

Environmental Education Model in Increasing Public Awareness of Waste Management

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Abstract : *The problem of waste is one of the environmental issues that requires serious attention because it can cause pollution and reduce environmental quality. One of the efforts that can be made to overcome this problem is through environmental education which aims to increase public awareness in managing waste responsibly. This research aims to examine an effective environmental education model in increasing public awareness of waste management. The research method used is a qualitative descriptive approach with data collection techniques through literature studies on various relevant scientific sources. The results of the study show that environmental education models based on community participation, such as waste sorting activities, waste bank programs, and environmental campaigns, are able to increase community understanding and involvement in waste management. Therefore, the development of sustainable environmental education programs is needed to encourage changes in community behavior in maintaining cleanliness and environmental sustainability.*

Keywords: *environmental education, community awareness, waste management, community participation.*

INTRODUCTION

The problem of waste is one of the increasingly complex environmental challenges along with the increase in human activities, population growth, urbanization, and changes in people's consumption patterns. The increase in household activities, trade, industry, education, and services results in various types of waste that continue to increase over time. Waste that is not managed properly has the potential to cause widespread environmental problems because it can accumulate on the soil, be carried into water bodies, be burned openly, or be dumped in an inappropriate location. These conditions show that waste management is not only a technical issue of transportation and disposal, but also related to human behavior, institutional capacity,

public policies, facilities, and community participation (Abarca Guerrero *et al.*, 2013; Ferronato & Torretta, 2019).

Waste that is not handled properly can have a negative impact on soil, water, and air quality. Careless waste disposal can cause blockage of drainage channels, groundwater pollution, environmental aesthetic disturbances, increased disease vector populations, and the emergence of the risk of public health disturbances. Open burning of waste also has the potential to produce emissions that disrupt air quality and increase public exposure to hazardous substances. In areas with limited transportation and treatment services, waste often ends up in unofficial landfills, rivers, vacant lots, or residential areas. These conditions show that ineffective waste management can disrupt the sustainability of the ecosystem while reducing the quality of life of the community (Ferronato & Torretta, 2019; Mulasari *et al.*, 2014).

Effective waste management needs to be carried out thoroughly from the source. The process includes reducing waste generation, sorting by type, collection, transportation, processing, reuse, recycling, and safe final disposal. If the sorting is not carried out from households or other waste sources, organic, inorganic, plastic, paper, glass, metal, and hazardous materials will be mixed. This condition can reduce the use value of waste that can actually still be used and increase the management burden at the next stage. Therefore, waste management needs to be understood as a system that demands connectivity between policies, facilities, governance, economic actors, and community behavior (Abarca Guerrero *et al.*, 2013; Wilson *et al.*, 2006).

In the Indonesian context, waste management problems are also related to the limited scope of services, sorting facilities, monitoring mechanisms, and community involvement in household waste management. Government policies have an important role in providing regulations, transportation services, management facilities, incentives, and community empowerment programs. However, policies will not run optimally without the awareness and active involvement of the community as the main waste producer. The community is not only positioned as a recipient of services, but also as an actor who plays a direct role in reducing, sorting, and managing waste from its source (Mulasari *et al.*, 2014).

Sustainable waste management does not depend only on the availability of infrastructure or government policies. The level of awareness, attitudes, knowledge, social norms, habits, motivation, and public perception of the environment also affect the success of waste management. Eco-friendly behavior does not form automatically just because one knows the negative impact of waste. These behaviors are influenced by various internal and external factors, such as personal values, social support, available facilities, ease of sorting, supervision, and encouragement from the surrounding environment (Steg & Vlek, 2009; Tonglet *et al.*, 2004).

Low public awareness in sorting and managing waste is still one of the main obstacles in source-based waste management. Some people still dispose of waste in a mixed manner without considering the differences in characteristics and potential for its use. In fact, waste sorting from households is the initial stage that determines the success of the recycling and reuse process. Knowledge of waste types, pollution impacts, 3R principles, and sorting methods need to be accompanied by supportive conditions so that they can turn into real behaviors. The study of environmental behavior shows that there is a gap between knowledge and action, as individuals can understand environmental issues without always applying them in daily life (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Setyowati & Mulasari, 2013).

This phenomenon is also seen in the practice of waste sorting in the community. Public knowledge about cleanliness and waste management does not necessarily result in the habit of sorting waste consistently. The physical condition of the environment, the availability of segregated garbage cans, ease of access to waste management services, and social norms in the

residential environment also affect people's behavior. Thus, the formation of waste management behavior requires an approach that not only emphasizes the provision of information, but also pays attention to social factors, facilities, and community involvement in the process of behavior change (Andina, 2019; Knickmeyer, 2020).

In this context, environmental education is one of the important strategies to increase public awareness of waste management. Environmental education not only aims to provide knowledge about the negative impacts of waste, but also builds attitudes, concerns, skills, and community commitment to take more responsible actions for the environment. Effective education needs to connect waste issues with the real conditions faced by the community. People need to understand the relationship between the habit of littering waste and the impacts that arise in their living environment, such as flooding, pollution, health problems, and a decrease in the quality of residential comfort (Ardoin *et al.*, 2020).

Environmental education will be more effective if it is designed in a sustainable, contextual, and action-oriented manner. One-way delivery of material needs to be complemented by discussion activities, demonstrations, sorting practices, recycling training, organic waste processing, reuse of used goods, and evaluation of behavior changes. This approach allows the community not only to understand the concept of waste management, but also to gain first-hand experience in applying the principles of reduce, reuse, and recycle in their daily lives. Practice-based learning can strengthen community skills while increasing a sense of responsibility for environmental cleanliness (Ardoin *et al.*, 2020; Thomas & Sharp, 2013).

One of the relevant approaches in environmental education is the development of an educational model based on community participation. This model not only focuses on delivering information from facilitators to the community, but also involves the community in the process of identifying problems, planning activities, implementing programs, and evaluating results. Communities can be invited to map waste sources in their environment, identify habits that cause problems, determine appropriate forms of activities, and draw up mutual agreements on waste management. Such involvement is important because behavior change tends to be stronger when people feel they have a program and are directly involved in the implementation process (Sekito *et al.*, 2013).

A participatory approach can also be applied through household waste sorting activities, waste bank management, compost making training, inorganic waste utilization, community service activities, and the formation of environmental care groups. These activities can strengthen social relations between residents while building collective habits in maintaining environmental cleanliness. Research in Indonesia shows that positive public perceptions of waste management can encourage better participation. Therefore, environmental education needs to be directed to build understanding, a sense of responsibility, and the willingness of the community to be actively involved in waste management (Nugraha *et al.*, 2018).

Waste banks are a form of community-based waste management implementation that can support the environmental education process. Through waste banks, people can learn to sort waste, understand the economic value of recyclable materials, and build waste management habits from home. Waste bank activities can also be a social learning space because they involve communication, training, cooperation, and institutional strengthening at the community level. This approach not only has the potential to reduce waste generation, but can also increase creativity, independence, and community welfare if managed consistently (Astheria & Heruman, 2016).

In addition to face-to-face activities, environmental education models can be developed by utilizing various media and creative learning methods. Visual media, posters, leaflets, educational

videos, digital campaigns, social media, environmental information boards, and technology-based applications can be used to convey messages about waste management in a more attractive and easy-to-understand way. However, the use of media needs to be adjusted to the characteristics of the community, literacy level, access to technology, and local needs. Effective media is not only visually appealing, but also able to encourage people to take concrete actions in reducing and managing waste (Knickmeyer, 2020; Thomas & Sharp, 2013).

The development of an environmental education model also needs to pay attention to the sustainability of the program. Education that is carried out only once has the potential to result in short-term knowledge improvement without lasting behavioral changes. Therefore, it is necessary to provide assistance, strengthen community groups, periodic evaluations, provide supporting facilities, and cooperation between the community, local governments, educational institutions, communities, and the private sector. This collaboration is needed so that environmental education does not stop at socialization activities, but develops into an integrated waste management practice in people's lives.

Based on this description, this study aims to examine environmental education models that can be applied in increasing public awareness of waste management. This research is directed to identify elements of education that are in accordance with the needs of the community, including materials, methods, media, forms of participation, and practical activities that support behavior change. The results of this research are expected to contribute to the development of an effective, participatory, and sustainable environmental education strategy. In addition, the results of the research are expected to support community-based waste management efforts and encourage the formation of behaviors that are more concerned about environmental sustainability.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a literature study method. A qualitative descriptive approach was used to analyze in depth the environmental education model in increasing public awareness of waste management. This approach was chosen because the research does not focus on statistical measurement or testing the relationship between variables, but on understanding the concepts, processes, forms of implementation, and factors that affect the success of environmental education in encouraging changes in community behavior.

This research focuses on environmental education models related to waste management at the community level. The focus of the study includes the form of environmental education, method of delivering material, educational media, forms of community participation, waste management activities applied, and the impact of education on improving knowledge, attitudes, awareness, and community behavior. The educational models studied can be in the form of socialization, training, environmental campaigns, waste bank activities, household waste sorting, recycling, waste reuse, organic waste treatment, and community-based activities.

Research data is obtained through literature studies by examining various scientific sources relevant to the research topic. Data sources include articles in national and international scientific journals, academic books, research reports, proceedings, government policy documents, regulations related to waste management, and publications of institutions that have relevance to environmental issues. The literature used was selected based on the suitability of the content with the focus of the research, the credibility of the source, the freshness of the information, and its contribution in explaining the relationship between environmental education, public awareness, community participation, and waste management.

The data in this study consists of secondary data. Secondary data is in the form of information, concepts, research results, empirical findings, policies, and recommendations

obtained from various written documents. The data is used to describe the condition of waste management in the community, identify factors that affect community behavior, and analyze the form of environmental education model that has the potential to be applied effectively. The use of secondary data allows research to obtain a broad and comprehensive picture without conducting direct data collection in the field.

Data collection techniques are carried out through documentation and literature analysis. The data collection stage begins with identifying relevant keywords, such as environmental education, waste management, community awareness, environmentally friendly behavior, community participation, waste sorting, recycling, waste banks, and community-based waste management. Next, the researcher selects literature based on the suitability of the topic and the quality of the sources. The selected literature is then read thoroughly to obtain important information related to the focus of the research.

At the documentation stage, every resource used is recorded systematically. Recording includes the identity of the source, year of publication, research objectives, methods used, main findings, the form of environmental education applied, the level of community participation, and the implications for waste management. This process is carried out to make it easier for researchers to group data and compare findings from various sources. Documentation also helps maintain the rigor of the research process because every information used can be traced back to its original source.

The data obtained was analyzed qualitatively through three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The data reduction stage is carried out by selecting, centralizing, and simplifying information relevant to the research. Information that is not directly related to the environmental education and waste management model is not used in the main analysis. The data that has been reduced is then grouped based on themes, such as the form of education, implementation method, media used, supporting factors, inhibiting factors, community participation, and impact on behavior change.

The data presentation stage is carried out by compiling the results of the study in the form of a systematic narrative description. Data are presented based on themes and relationships between previous research results. The presentation of data aims to show patterns, similarities, differences, and trends of various environmental education models found in the literature. Through the presentation of these data, researchers can understand the most appropriate environmental education model to increase public awareness of waste management.

The last stage is the drawing of conclusions. Conclusions are compiled based on the results of interpretation of the data that have been reduced and presented. At this stage, the researcher identifies the main elements that need to be contained in the environmental education model, such as the delivery of easy-to-understand information, direct practical activities, community involvement, facility support, ongoing mentoring, and cooperation between the community and related parties. The conclusion of the study is expected to provide an overview of an effective, participatory, and relevant environmental education model to be applied in increasing public awareness of waste management.

To improve the validity of the data, this study uses the source triangulation technique. Source triangulation is carried out by comparing information, concepts, and research results from various scientific references that discuss similar topics. Comparisons were made to see the consistency of findings, differences in approaches, and the relevance of each source to the focus of the research. Data that has suitability from several sources is used as the main basis for compiling analyses and conclusions.

In addition to triangulating sources, the study also pays attention to the accuracy of selecting literature. The sources used are primarily from scientific journals, academic books, official documents, and accountable research reports. Each information used is listed appropriately through citations and bibliographies to maintain academic integrity. With this procedure, the research is expected to be able to produce a systematic, comprehensive, and relevant study of environmental education models in increasing public awareness of waste management.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the literature review, environmental education has an important role in increasing public awareness of waste management. Education not only functions as a means of conveying information about the types, sources, and impacts of waste, but also as a process of forming attitudes, values, skills, and behaviors that support environmental sustainability. The success of environmental education is determined by the suitability of models, methods, media, community involvement, and the sustainability of the programs implemented. The results of the study show that there are several main aspects that need to be considered in the development of an environmental education model to increase public awareness of waste management.

The Role of Environmental Education in Increasing Community Knowledge and Awareness

Environmental education is an important first step in building public understanding of waste problems. Through education, the public can obtain information about the types of waste, sources of waste generation, the impact of pollution, and the proper way to manage waste. This knowledge is needed so that the community is able to understand that waste that is not managed properly can cause various negative impacts, such as soil, water, and air pollution, health problems, blockage of waterways, and a decrease in the quality of the residential environment.

Increasing knowledge is the basis for the formation of environmental awareness. People who understand the impact of waste tend to have greater attention to environmental cleanliness and sustainability. This awareness can encourage changes in attitudes, such as not littering, reducing the use of single-use items, sorting waste based on its type, and supporting waste management activities in the surrounding environment. However, knowledge alone is not enough to form consistent behavior. Education needs to be carried out repeatedly, easy to understand, and linked to real problems faced by everyday people.

Effective environmental education also needs to emphasize the relationship between individual behavior and environmental conditions directly. For example, the community needs to understand that the habit of dumping sewage into waterways can lead to drainage blockages and increase the risk of flooding. Similarly, open burning of waste can reduce air quality and potentially cause health problems. An approach that connects educational materials with real problems in the community will help increase people's understanding and sense of responsibility.

Thus, environmental education not only aims to increase knowledge, but also to form critical public awareness. This awareness is the basis for the emergence of more responsible waste management behaviors, both at the individual, family, and community levels.

Community-Based Education Model in Waste Management

The results of the study show that the community participation-based education model is one of the effective approaches in increasing awareness of waste management. This model places the community as the main actor in the process of education and waste management. The

community not only receives information from facilitators or related parties, but is also directly involved in activities related to waste management.

Community involvement can be carried out through various activities, such as sorting organic and inorganic waste, processing organic waste into compost, recycling inorganic waste activities, using used goods, and environmental cleanliness service work. Through these activities, the community gained first-hand experience on how to manage waste practically. This hands-on experience is important because it can strengthen people's understanding of the benefits of waste management for the environment and daily life.

Community participation can also be started from the problem identification stage. The community can be invited to observe environmental conditions, recognize the main sources of waste, and discuss the impacts that arise due to suboptimal waste management. Furthermore, the community can be involved in the preparation of activity plans, scheduling, task divisions, and program evaluation. This approach can increase the sense of belonging to environmental education programs.

The participatory model also plays a role in building shared responsibility. Waste management cannot be done only by the government or certain groups, but requires the involvement of all elements of society. When the community is actively involved, they will better understand that environmental cleanliness is a shared responsibility. This condition can form more sustainable positive habits in daily life.

Therefore, an education model based on community participation needs to be developed consistently. It is not enough to carry out activities in the form of one-way socialization, but it needs to be complemented by practice, mentoring, evaluation, and strengthening of community commitment to waste management.

Strengthening Environmental Education through a Community-Based Approach

The community-based education model is also a relevant approach in increasing public awareness of waste management. The community can be a shared learning space that allows people to exchange experiences, discuss, and build positive habits in maintaining the cleanliness of the environment. The existence of community groups can help strengthen the implementation of education because activities are carried out collectively and sustainably.

One form of community-based approach is the establishment of a waste bank. Waste banks can be a means of education as well as waste management that directly involves the community. Through this activity, people learn to sort waste based on its type, especially waste that still has economic value, such as plastic, paper, cardboard, bottles, glass, and metal. The waste that has been sorted can then be deposited for further weighing and management.

In addition to helping reduce the volume of waste, waste banks can increase public understanding that waste is not always a useless item. Certain waste can be reused or sold so that it has economic value. This understanding is important to encourage people to be more motivated in sorting and managing waste from home. In the long term, waste bank activities can support the formation of a simple circular economy at the community level.

A community-based approach can also be carried out through the formation of environmental care groups, environmental cadres, housewife groups, youth organizations, school groups, and other community organizations. These groups can play a key role in disseminating information, inviting residents to participate, and monitoring the implementation of waste management activities. The involvement of community leaders and environmental administrators is also important to increase trust and involvement of residents.

With community-based activities, environmental education can develop into a broader social movement. The community not only receives education individually, but also builds a collective commitment to creating a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.

Utilization of Creative Media and Training as a Means of Environmental Education

The effectiveness of environmental education is also influenced by the media and delivery methods used. Creative educational media can help convey information in a more interesting, simple, and easy-to-understand way for the public. Posters, leaflets, banners, educational videos, social media, infographics, and environmental information boards can be used to convey messages about the importance of waste management.

Posters and infographics can be used to provide brief information on how to sort waste, types of waste that can be recycled, the impact of littering, and simple steps in applying the principles of reduce, reuse, and recycle. Educational videos can be used to show the process of waste treatment, composting, use of used goods, as well as examples of waste management practices that can be applied at home. Social media can also be an effective means to reach a wider group of people, especially the younger generation.

In addition to the use of media, training activities also have an important role in strengthening environmental education. Training can be carried out in the form of waste sorting practices, making compost from organic waste, making crafts from plastic waste, and managing waste banks. The training activities provide opportunities for the community to acquire practical skills that can be applied directly.

Training carried out in a participatory manner can increase public confidence in waste management. People not only understand theory, but also have the ability to take real action. These activities can encourage the emergence of creativity in utilizing waste into products that have use value. For example, plastic waste can be processed into simple crafts, while organic waste can be used as compost for household plants.

The use of creative media and training needs to be adjusted to the characteristics of the community. Educational materials must use simple language, examples that are close to daily life, and forms of activities that are easy to do. With this approach, environmental messages can be better received and potentially result in more consistent behavior changes.

Implementation Challenges and the Importance of Sustainable Collaboration

Although the environmental education model has great potential in increasing public awareness, its implementation still faces a number of challenges. One of the main challenges is the low participation of the community in waste management activities. Some people still consider waste management as the responsibility of the government or cleaners. This view can reduce community involvement in waste sorting, reducing, and utilization activities.

Low participation can also be influenced by a lack of understanding of the impact of waste on the environment and health. People who do not understand the long-term impact of improper waste management are less likely to have a strong incentive to change their habits. In addition, the habit of throwing waste in a mixed and careless manner often has lasted for a long time, making it difficult to change in a short time.

Another challenge is the lack of supporting facilities. Waste sorting activities will be difficult to carry out if the community does not have access to sorted waste bins, waste collection sites, transportation services, or waste treatment facilities. Therefore, environmental education needs to be supported by the provision of adequate facilities. The community needs to be given convenience so that they can implement waste management behavior practically and consistently.

The sustainability of the program is also an important factor. Environmental education that is only carried out once has the potential to result in temporary changes in knowledge. The program needs to be carried out regularly through socialization, training, mentoring, monitoring, and evaluation. Support from the government, educational institutions, community organizations, environmental communities, and the private sector is needed to maintain the sustainability of the program.

The government can play a role through policy formulation, provision of facilities, and strengthening waste management programs at the local level. Educational institutions can play a role in instilling the value of environmental concern from an early age. Community and community organizations can be a driver in building citizen participation. This collaboration needs to be developed in an integrated manner so that environmental education is not only a momentary activity, but also part of the community's culture in preserving the environment.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of the study, environmental education has an important role in increasing public awareness of waste management. Education not only increases public knowledge about the impact of waste, but also forms attitudes, skills, and behaviors that are more responsible for the environment. The education model based on community participation, community-based approaches, waste bank activities, the use of creative media, and practical training is a form of strategy that can be applied to encourage community involvement in the sorting, reduction, utilization, and sustainable management of waste.

The implementation of environmental education still faces challenges in the form of low community participation, limited understanding, inappropriate waste disposal habits, and lack of supporting facilities. Therefore, educational programs are needed that are carried out in a sustainable, contextual, and integrated manner with waste management policies at the local level. The government, educational institutions, community organizations, environmental communities, and communities need to build strong cooperation so that waste management can become a common habit. Through this support, the community is expected to be able to manage waste more responsibly and contribute to reducing the risk of environmental pollution.

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