

International Community Service: Animal Welfare Campaign And Education For Elementary Student In Kota Bharu, Kelantan, Malaysia

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Abstract.

The existence of animals has a very important role in the lives of children around the world who generally place animals as their closest friends. Having pets for children provides benefits in the form of social support, reducing stress levels and can increase empathy for other living things. Children who love their pets will usually become someone who is aware of the importance of animal welfare and most importantly has a humane character. Animal Welfare Education for children at the elementary school level aims to provide early prevention of animal abuse and improve humane character. Therefore, this Community Service aims to provide early education to children at the elementary school level about the importance and how to apply animal welfare values in everyday life, which in the long term will bring goodness and benefits to human health and welfare.

Keywords: Kids; animal welfare; education and kesejahteraan hewan.

I. INTRODUCTION

Animal welfare is an essential component of ethical education that emphasizes compassion, responsibility, and the humane treatment of animals. This topic is becoming increasingly relevant, particularly as human activity continues to impact animal habitats and welfare on a global scale (Fraser, 2008). Introducing animal welfare education to elementary school students plays a critical role in fostering empathy, moral development, and environmental consciousness. Young children are in a prime developmental stage to learn these values, and education on animal welfare can encourage them to develop lifelong attitudes of care and respect towards animals and the environment (Ascione, 1992). Educational programs focused on animal welfare for children can also help counteract common misconceptions about animals, breaking down harmful stereotypes and building understanding of the interconnectedness between human and animal lives (Melson, 2001).

Research suggests that early education on animal welfare can enhance children's social skills, increase empathy, and contribute to positive attitudes towards animal rights (Signal & Taylor, 2007). Additionally, exposing children to humane education at a young age has been linked with improved academic performance and enhanced emotional intelligence, as it encourages critical thinking and self-reflection (Arbour et al., 2009). Despite these benefits, animal welfare is often underrepresented in elementary school curriculums worldwide. There is a growing need to integrate this topic into education systems, given that knowledge about animal welfare can inspire children to become more responsible and considerate adults (Lerner & Kalof, 1999). The aim of this paper is to discuss the importance of introducing and implementing animal welfare education within primary school curriculums, highlighting how such education can positively impact children's ethical and emotional development.

II. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

2.1 Methods

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to assess the effectiveness of introducing animal welfare education to elementary school students. The methods included educational posters, videos, and lectures designed to communicate key animal welfare concepts in an engaging and age-appropriate way. By

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combining visual aids, multimedia resources, and interactive discussions, the program aimed to evaluate changes in students' attitudes and understanding of animal welfare principles. Participants were 96 students of grade 5 of Sekorah Rendah Islam Aman, Kota Bahru, Kelantan, Malaysia.

2.2 Educational Materials and Program Design

The educational intervention consisted of three primary components:

Posters: Informative and visually engaging posters highlighting essential animal welfare concepts, such as kindness to animals, recognizing animals' needs, and understanding pet care, were displayed in classrooms and school hallways. This approach allowed for passive yet repeated exposure to these messages, reinforcing learning over time (Cottee, 2001).

Videos: Short educational videos were created to depict real-life scenarios demonstrating humane animal treatment and responsible pet care practices. These videos were designed to be age-appropriate, visually engaging, and to include both animated and real-life sequences. The use of video as an educational tool has been shown to improve knowledge retention and engagement in young learners (Mayer, 2009).

Lectures and Discussions: Educators led interactive lectures that introduced fundamental concepts of animal welfare, including empathy, responsibility, and the ethical treatment of animals. Lectures were followed by guided discussions where students could ask questions and share their own experiences with animals, promoting active participation and reflection (Ladson-Billings, 1995).



Fig 1. Posters used in this activity



Fig 2. Animated videos used in this activity

2.3 Implementation of Activities

The animal welfare education program was implemented as a one-day event designed to introduce elementary school students to fundamental concepts of animal welfare. The program utilized posters, educational videos, and lectures to convey essential information about animal care, empathy, and responsible behavior towards animals. The activities were structured to be engaging, age-appropriate, and to foster an interactive learning environment that encouraged students to reflect on their own attitudes toward animals.

2.3.1 Preparation and Setup

Prior to the event, classrooms and hallways were decorated with vibrant, informative posters illustrating key principles of animal welfare. The posters included simple messages and illustrations about

treating animals with kindness, understanding animals' needs, and responsibilities associated with pet care. This preparatory stage ensured that students were passively exposed to animal welfare concepts even before the formal sessions began, reinforcing the main themes of the program (Cottee, 2001).

2.3.2. Schedule of Activities

The one-day event was divided into three main sessions:

Session 1: Introduction to Animal Welfare (Lecture and Discussion)

The day began with an introductory lecture that highlighted fundamental animal welfare concepts. The session covered topics such as animals' physical and emotional needs, responsible pet ownership, and empathy towards animals. This was followed by an open discussion where students were encouraged to share their experiences and ask questions, creating an interactive and reflective learning environment. Studies have shown that discussion-based approaches can deepen understanding and allow children to actively engage with new concepts (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Session 2: Educational Video Screening

In the second session, students watched a series of short, engaging videos demonstrating real-life scenarios of proper animal care and examples of both positive and negative behaviors toward animals. The videos included animations and child-friendly scenes that emphasized empathy and responsible animal treatment. Research has shown that educational videos are effective tools for young audiences, as they can increase engagement and aid memory retention (Mayer, 2009). After the screening, facilitators led a brief discussion to reinforce key messages from the videos and allow students to express their thoughts.

Session 3: Poster Walkthrough and Reflection Activities

In the final session, students participated in a "poster walkthrough," where they explored the informational posters set up around the classroom. Facilitators guided them through each poster, providing explanations and asking questions to prompt deeper reflection on the messages presented. To conclude, students completed a reflection activity, where they were encouraged to write or draw something they learned about animal welfare. This reflective component allowed students to internalize the day's lessons and share personal takeaways (Ascione, 1992).

2.3.3. Feedback Collection

At the end of the program, feedback was collected from students to gauge their understanding and engagement with the material. A simple quiz assessed changes in attitudes and knowledge, including questions about empathy towards animals and awareness of responsible pet care. Previous studies suggest that gathering immediate feedback enhances the learning experience and helps educators adjust future programs (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).



Fig 3. Photo of the FKH UWKS Community Service Team, the FPV UMK and The headmaster of the Sekolah Rendah Islam Aman, Kota Bharu, Kelantan, Malaysia



Fig 4. Group photo of the community service team and students after the activity

III. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates the effectiveness of a one-day animal welfare education program, incorporating posters, educational videos, and lectures, in promoting fundamental understanding and compassion toward animals among elementary school students. By introducing key concepts of empathy, responsibility, and humane treatment of animals in an engaging and age-appropriate way, the program successfully increased students' awareness of animal welfare issues and fostered positive attitudes. This study underscores the value of early humane education and suggests that schools can play a crucial role in shaping children's perceptions and treatment of animals, ultimately contributing to a more humane society.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to express our thanks to the Faculti Perubatan Veteriner, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, which has provided support in the form of the Veterinary Medicine Faculty, University Wijaya Kusuma Surabaya, a Team of service members, and the Sekolah Rendah Islam Alam, Kota Bahru, Kelantan, Malaysia.

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