

Education for sustainability hinges on a shared value?

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Abstract

To shift towards a more sustainable generation and society, the shaping of environmental cultures, attitudes and behaviour among the youths are of utmost importance. Therefore, this article outlines a framework modified from an earlier ecostrategies idea that would help in promoting education for sustainability. And on top of that, it also argues that there are many models around that are equally excellent but what was needed is to develop shared value(s). These different models are likening to different trees, most importantly is to build on the same share value(s), so that it is possible to shape a sustainable-focus society.

Increasingly, governments, education organisations and institutions are attempting to address environmental sustainability issues by coming up with good practices and models that would enable the integration of sustainability into the management practices and curriculum.

Many years ago, that was back in 1991, Prof Sandell proposed about the idea of ecostrategies (views and use of landscape) that attempted to relate the case of outdoor life and Friluftsliv (I think its meaning is "the Norwegian love for the outdoors") (Sandell, 1991). The study was done to come up with ideas to promote environmental attitudes and behaviours among the youth to achieve a more sustainable society. It was a very meaningful study and one of the findings was on how ecostrategies can serve as a platform for discussion, research and even steps for environmental education and management.

The original work from Prof Sandell's study in 1991 was shown in Figure 1 as follows. The diagram illustrates how eco-strategy can be influenced by various ways as put forth by the author.

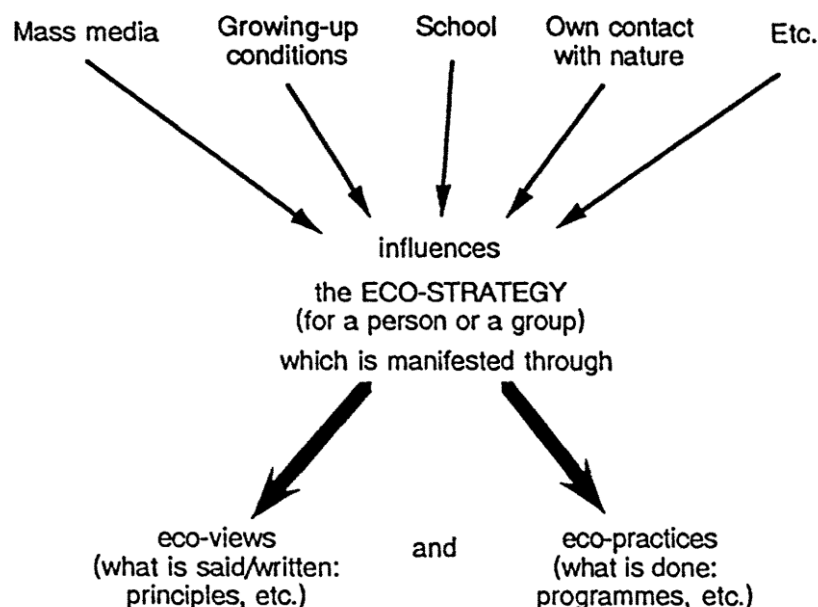


Figure 1. An "ecostrategy" is influenced in various ways and manifested verbally and in practice (Source: Sandell, 1991).

As we continue to investigate this framework, we managed to carry out some studies to try to fill in the blanks to better understand the scenario, the results from a few studies are shown in the following Figure 2, an enhanced and modified framework from Prof Sandell.

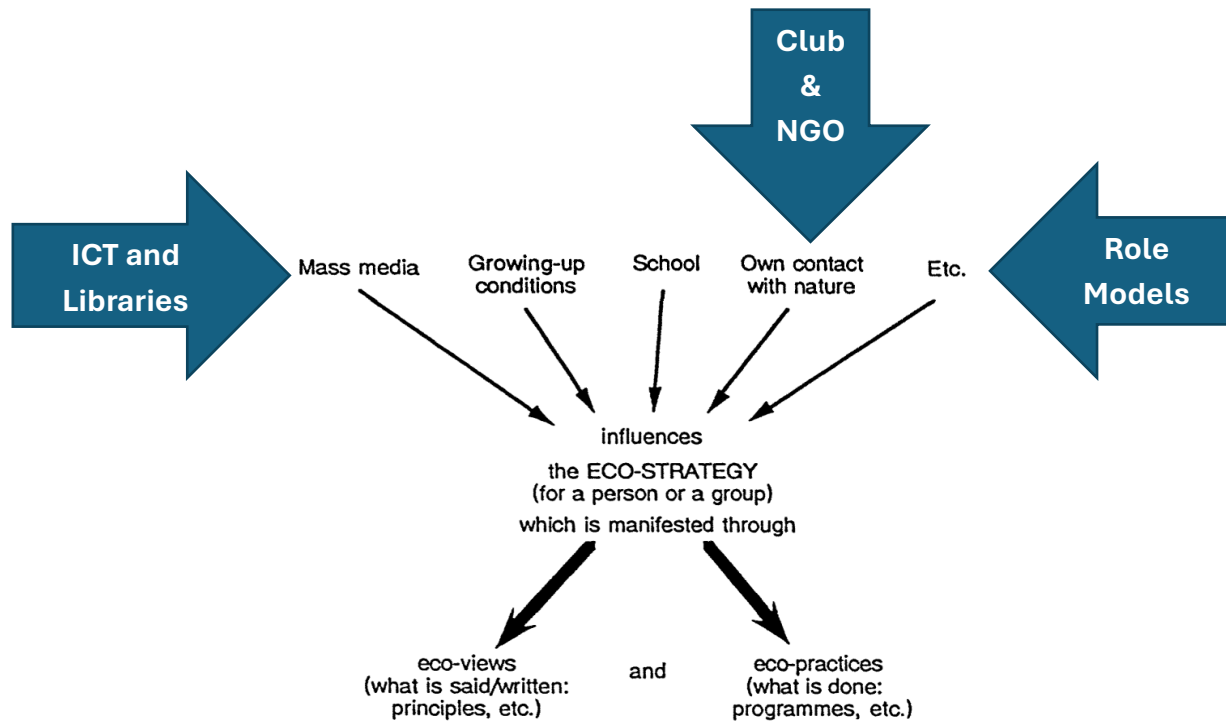


Figure 2. Modified framework for ecostrategies (Omar et al. 2019).

We found out that mass media (using information, communication and technology (ICT) and the school resource centres/libraries) is indeed playing an important role in influencing a person’s views and behaviours related to the environment and sustainable development, particularly at the present time. Other factors like Environmental Club and NGOs, as well as Role Models (such as teachers and peers) are also vital in the interplay.

The modified framework seems to paint a more complete picture of the scenario, most of the models that come after Sandell have shown to have almost the same things, the difference would be in the use of words and flow of thoughts.

However, with the proposal and progress in Sustainable Development Goals, and the challenges in many of the international conferences and seminars related to the environment and sustainability, there seems to be still something missing from this framework. Previously in 2015, it was proposed that a simple framework of action on 4S, that is “Stop, Slow, Simplify and Share”, which highlighted the four simple steps to sustainability (Vun, 2015). However, this idea of 4S, after much consideration, will not be possible if there was no shared perspective or philosophy towards the environment. And this prompted the author to revisit the framework and realised that there was one more thing.

Imagine the modified framework suggested from Figure 2, all those factors and outcomes can be viewed as branches of a tree. As for all other models, they can also be viewed as trees, just the different ones. The diversity in trees is just fine, what was lacking was the shared values that we need to build on and develop in order to move towards environmental sustainability (Figure 3).

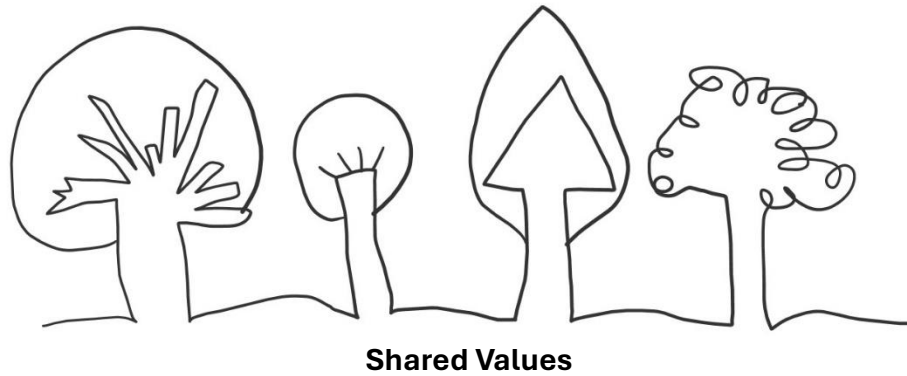


Figure 3. A framework for shared values with shared values as the foundation of different sustainability or educational models.

I recalled Mr Kofi Annan about his assertion of universal shared value in his speech in December 2003 and that was more than twenty years ago (Anan, 2003). As Mr Annan has pointed out clearly that there is a need to find within us the will to live by the universal values we proclaim -- in our private lives, in our local and national societies, and in the world. Indeed, the challenges ahead for all of us is to find our shared value(s) and live by it. Because when there is no shared values, there will not be a shared vision and a shared agenda for sustainability.

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