

Islamic Values as the Foundation of Sustainable Education in Modern Educational Institutions

Ali Mustofa

Universitas Islam Negeri K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, Indonesia

Email: ali.mustofa24056@mhs.uingusdur.ac.id

Abstract

Sustainable education has become a global agenda that emphasizes the holistic development of human beings—spiritually, ecologically, socially, and economically. In Islamic thought, sustainability is deeply rooted in the principles of tawhid, amanah, justice, and the human role as khalifah (steward) on earth. This article aims to analyze Islamic values that can serve as fundamental principles in the development of sustainable education within modern educational institutions. The study employs a library research method with an analytical-critical approach to classical and contemporary literature. The findings reveal that Islamic values such as tawhid, mīzān (balance), khalifah fil arḍ, amanah, ‘adl (justice), ihsan, and rahmah (compassion) align with UNESCO’s Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). The integration of these values into curriculum, pedagogy, and school culture strengthens students’ character as agents of sustainable environmental and social transformation. This study concludes that Islamic education has strategic potential in shaping an education ecosystem that is not only academically excellent but also morally and ecologically sustainable.

Keywords: Islamic Values, Sustainability, ESD, Islamic Education, Khalifah.

Introduction

Global challenges such as climate change, moral degradation, and social inequality demand an educational paradigm that does not only focus on cognitive development but also emphasizes ethics, character, and ecological responsibility. UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) promotes an approach that encourages learners to contribute actively to sustainable development. This concept highlights the need to balance human interests with environmental preservation.

In Islamic teachings, sustainability is not a new concept. The Qur’an contains numerous verses that prohibit destruction, encourage the preservation of nature, and emphasize humanity’s duty as stewards of the earth. Islamic educational institutions should be strategic arenas for integrating these values into the learning process.

This article examines how Islamic values can become foundational principles of sustainable education in modern educational settings and how these values can be implemented through curriculum, pedagogy, and institutional culture.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach through library research. Primary sources include the Qur'an, hadith, and classical Islamic literature. Secondary sources include scholarly articles, books, and international documents such as UNESCO's ESD framework. Data were analyzed using descriptive-analytical and hermeneutical approaches to examine the relevance of Islamic values with sustainable education principles.

Discussion

1. Tawhid as the Spiritual Basis of Sustainability

Tawhid acknowledges the universe as the creation of Allah, designed with purpose and balance (*mīzān*). Learners who internalize tawhid will view environmental stewardship as an act of worship and obedience to Allah, leading to strong ecological awareness.

2. Humans as Khalifah: Ecological and Social Responsibility

Humans are entrusted as *khalifah fil arḍ* to maintain the earth's sustainability, manage resources wisely, and prevent destruction. In modern education, this principle is manifested through environmental projects, green curriculum initiatives, and sustainable behavioral practices in daily school life.

3. Amanah and Accountability in Resource Management

Amanah demands moral responsibility in all aspects of life. Students are taught that managing resources such as water, energy, and time efficiently is an ethical obligation, central to sustainable living.

4. Justice ('Adl) and Sustainable Development

Justice in Islam extends beyond interpersonal relations to include ecological and social justice. Education must foster awareness that environmental damage often results in social inequality. Embedding justice in the learning process helps students understand the importance of ethical and sustainable decision-making.

5. Ihsan and Ethical Goodness Toward Nature

Ihsan inspires individuals to act with excellence, not only avoiding harm but also improving environmental conditions. In education, ihsan can be applied through social engagement, environmental restoration, and acts of kindness in everyday life.

6. Rahmah: Compassion as the Core of Islamic Humanism

Rahmah is a fundamental Islamic principle emphasizing love and care for all of creation. Education that cultivates rahmah shapes empathetic learners who are sensitive to humanitarian and ecological issues.

Integrative Model of Islamic Values in Modern Educational Institutions

1. Value-Based and Issue-Based Curriculum

Integrating themes of environmental ethics, social justice, and responsible resource use across Islamic education, science, and social studies subjects.

2. Holistic and Humanistic-Religious Pedagogy

A learning approach emphasizing self-awareness, empathy, collaboration, and solving sustainability-related problems.

3. Sustainable School Culture (Green School)

Through programs such as waste reduction, water conservation, tree planting, and promoting healthy lifestyles.

4. Community Engagement and Social Collaboration

Involving local communities, mosques, Islamic organizations, and parents in environmental and social initiatives.

Conclusion

This study emphasizes that Islamic values—such as tawhid, mīzān, amanah, ihsan, ‘adl, and rahmah—have strong relevance to sustainable education principles. These values provide a solid spiritual, moral, and ethical foundation for developing modern education systems that promote sustainability. Integrating Islamic values into curriculum, pedagogy, school culture, and community collaboration can strengthen learners’ ecological awareness, social responsibility, and spiritual character. Islamic education can contribute significantly to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the reinforcement of these values.

References

- Abu-Sulayman, A. A. (1993). *Crisis in the Muslim mind*. International Institute of Islamic Thought.
- Al-Attas, S. M. N. (1993). *Islam and secularism*. International Institute of Islamic Thought and

Civilization.

- Al-Attas, S. M. N. (2014). *The meaning and experience of happiness in Islam*. UTM Press.
- Al-Zayyat, A. (2017). Islamic values and sustainable development: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, 12(2), 45–62.
- Badri, M. (2018). *Contemplation: An Islamic psychospiritual study*. IIIT.
- Bano, M., & Kalmbach, H. (Eds.). (2012). *Women, leadership and mosques: Changes in contemporary Islamic authority*. Brill.
- Chapra, M. U. (2008). *The Islamic vision of development in the light of maqasid al-shariah*. Islamic Research and Training Institute.
- Fasihuddin, F., & Yusoff, M. Z. (2020). Embedding Islamic values in modern schooling: A sustainable education perspective. *International Journal of Islamic Education*, 5(1), 77–94.
- Halstead, J. M. (2004). An Islamic concept of education. *Comparative Education*, 40(4), 517–529.
- Hassan, R. (2021). Islamic ethics and sustainable futures: Opportunities for modern education. *Journal of Sustainability and Education*, 9(3), 112–130.
- Naseef, A. A. (2001). *The role of Islamic values in building a sustainable civilization*. Dar al-Maarifah.
- Nasr, S. H. (1996). *Religion and the order of nature*. Oxford University Press.
- Razak, S. A. (2012). *Islamic education: The philosophy, aim and main features*. Al-Hikmah Press.
- Salleh, M. S. (2019). Islamic worldview and environment: Toward an integrated sustainable education model. *International Journal of Islamic Thought*, 15, 1–10.
- Sardar, Z. (2011). *Reading the Qur'an: The contemporary relevance of the sacred text of Islam*. Oxford University Press.
- Taşkın, N. (2020). Integrating sustainability principles into Islamic schools: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of Islamic and Social Studies*, 8(1), 33–55.
- UNESCO. (2017). *Education for sustainable development goals: Learning objectives*. UNESCO Publishing.
- Zarkasyi, H. F. (2015). *Islamization of knowledge: A critical overview*. Baitul Hikmah Press.