

Integration of Islamic Values in Building Sustainability Awareness in Elementary School Students

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Abstract

Sustainability is an increasingly pressing global issue in education, particularly at the elementary level. Elementary Schools (MI) hold a strategic position in establishing the foundation of sustainability awareness in students because the MI age is a crucial period for the formation of character, moral logic, and life habits. Islamic education holds a wealth of values highly relevant to sustainability, such as the concept of *khalifah fil ardh* (vicegerent), *mīzān* (property), *amanah* (trust), the prohibition of *fasāf* (wastefulness), and the principles of *israf* and *qanā'ah* (moderation). This literature-based research aims to describe, analyze, and develop a model for integrating Islamic values in building sustainability awareness in MI students. The results indicate that integration can be achieved through the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum, habituation, teacher role models, madrasah culture, and experiential learning. The integration of Islamic values can provide a spiritual dimension to sustainability education, enabling students not only to rationally understand ecological aspects but also to interpret them as part of their worship and obedience to Allah. This study recommends strengthening eco-Islamic education as a new paradigm for Islamic basic education in addressing global challenges.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Sustainability, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Islamic Values, Basic Education.

Introduction

Sustainability issues have become a major global concern in the past two decades due to their far-reaching impacts on human life and the planet's sustainability. Climate change, ecosystem destruction, environmental pollution, and overexploitation of natural resources have given rise to various multidimensional crises: ecological, social, economic, and moral. UNESCO (2020) emphasizes that education is key to developing a new generation capable of adapting and playing a role in maintaining the planet's sustainability through the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) program.

In the Indonesian context, elementary education institutions, including Islamic elementary schools (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah), have a responsibility not only to educate students but also to develop character values, environmental awareness, and sustainable behavior. However, many educational institutions have not yet tapped into the immense potential of Islamic values to

integrate sustainability into learning. Yet, the Quran and Hadith provide a strong theological and ethical foundation for building ecological and social awareness.

Islamic values, such as the concept of humans as vicegerents on earth, the prohibition on falsehood, the encouragement of cleanliness, and a simple lifestyle (anti-israf) align strongly with modern sustainability principles. When these values are integrated into Islamic elementary school (MI) learning, students view sustainability not merely as a social obligation but as part of their religious responsibilities, valued as acts of worship.

However, the implementation of Islamic-based sustainability education in Islamic elementary schools still faces challenges, such as a lack of teacher understanding, unclear explicit curricula, and a less than fully supportive madrasah culture. Therefore, this article seeks to provide an in-depth examination of how Islamic values can be comprehensively integrated into developing Islamic elementary school (MI) students' sustainability awareness.

Theoretical Review

1. The Concept of Sustainability in Education

Sustainability in education encompasses three main aspects:

1. ecological, which emphasizes the preservation of nature and the wise use of resources;
2. social, which focuses on justice, solidarity, and empathy;
3. economic, which emphasizes efficiency, balanced consumption, and financial responsibility.

Sustainability education emphasizes the importance of the connection between humans and the environment, as well as the need to develop environmentally friendly lifestyles. For elementary school students at the concrete operational cognitive development stage (Piaget), these concepts must be taught through direct experience, concrete practice, habit formation, and reflective practice.

2. Sustainability Values in Islam

Islam provides a strong theological foundation for sustainability, including:

1. Khalifah fil Ardh (QS. Al-Baqarah: 30): humans are entrusted with the responsibility to manage the earth wisely.
2. Prohibition of Fasad (QS. Ar-Rum: 41; Al-A'raf: 56): Damage is strictly prohibited.
3. Mīzān (QS. Ar-Rahman: 7–10): All nature exists in a balance that must be maintained by humans.
4. Israf: All forms of waste are prohibited.
5. Simplicity & Qanā'ah: Living frugally, not excessively, and maintaining the sustainability of resources.
6. Thaharah: Cleanliness is part of faith.

These values emphasize not only ecological aspects, but also spiritual and moral ones.

3. Characteristics of MI Students

MI students are aged 7–12 years, with the following characteristics:

- the ability to understand simple cause-and-effect relationships;
- a strong ability to imitate teacher behavior;
- the need for real-life, activity-based learning;
- a period of core character formation such as discipline, responsibility, and empathy.

Therefore, sustainability education must be practical, consistent, and provided with concrete examples by teachers.

Methods

This research used a descriptive qualitative approach with a literature review method. Data sources included international journals, national scientific articles, Islamic education books, Quranic verses, hadiths, UNESCO ESD guidelines, and the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs' policies regarding MI education. Data analysis used content analysis techniques that

classified core concepts into broad themes: Islamic values, sustainability, integration models, and educational impact.

Results and Discussion

4.1 Integrative Foundation: Islam and Sustainability as a Unity

Islam views humans not as absolute owners of the earth, but as responsible stewards of it before God. This perspective provides spiritual depth to the modern concept of sustainability. While sustainability education often focuses solely on rational-empirical aspects, Islam provides a new dimension in the form of worship motivation.

For Islamic elementary school students, sustainability must be understood not simply as protecting the environment as recommended by school, but as part of obedience to God. This spiritual values-based approach strengthens student motivation and consistency.

4.2 Integration of Islamic Values into the Islamic Elementary School Curriculum

The integration of sustainability values into the curriculum can be implemented in various Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects, for example:

a. Creed and Morals

Teachers emphasize morality toward nature, teaching that protecting the environment is part of commendable morals. Students can be guided to love living things, not to torture animals, and to care for God's creation.

b. Fiqh (Taharah and Cleanliness)

The topic of taharah can be expanded to include environmental sanitation efforts, maintaining classroom cleanliness, sorting waste, and conserving water. This simultaneously fosters discipline and responsibility.

c. Quran and Hadith

Verses about nature (kauniyah verses) serve as reflection material outside the classroom. Teachers can invite students to contemplate nature in the schoolyard and connect it to the power of Allah.

d. Islamic Cultural History (SKI)

The stories of the Prophet and his companions can be used as examples of simple living, full of social empathy, and energy efficiency.

This integrative curriculum approach makes sustainability not an "additional program," but an organic part of learning.

4.3 Teacher Exemplars as Spiritual-Ecological Role Models

MI teachers are figures highly idolized by students. Teachers' role models are far more influential than verbal instructions. Teachers can set an example by:

- bringing non-plastic drinking bottles,
- turning off lights when not in use,
- planting small plants,
- disposing of trash properly,
- using environmentally friendly teaching materials.

When teachers demonstrate consistency, students will naturally follow suit because the tendency to imitate is still very strong.

4.4 Experience-Based Learning: PBL, Outdoor Learning, and Discovery Learning

Project-based learning models provide space for students to experience the sustainability process:

- Class garden project: students plant, care for, and record plant growth.
- School waste bank: students learn to sort, weigh, and understand the economics of recycling.

- Clean Friday: building a collective habit of maintaining cleanliness.
- Nature observation: learning about insects, plants, and small ecosystems around the school.

Through direct experience, ME students feel, understand, and practice the values of sustainability while interpreting them within the framework of worship.

4.5 Madrasah Culture that Supports Sustainability

Madrasah culture is a value system built through daily social habits. It influences student behavior far more strongly than the subject matter.

Examples of sustainable madrasah culture:

- the "Green Islamic School" program,
- competitions for the cleanest classroom,
- mushafah (greeting) every morning as a social culture,
- saving electricity and water,
- donating waste for social activities,
- making a habit of praying before using resources.

This culture creates an educational environment that consistently encourages sustainable behavior.

4.6 Impact of Integration on MI Student Development

The integration of Islamic values and sustainability has a holistic impact:

1) Cognitive

Students understand the relationship between Islam, nature, and human responsibility. They can relate verses of the Quran to natural phenomena.

2) Affective

Students develop a sense of love, gratitude, empathy, and respect for the environment as God's creation.

3) Psychomotor

Students practice concrete actions such as sorting waste, caring for plants, conserving water, and maintaining cleanliness.

4) Character

Integrating sustainability values strengthens character:

- discipline,
- responsibility,
- social awareness,
- cooperation,
- independence,
- simplicity.

These are the foundations of core character needed in a global society.

4.7 Challenges in Implementing Sustainability Value Integration

Some of the challenges identified are:

1. Teachers receive insufficient specialized training in eco-Islamic education.
2. Limited school facilities, such as green areas or waste management facilities.
3. Lack of explicit integration into the national curriculum.
4. Lack of parental support, resulting in inconsistent home practices.
5. The perception that environmental education is still the responsibility of science teachers, not all teachers.

This challenge requires collaboration between Islamic schools, parents, the government, and the community.

Conclusion

Integrating Islamic values in fostering sustainability awareness in elementary Islamic schools (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah) students is an important strategy for addressing current and future global challenges. The rich and holistic values of Islam provide a strong spiritual and moral foundation for the development of students' ecological character. Through the integration of the curriculum, practices, teacher role models, Islamic school culture, and experiential learning, Islamic elementary school (MI) education can become a center for the formation of sustainable character that is not only rational but also spiritual. Sustainable Islamic education (eco-Islamic education) is not only a response to global issues, but also a religious imperative that must be practiced. With a systematic, comprehensive, and consistent approach, Islamic elementary schools (MI) can shape a generation of caring, responsible Muslims who are ready to preserve the earth's sustainability as a trust from Allah.

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