

## Conservation Education as an Effort to Develop Environmentally Caring Character

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### Abstract

*Conservation education has an important role in building environmental awareness and character in every individual. Conservation education is a type of education that hopes to influence behavior, attitudes and ways of thinking about how to manage natural resources and ecosystems. To foster a sense of concern for the environment, efforts are needed to build spirit, one of which is through conservation education. Conservation education is very important to implement in an effort to foster, direct and make someone love the environment with the aim of improving and maintaining environmental health in all aspects of interaction with nature. Parents, as the first and main educators in the household, have a very big role in educating children's attitudes and behavior so that they care about the environment. The conclusion obtained is that conservation education can prepare people who are pro-nature conservation, because conservation education is a form of character education in accordance with the reference from Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 20 of 2018.*

**Keywords:** Conservation Education, Character, Care for the environment

### INTRODUCTION

Education is an important part of human life that can never be abandoned. Purmadi (2020) emphasized that education is very important to improve a nation's human resources. As a process, there are two different assumptions regarding education in human life. First, it can be considered as a process that occurs accidentally or occurs naturally. Education is not a process that is organized regularly, planned, and uses learned methods and is based on rules that have been agreed upon by a community, but rather is a part of life that has been going on since humans existed. Second, education is considered a process that occurs intentionally, intentionally, and is organized based on applicable rules.

Nugroho (2022) underlines the important role of education in shaping the character of the younger generation, including developing concern for the environment. In this case, environmental education functions as a means to foster environmental awareness among society, which is rooted in a love of nature and the environment. Lickona (1991) advocates conservation education as a

foundation for developing character that is consistent with sustainability values. The conservation objectives are (1) Protecting biological natural resources and ecosystem balance in order to support efforts to improve the quality of human life and human welfare (2) ensuring that the utilization and capabilities of biological natural resources and their ecosystems are carried out in a balanced and harmonious manner with each other. If you look closely at environmental problems, it will be seen that there is neglect of the ecosystem due to human activities. Santika, (2021). Caring for the environment includes attitudes or behavior related to a person's responsibility to protect, love and preserve nature. This reflects a general attitude towards environmental welfare which is manifested in actions aimed at improving and preserving environmental quality in all environmental-related behavior. Purwati (2019). Nowadays, it seems that humans are increasingly ignoring and neglecting nature, even though nature provides all their essential needs. This trend indicates a decreasing level of concern for the environment. Therefore, it is very important to effectively cultivate and foster a culture of good environmental management.

## METHOD

This research is a qualitative descriptive study that tries to describe conservation education in cultivating the character of environmental concern. This research data was collected through library materials including exploration of various written sources such as books, archives, magazines, articles, journals. Qualitative data analysis was carried out interactively and attractively until data saturation was achieved. Analysis consists of several stages which include data reduction, data presentation, and drawing or verifying conclusions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Conservation Education

Conservation education is an important approach in efforts to preserve natural resources and biodiversity. Conservation education is an effort to instill attitudes or behavior of concern for the environment (BTN BNW 2020). Planting, utilizing, preserving and studying are the four values that underlie the concept of conservation, considering its breadth and limitations Rachman (2012). Conservation education aims to change the behavior or attitudes of people in society. Effective environmental education can encourage individuals to develop positive attitudes towards preserving the environment and natural resources. In this context, conservation education not only provides knowledge, but also shapes behavior that supports sustainability. By understanding environmental issues in depth, individuals can make better and more environmentally responsible decisions.

### Character building

Character education is a system of naming character values which includes components of knowledge, awareness or will, and actions to implement these values, both towards God Almighty, oneself, others, the environment and nationality. Development of national character can be done through the

development of a person's individual character. Character education is an important aspect of the education system which aims to shape and develop positive character in students. In the increasingly complex context of globalization, character education becomes very relevant to build a generation that is not only academically intelligent, but also has good morals and ethics. Berkowitz (2002) states that character is a set of a person's psychological characteristics that will influence the person's tendencies and ability to function morally. Cultivating character, followed by knowledge and skills, is a core competency that must be emphasized in the 2013 curriculum. The attitude competency standards set by the 2013 curriculum are that students must be able to become responsible individuals, have noble character, and interact with their environment, the world, and its civilization.

Environmentally conscious character reflects a proactive attitude in preventing damage to the surrounding nature and playing an active role in efforts to restore damaged ecosystems. Furthermore, conservation education functions as a forum for fostering students' understanding, awareness, attitudes and responsible behavior towards nature and the principles of sustainable development. Matanari, (2020) kcharacter can usually be seen from how he interacts with parents, teachers, friends and the environment and character can also be obtained from the results of learning carried out directly or from observations of other people. This shows that character education is something that is important to immediately strengthen its implementation. In this regard, the Government issued Minister of Education and Culture Regulation (Permendikbud) Number 20 of 2018 concerning Strengthening Character Education in Formal Education Units. In this Permendikbud, strengthening character education is intended to strengthen students' character through harmonization of thought, heart, sport and feeling, while the five main values to be instilled include religiosity,

independence, mutual cooperation, nationalism and integrity. integrated into the curriculum (Kemendikbud RI, 2018).

### **Environmental care**

Awareness of the importance of protecting the environment is not only an individual responsibility, but also a collective obligation that must be carried out by the entire community. An environmentally caring attitude is very important because a healthy environment is the basis for a quality life. (Rahardyan, 2020) environmental damage can have a direct impact on human health and overall quality of life. By protecting the environment, we ensure that future generations can enjoy the same resources that we enjoy today. Nugroho, (2022) emphasized that good environmental education can help shape environmentally caring character in children, which will contribute to pro-environmental behavior in the future.

### **Conservation Education as an Effort to Develop Environmentally Caring Character**

Education is an effort to develop a person's innate potential mentally and physically in accordance with the principles held in their society and culture. Hasibuan et al. (2021). Apart from that, education is one component of life that continues to be a concern in developing the living environment, especially in terms of environmental education Anisa & Tjahjono, (2018). According to Ardoin et al. (2020), environmental education can provide direct benefits for the environment and solve conservation problems concretely. Of course, this means that environmental education can develop and improve environmental values, attitudes and knowledge, and build skills that prepare people and society to work together. take positive environmental action.

Environmentally caring character includes active behavior to protect, preserve and improve the environment. Conservation education seeks to build this character by

providing contextual and relevant learning experiences. Caring for the environment is an attitude and action that always tries to prevent damage to the surrounding natural environment and develops efforts to repair natural damage that has occurred. Thus, the character of caring for the environment is an attitude possessed by someone who strives to improve and manage the surrounding environment properly so that the environment can be enjoyed continuously without damaging its condition, as well as maintaining and preserving it so that there are sustainable benefits. Caring behavior towards the environment can be demonstrated by carrying out various activities such as preserving the environment properly, throwing rubbish in the places provided, and carrying out activities related to the character of caring for the environment. Character education, caring for the environment can help someone become aware of environmentally caring behavior which is very beneficial for nature. Character education is a component of the idea of conservation education, which can ultimately change the way people think about environmental conservation. By integrating conservation education into efforts to improve care environment, it is hoped that it can foster environmentally caring character or behavior in students. This is due to the fact that moral actions are expected to grow from moral knowledge and moral feelings, not only from theories of knowledge and consciousness, but also from the ability, desire and habit to do something.

### **CONCLUSION**

Conservation education has an important role in building environmental awareness and character in every individual. Conservation education is a type of education that hopes to influence behavior, attitudes and ways of thinking about how to manage natural resources and ecosystems. Conservation education is not only a tool to increase knowledge, but also a means to build

individual character who cares and is responsible for the environment, thereby creating a society that is sustainable and in harmony with nature.

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