Development of Citizens’ Environmental Concerns in Character Education

Fatimatuz Zahrah¹* and Rahmat²

¹Civic Education Department, Faculty of Education and Social Sciences, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia and
²Civic Department, Faculty of Education and Social Sciences, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

*zahrahfatimatuz98@upi.edu

Abstract

Environmental pollution is a global problem that is increasingly being discussed and requires a comprehensive solution. Various efforts have been made to build citizens’ awareness of the environment, one of which is character education. This study examines the development of environmental awareness concerning character education by conducting a literature review on 30 articles from 2017 to 2022 and focusing on research progress on environmental care. This review critically assesses and evaluates various findings in the literature for a later re-examination of efforts to develop environmental awareness, development goals of environmental awareness, and character education in building environmental awareness of citizens. The results of the review show that the efforts made to build environmental awareness are carried out in a structured manner starting from the family, school, and community environment. The purpose of developing environmental awareness is to build knowledge, awareness, behavior, skills, and citizen participation in the environment. Character education in the development of environmental awareness by forming habits, providing examples, and integrating values in learning, as well as integrating three educational centers. The implication of this research shows that environmental awareness can be built with character education. Overall, this research can provide an appropriate reference for further research by identifying environmental awareness development media for the nation’s next generation.

Key words: care for the environment, character education, citizens.

Introduction

Environmental pollution is a problem that is increasingly being discussed and becomes a global problem that requires a structured and joint solution with all elements of society. Environmental pollution in Indonesia is regulated in Law Number 32 of 2009 concerning Environmental Protection and Management. Environmental pollution is damage to the environment caused by the entry of living things, substances, energy, and other components due to human activities. Kerf (2010) states that environmental damage occurs because of human errors and mistakes in acting, understanding the environment, utilizing the environment, establishing relationships with fellow humans, and relationships with nature. Mistakes in utilizing nature and life resulted in an unbalanced environmental condition.
This can be analyzed from the amount of waste, the lack of factory waste management, and illegal and massive deforestation. If it continues for a long time it will be dangerous for life in the future.

Environmental problems that are important to pay attention to at this time are how to build and integrate attitudes and environmental awareness in the community. Public awareness and concern for environmental issues should have been embedded long ago, considering the various problems and disasters that have occurred so far. Environmental problems in Indonesia are very complex, such as illegal logging, air pollution, and also the waste management system.

Regarding the waste problem, Indonesia is one of the countries that does not yet have a good waste management model. In addition, public awareness regarding waste management is also still low. Reporting from tempo.co (2021) Indonesia occupies the third position as the country with the largest plastic waste producer in the world. The Indonesia.go.id page explained that in 2020, Indonesia produced 67.8 million tons of plastic waste, this is equivalent to 185,753 tons of waste produced every day by 270 million people. This shows the low level of waste management in Indonesia and public awareness of the importance of managing and reducing waste for environmental health and life sustainability.

Environmental conditions that continue to experience damage, require improvement and efforts to educate the public regarding environmental problems. Knowledge, expertise, values, and an attitude of caring for the environment are needed to maintain the sustainability of life in the future. Efforts to increase environmental care need to be carried out by all elements, including families, schools, and communities. Based on the background that has been described, there are several problem formulations as follows:

a. What are the efforts made in building citizens’ environmental awareness?
b. What are the objectives to be achieved from the development of citizens’ environmental concerns?
c. What is the impact of character education in building citizens’ environmental awareness?

**Literature Review**

**Environmental Concern**

Caring for the environment means that a person has the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are sensitive to the environment and preserve the environment. Environmental care is instilled in someone as early as possible. In connection with the education carried out, it becomes important to instill the value of caring for the environment. Concern for the environment can be instilled in students at every level of education. The value of caring for the environment is instilled in students to develop knowledge, skills, awareness, and attitudes of students about the value of environmental care. Pitt and Fox (2015) say that environmental education is very important to be given to students in the school environment. The value of caring for the environment is instilled in students, with the hope that in addition to gaining knowledge, students are also able to have an attitude of caring for the environment. Ecological communities can know, can develop attitudes and skills to then be able to identify values and goals related to the environment, and can take action and consider every consequence of these actions (Berkowitz et al., 2005).

Humans have intellectual and physical advantages which are the most dominant components in the use of nature. Humans need to be aware that they are part of nature and their survival is largely determined by nature’s ability to carry out its functions, such as the production function, the regulatory function, the pure function, and the balance function. Without all these, human life will indirectly end (Soeriaatmadja, 2000). Environmental damage is caused by humans who in the use of the environment ignore the principles of environmental ethics. Environmental ethics already exists in various cultural customs of the community or what is more often called local wisdom (local genius). Environmental ethics can also be formalized into the positive law of a country. The main issue of environmental ethics is not whether the form of environmental ethics has become a legal law or not, but human awareness from within itself and with knowledge and skills trying to protect the environment (Susilo, 2014).

**Character Building**

Character education is often also called value education because the character is a value that is embodied in action (Lickona, 1991). Character is a value that is operationalized in action (behavior). Therefore, character education is an attempt to internalize, present, and develop good values in a person. Character develops according to the potential of the child. According to the difference in character development, it can be seen where in older adolescent character possessed is stronger than younger adolescents (Brown, M., Blanchard, T., & McGrath, 2020).

In character education, the role model becomes important. Parents, teachers, or other idol figures in people’s lives will influence the development of children’s character. Characters or figures influence role models in character education (Croce, M., & Silvia, 2017). Exemplary figures in character education can help children to understand every process of character development and learning. Character education is a continuous process so its development can
be seen that in general character education has a greater effect on children at the secondary school level than at the elementary school level (Jeynes, 2019).

Character education starts in the family, school, and community environment. Character education starts from the family, and is instilled as early as possible, and very important values to be instilled are religion, honesty, responsible, caring for the environment, and discipline (Septiani, Wibawa, & Situmorang, 2020). After planting character in the family, children will learn about the value of the character at school. Schools have an important role in the moral and character development of their students, one of which is through civic education (Althof, & Berkowitz, 2006). It is important to increase collaboration and cooperation and increase student integrity. This can be done with cooperation between parents and the community around the school in character education (Muttaqin, Raharjo, & Masturi, 2018).

Method
The method used in this research is content analysis. The content analysis method was used to analyze 30 reference journal articles on environmental awareness development research and character education published from 2017 to 2022. Social sciences and humanities usually use content analysis as a research method (McMillan, 2012). Concern for the environment of citizens is very important to always be developed, one of which is by integrating it into character education. The number of studies on the development of citizens’ environmental concerns is evidence of the importance of increasing citizens’ awareness of the environment. The content analysis method is a method that seeks to understand the contents of written texts, artifacts, images, and recordings (Creswell, 2015). The themes found during the analysis process in content analysis research can be developed into models. The data analysis method is used to connect various interrelated findings and analyze themes, so that they are easier to read and more efficient, and can be used as reference materials for further research (Bauer, 2000).

Results & Discussion
Results
This section describes important findings that are relevant to the research objectives. Researchers used a new approach to analyze and identify the most frequently used keywords in 30 articles with the theme of environmental care and character education.

Efforts to Build Environmental Awareness
Environmental care is built from the smallest scope, namely the family. Families have the power to build children’s awareness of the environment, because family education is the first place for children to learn everything, including learning about environmental care. Environmental awareness can be built with good parenting methods. By familiarizing children with environmental cleanliness, waste separation, and waste management, they can build children’s knowledge about environmental care. The eco-family parenting method can be used to build children’s awareness of the environment. This is to research conducted by (Wisnu & Wijaya, 2019) which states that the design of an environmentally literate family with the eco family parenting method focuses on the habituation of children’s attitudes.

Concern for the environment built by the family has a very important influence. Research conducted by (Mustika & Sahudra, 2018) states that the family environment is very influential in shaping one’s environmental care character. This proves that concern for the environment must be built as early as possible by the family. By habituation by the family to always pay attention to the environment, the child will have a concern for the environment. The method that can be used in building environmental awareness is storytelling (Andini, 2021). The storytelling method can provide an overview and example to children about civility towards the environment.

After the family environment, then the development of environmental awareness is carried out in schools. In schools, environmental awareness is carried out by building the knowledge of school residents. This is done by integrating environmental care into the curriculum, and internalizing it in the learning process (Efendi, 2020; Miranto, 2017; Purwanti, 2017; Siskayanti & Chastanti, 2022). School culture can be built in several ways, such as managing waste using the three R methods (i.e. reduce, reuse, and recycle), bringing tumblers for food and drinks, keeping plants at school, providing refill water stations, not buying food wrapped in plastic, or implementation of the adiwiyata program (Arisona, 2018; Bahrudin, 2017; Baroah & Qonita, 2020; Hasnidar, 2019; Ismail, 2021). Most importantly, character education to build environmental awareness is by example and direct examples from school principals and teachers. Love for the environment is built on students by example, habituation, and school culture so that school residents have a sense of love and concern for the environment (Rezkita & Wardani, 2018; Sitorus & Lasso, 2021; Wardani, 2020).

The next development of environmental awareness is in the community. What can be done is to build community knowledge about environmental management (either with the three R method, preserving the environment) or
changing community culture (Gusmadi, 2018; Rahmadani, 2020; Sadler-Smith, 2015). This needs to be done because of the low level of environmental management by the community, one of which is caused by lifestyle and lack of knowledge and skills (Sembiring, 2019). To change the culture of people who are less concerned about the environment, examples or examples of village leaders are needed, and campaigns for environmental care (Helmi et al., 2018; Maryani & NR, 2020; Santika, 2018).

**Environmental Awareness Development Goals**

The development of citizens' awareness of the environment needs to be done. Citizens' concern for the environment is important so that citizens can grow into a happy and healthy society. In the opinion of Stavrova et al. (2013) the civility of citizens can help society grow and develop into a happier society. The Tbilisi Agreement of 1977, globally stated that five goals of environmental education were mutually agreed upon (Miyake et al., 2003) including:

a. The field of knowledge, helping individuals and communities to gain knowledge and experience related to something needed to maintain a sustainable living environment.

b. The field of awareness, helps individuals and the community to be able to be aware and sensitive to the environment, both environmental issues, environmental problems, and development.

c. The field of behavior, helping a person and society to acquire a set of values and feelings of caring for the environment and being able to play an active role in improving and protecting the environment.

d. Skills area, helping individuals and communities acquire skills to be able to identify, prevent, and solve environmental problems.

e. In the field of participation, helping individuals and communities to actively participate in solving environmental problems and realizing a sustainable environment.

**The Impact of Character Education in Building Environmental Awareness**

Concern for the environment is an attitude of the community that maintains and uses the environment well and repairs the damage that occurs (Purwanti, 2017). Concern for the environment is a manifestation of human attitudes towards the environment in the form of actions in everyday life which are an effort to prevent damage to the surrounding natural environment, as well as trying to repair all-natural damage that has occurred. Environmentally cultured education can have a positive impact on school residents. With character education and building concern for the environment, school residents can have the knowledge and behavioral sensitivity to the environment, and increase creativity and productivity (Siswanto et al., 2019). The impact of character education in building environmental awareness is to increase environmental awareness, can be a preventive measure, and increase cooperation and concern for the environment throughout the community. Santika (2018) revealed that character education based on exemplary, character education for the community can increase cooperation and concern for the environment.

**Discussion**

Concern for the environment is built as early as possible, one of which is through education. Education is carried out to form the next generation of the nation who are ready to face the challenges of life and can carry out and continue the life of the nation and state. Education is carried out by the three education centers, namely the family, school, and state. A person's abilities are honed and built through a series of educational processes. Based on the theory of character development, Thomas Lickona (2019) states that character can be formed by three components of good development, namely moral knowledge (moral knowing), moral attitude (moral feeling), and moral behavior (moral action). From the results of the study, it can be seen that environmental awareness is carried out with character education through moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral behavior. Moral knowledge (Moral Knowing) about caring for the environment is built through learning from parents, either directly or indirectly, learning at school, and the culture that develops in the community. Moral knowledge about environmental care is illustrated by data obtained from the results of article reviews. Based on the results of the study, by providing knowledge about the environment such as waste management, the impact of not protecting the environment, and integrating environmental care into subjects, it shows that environmental awareness can be influenced by character education by forming moral knowledge, moral attitudes, and moral behavior for children to grow environmental care attitude.

The moral feeling is an attitude of respect for the environment which is a form of implementation of moral knowledge. The inculcation of environmental care characteristics is carried out in the form of building habits and giving children the freedom to minimize the use of plastics, managing waste with the three R method, and inculcating an independent attitude and cooperation in children, making children feel moral.

Moral behavior (Moral Action) is a behavior that represents an attitude of caring for the environment. Environmental care behavior in this study is shown in several attitudes, namely bringing a tumbler to drink at school, managing waste at home and school, working together to build facilities and infrastructure, and campaigning for environmental awareness. This process is carried out by parents, teachers, and the community by building habits of independent character and cooperation in children. Character education affects the process of building environmental awareness.
in a person. This can be seen from the cultivation of moral knowledge, and moral feelings, and shown by moral behavior that reflects environmental care. Character education about environmental care can be instilled from the smallest scope, namely the family, then the school environment, and the community environment.

Conclusion

From the description above, it can be concluded that the use of sentence structure in writing books for elementary school students must follow the curriculum standards in schools. It is necessary to avoid the use of affixes that have not been taught in school. With also with sentences. It is better to avoid using complex compound sentences. Hopefully the results of this study can be recommended for book writers, teachers, or parents in choosing books for elementary school children.

References


