

Literature Review on the Relationship between Environmental Policies and Household Waste Management Practices

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ABSTRACT

Environmental policies designed by the government aim to systematically address domestic waste issues. However, its success largely depends on how far households adopt values and practices that are in line with the content of the regulation. This study aims to examine the relationship between environmental policies and household waste management behavior through a literature study approach. The results of the study show that the success of policy implementation is not only determined by technical or administrative aspects, but also by residents' perceptions, social structure, and available support facilities. Policies that are not accompanied by persuasive communication, incentive systems, and active participation of residents tend to be less effective in changing domestic habits. In addition, the literature shows that support from local institutions and strengthening social norms can accelerate the process of internalizing environmental values. This study emphasizes that the interaction between regulation and behavior should be seen as a dynamic process involving structure and culture, not just procedural compliance. The study provides an analytical framework to understand the complexity of waste management policy implementation and suggests a more contextualized and reflective approach in public policy design.

INTRODUCTION

Attention to environmental issues is increasing along with the growing collective awareness of the importance of ecosystem sustainability (Sestini, 2012). One of the crucial aspects of this conservation effort is the management of domestic waste. In daily life, households are one of the largest sources of waste generation. Consumption patterns and lifestyle choices of society directly affect the volume and type of waste generated, so the behavior of individuals and families in handling household waste has a tangible impact on environmental quality (Barr, 2017). Therefore, fostering responsible consumption and waste management habits at the household level is essential for achieving sustainable environmental outcomes. In general, environmental governance cannot be separated from the role of legal frameworks that regulate how communities interact with the environment in their daily lives (Hidayat et al., 2024). This condition shows that the success of environmental protection

efforts is closely related to how regulations and community behavior work together in maintaining environmental sustainability.

Governments in various countries have designed environmental policies aimed at organizing waste management systems comprehensively (Pires et al., 2011). The regulations include waste reduction at the source, sorting, recycling, and responsible final processing. However, the extent to which the policy can bring about change depends on how society responds and adjusts its behavior (Baum et al., 2017). In this case, the policy does not stand alone as a normative text, but rather requires the involvement of citizens as the main actors at the household level (Knickmeyer, 2020). In many legal contexts, policies will be more effective when they are supported by clear institutional arrangements and consistent implementation in society (Khayru et al., 2024). Therefore, the effectiveness of environmental policy is not only determined by the existence of

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regulations but also by the ability of the community to understand and implement those regulations in everyday life.

Household waste management behavior shows how well residents understand and respond to existing regulations (Debrah et al., 2021). Simple habits like sorting waste, reusing materials, and limiting plastic use are often ignored without strong support from education and systems. This shows that behavior change needs more than just rules. Studies that explore how policies interact with daily household actions are key to measuring waste management success (Viswanthan et al., 2014). Reviewing research from different regions helps see which policies work best. Policies alone are not enough people's behavior must also support environmental goals. Therefore, building awareness and encouraging sustainable habits should be part of any policy strategy (Mazar et al., 2021). Community-based initiatives such as waste bank programs also demonstrate that public awareness and participation play an important role in maintaining environmental cleanliness (Djaelani, 2022). Thus, strengthening public awareness and participation becomes an important step in ensuring that environmental policies can function effectively in society.

The main issue in this study lies in the disconnection between public policy and implementation at the household level. Most waste management policies are designed with an administrative approach, but they overlook behavioral variables as the focal point for change (Raghu & Rodriguez, 2020). According to Ajzen (1991), human behavior in acting is greatly determined by intentions shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control. If the policy does not synergize with those factors, then the public's response will tend to be passive. Therefore, understanding community behavior becomes an important foundation in developing environmental policies that are realistic, applicable, and sustainable.

Additionally, there is still a gap between legal norms and field practices. Research by Barr et al. (2003) shows that many residents have knowledge about waste management, but are reluctant to apply it due to the lack of adequate facilities or insufficient social encouragement. Thus, the existence of regulations does not automatically encourage behavioral change if it is not accompanied by ease and structural incentives. This phenomenon shows that the success of policies is greatly determined by the supporting system and not just by normative

commands. In urban environmental management, for instance, the improvement of environmental quality is often influenced by the integration between policy initiatives and community participation (Dahar et al., 2022).

Another significant issue is the weakness of behavior-based evaluation in the design and implementation of environmental policies (Byun et al., 2013). Many policy studies place more emphasis on technical and administrative aspects, while the dynamics of households as social units are rarely considered the main variable. According to Stern (2000), environmental behavior is influenced by the complex interaction between values, motivations, and opportunities for action. By neglecting these dimensions, policies become difficult to implement consistently in the daily lives of citizens. In several environmental programs, behavioral adaptation such as the use of environmentally friendly products has been shown to influence the success of policy implementation in society (Hariani & Al Hakim, 2022).

This situation indicates the need to further observe the relationship between policy and daily practices. In a socio-culturally diverse society, reactions to rules are greatly influenced by perceptions and direct experiences. Therefore, reading domestic behavior patterns will provide a more realistic picture of regulatory success. This perspective can provide input for policymakers in designing a system that is not only legally sound but also functional in the social lives of citizens. Such an approach highlights that environmental law should not only focus on regulatory texts but also on how policies are experienced and practiced by communities in their everyday activities (Hidayat et al., 2024). Through a broader understanding of the relationship between legal regulation and community behavior, policymakers can formulate environmental governance strategies that are both practical and socially acceptable (Khayru et al., 2024).

Household waste management cannot be separated from the quality of community life. A successful management system is not determined by the number of regulations imposed, but rather by the connection between public norms and individual awareness. If not observed scientifically, the relationship between policy and citizen action will continue to be a void that complicates the formulation of sustainable solutions. This study aims to identify and analyze the linkages between applicable environmental policies and household behavioral responses in waste management based

on findings in the literature study. The search is conducted on scientific works that examine how regulations can affect domestic awareness, attitudes, and actions in waste management. The results of this study are expected to provide a conceptual basis for the development of more relevant and applicable policies.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a descriptive-qualitative literature study approach to examine the relationship between environmental policies and household waste management behavior. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to examine a variety of academic sources that have documented empirical experiences and theoretical analysis from various regions. According to Gall et al. (2003), literature review is an effective way to systematically organize scientific understanding by integrating previous research results into an analytical framework. The search was conducted on scientific journals, research reports, and relevant policy publications, especially those that highlight the behavioral dimension in response to environmental regulation. Therefore, this

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Behavioral changes in the environmental field cannot be separated from the way society interprets the regulations in their surroundings. Each policy is designed with a specific intention, but the final outcome is greatly influenced by the process of acceptance and understanding of the policy's content and objectives by the citizens (Colebatch, 2018). If regulations are drafted without considering the social and cultural perspectives that exist within the community, there is a high likelihood that the policy will merely become an administrative instrument without any real transformative power. In general, environmental law also emphasizes that regulation must be accompanied by effective enforcement so that rules are not only written formally but also implemented in everyday practices (Mahmud et al., 2023).

Environmental policies have distinctive characteristics because they are directly related to the daily actions of individuals and families. In private spaces such as households, decision-making related to waste is often based on convenience, habits, or the perception of direct benefits. When the rules do not seem relevant or add to the burden, they are likely to be ignored. Therefore, understanding the psychological and social dimensions becomes very important in designing policies that can truly be implemented (Junginger,

approach provides a comprehensive overview of how environmental policies and community behavior are discussed and understood in various academic studies.

The analysis process was conducted using a thematic model that emphasizes grouping arguments based on categories such as policy design, citizen perceptions, individual motivations, and structural support. This technique is in accordance with the guidelines described by Creswell (2007), where the qualitative approach in the literature study aims to interpret the meaning of various written documents in a contextual and interpretative manner. Each data is examined to see the pattern of relationship between policy intention and actualization of citizens' behavior in waste management practices. Through this procedure, the researcher is expected to compile an accurate and useful synthesis of thoughts for the development of environmental policies that are more responsive to social dynamics. In this way, the research method helps provide a clearer understanding of how policies and social behavior interact in shaping environmental management practices.

2013). In the broader perspective of public policy, sustainability can only be achieved when environmental, social, and economic considerations are balanced in regulatory design (Mardikaningsih & Hariani, 2021). Thus, effective environmental policies must consider not only legal aspects but also the social realities that influence people's everyday behavior.

Effective regulation is not just one that is clearly written, but one that can reach the underlying layers of citizens' thoughts and beliefs. This process requires an approach that goes beyond mere instructions, but rather an interaction between legal norms and the values believed by the community. In many cases, the success of a policy does not depend on the strength of sanctions, but on the ability of the policy to transform into something that is considered meaningful and logical by the community. In addition, environmental governance also requires proper management systems so that policy objectives can be translated into practical actions in society (Nuraini et al., 2021). Therefore, the success of environmental regulation depends on the integration between clear legal rules and effective management practices in society.

Each household has its own characteristics and dynamics that cannot be generalized. Social environment, education level, and collective experience are the main determinants in shaping

attitudes towards rules. If the policy does not accommodate this diversity, its implementation will experience a gap between what is regulated and what is actually done (Smith & Mayorga, 2017). In this framework, the policy approach must be flexible, adapting to the social realities faced by the target community. This flexibility is important because local communities often have their own knowledge and traditions that influence how environmental rules are understood and practiced (Nurmalasari & Nuraini, 2021). For this reason, policy design should be adaptive so that it can respond to the diversity of community conditions and encourage wider participation in environmental management.

Stern, in his thinking, emphasizes the importance of linking policies with the value orientations that live within individuals. When someone feels that their actions align with what they consider right and useful, then no external motivation is needed to act. At this point, public policy becomes effective because it has merged with personal consciousness. That means, behavioral change will be much stronger if supported by understanding and the alignment of meaning formed from within the individual (Van den et al., 2013). In practice, the use of environmentally friendly technology and management systems can also support this transformation toward more sustainable behavior (Mardikaningsih & Wardoyo, 2024). This indicates that the combination of internal awareness and supportive environmental systems is essential for achieving sustainable behavioral change.

Thus, the study of the relationship between environmental policies and domestic behavior cannot be limited to structural analysis alone. Sharp observation is needed on how citizens interpret rules, how values are formed in their daily lives, and how the social system influences responses to policies. This approach opens up a broader space for analysis and provides a foundation for formulating more humane, relevant, and effective regulations. At the same time, public participation and the development of environmental awareness are important elements that strengthen the sustainability of environmental governance (Oluwatoyin & Mardikaningsih, 2024). Therefore, understanding the social context of community behavior becomes an important step in ensuring that environmental policies can function effectively in everyday life.

Understanding the relationship between environmental policies and household waste

management behavior requires an approach that considers how regulations are interpreted and translated by citizens into real actions (Bortoleto, 2014). In much of the literature, it is found that the presence of formal rules does not automatically change individual behavior if it is not supported by the alignment of values, motivations, and social structures. Stern (2000) states that environmental behavior is greatly influenced by personal value orientation and perception of policy effectiveness, so legal interventions require a strong psychosocial foundation to be accepted. In this context, the development of community initiatives such as recycling activities can also foster responsibility and entrepreneurial awareness in managing waste (Nurmalasari & Mardikaningsih, 2022). Thus, strengthening community initiatives can support the implementation of environmental policies while encouraging more responsible waste management practices.

Some policies designed with very good technical structures actually face obstacles at the implementation level because they neglect the processes of communication and public awareness. In a study by Barr et al. (2003), it was found that citizens' understanding of waste separation regulations was often limited or inconsistent. As a result, although the policy has been implemented at the administrative level, field practices show that the targets have not been achieved due to low active participation from households (Newig & Koontz, 2014). This phenomenon highlights the importance of including education and a participatory approach in the cycle of policy formulation and implementation. Transparency in environmental reporting and public access to environmental information are also important elements in strengthening public trust and policy effectiveness (Mamesah et al., 2024). Therefore, effective communication and transparent information systems are essential to support community participation in environmental governance. Thus, effective environmental policy requires clear communication, education, and transparency to ensure that regulations are properly understood and practiced by the public.

The high dependence on normative approaches has become a major weakness in many domestic waste management programs. Policies that emphasize commands and sanctions tend to face resistance, especially in areas with limited education levels or access to information. Ajzen (1991) states that the intention to act is influenced by the perception of control and subjective norms, so

legalistic pressure is insufficient without the internalization of values and collective support. In this case, an incentive-based or reward approach shows more positive results in changing residents' habits. This indicates that policies that combine regulation with motivation and support mechanisms tend to be more effective in encouraging sustainable environmental behavior.

Other research shows that the perception of direct benefits is an important trigger in fostering community engagement. When households see that waste management brings economic benefits or environmental comfort, the response to policies increases. For example, a material incentive-based recycling system has proven to be more preferred than a coercive scheme. This is in line with the findings of Schultz et al. (2007), which assert that the formation of environmental habits is influenced by positive reinforcement and tangible evidence of the outcomes of actions. Therefore, policies that provide clear and tangible benefits are more likely to encourage active community participation in waste management practices.

The strong relationship between regulation and domestic action is also determined by the extent to which citizens feel a sense of responsibility for collective outcomes. In a study conducted by Thøgersen (2005), it was explained that community participation will increase when policies are designed with the principles of clarity, involvement, and recognition of citizens' roles. A sense of attachment to the outcome becomes a stronger psychological driver compared to the threat of administrative sanctions. Therefore, policy communication should be directed towards building a sense of ownership of environmental goals (De Vries, 2020).

Social dynamics at the community level have a significant impact on the success of household waste management. Policies accompanied by community-based programs show higher effectiveness because they encourage the formation of social norms that support pro-environmental behavior (Kennedy, 2010). According to McKenzie-Mohr (2000), strategies that leverage social bonds, such as community service and neighborhood meetings, can strengthen trust and collaboration. This process not only changes individual behavior but also shapes a new culture in environmental governance.

The structure of public facilities such as segregated trash bins, regular collection schedules, and recycling centers also serves as important indicators in measuring the success of the policy. Residents who feel supported by the presence of

adequate facilities will find it easier to follow the rules (Joseph, 2016). If the infrastructure does not support it, then even if the residents have good intentions, the practice will be hindered. In this case, policies must be followed by logistical investments so that the established norms can be implemented effectively and consistently. From a management perspective, the concept of reducing waste and improving efficiency is also widely applied in various sectors to support sustainable operational practices (Radjawane et al., 2022). Therefore, adequate infrastructure becomes a crucial supporting factor that enables environmental policies to be implemented effectively in everyday practice.

The factor of trust in the government also plays a role in determining the extent to which policies are accepted by the public. If the public believes that regulations are designed for the common good and implemented fairly, then support for their implementation will increase. Conversely, when citizens suspect that policies are made merely as a formality or are profit-oriented, participation tends to decrease. According to Tyler (2006), the legitimacy of policies is greatly influenced by perceptions of procedural justice and transparency in their implementation. This indicates that strengthening public trust and transparency is fundamental for improving compliance and community participation in environmental policies.

The experience of countries with high compliance levels shows that collective learning within society is a crucial determinant of successful environmental management. Early education, the development of school curricula that include environmental subjects, and consistent public broadcasting strengthen the long-term impact of policies. In the OECD report (2004), it is stated that countries that integrate environmental values into their education systems have societies that are better prepared to face ecologically compliant policies.

Household responses to environmental policies are also greatly influenced by socio-economic conditions. Families with low-income levels might view waste management as an additional burden, rather than a priority. Therefore, policy design must take into account the diversity of residents' capacities in implementing the rules. For example, incentives such as reduced waste disposal fees for disciplined households can balance compliance and economic conditions. Thus, considering socio-economic disparities is essential to ensure that environmental policies remain fair, inclusive, and feasible for all households.

Additionally, mass media play a significant role

in conveying policy narratives and shaping public opinion. The presentation of persuasive and educational information is more capable of building awareness compared to threatening messages. In a study by Monroe (2003), it was explained that a narrative-based communication approach is more effective in fostering behavioral change because it touches on the emotional and identity dimensions of citizens. Narratives that depict real consequences are easier to grasp compared to the presentation of numbers or regulatory documents. Therefore, effective communication strategies through media can significantly strengthen public understanding and support for environmental policies.

Evaluating environmental policies that only focus on the volume of waste reduction without considering the quality of behavioral changes does not reflect true success (Lokhorst et al., 2013). Success indicators should encompass the extent to which citizens understand, accept, and adopt the values contained in the policy. Therefore, impact measurement should be directed to include indicators of attitudes, perceptions, and behavioral consistency over the long term. This approach ensures that policy evaluation captures not only quantitative outcomes but also the depth of behavioral transformation within society.

The relationship between policy and household practices is dynamic, meaning it can change in response to evolving social, economic, and cultural conditions (Sorokin, 2017). Therefore, adaptive policy design is more likely to be accepted and voluntarily implemented by the community. Flexible policies that still have a clear direction provide space for citizens to adjust environmental

practices to local conditions. Consequently, adaptive policy frameworks are necessary to maintain relevance and effectiveness in changing social environments.

Strengthening the capacity of local institutions such as neighborhood units (RT), community units (RW), and sub-districts is key in bridging macro policies with micro actions. When local structures are empowered to become policy mediators, the processes of information dissemination and social control become more effective. The role of local institutions as a bridge between policy values and citizen practices strengthens the psychological closeness that often becomes the key to successful participation. Therefore, empowering local institutions becomes a strategic mechanism for translating policy objectives into concrete community actions.

Overall, the relationship between environmental policy and household waste management behavior is not linear. It is the result of a complex interaction between regulations, perceptions, values, means, and the social dynamics that thrive within the community. This literature review shows that the success of policies is not only determined by the quality of their regulations but also by their ability to address real and recurring behavioral dimensions in domestic spaces. In this way, environmental policies can become more adaptive, practical, and capable of creating long-term behavioral change within society. Thus, integrating regulatory frameworks with social, psychological, and institutional dimensions is essential for achieving sustainable environmental governance.

CONCLUSION

The study results show that the relationship between environmental policies and household waste management behavior cannot be understood solely from a legal-formal perspective, but rather involves complex psychological, social, and cultural structures. Policies designed without considering the perceptions, motivations, and readiness of the residents tend to face resistance or are merely implemented symbolically. The interaction between the content of regulations, the method of delivery, facility support, and community norms becomes a determining element in bridging the government's desires and actual practices at the household level. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of social behavior is essential to ensure that environmental policies can be effectively implemented in everyday life.

The implications of these findings emphasize that the effectiveness of an environmental policy is greatly determined by how well it aligns with the social realities and behaviors of the residents. Policies developed with a participatory approach, incentive-based, and taking into account the diversity of community characteristics will be more easily accepted and consistently implemented. In addition, strengthening the capacity of local structures and integrating environmental values into the education system has proven to support the long-term internalization of cleanliness norms and ecological responsibility. This indicates that sustainable environmental governance requires cooperation between government institutions, community participation, and continuous educational efforts.

As a further step, it is recommended that every

waste management policy formulation takes into account actual resident behavior data and involves them from the planning stage. Transparent communication, evaluation based on behavioral indicators, and the provision of adequate facilities should be fundamental principles in designing environmental programs. This study is expected to serve as a conceptual reference in the development of socially interactive policies aimed at sustainable domestic behavior change.

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