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Implementation of School-Based Environmental Management to Create a Culture of Environmental Care in Elementary Schools

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Abstract

Rapid global development and technological advancements have led to an increase in human needs and caused a number of environmental problems. This situation is exacerbated by humans irresponsible use of natural resources. Therefore, a systematic approach is needed to instill environmental awareness from an early age, particularly through education at the elementary school level. This study aims to analyze the implementation of environmental management in schools to foster an environmentally conscious character among students. The methodology employed is a literature review using document analysis techniques from various references. The results indicate that environmental management in schools can be implemented through integrated steps of planning, organizing, executing, and monitoring, embedded within policies, curricula, participatory activities, and the management of environmentally friendly facilities. This implementation can shape students' environmentally conscious character through the cultivation of attitudes, knowledge, and skills. In other words, school-based environmental management serves as an efficient strategy for building green schools and enhancing the quality of sustainable education.

Keywords:School-Based Environmental Management, Environmental Education, Environmentally Conscious Character, Elementary School, Green School.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization and technological advancements have brought significant changes to people's lifestyles, including increased exploitation of natural resources, which has led to various environmental crises such as global warming, climate change, pollution, and ecosystem damage.

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These conditions indicate that environmental problems are not only caused by natural factors but also by low human awareness of environmental sustainability. In the context of education, elementary schools play a strategic role in shaping environmentally conscious character from an early age through learning and cultivating sustainable environmentally friendly behaviors. Environmental education is an important means of instilling knowledge, attitudes, and skills in students to maintain environmental balance in their daily lives (Ministry of Environment & Ministry of Education and Culture, 2012; Safitri et al., 2022). Previous research also shows that the implementation of environmental education in elementary schools can increase students' awareness and concern for the environment through learning activities integrated with school culture (Widiawati et al., 2022; Zakiyah & Nur DS, 2024).

Environmental education in elementary schools is increasingly relevant to the demands of sustainable development and the strengthening of 21st-century character education. Schools serve not only as a place to transfer knowledge but also as a space for developing students' ecological character through green school policies, promoting clean living habits, and active participation of the school community in environmental protection. Environmental-based programs such as Adiwiyata are one form of school-based environmental management implementation that aims to create a healthy, comfortable, and sustainable learning environment. The integration of environmental education into the curriculum, participatory activities, and management of environmentally friendly facilities have been proven to be able to build environmental literacy and ecological character in students more effectively (Sahra et al., 2026; Andriana et al., 2024). Furthermore, environmental education in elementary schools also contributes to increasing student interest in learning and engagement through the use of the environment as a contextual learning resource (Amelia et al., 2025; Azima, 2022).

Although various environmental education programs have been implemented in elementary schools, the reality on the ground shows that the implementation of a culture of environmental awareness has not been optimal. Students still lack cleanliness in their schools, have low awareness of waste management, and have minimal involvement of all school members in creating a sustainable environment. These issues indicate that environmental education has not been fully integrated into the overall school management system. However, the success of developing an environmentally conscious character depends not only on the classroom learning process but also on school policies, program organization, supervision, and the role models of all school members (Robbins & Coulter, 2009; Mulyasa, 2013). Previous research also indicates that the implementation of environmental education in elementary

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schools still faces obstacles such as limited learning time, lack of family support, and suboptimal participatory school environmental management (Nur 'Afifah, 2022; Solika & Amrullah, 2022).

Furthermore, the implementation of school-based environmental management tends to focus on ceremonial activities and school physical cleanliness without being accompanied by strengthening sustainable ecological character. Many schools have environmental programs, but have not been able to build a culture of environmental awareness as part of students' daily habits. The lack of integration between school policies, curriculum, participatory activities, and environmental facility management results in the implementation of environmental education not being carried out systematically. However, a school-based environmental management approach requires synergy between the planning, organizing, implementation, and monitoring stages so that a culture of environmental awareness can grow consistently in the school environment (Hasan, 2002; Terry, 1972). Research on environmental literacy in elementary schools also shows that routine habits and the active involvement of teachers and parents are important factors in developing students' sustainable environmental awareness character (Andriana et al., 2024; Leviannur, 2026).

Based on these problems, this study aims to analyze the implementation of school-based environmental management in realizing a culture of environmental care in elementary schools through aspects of planning, organizing, implementing, and monitoring. This research is important because integrated school environmental management can be an effective strategy in shaping the character of students who care about the environment while supporting the creation of sustainable green schools. The urgency of this research lies in the need to strengthen ecological character education from an early age amidst increasing global environmental issues. The novelty of this research lies in the focus of the study which places school-based environmental management as a holistic approach in building a culture of environmental care in elementary schools through the integration of school policies, curriculum, participatory activities, and sustainable management of environmentally friendly facilities.

METHODS

This research uses a library research method. According to Hasan (2002:11), library research is a method of reviewing using literature sources, such as books, notes, and reports from previous research. The data used in this study are documents, which are analyzed through a commentary study method. Commentary study means collecting information about variables or phenomena from various records such as books, newspapers, magazines, inscriptions, meeting minutes, agendas, and the like (Arikunto, 2010:275).

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to GR Terry (1972), management is a method or way to direct a group of people towards the real goals of an organization. Management can be seen in two ways, namely as a process and also as part of school management. From a process perspective, school management forms a system that includes planning, organizing, implementing, and monitoring. Meanwhile, from the component side, school management includes: (1) curriculum and learning, (2) students, (3) teachers and education staff, (4) funds, (5) facilities, (6) interaction between the school and the community, and (7) culture and environment in the school (Mulyasa, 2013).

Robbins and Coulter (2018) explain the functions of management as planning, organizing, leadership, and supervision.

1. **Planning**is about setting goals, strategies, and making plans to organize all activities.
2. **Organizing**contains steps to determine tasks, the people who carry them out, the grouping of tasks, who reports to whom, and the level of decisions taken.
3. **Leadership**involves encouraging subordinates, directing them, choosing good means of communication, and resolving problems as they arise.
4. **Supervision**is about checking activities to ensure that plans are running according to plan and correcting any errors.

School-based management (SBM) is defined as a form of resource management carried out autonomously by schools, involving all parties in the decision-making process to improve the quality of education (Law No. 20/2003). School-based environmental management (SBM) means managing school resources to create a more environmentally friendly atmosphere, by instilling character values that care for nature in a sustainable manner with all parties, for the sake of improving school quality (KLHK, 2018).

MLBS has four main interconnected parts to create an environmentally friendly school:

1. **Policies that Care for Nature**.
2. **Implementation of a Curriculum that Prioritizes Nature**.
3. **Nature Activities That Invite All Participants**.
4. **Management of Facilities that Support the Environment**.

The essential elements of the MLBS process consist of four parts:

1. **Planning**

   Planning is the steps to determine the goals, activities, resources, time, place, and methods

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of work for school-based management. Some planning requirements include: (1) clear goals, (2) easy to understand, (3) realistic, (4) applicable (5) detailed (6) adaptable (7) comprehensive, and (8) effective (Hasan, 2002). In achieving an environmentally friendly school, planning begins at the beginning of the school year with a vision and mission that focus on the environment, green policies, and slogans such as "Clean, Healthy, Green School" for all parties involved. There are two important standards: (1) a curriculum that includes environmental protection, and (2) RKAS with an environmental management program.

2. **Organizing**

   Organizing means selecting the right people, establishing working relationships, and writing down tasks and responsibilities to create a clear organizational structure for better school performance (Robbins & Coulter, 2018). In selecting, factors such as physical and mental abilities (interests, abilities, emotions, intelligence, personality) as well as educational background and work experience must be taken into consideration. For an environmentally focused curriculum, two important things are important: (1) educators must understand how to teach in an environmentally friendly manner, and (2) students must actively participate in environmental protection activities.

3. **Implementation**

   Implementation is how we carry out plans and organize things by providing encouragement, supervision, and checking. Encouragement helps educators and staff to improve the quality of their work; supervision provides assistance for regular improvements from the principal and related parties; checking is used to assess how well the effectiveness, efficiency, and responsibility (Mulyasa, 2013). For activities that involve many people, there are two things that need to be considered: (1) implementation of environmental protection plans for students at school, (2) cooperation with external parties.

4. **Supervision**

   Supervision is the process of comparing existing standards with work results to assess success, identify errors, report, and provide feedback. This process includes assessment, reporting, and follow-up, based on encouragement, guidance, supervision, and checking (Hasan, 2002).

Building Character

Literally, character building comes from the term "build," which means to create or improve something, and "character," which refers to the traits or characteristics that distinguish one individual from another (KBBI, 2023). In environmental terms, it refers to the process of

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developing good character and morals so that people become more concerned about a sustainable environment.

Efforts to maintain a healthy school environment involve maintaining safety, comfort, inclusion, cleanliness, and health through good habits from all parties. Examples include creative resource-saving campaigns by students, such as electricity, water, and telephones; a culture of maintaining cleanliness both individually (such as on desks) and as a group (in the classroom and surrounding area); a rotating cleaning schedule; and caring for plants between classes.

Environmental character development is supported by the PKLH/PLH subject. Population and Environmental Education (PKLH) is a government program aimed at increasing public awareness of the environment (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013). There are two main focuses: (1) population education to teach good attitudes regarding population reproduction and distribution, and (2) environmental education for responsible resource management. The main goal is to improve the quality of life.

Environmental education affects students in various ways:

1. **Cognitive Aspects**: Improve understanding, memory, application, analysis, synthesis, and assessment of environmental issues (Arikunto, 2010).
2. **Affective Aspect**: Increase acceptance, assessment, organization of values, and personality development in line with nature.
3. **Psychomotor Aspects**: Practice skills such as imitation, organization, speaking accuracy, articulation, and develop environmental skills to enrich culture.
4. **Interest Aspect**: Forming an interest that comes from within to succeed in environmental management.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the implementation of school-based environmental management plays a crucial role in fostering a culture of environmental stewardship in elementary schools. The implementation of environmental management encompasses planning, organizing, implementing, and monitoring, integrated with school policies, curriculum, participatory activities, and the management of environmentally friendly facilities and infrastructure. The results demonstrate that fostering environmentally conscious behavior through activities such as maintaining cleanliness, waste management, resource conservation, and the active involvement of all school members can sustainably shape students' ecological character. Furthermore, the implementation of school-based environmental management

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supports the creation of a healthy, comfortable, and conducive learning environment, thereby improving the quality of sustainable education in elementary schools.

However, this study has limitations because it used a literature study method, so the results are still conceptual and do not directly describe empirical conditions in the field. Furthermore, the data sources used are limited to various relevant literature and documents, so it cannot show variations in environmental management implementation in various elementary schools in more depth. Therefore, further research is recommended to use a field approach through qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods to obtain more comprehensive data on the effectiveness of school-based environmental management implementation. Future research can also examine the influence of a culture of environmental care on learning outcomes, student character, and parental and community involvement in supporting green school programs. Practically, the results of this study can be used as considerations for schools, teachers, and educational policymakers in designing integrated and sustainable environmental management programs to strengthen environmental care in students from an early age.

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