (Hiemstra, 1991; Iriste, 2018; Katane, 2007; Katane & Katans, 2014).

It also identifies overlapping types of national defence environmental segments (Figure 2):

![Figure 2. Youth education environment in the field of national defence (Created by the authors)](image)

Conclusions

1. Based on one of the interpretations of the concept of sustainable development, it can be concluded that it is necessary to ensure and promote the sustainable development of our country so that future generations can be born, grow up, develop and live in their sovereign and secure country.

2. There is the diversity of ecological approach manifestations in the education of young people in the field of national defence. The content of national defence education and the learning process itself is and will continue to be based on the three basic principles of environmental education: education about the environment; education in the environment; education for the environment.

3. The basic principle education in the environment allows to explain the national defence educational environment from various aspects and manifestations of the ecological approach: 1) the ecological systemic approach makes it possible to distinguish between the internal and external environment of national defence education and substantiate belonging to the multilevel human living environment; 2) the ecologically multidimensional approach makes it possible to distinguish several contexts of the national defence educational environment, the specifics of which are determined by various dimensions of national defence education content.

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