

EDUCATIONAL BARRIERS TO PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOR: AN ANALYSIS OF INHIBITING FACTORS

by Bambang Kamajaya Barus

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EDUCATIONAL BARRIERS TO PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOR: AN ANALYSIS OF INHIBITING FACTORS

Nurul Hidayati Ahmad¹, Sigit Nugroho¹, Syarifah Farradinna¹, Icha Herawati¹

Fakultas Psikologi, Universitas Islam Riau

*email: sigit.nugroho@psy.uir.ac.id

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Abstract

This research delves into the inhibiting factors of pro-environmental behavior in Indonesia, with a particular emphasis on waste management challenges in Pekanbaru, a major contributor to Riau's waste production. It examines the gap between environmental knowledge and action, attributing the lack of pro-environmental behavior to insufficient environmental education and exploring the cognitive aspects of littering behavior through the lens of Social Learning Theory. Employing a descriptive qualitative methodology, the study gathers data via interviews and observations, analyzing it through techniques of data reduction, display, and verification to identify key themes from 3 participants. These themes encompass individual factors such as awareness, knowledge, and attitudes; behavioral factors including practicality, intention, and lifestyle; and environmental factors like social pressure and result orientation, particularly within the Conservation lifestyle type. The research underscores the complex interplay of these factors in shaping pro-environmental behavior and suggests that future research should target behavioral changes that encourage pro-environmental outcomes. Acknowledging the contributions of the Islamic University of Riau and its participants, the study offers a foundation for further exploration in the field of environmental behavior..

Keywords: Inhibiting factors, pro-environmental behavior, garbage

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menyelidiki faktor-faktor penghambat perilaku pro-lingkungan di Indonesia, dengan penekanan khusus pada tantangan pengelolaan sampah di Pekanbaru, yang merupakan kontributor utama produksi sampah di Riau. Laporan ini mengkaji kesenjangan antara pengetahuan dan tindakan lingkungan, menghubungkan kurangnya perilaku pro-lingkungan dengan kurangnya pendidikan lingkungan dan mengeksplorasi aspek kognitif dari perilaku membuang sampah sembarangan melalui lensa Teori Pembelajaran Sosial. Dengan menggunakan metodologi deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini mengumpulkan data melalui wawancara dan observasi, menganalisisnya melalui teknik reduksi data, display, dan verifikasi untuk mengidentifikasi tema-tema utama dari 3 partisipan. Tema-tema ini mencakup faktor-faktor individu seperti kesadaran, pengetahuan, dan sikap; faktor perilaku termasuk kepraktisan, niat, dan gaya hidup; dan faktor lingkungan seperti tekanan sosial dan orientasi hasil, khususnya dalam tipe gaya hidup Konservasi. Penelitian ini menggarisbawahi interaksi yang kompleks dari faktor-faktor ini dalam membentuk perilaku pro-lingkungan dan menyarankan bahwa penelitian di masa depan harus menargetkan perubahan perilaku yang mendorong hasil pro-lingkungan. Mengakui kontribusi Universitas Islam Riau dan para pesertanya, penelitian ini menawarkan landasan untuk eksplorasi lebih lanjut di bidang perilaku lingkungan.

Kata Kunci : Faktor penghambat, perilaku pro lingkungan, sampah

INTRODUCTION

Countries worldwide are facing environmental issues, and Indonesia is no

exception. Various environmental problems exist in Indonesia, with one of them being related to household waste. According to

Dobikin (2018), as stated by the World Health Organization (WHO), waste is defined as something unused, not utilized, not liked, or something discarded that originates from human activities and does not occur spontaneously. The emergence of these environmental issues is also supported by the increasing global population and individuals' changing daily consumption habits, resulting in the accumulation of various quantities and types of waste. This, in turn, contributes to environmental pollution and adversely affects the health of communities, both on land and in the sea.

Furthermore, waste generation also indicates the insufficient internalization of environmental education within society. The issue of waste is complex and cannot be swiftly addressed. As long as humans continue to live and engage in activities, the production of waste will persist and increase daily and yearly. Additionally, environmental problems are attributed to human behavior and their perspectives on interacting with the Earth (Smith et al., 2007; Winter & Koger, 2014). The changing habits of individual consumption each day contribute to the diverse amounts and types of waste generated, affecting both environmental pollution and public health on land and at sea. Additionally, the generation of waste also serves as evidence of the inadequate

internalization of environmental education within society.

The problem of waste is not a simple matter to be quickly addressed. As long as humans live and continue their activities, the production of waste piles will continue to increase both on a daily and yearly basis. Furthermore, environmental issues are also caused by human behavior and their perspective on interacting with the Earth (Smith, Shearman & Positano, 2007; Winter & Koger, 2014). Based on the findings of Mahyudin (2017) regarding waste management and landfill (TPA), untreated waste and inappropriate landfill management systems have negative impacts.

The fundamental issue contributing to the ongoing increase in waste is the understanding of landfills, as stipulated in Law Number 18 of 2008 concerning waste management, namely Landfills (Tempat Pemrosesan Akhir or TPA). TPAs function to manage and safely return waste to the environment for both human and environmental safety. However, the public's understanding of TPAs has been misinterpreted as Final Disposal Sites (Tempat Pembuangan Akhir), leading to the indiscriminate dumping of waste in landfills and other places without prior sorting, ultimately causing an increasing waste pile every year (overload). As seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Illegal Waste Dump

Sustainable Waste Indonesia (SWI) states that unmanaged waste in Indonesia amounts to 24%. The remaining 7% is recycled, while 69% ends up in landfills, with 60% being organic waste, 14% plastic, and other types of waste making up the rest. It is also mentioned that the root causes of this issue lie in the behaviors and habits of the community, infrastructure challenges, and the optimization of waste services (CNN Indonesia, 2018). From this, it can be concluded that these unmanaged wastes eventually pollute the ecosystem and the environment due to the lack of proper management.

According to data from the National Waste Management Information System (SIPSN), the waste generated on a national scale was 30,831,900.87 tons in 2021 and

35,347,766.03 tons in 2022. On the provincial scale, in Riau, the focus of the study, the annual waste generation amounted to 650,029.08 tons in 2021 and increased to 995,172.66 tons in 2022. Waste in Riau is predominantly from Pekanbaru City, recorded as the top waste-producing district/city in 2021 with a waste generation of 353,133.89 tons, while in 2022, it amounted to 356,503.31 tons. Data from the past two years show that the waste produced in annual production has a high percentage, specifically of food waste and plastic waste, as seen in the following figure.

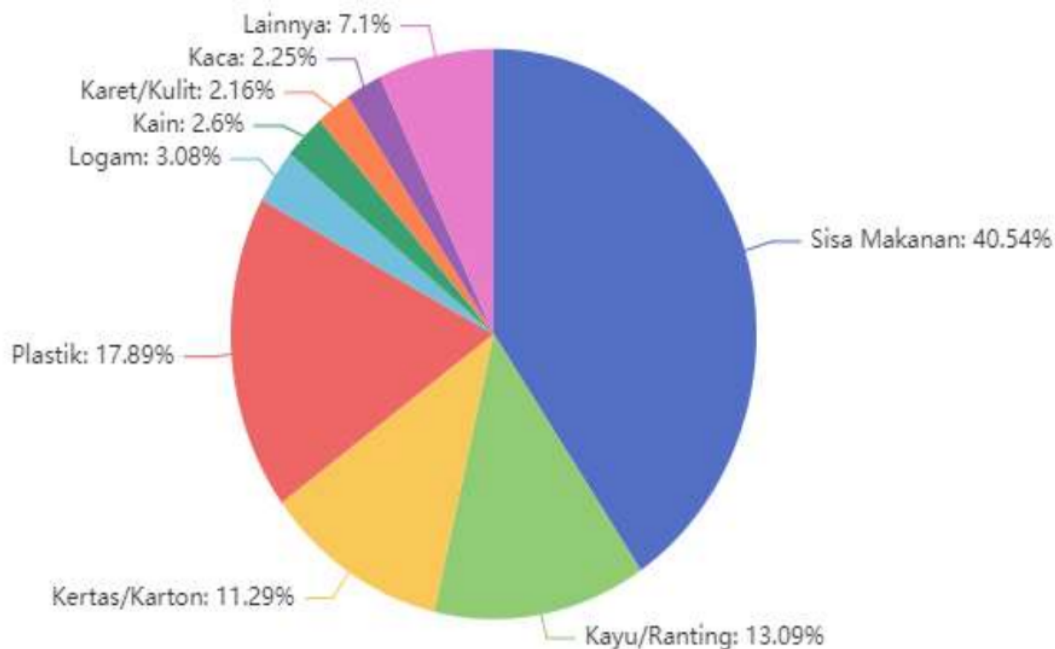


Figure 2. percentage of Waste in Riau

The discussion related to barriers in human behavior impacting the environment can be elucidated using psychological theories that connect human behavior to the environment. According to Kollmu_s & Agyeman (2002), numerous theoretical frameworks have been

expanded to define the imbalance between environmental knowledge, awareness, and pro-environmental behavior. However, the crucial aspect that requires specific attention in this issue.

As stated by Gifford (cited in Effendi et al., 2020), even when all factors converge for individuals to form an intention to engage in pro-environmental actions, barriers such as access issues, behavior, past habits, and social pressure can impede pro-environmental behavior. The environmental phenomenon is so complex that resolving the problem will only succeed if more individuals support and actively participate in all forms of special treatment toward the environment, especially in addressing waste issues, by prioritizing the intention to behave pro-environmentally. This constitutes a significant step that needs to be a priority for all parties, both individuals and groups.

Pro-environmental behavior

The environment is an aspect that can influence an individual's behavior. Various psychological disciplines can explain how someone behaves, especially in relation to their environment. According to Steg & Vlek (2009), the quality of the environment depends on human behavior models. By monitoring the involvement and psychological abilities related to the environment, understanding and promoting pro-environmental behavior can be achieved. In the field of environmental psychology, there are several definitions of pro-environmental behavior (Kusnaini, 2021).

According to Gifford (cited in mi & Faradiba, 2015), human behavior has a significant impact on the environment. Humans have turned the Earth into a planet that suits their comfort and needs by excessively exploiting natural resources and disrupting the survival of other species. This exploitation leads to environmental problems, including the excessive use of food resources, resulting in challenging waste management issues. To minimize these impacts, pro-environmental behavior is necessary. According to Kollmuss & Agyeman (2002), pro-environmental

behavior is defined as intentional behavior with the purpose of minimizing the negative impact of one's actions on the natural and built environment. This includes reducing the use of resources and energy, using non-toxic materials, and minimizing waste production.

According to Putra (2019), pro-environmental behavior is an activity aimed at minimizing environmental damage or improving environmental conditions. Meanwhile, according to Hendra (cited in Rifayanti, Saputri, Arake & Astuti, 2018), pro-environmental behavior is an activity beneficial for reducing environmental damage or restoring environmental conditions. Based on the explanations above, pro-environmental behavior can be defined as an activity carried out with awareness and intent to minimize the negative impact on the environment by protecting and improving current and future conditions, for the well-being of both humans and the environment.

According to Blake in Kollmuss & Agyeman (2002), the gap between attitude and behavior is discussed as a value-action gap, indicating that many pro-environmental behavior models are limited because they fail to account for individual, social, and institutional constraints and assume that humans are rational in using systematically available information. Recent research, mostly by sociologists rather than psychologists, has attempted to address these limitations. Blake uses quotes from Redclift and Banton to summarize this new approach and identifies three barriers to action: individuality, responsibility, and practicality. According to Blake, these barriers are divided into three categories:

1. Individual Individual barriers originate within an individual, relating to attitudes and temperament. These barriers significantly impact individuals who lack a strong environmental concern. However,

these barriers can be overcome with stronger desires and needs.

2. Responsibility The responsibility barrier is closely related to the psychological concept of 'locus of control.' Individuals who do not engage in pro-environmental actions feel that they cannot influence the situation or should not take responsibility for it. Blake indicates that in certain communities he describes, a lack of trust in institutions often leads people to stop acting pro-environmentally because they are suspicious of local and national governments, and they are unwilling to follow prescribed actions.
3. Practicality Blake interprets practicality barriers as social and institutional obstacles preventing individuals from engaging in pro-environmental behavior, regardless of their attitudes or intentions. Additionally, a lack of time, money, and knowledge serves as constraints. Previous models are useful as they address both internal and external factors but do not consider social pressure factors.

Despite several possible explanations for the relationship between pro-environmental behavior and other inhibiting factors, Social Learning Theory emphasizes that this connection occurs as a result of learning through observation of individual behavior, social environmental values, and personal cognition. The choice of this perspective is based on the researchers' need to examine inhibiting factors of pro-environmental behavior from a cognitive aspect of behavior but not touching on behavioral aspects. The use of theory from Blake's findings (1999) identified using the social learning theory. This theory is selected because it delves more deeply into the role of

personal, behavioral, and environmental factors, also considering whether or not to produce behavior.

This research aims to explore the hindrances to pro-environmental behavior, particularly focusing on the cognitive aspects influencing littering behavior. Understanding these barriers is crucial as they emanate from the inadequate internalization of environmental education. The discussion will draw upon psychological theories linking human behavior to the environment to delve deeper into the challenges impeding pro-environmental actions (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Gifford, Effendi et al., 2020).

The novelty of this study lies in dissecting the cognitive dimensions that hinder pro-environmental behavior, supplementing existing theories with empirical insights. Utilizing a social learning theory perspective, this research will scrutinize inhibiting factors without delving into behavioral aspects, aiming to fill the gap in understanding cognitive barriers impacting environmental actions (Blake, 1999).

This study sets out to accomplish a multifaceted exploration aimed at understanding and addressing the cognitive barriers inhibiting pro-environmental behavior. Firstly, it seeks to meticulously identify and categorize these obstacles, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding the psychological impediments to sustainable actions. By delving into the interplay between environmental education, societal perceptions, and littering behavior, the research aims to unravel the intricate dynamics shaping individuals' attitudes and actions towards waste disposal. Building on these insights, the study endeavors to propose effective strategies aimed at mitigating these cognitive hurdles, thereby fostering a culture of pro-environmental actions. Moreover, through the accumulation of empirical

evidence, this research aims to contribute substantively to the enhancement of existing psychological theories pertaining to environmental behavior. Ultimately, this comprehensive analysis aims to advocate for a paradigm shift in attitudes and policies towards waste management, aiming for more sustainable practices. By shedding light on these intricate aspects, this study aspires to offer valuable insights that can inform policy-making and interventions, leading to a concerted effort to promote pro-environmental behavior. The overarching goal is to curb the detrimental effects of unmanaged waste on ecosystems and public health, paving the way for a more sustainable and responsible approach to waste management.

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RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a descriptive qualitative research design. According to Sugiyono (2016), qualitative research is a method used to investigate objects in natural conditions. Data collected are in the form of words, descriptions, not numbers, and the data produced are as-is, without manipulation. Data are obtained through observation, interviews, documentation, and data triangulation. To narrow down the location for an in-depth study, the research focuses on one district/city, namely Pekanbaru, which is the top producer of annual waste in Riau, as recorded in the National Waste Management Information System (SIPNS). The research began in March 2023 and involved three respondents.

The method of selecting informants for this research uses non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling as a technique for sampling data sources based on specific considerations. For example, individuals are selected based on their perceived knowledge related to what the researcher expects (Sugiyono, 2016). Additionally, the research uses data analysis

techniques from Miles and Huberman, which involve interactive and thorough qualitative data analysis activities. The process includes data reduction, display of data, drawing conclusions, and verification (Sugiyono, 2013).

RESULTS

From the research results, themes related to Inhibiting Factors of Pro-Environmental Behavior were identified, aligning with the employed theory. Firstly, individual factors, influenced by knowledge, awareness, and attitude. Secondly, behavioral factors influenced by cognitive aspects such as practicality, intention, expectations, lifestyle, and punishment. Thirdly, environmental factors influenced by responsibility, situational factors, external motivation, and social pressure.

The first theme of inhibiting factors in pro-environmental behavior is the individual factor (Personal). Based on the conducted interviews, awareness emerges as the primary component causing environmental issues. The lack of awareness leads individuals to have less responsibility toward their behavior. In this context, the insufficient awareness of the importance of proper waste management perpetuates indiscriminate waste disposal behavior. This is considered a hindrance to pro-environmental behavior. This is evident in the interviews with informants A, A, E, as follows:"

"he primary behavior causing environmental issues starts with the profound lack of human awareness. Indiscriminate littering leads to the accumulation of waste piles. Additionally, some individuals burning waste can cause respiratory issues due to the hazardous smoke from burning trash. In my opinion, the smoke from burning waste is dangerous. That's roughly what I know" (W³.F¹.D¹.B²⁶ 19 Mei 2023).

Furthermore, a lack of knowledge also impedes pro-environmental behavior. Starting from a deficiency in understanding the procedures for recycling waste, to the

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unawareness of the actual meaning of a landfill (TPA), which leads to misconceptions and impacts the waste management system, causing it to accumulate excessively, resulting in overloaded landfills that are challenging to address. This issue was identified in interviews with informants A, A, as follows ; *“Really? As far as I know, TPA stands for 'Tempat Pembuangan Akhir' (Final Disposal Site)”* (W².I².D¹.B¹² 26 April 2023).

Besides knowledge and awareness, attitude also serves as a supportive component in hindering pro-environmental behavior. A less caring attitude can exemplify negative behavior for others and act as an obstacle to pro-environmental behavior. All three informants A, A, E, exhibit a less caring attitude toward environmental issues, as per the data *“Because I am like that too, it's up to them, you know. It's called Earth, the Earth from the Almighty. Whether they want to litter or not, it's their own problem”* (W¹.I¹.D¹¹.B³² 17 Maret 2023). *“It can be said like that too, dear, because sometimes I am not too concerned about environmental issues either”* (W³.I³.D⁹.B³⁰ 19 Mei 2023). Situations like this contribute to the presence of waste piles everywhere and make them difficult to manage..

The second theme is behavioral factors influenced by cognitive aspects, or a thought process that causes the behavior to occur. For example, the desire for practicality and efficiency, both on a personal level and in line with the surrounding environment, in disposing of waste. This involves combining all types of waste into one bag, considering busy schedules, saving time, and achieving greater efficiency. This is evident in interviews with informants A, A, as follows;

“From myself, living in an environment and neighborhood where my surroundings are still not proactively supportive of proper waste disposal

practices, such as the separation of non-organic and organic waste. Moreover, reducing plastic usage is challenging, partly due to laziness and the hassle involved. Combining them is more practical, quick, and avoids wasting time. That's how it is” (W².I².D⁴.B³⁸ 26 April 2023).

An intention is necessary to initiate behavioral change. Based on the conducted interviews, it can be stated that all three informants A, A, E, exhibit a positive intention to move toward pro-environmental behavior, as found in the following data ;

“Umm.. there is, there is a calling like that from deep within, but sometimes the heart and mind can't be aligned, sister. Sometimes when we intend to dispose of trash or take care of the surrounding environment, there are no facilities. That's roughly how it is, sister” (W¹.I¹.D⁵.B³⁸ 17 Maret 2023).

All three informants also express hopes to lead to pro-environmental behavior with the improvement of several facilities and socialization related to the proper waste management system to reduce waste piles. This finding aligns with the interview data.

“It can start with the availability of waste disposal facilities in the vicinity accessible to the surrounding community, socialization to the community regarding proper waste separation, and the government providing solutions for overloaded landfills and waste recycling” (W².I².D¹³.B⁵⁹ 26 April 2023).

The inhibiting factor of pro-environmental behavior is also evident in lifestyle. The level of concern for the environment is quite low, with a lack of independent sorting of organic and non-organic waste, even though the informant is aware that waste should be separated. This was observed in the interview with informant A, A, as follows;

“Well, in my opinion, my own lifestyle is just like that, no concern for the environment. Because my habit when shopping, buying food, and then disposing of the waste, I just

combine it all. Whether it's organic or non-organic waste that should be separated, I don't pay much attention to those things" (W¹.I¹.D³.B¹⁴ 17 Maret 2023).

Negative behavior toward the environment, such as littering and not sorting waste, occurs due to the ineffectiveness of a consequence that provides a deterrent effect known as punishment. This is what causes the waste problem to continue to increase and is difficult to reduce its production rate. This is evident in the interviews with informants A, A, E, as follows;

"In my opinion, it's because the government regulations regarding waste separation by

type are still minimal, and there is still a lack of deterrent effect on the community. As a result, people continue to dispose of waste without sorting it first" (W².I².D⁷.B²² 26 April 2023). "The penalties exist, but they are not effective at all. Like, we can see in the illegal dumpsites, there are signs saying 'no littering' and even fines are specified there, but people still throw their trash there" (W².I².D⁹.B⁴⁸ 26 April 2023). It is evident in Figure 2. There is a banner with a prohibition sign, and beneath the banner, there is a pile of garbage



Figure 3. Illegal Garbage Pile

Then, the third theme is the environmental factor, which broadly discusses social aspects. This factor is influenced by several components such as responsibility. To reduce this waste problem, everyone must participate. This is agreed upon by all three informants A, A, E, according to the interview results below;

"Everyone, dear, should take responsibility for themselves because no matter what

policies the government makes, if we as citizens still don't care, still dispose of trash carelessly, it's useless, right" (W³.I³.D⁸.B⁴² 19 Mei 2023).

"Then, the situational aspect, where conditions such as insufficient facilities, plastic-based products still dominate everyday items, and several illegal trash piles are still found along the roadside. Situations like this become supporting factors hindering

someone's pro-environmental behavior. This is evident in the interviews with informants A, A, E, as follows; *"I don't think so, dear, because the products or items that we use and consume on a daily basis are mostly made of plastic."* (W³.I³.D⁷.B²² 19 Mei 2023).

"Well, yes, I just threw away the garbage in the wrong place because for the past few days, there hasn't been a garbage truck passing by, so out of laziness and seeing a lot of garbage piles on the side of the road, I had the intention to throw the garbage in the wrong place. Like the place earlier, so I just did it" (W².I².D¹⁰.B¹⁴ 26 April 2023).

To support pro-environmental behavior, in line with the social learning theory, which involves learning through the modeling process. From the interviews, all three informants agreed in the context of external motivation requiring a role model, where modeling behavior is formed due to a sense of shame when not participating in the same behavior. Based on the following data; *"Yes, the people around, especially ma'am, if all the residents around are caring like that, then surely I would also care. Because if I don't care about the environment and my neighbors care, well, automatically I would feel ashamed, it would certainly become a topic of conversation among my neighbors, right"* (W¹.I¹.D⁸.B⁷⁴ 17 Maret 2023).

Moreover, social pressure originating from the reactions of others or the feedback received when engaging in pro-environmental behavior or trying to remind and encourage others to do the same, does not always receive a positive response. In general, many receive negative reactions. This has an impact on the consistency of someone's positive behavior towards the environment. This is evident in the interview with informants A, A, E, as follows;

"Yeah... pressure, right, sis? Maybe for those who often face pressure, like when they remind someone and get responses like, 'What's it to you!' Especially for people in

vulnerable age groups like us, when friends around 40 remind about not littering, about being environmentally friendly, well... they would surely get bullied. Acting all righteous, you know. So, those who remind others end up feeling disappointed, thinking, 'Well, I might as well litter too.' Maybe it's a kind of pressure, sis, at least that's how I see it. So, people become less self-aware, and they don't want to remind others anymore" (W¹.I¹.D⁶.B⁴⁶ 17 Maret 2023).

Besides the above-mentioned components inhibiting pro-environmental behavior, there is one unique component in this study, namely result orientation. Where someone only focuses on the end result rather than the process. This was found in the interview with informant E, as follows;

"I also do that, sometimes I'm lazy to separate the trash, there are many other things to take care of, and I'm used to living like that. If I buy something, I usually just combine it to make it easy and not time-consuming. Because as far as I know, when the garbage truck comes, they will mix everything anyway, so it's pointless for us to bother." (W³.I³.D¹⁰.B²⁰ 19 Mei 2023).

The inhibiting factors of pro-environmental behavior can be described through the process of Triadic Reciprocal Determinism, where they mutually influence each other. There are three main components in the process inhibiting pro-environmental behavior: individual (personal), behavior, and environment.

The implications for education stemming from this research are multifaceted and impactful. Firstly, there's a clear necessity to revamp and prioritize environmental education within curricula at all educational levels. By integrating comprehensive programs that address waste management, environmental impact, and pro-environmental behavior, schools can play a pivotal role in nurturing environmentally conscious citizens. Additionally,

understanding the cognitive barriers hindering pro-environmental behavior underscores the need for educational approaches that focus on altering perceptions, attitudes, and habits surrounding waste disposal. This calls for innovative teaching methodologies that engage students in hands-on experiences, promoting a deeper understanding of the consequences of unchecked waste and the importance of sustainable practices. Furthermore, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills within the context of environmental issues can empower students to become proactive agents of change in their communities. Ultimately, the implications for education underscore the pivotal role of schools in cultivating a generation equipped with the knowledge, values, and motivation to tackle environmental challenges and promote responsible waste management practices.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research data on the factors inhibiting pro-environmental behavior, focusing on the Conservation lifestyle type, using the social learning theory to further examine Blake's theory, it can be concluded that the inhibiting factors for pro-environmental behavior, taken from the findings of Kollmuss, A., & Agyeman (2002) and later identified by Blake, include three main factors: individual (personal) factors influenced by components of knowledge, awareness, and attitudes; behavioral factors influenced by cognitive aspects such as practicality, intention, expectations, lifestyle, punishment; and environmental factors influenced by responsibility, situational factors, external motivation, social pressure, and result orientation as a new theme that emerged beyond the theoretically determined themes. The inhibiting factors for pro-environmental behavior can be described through the Triadic Reciprocal Determinism process, mutually influencing each other. In

this study, the inhibiting factors for pro-environmental behavior focused on cognitive causes without addressing behavioral aspects such as direct and significant behavioral changes. A suggestion for future researchers is to narrow down and focus on pro-environmental treatment, starting from initial behavior to behavioral changes leading to pro-environmental outcomes.

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