

STIMULATING ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS IN PAUD COMMUNITY

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Abstract: Loving the environment is a child's character that must be instilled in the Indonesian people from an early age. For this reason, the PAUD community needs to be introduced to environmental literacy because there are still many PAUD communities that do not understand environmental literacy. Understanding and environmental literacy skills if learned by someone from an early age, then the knowledge can become a habit and will last a long time in one's mind and heart. This article will describe how the research team strives to instill a love for the environment in the PAUD community. This study uses an action research method by providing information and motivation about the importance of Environmental Education (PLH) for early childhood. The subjects involved in this activity were the PAUD community represented by 11 PAUD teachers in the Tangerang, Sawangan Bogor, Medan, and Batam areas. This article was written based on the results of Action Research with a qualitative approach through discussions and interviews and the delivery of information through online meetings regarding PLH for PAUD. The data collection period took 4 months in 2020. Content analysis was used to analyze the data in this study. The data obtained were validated by faculty members. The findings of this study indicate that the provision of information and motivation to the 11 PAUD teachers can make the 11 teachers motivated to participate in learning and teaching environmental literacy to their students. The teachers are trying to make the school environment greener by planting trees and doing various learning activities with children to get to know and love the environment better.

Keywords: environmental literacy, environmental education, action research, loving and preserving the environment.

Accepted: October 3, 2023

Approved: November 10, 2023

Published: March 21, 2024



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INTRODUCTION

Every year the people of Jakarta and its surroundings as well as people in various regions in Indonesia often experiences major floods. Some areas have experienced landslides. Another problem is the disposal of factory waste or garbage. The problem in this country is that many people throw garbage indiscriminately into rivers and flow into the sea. These facts show the lack of public awareness of environmental problems. Therefore, the research team wants to try to instill and develop public insight into environmental literacy. Environmental literacy according to Kusumaningrum (2018) is a person's awareness to keep the environment in balance. This awareness can also be interpreted as an attitude of environmental literacy, namely a

condition in which a person not only has knowledge about the environment but also has a responsive attitude and can provide solutions to environmental issues. Early childhood is the golden generation or part of society that needs to be equipped with environmental literacy skills since they are small so that these abilities are carried over until they become adults (Siregar et al., 2021).

The current challenges in educating the community and children to be more sensitive to environmental problems include the lack of environmental education from the child's parents, the community is still not aware of environmental problems so environmental education must be more intensively carried out through religious education, schools, etc. Therefore, in educating a community, especially in early childhood, schools must cooperate with parents and the surrounding community. Research shows that instilling children's awareness to love the environment requires support from the child's parents themselves.

Environmental education plays an important role in preserving and improving the world's environment, and in realizing sustainable living. A basic goal of environmental education is to make individuals and society understand the complex nature of nature and the built environment resulting from the interaction of their biological, physical, social, economic, and cultural aspects, and acquire the knowledge, values, attitudes, and practical skills to participate. Responsibly and effectively in anticipating and solving environmental problems, and in environmental quality management.

The importance of environmental education for sustainable living must be applied in the community from an early age. Every school must be able to invite and introduce students to understanding natural conditions and current natural problems. One example is in inviting early childhood to be aware of the environment by giving small examples, namely throwing garbage in its place. Teachers and parents need to introduce the current environmental problems and their prevention for the future to the children. Furthermore, teachers and parents must work together in inviting children to practice environmental awareness directly, such as learning to grow vegetables. What is happening today is that many parents never introduce their children to the environment. Even today, many junior high or high school children do not know the names of vegetables because their parents have never been introduced to them. Based on the problems above, this research seeks to instill public awareness of the environment through the cultivation of environmental literacy which begins with the development of environmental literacy in several kindergartens and PAUD in several regions in Indonesia.

Increasing Environmental Awareness Among Children

Primary education is an important stage in the development of a person's behavior, social awareness, and selflessness. In school, we learn values and behaviors that will stay with us throughout our adulthood and define who we are. That's what makes it so important to spark interest in caring for and protecting the environment while children are still in school. The goal of teaching children about environmental education is for them to take care of nature as a part of their lives, not just study it. The idea behind this subject is for young people to develop strong ecological mindsets and use them to tackle today's environmental challenges with a proactive attitude and strong

commitment. Environmental education also has another positive effect on youth. In 2017, Stanford University studied how this affects schoolchildren from infancy to high school. After examining more than a hundred scientific studies published on the subject from 1994 to 2013 by other institutions, they concluded that 83% of schoolchildren improved their ecological behavior and 98% scored better in other subjects such as mathematics and science.

Environmental Education Methods for Children

Environmental education is a lifelong process and should be included in every primary and secondary school syllabus, as well as in other activities such as seminars, conferences and talks. The way it is taught in the classroom must be adapted to the age and maturity of the children and must be not only theoretical but also practical, entertaining and fun. Many activities can be done on the playground or in a nearby park. Children can go outside to learn about plants, trees, rivers, birds, and insects, but also about environmental issues such as pollution, gas emissions, energy consumption, recycling, good water use, and all other important aspects.

Environmental Education Goals for Children

According to UNESCO, the purpose of children learning about environmental education is to:

- make them more aware and aware of environmental issues.
- increase their interest in caring for and improving the environment.
- improve their ability to learn about their environment.
- broaden their ecological knowledge in subjects such as energy, landscapes, air, water, natural resources, and wildlife.

Teaching a new generation is up to all of us, not just parents. Today's children will be tomorrow's governors and world leaders and they will have to face big challenges - such as global warming and water stress - and make important decisions for all of humanity. The future is in their hands

METHOD

This research uses action research because according to Arikunto "the definition of action research is research about things that happen in the community or target group, and the results can be directly applied to the community concerned. The choice of action research in this study is because it is by the social problems faced, especially in early childhood teachers. After all, it aims to overcome various problems that occur in social situations. According to Suharso action research is a research conducted collaboratively (cooperation) based on reflective results (contemplation or assessment) conducted by The teacher who works with other related parties to fix an educational problem. The purpose of action research is a movement of teachers as researchers, whose aim is to reduce the gap between theory and practice. This study seeks to convey information about Environmental Education (PLH) to 11 PAUD teachers as respondents or research subjects online with the following materials:

1. Environmental problems
2. Environmental literacy for PAUD
3. Environmental learning in PAUD

The delivery of this information is done online, in the form of an PLH webinar for PAUD because there is a covid 19 pandemic and because our research subjects are in Medan, Batam, Tangerang, Sawangan. Next, the researchers sought to find out how far the PAUD teachers' knowledge and understanding of environmental literacy was related to PLH, especially how PAUD teachers could teach environmental education in this pandemic situation through online and offline learning.

The research team then sent open-ended questions to all research subjects and discussed and re-explained information about environmental literacy related to PLH to 11 PAUD teachers as respondents or research subjects. This action research is carried out with a qualitative approach because researchers can get to know the research subject and can dialogue with each other. The data collection period took 4 months, August-November 2020. Content analysis was used to analyze the data in this study. The data obtained were validated by a senior lecturer at FKIP-UT.

The research team provides information about environmental protection and environmental literacy through webinars or online meetings with several resource persons. In addition to delivering information, this activity is also equipped with the provision of motivation and examples from several books on PLH. Examples of teaching strategies that TK/PAUD teachers do are closely related to themes such as environmental themes or plants, for example teaching early childhood to do several activities such as cleaning the yard, sweeping and helping mothers clean and tidy the house, watering plants, and planting some plants. The focus of this research is to provide direction to PAUD/TK teachers about environmental literacy and direction about efforts to love the environment to PAUD/TK teachers around Sawangan, Depok, Tangerang and Pamulang Banten.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on interviews with 11 PAUD/TK teachers, the results showed that previously they were not too aware and did not know or fully understand what is meant by environmental literacy (Chandrawati, 2022). However, after being given direction and information to the 11 PAUD teachers who were the subjects of this research, they stated that they now understand more about the importance of environmental literacy, therefore they have started to provide learning activities related to PLH to their students. The 11 PAUD teachers also explained that they have implemented several teaching strategies that lead to early childhood learning about environmental literacy or environmental education, for example inviting children to clean their classrooms and houses, throwing garbage in its place, or planting and watering trees.

Furthermore, 11 TK/PAUD teachers from 11 research subjects also stated that by participating in this activity they became aware of the importance of developing environmental literacy for their students. Therefore, they started reading story books related to PLH. Here are the titles of the books:

1. Si Botsi's Adventures
2. 3 M
3. Why is there so much trash
4. Causes of flooding



Figure 1: Kids were learning the books

When reading books, the teacher tries to instill an understanding of the importance of protecting the environment by using interesting storytelling techniques. The teacher is guided by the following stages of reading.

a) Pre-reading activities

The activities carried out before reading the book are as follows.

- (1). Introducing the parts of the book such as the front cover, pages, top and bottom, and back cover, and how to open the book properly.
- (2). Attract children's attention by creating a pleasant atmosphere, by commenting on pictures or words on the cover, the teacher reads the title of the book, the author's name aloud while pointing at the writing. Followed by asking the children the possibility of the content of the story.

b) The activity of reading the story in its entirety.

In this activity, the teacher tells the whole story continuously until the end. The teacher can ask the child who reads a part of the sentence when he stops at a certain page or can ask the child to comment or guess the next story. The teacher can also provide additional explanations, body movements, expressions, and intonation must be interesting and lively.

c) Repetition of reading activities.

In this section, the teacher repeats the reading page by page while pointing at the words that are spoken accompanied by inviting children to give comments. The teacher can pause for a moment to give the child an opportunity to remember and guess the word.

d) Activities after reading

The activities carried out in this section are discussing keywords and connecting a concept with other concepts that the child already knows before. Then the teacher reread the story together. The teacher emphasizes how to read and corrects how to read in a way that is fun and comfortable for children. Reading together is very

important in developing children's language skills

e) Closed activities

At this stage, activities are filled with various interesting activities that can be adapted to the theme and books that have been read. These activities can be in the form of looking for missing words, matching writing with pictures, 3 M (coloring-cutting-folding), playing drama, imitating voices or movements of characters in books, retelling stories that have been heard or can also tell similar or even similar stories. against the storyline. All activities require teacher creativity so that children feel comfortable and eager to learn.

From all these stages, with various activities that can be done to increase knowledge, model thinking skills, encourage reading skills and provide creative linguistic activities for all curriculum goals.

One of the closed activities implemented in this research is to start asking students to plant trees or watering trees for children whose homes already have plants or asking students to help clean their homes and schools. The following are two opinions of the subjects of this study about the effect of participating in environmental love planting activities:

Subject 1:

“With the PLH for environmental literacy, I as an early childhood teacher can provide stimulation to children on how to protect and preserve the environment, the children understand that we must maintain cleanliness. Don't litter. Because throwing garbage can cause flooding / natural disasters. Children are very interested when we carry out the development of environmental literacy socialization”

Subject 2:

Participating in this activity of instilling love for the environment in early childhood made me as a teacher try to invite my students to take a walk around the school and pay attention to a clean and dirty environment and then invite children to discuss how to make the environment always clean by always throwing garbage in the trash. the place. I was even touched to see a student of mine reminding people to throw trash in the trash.

Subject 3:

I have invited my students to plant and carry out tree planting activities on the land of one of the students' parents. I'm also buying and looking for some flower pots to make my school look greener.

The research subject also sent several photos containing the activities of early childhood who have carried out environmental love activities as follows.



Figure 2: Early children Closed Activities in Environmental Learning

The activities that have been carried out by research subjects as PAUD teachers have shown that even though the Covid pandemic has prevented learning activities from always meeting face-to-face, children's learning activities to love the environment can still be carried out. This also shows that the activities of delivering information and providing motivation to research subjects have made them realize the importance of teaching and familiarizing early childhood to love the environment from an early age.

CONCLUSION

Even though at first the PAUD/TK teachers did not really understand the concept of environmental literacy, but by participating in the Action research activities of the research team, they could help PAUD teachers to recognize what environmental literacy means and how to apply it in TK/PAUD. Research subjects have also used several teaching strategies to help their early childhood students become environmentally literate. Although the teaching strategies used by teachers vary from one another, the point is, that teachers try to instill a love of the environment in their students at an early age.

A pleasant atmosphere when reading books about the environment affects students' understanding of the need to protect the environment, by reading books together. The strength of the text and illustrations in the books developed in this study, allows children to engage themselves as active readers. During the activity of reading stories, the teacher can bring a relaxed atmosphere, full of jokes and laughter. This is possible because the text in the book contains messages that students can do in everyday life to protect the environment. In addition, it contains a vocabulary with several words repeated, has the strength and simplicity of the storyline, the text can be hummed/sung and is often associated with humor. Meanwhile, the colorful illustrations of the book, and the pictures according to the development of the child's soul, will immediately attract the child's attention. In addition, the developed book can provide a very good opportunity for children to be involved in real-life situations with all their problems in a way that does not frighten the child. From the research it is implied that although early childhood must study at home, their PAUD teachers can still teach their students to start protecting and preserving their environment.

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