

Literature Review: Environmental Awareness and Pro-Environmental Behavior

Wiwik Handayani*, Reiga Ritomiea Ariescy, Felia Ananda Cahya, Salsabila Islami Yusnindi, Desy Ari Sulisty

Faculty of Management, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional "Veteran" Jawa Timur, Indonesia

*Corresponding author:

E-mail: wiwik.em@upnjatim.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this literature review is to review and explore the results of previous research and other literature related to environmental awareness and pro-environmental behavior. The research method used is a literature review. This study presents antecedents of Environmental awareness. Environmental awareness is very important to realize environmental protection behavior. The results of previous research indicate that environmental awareness has a significant role in building pro-environmental behavior. Someone will protect the environment if he realizes that the environment around him needs to be protected. Environmental awareness has a positive correlation with pro-environmental behavior. If someone has high environmental awareness, the pro-environmental behavior will also be higher.

Keywords: Literature review, environmental awareness, pro-environmental behavior

Introduction

Nowadays we have witnessed an increased environmental awareness performed by society, government, and scientists. This increased behavior is a result of the Covid-19 pandemic that becomes a threat to the people's health, thus a threat to the world. Human-environment interaction deals with the fulfillment of food and resource demand. It goes further to how human treats and affects the environment. Hanisch et al. (2014) argue that such environmental awareness is very important in environmental management and the protection of living creatures. Moreover, environmental awareness may give a more powerful effect when implemented. Agarwal (2018) states that environmental sustainability may be achieved when environmental awareness is performed in an integrated manner by all elements of the people, such as the scientists, engineers, and other communities.

Environmental awareness is to attend to an environmental issue and its respective action leading to realizing a good practice to achieve a sustainable environment. According to Carmi (2013), environmental awareness can be defined as a conscious behavior towards the environment like the pro-environmental behavior. Enger and Smith (2013) presume environmental awareness as the science which helps people attain the value, skills, and knowledge required to live sustainably. Environmental awareness plays a significant role in building people's awareness of the environment and becomes a responsible part of the country that cares about the environment.

Environmental awareness constitutes an ultimate drive to green behavior. Green behavior is a pro-environmental behavior. Mkumbachi et. al. (2020) argue that there is a cause-effect relationship between individual environmental awareness and pro-environmental behavior. An individual who applies a strong environmental value tends to be aware of how his/her behavior affects the environment. This is to justify that environmental awareness leads to pro-environmental

How to cite:

Handayani, W., Ariescy, R. A., Cahya, F. C., et al. (2021). Literature review: environmental awareness and pro-environmental behavior. *5th International Seminar of Research Month 2020*. NST Proceedings. pages 170-173. doi: 10.11594/nstp.2021.0925

behavior. When an individual receives good information about his/her environment, one will be more aware of human-caused environmental issues, which will also motivate them to live a sustainable life. The knowledge of the environment will construct their attitude, belief, and eventually resulting in the expected behavior.

Methods

The method used in this study is a literature review of books, national and international articles discussing within the scope of environmental awareness and pro-environmental behavior. The total number of articles reviewed in this literature review is 11 articles.

Results and Discussion

Results

Environmental awareness

Environmental awareness helps social groups and individuals become aware of the environment. Enger and Smith (2013) presume environmental awareness as the science which helps people attain the value, skills, and knowledge required to live sustainably. The awareness towards the environment plays an integral role in building people's awareness towards the environment, making them responsible beings to their surroundings. It may also be defined as the ability to understand environmental issues and respective actions one needs to take to reach the good practice for realizing a sustainable environment. Hanisch et al. (2014) explain that environmental awareness is very important for environmental management as well as the protection of the living organism. Agarwal (2018) states that environmental sustainability may be achieved when environmental awareness is performed in an integrated manner by all elements of the people, such as the scientists, engineers, and other communities.

Wan et al. (2014) argue that one with a higher education tends to have a better understanding and awareness of the environment, compared to one with lower education. Meanwhile, Pena et al. (2018) found that local issues would be more influential in the construction of pro-environmental behavior than the regional or national issues would be. The integration of environmental issues in one area can improve education and be translated to positive environmental behavior.

Environmental awareness is necessary for improving life quality where it can help achieve a life in harmony. One's awareness of the environment may be seen from his or her behavior. According to Carmi (2013), environmental awareness can be defined as a conscious behavior towards the environment like the pro-environmental behavior. Hadriana and Hudrasyah (2013) found that environmental awareness positively affects pro-environmental behavior. The higher one's awareness towards the environment, he/she would be more likely to show a higher pro-environmental behavior.

Pro-environmental behavior

Previous literature has used different terms to describe behaviors relevant to pro-environmental behavior, such as green behavior, ecological behaviors, responsible environmental behaviors, and other terms. Vicente-molina et al. (2013) reveal some factors that affect pro-environmental behaviors, such as attitude, knowledge, motivation, and customer perception effectiveness. Lack of understanding of the environment may limit the construction of pro-environmental behavior. This is in line with Zsóka, et al. (2013) who describe that attitude and knowledge are so significant that they will potentially impact the construction of positive environmental behaviors. Additionally, a different finding was declared by Azwar (2015), stating that pro-environmental behaviors are affected by several factors, including internal and external factors, coming from the dimension of the past, present, and the future. These factors may complexly contribute to the pro-environmental behaviors because human by nature is not simple to understand or predict either.

Scholars have tried to approach the issue of pro-environmental behavior differently. Matthies, et al. (2012) attempt to see impacts from parents' behavior, and found that it directly affects the pro-environmental behavior of their children, particularly through communication and pro-environment norms. Besides, the education system is also found to contribute to increasing pro-environmental behavior. The effective formal education is expected to give a magnitude effect on the development of one's cognitive and emotional relationship to the environment, the development of attitude and ecocentrism about self-responsibility, and the improvement of pro-environmental behavior.

While Matthies, et al. focus on students as the study respondents, Shikaleska et al., (2018) conducted a study on a more varied group of respondents by age. The study found that the respondents within the range of 30 years old above perform more pro-environmental behaviors. This finding, however, does not mean to justify that those below 30 years old perform less pro-environmental behaviors. Overall, the environmental awareness is known to be satisfactory, but practically pro-environmental behaviors are moderately performed. Therefore, it needs to be more intensified to encourage society to have more pro-environmental behaviors.

Discussion

Findings of previous studies have explained that environmental awareness is one of the keys to one's pro-environmental behaviors. In other words, having good environmental awareness may lead to performing real actions to protect and sustain the environment. The stronger the awareness, the more obvious the pro-environmental behaviors will be. Meanwhile, this awareness will exist once comprehension is achieved. Being able to understand the environment and what is required for it to sustain, people will tend to become more determined to sustain the environment. Moreover, environmental awareness is not by nature. Some factors have been identified by the previous studies, particularly the education and age factors. Having a higher education will encourage one to perform more pro-environmental behaviors. Although this notion is not definite, it has been around the society. Furthermore, those in a more mature age tend to be more active in expressing pro-environmental behaviors.

Pro-environmental behaviors are indicated by caring for the environment, like efficiently use water and energy, use and consume environmental-friendly products, use vehicles with less pollution, and other behaviors that contribute positively to the environment. Pro-environmental behaviors are vital for maintaining a good environment therefore individuals are expected to perform such behaviors.

Conclusion

Environmental awareness is a situation where humans understand what is best and necessary for the environment. Being environmentally aware does not guarantee one's active pro-environmental behavior. However, previous studies have proven that the higher one's awareness towards the environment the more likely one expresses the pro-environmental behaviors. Pro-environmental behaviors are the manifestation of one's attitude aiming at the objective that is to minimize negative effects to the environment.

References

- Azwar, S. (2015). *Penyusunan skala psikologi*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Belajar.
- Agarwal, S., (2018). *Environmental biotechnology*. New Delhi: APH Publishing Corporation.
- Carmi, N. (2013). Caring about tomorrow: Future orientation, environmental attitudes and behaviors. *Environmental Education Research, 19*(4), 430-444.
- Enger, E. D., Smith, B. F., & Bockarie, A. T. (2000). *Environmental science: A study of interrelationships* (p. 434). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

-
- Hadriana, & Hudrasyah, H. (2013). the green knowledge and green awareness influences analysis on green behavior and its impact on green lifestyle of instant noodles consumer (Case Study: Bandung Institute of Technology's Undergraduate Students). *The Indonesian Journal of Business Administration*, 2(19), 2250-2256.
- Hanisch, A., Rank, A., & Seeber, G. (2014). How green are european curricula? a comparative analysis of primary school syllabi in five european countries. *European Educational Research Journal*, 13(6), 661-682.
- Mkumbachi, Lausi, R., Astina, I. K., & Handoyo, B. (2020). Environmental awareness and pro-environmental behavior: A case of university students in Malang City. *Jurnal Pendidikan Geografi*, 25(2), 118-125.
- Pena, P. N. D., Macale, A. M., & Largo, N. N. (2018). Environmental awareness and pro-environmental behaviors of high school students in Los Baños, Laguna. *Journal of Nature Studies*, 17(1), 56-67.
- Shikaleska, A. V., Trpovski, G., & Gjozinska, B. (2018). Environmental Awareness and of Pro-Environmental Consumer Behavior. *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 8(20), 4-17.
- Matthies, E., Selge, S., & Klöckner, C. A. (2012). The role of parental behaviour for the development of behaviour specific environmental norms - The example of recycling and re-use behaviour. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 32(3), 277-284.
- Vicente-Molina, Azucena, M., Fernandez-Sainz, A., & Izagirre-Olaizola, J. (2013). Environmental knowledge and other variables affecting pro-environmental behaviour: Comparison of university students from emerging and advanced countries. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 61, 130-138.
- Wan, M. & Toppinen, A. & Chen, J., (2014). [Consumers' environmental awareness towards children's furniture in Shanghai and Shenzhen, China](#). *Scandinavian Forest Economics: Proceedings of the Biennial Meeting of the Scandinavian Society of Forest Economics*, 2014(45), 1-9.
- Zsoka, A., Szerenyi, Z. M., Szechy, A., & Kocsis, T. (2013). Greening Due To Environmental Education? Environmental Knowledge, Attitudes, Consumer Behavior and Everyday Pro-Environmental Activities of Hungarian High School and University Students *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 48, 126-138