

# Teachers' Perceptions of Environmental Care Education in Elementary Schools

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## Abstract

This study aims to gain an understanding of teachers' perceptions of environmental care education in elementary school students. This research uses descriptive quantitative method. The research sample was aimed at IGM Palembang elementary school teachers. The data collection technique used total sampling, namely all the teachers at the school as many as 50 people. The research instrument includes aspects of knowledge, views, attitudes and habits, teacher expectations and assessments of environmental care education. The data collection technique used a questionnaire. Data analysis was performed by describing the results of the percentage calculation. The results showed that the overall average perception of teachers was in a very high category. It is recommended that teachers are always involved in activities related to caring for the environment in schools, especially making green schools.

## Keywords

Teacher, Education, Perception, Environmental Care

## 1. Introduction

Environmental issues have never been resolved. Environmental damage has an impact on human life. Various types of environmental damage cannot be separated from human behavior. Human behavior is not friendly to the environment and even damages the environment. Environmental damage is increasingly difficult to control. The practice of illegal logging, illegal fishing, large-scale forest burning, the use of materials that do not decompose quickly such as plastic that has increased, the high use of vehicles that causes carbon dioxide to increase, etc. are real examples and the consequences are felt by the community. Various parties are expected to be involved to reduce and prevent further damage to the environment. Educational institutions are expected to play a role in educating stu-

dents to protect and preserve the environment. School in this case as a formal institution has a strategic role in educating children to care for the environment. The Ministry of Education and Culture determines 18 characters that must be formed in schools. One of these characters is caring for the environment. In schools, students and teachers are human components that determine the school education ecosystem. Teachers always interact with students informally both in formal learning situations in class and outside the classroom still in the school environment. What is on the teacher's mind regarding the value of education is the teacher's job to transfer it as long as the students are in the school environment. Whether it is running or not, a value of caring for the environment in school can be seen from the condition of the school environment.

Elementary school students have high imitation characteristics. They admire the figure of their teacher who sometimes becomes a child's idol to their teacher. If the teacher behaves positively, then students will unconsciously imitate the teacher. Therefore, if the teacher's views and perceptions are positive towards an object, it will be reflected in the behavior towards that object. During school students acquire certain knowledge, values, skills and abilities. To change behavior so that it has a value of environmental care, the teacher conveys the value of caring for the environment in various ways such as: the teacher orders, gives assignments, reminds, gives punishment, gives knowledge, exemplifies, gives advice, assessments, views, and hopes. So important is the position of teachers in the eyes of students, environmental education teachers in particular and even all teachers have an important role in the success of environmental education programs, build a lifestyle and instill the principle of sustainability and apply environmental ethics. Teachers must behave, have views, and have a positive opinion, especially about the values that exist and are required to be educated in school. The values contained in character education in school, amounting to 18 characters, each of which must be deepened with understanding, appreciation, of a character object, in this case the character of environmental concern. The character of environmental care contains values that must be guided, lived, and implemented or implemented in daily life, in this case in schools, through student teacher interactions, gestures, speech and habituation, rules and duties as well as in the vision and mission program. Teachers pass on their perceptions to their students at school, so that teachers' understanding of the environment becomes an important thing to identify (Desjean-Perrotta et al., 2008). The potential for misunderstanding and the formation of misconceptions about the environment in students will be identified by understanding teachers' perceptions of the environment. Teachers who have a correct/positive perception of the environment are likely to have positive attitudes towards the environment, namely environmentally friendly behavior. This positive/environmentally friendly behavior will be a good role model/example for students. Exemplary from the teacher is a good way of teaching Environmental Education (PLH) to students, because learning PLH also learns through modeling (Desjean-Perrotta et al., 2008). The

results of the research (Manik, 2009) suggest that, contrary to popular assumptions, neither ethnicity nor dominant residential experience had a significant influence on participants' perceptions of the environment. This shows that perceptions are not determined by ethnicity and the length of life in a place. Furthermore, the chapter review from (Moseley et al., 2014), Programmatic Implementation of Environmental Education in an Elementary Educator Preparation Program: This chapter provides an overview of researching teacher candidates' perceptions and beliefs about the environment and describes an approach to involving prospective teachers in environmental education in the curriculum educator preparation program. Here it is important for teachers to be involved in environmental education programs. Furthermore, based on research results (Boca & Saraçlı, 2019) it was revealed that students receiving academic education are involved in activities regarding environmental protection (volunteer, warning, participation, recycling of materials) using the new product and "greener" alternative energy. As a result of the t-test performed, it was put forward that there was no difference in their level of perception regarding the importance of environmental education. As a result of the correlation analysis, a positive relation was identified between the perception, attitude, and behavior variables. The results of the above research indicate that what is in thoughts, words, actions, and hopes will come out in line with attitudes and behavior towards the environment. (Nurzaelani, 2017), said that environmental care education is important and all teachers are involved in instilling environmental care education. Perception greatly influences a person's behavior towards their environment. Someone who has the correct perception of the environment influences behavior for environmental conservation efforts. Individual perceptions of their environment are fundamental because they can influence individuals in their subsequent actions. This study aims to determine how teachers perceive environmental care education in IGM primary schools?

The term caring can be defined as giving attention, nurturing, looking after. The environment is something that exists in the natural environment that has a certain meaning and/or influence on individuals (Hamalik, 2001). Environmental care is an attitude and action that always tries to prevent damage to the natural environment around it from developing efforts to repair natural damage that has occurred (dan Suryatri Darmiatun, 2013). Caring for the environment is an attitude and action that always strives to prevent damage to the natural environment around it, and develops efforts to repair natural damage that has occurred (Ma'mur Asmani, 2013). Fostering a caring attitude towards the environment can be done by familiarizing students with disposing of garbage based on the type of waste, caring for plants, keeping class and school clean, and so on (Yunansah & Herlambang, 2017). The value of environmental care is one of the values developed and educated in schools from 18 other values/characters. The value of environmental care is an attitude to nurture and preserve the environment for now and in the future. Schools that care about the environment will

bring to a beautiful environment because the teacher's attention program and the school are focused on environmental conservation efforts. Schools that care about the environment will do greening here and there, the environment looks beautiful. Anniversary activities will always relate to the environment, cleanliness and beauty of the school. Funds and efforts are given to reforestation and cleaning programs.

## 2. Methods

This research uses descriptive quantitative method to teachers in elementary schools. The research location was conducted at the IGM Palembang elementary school data collection was carried out from January to March 2020 using WhatsApp. The target population of the study was elementary school teachers in Palembang. The sample was 50 teachers in IGM primary school with a sampling technique, namely total sampling. Research aspects from variable teachers' perceptions of environmental care education namely: knowledge, views/opinions, attitudes and habits, expectations and teacher evaluations of environmental care education at SD IGM. The research process includes the steps of making research instruments, then the instruments are tested on 20 teachers in other schools to test the validity and reality. The results show that all instruments are valid with  $r$  count below the  $r$  table with a significance level of 1%. The data analysis technique uses the average percentage and standard deviation. The instrument was developed to find out how teachers' perceptions of environmental care education. Measuring the level of perception using a Likert scale, namely strongly agree, agree, disagree and disagree. The average yield is categorized as follows: the score obtained is an average of 3.50 to 4.00 is in the Very High category, 3.00 to 3.49 is in the High category, 2.50 to 2.99 is in the low category, 2.00 to 2.49 is stated in the very low category.

## 3. Research Results

The vision of the IGM elementary school is to become a center of science for the development of students with character and environmental insight. Some point of the school's mission: to form students with character, noble character, intelligent, creative, independent and environmentally friendly; creating a clean, green, healthy and comfortable school environment; strive to prevent environmental damage. The purpose related to environmental care are: Quality improvement in the areas of cleanliness, greening and environmental preservation; Give awards to students who maintain cleanliness in order to motivate other students in protecting the environment; Determining students as environmental policemen in striving for a culture of disposing of garbage in its place; Creating a shady, green, and litter-free school environment; Increase cultivation development on land without soil.

Overall the calculation results from the data are obtained showed that the teachers' perceptions of education cares for the environment were very high. It

was proven that the average results obtained were in the interval score 3.5 - 4. The average score was 3.62. This shows that teachers have a high perception of environmental care education in schools. Overall environmental care education at IGM School is in a high category. Schools carry out environmental care education seriously (**Table 1**).

In all indicators of teacher perceptions of environmental care education are in the above 3.50 category average. Teachers' knowledge of environmental care education in elementary schools is very high: Teachers have simple knowledge of environmental care practices, namely: teachers educate children through words, deeds, examples, orders and prohibitions, punishment and rewards. Teachers' knowledge of environmental care education is very high. This can be seen from the acquisition of an average score of 3.56. This figure is included in the very high score category. Based on the teacher's knowledge, the teacher has carried out the task of environmental care education for students/at school. Teachers/schools carry out environmental care education in all components of the school ecosystem. A green and clean school affects the comfort and tranquility of learning. Teachers know that humans are an important component in the school environment from other components, where humans can affect the environment. The teacher knows that it is important to instill the value of caring for the environment by the teacher. A green and clean school affects the comfort and tranquility of learning. Greening in schools is needed because a green environment is a source of oxygen for humans. In ecosystems, humans are the determining factor for good or bad environmental quality. The main factor causing environmental damage is human behavior. Teachers' behavior towards the environment at school will reflect the attitudes and behavior patterns of students.

The teacher views that children need to have an attitude of environmental care. The teacher realizes how much the students care about the environment. The school has a reforestation program. The vision and mission of the school includes the environment. Schools instill students to save energy such as water. Teachers who care for the environment have an impact on students who care for the environment. The score was 3.59. This shows that teachers have a very high view of aspects of environmental care education.

**Table 1.** The grid for teacher perceptions about environmental care education in primary schools.

No	Indicators of Teacher Perceptions of Environmental Care Education	Mean	SD
1	Teachers' knowledge of environmental care education	3.568	0.330
2	Teachers' views on environmental care education	3.59	0.431
3	The attitude and habituation of teachers to environmental care education	3.703	0.282
4	Teachers' expectations for environmental care education	3.702	0.270
5	Teacher evaluation of environmental care education	3.55	0.375
	Average	3.62	0.336

The teacher instills the value of environmental care through habits in students. Students are given pickets to water the plants. Students are accustomed to keeping the class and the environment clean. The teacher immediately reprimands the child when the child destroys the environment. Teachers are interested in the value of environmental care. Teachers are role models for environmental care education. Teachers enjoy school environment activities. The teacher likes to invite students to practice greening the environment. The average score obtained is 3.7. This means that teachers have a very positive/high perception of education about environmental care.

Teachers have high hopes for environmental care education. This can be seen from the average score obtained of 3.7. In the interval the score is in the very high category. The teacher aspires to this school so that the school gets the Adiwiyata award. Teachers realize that children need to have the value of caring for the environment. Education on environmental care should be further enhanced. Teachers need to be trained about environmental education. Teachers are given awards for being environmentally friendly. Teachers should instill habits in students to care for the environment. Teachers should be examples of caring for the environment. Schools are advised to imitate other schools that can Adiwiyata. Teachers were involved in composting skills training and environmental training programs. The cultivation of the value of environmental care is educated by all teachers. The teacher hopes that environmental care education will be further improved. Efforts that can be made are including teachers in activities related to the environment, greening programs, government programs on green schools, and participating in seminars, conferences, training activities. Environmental care programs are carried out outdoors or indoors. Schools carry out competitions held by the National Education Ministry such as: competitions for cleanliness, beauty and greenness of schools, and competitions for the Adiwiyata program.

Based on the teacher's assessment of environmental care education, schools have a commitment to care for the environment. The school develops an atmosphere of environmental care. Teachers familiarize students with environmental care. Teachers motivate students to care for the environment. The teacher is interested in talking about the environment. The teacher instills the student's habit of keeping the environment clean. Principals, teachers and staff work together to develop a green school concept. Teachers and school staff have a commitment to environmental care education. The average score obtained is 3.55. This means that the teacher highly assesses environmental care education.

From the results of observations at the IGM primary school, the primary school consists of 12 classes and 50 teachers. Green and sustainable school environment. The extra-curricular program is reforestation/planting of plants for schools and watering plants in turns and clean Fridays. The results of the preliminary study obtained information that teachers have a concern for the environment. This can be seen from the green, clean and beautiful environment, and

there is a slogan on the school wall about keeping the environment clean, trash bins are available in sufficient quantities.

The school has a reforestation program, the vision and mission of the school includes one of its goals is a green and clean school. Based on the results of observations, it can be seen at several points in the school environment such as walls, parks, written slogans that imply the school's concern for the environment. In the school yard and in the corridor and in the classroom there are potted plants placed there. You can see that the green plants planted in pots and in the soil of the yard and in the garden look beautiful and green. Cool school. Apart from that the school looks clean and comfortable. Based on interviews with teachers and school principals, it was stated that schools really care about the environment, the value of environmental care is indeed developed and there are programs to care for the environment. The teacher always gives students assignments in rotation to take turns watering the plants. Each student has their own plant to care for. The school prepares fertilizers from processed organic waste.

#### 4. Discussion

It is hoped that environmental care will be increased to all parties, including elementary school children. A young age will find it easier to instill the values and habituation of environmental care. Teachers play an important role as parties who plant the value of environmental care education. The teacher's perception of the environment will belong to the students because the teacher is in charge of educating all day long at school. Schools have great potential to instill environmental care. This potential is the character value of environmental care, school vision and mission, extra-curricular activities, curriculum, school physical environment, educational-weighted student teacher interactions, school norms/rules, conditioning, slogans, environmental care character values, and anniversaries (Husin & Saleh, 2019). The high level of teacher perceptions of environmental care education is based on knowledge, views, inculcating attitudes and skills, expectations, and a high assessment of environmental care education.

Teachers have good knowledge about environmental care education in schools formally through subjects, and non-formally through extra-curricular programs and school vision and mission. Informally cultivate environmental care through communication and teacher orders, assignments, rules, orders, punishments, prohibitions, supervision, warnings, and exemplary (Husin, 2019). All teachers have an important role in the success of the Environmental Education program, building a lifestyle and instilling the principles of sustainability and applying environmental ethics.

A green school environment, lots of plants and clean, can have a good effect on children's motivation to learn. As the results of the research of (Wulandari & Kasturi, 2019) show that there is significance between perceptions of the school environment and learning motivation. The higher the perception of the school



environment, the higher the student's learning motivation, and vice versa.

Schools are expected to take part in environmental management, especially elementary schools, through elementary schools it is hoped that they will be able to instill care of the environment in the younger generation from an early age. Planting environmental foundations from an early age is the main solution that must be done, so that the younger generation has a proper and correct understanding of the environment (Sumarmi, 2008).

The teacher gives students habituation to keep the environment clean, throw garbage in its place, flush toilets, provide picket schedules, do greening. The teacher instructs students to bring plants to be planted, reprimands students for not keeping the environment clean, and delivers them through advice and reprimands. Teachers familiarize children with watering plants. Teachers provide insight into the environment through the delivery of social studies subject matter which contains messages to care for the environment

School is a place of conditioning value education, habituation/behavior, skills, and knowledge. Teachers can take advantage of components of the school education ecosystem in educational events. Educational activities always occur in almost all activities, especially interactions with educational content. Educational activities in schools can occur formally through the in-class learning curriculum. The informal education situation occurs through the interaction of student teachers in the form of admonitions, prohibitions, punishments and rewards. School/classroom walls are given a slogan containing the weight of educating environmental care. The school has a vision and mission, extracurricular programs, school gardens, social studies curriculum/subjects about the environment.

It takes a comprehensive approach to maximize the results of environmental education. A separate approach can affect the level of achievement of the formation of environmental care values. As the results of research by (Narut & Nardi, 2019), students' knowledge and environmental care will not always have a positive impact on their behavior. The results of the study found that environmental care scores on the conation aspect were lower than others. Even though students have care, feelings related to environmental problems, there is no evidence of everyday behavior. This means that there are other variables that influence not to care about the environment.

Student activities for environmental care education can also be carried out through student self-development programs at school. Through exemplary attitudes and behavior of teachers, as well as programs held by schools such as extra-curricular programs, children can easily be formed to care for the environment. From the research results of (Idrus & Novia, 2018), the implementation of environmental care values through self-development programs in the form of routine activities is class picket and collective picket. Spontaneous activities include planting trees together and sorting out the waste savings for handicrafts. From an exemplary aspect, school principals and teachers show concern for the



environment by picking up the trash they find. From the conditioning aspect, the school provides facilities in the form of organic and inorganic trash cans in the school environment

Educating students to care for the environment by accustoming them to positive or friendly behavior to the environment. This positive behavior can be seen from the children doing cleanliness and protecting the environment. This is in line with the results of research by (Gunawan & Guslinda, 2019), namely: cleaning and protecting the environment by doing 6 things, namely: cleaning toilets, cleaning trash bins, cleaning the school environment, beautifying the class and school with plants, take part in maintaining the garden at school and participate in maintaining a clean environment.

Environmental care education can be integrated with subjects, especially social studies and can also be developed in other subjects. The ability of teachers is encouraged to include environmental care value education in existing subjects. Based on (Afandi, 2013), research results that environmental education can be integrated into social studies learning in elementary schools by utilizing the school environment.

## 5. Conclusion

Teachers' perceptions of environmental care education at IGM Palembang elementary school as a whole are in a very high category. Teacher perceptions include aspects of knowledge, views, attitudes and habits, expectations, and teacher assessments of environmental care education. Environmental care is carried out through the subjects and vision and mission of the school, extracurricular programs, and through student teacher interactions, rules, punishments and prohibitions, messages on the slogan, the teacher has carried out the task of educating students about environmental care, and institutionally the school has implemented it well. The implication of this research is that teachers' high perceptions of the environment are maintained, because they contribute to the behavior of students to care for the environment. It is recommended that teachers are always involved in activities related to caring for the environment in schools, especially making green schools.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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