

Integrating Islamic Education with Environmental Programs: Strategies for Sustainable Character Development at SMAN 2 and 7 Malang Indonesia

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This study aims to investigate the integration of Islamic education into environmental programs at State High Schools 2 and 7 Malang (SMAN 2 and 7). Addressing the environmental crisis in Indonesia, it focuses on how religious education can foster environmental consciousness and character development in students, contributing to sustainable education practices. A qualitative phenomenological approach was employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the integration of Islamic education and environmental programs at SMAN 2 and 7. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, including principals, vice principals, teachers, staff, and students. Data were collected via semi-structured interviews, observations of school activities, and analysis of documentation. The data were analyzed systematically through coding, theme identification, and triangulation to ensure rigor and trustworthiness. Both schools' initiatives include spiritual and environmental programs, curricular integration, and community engagement, fostering a culture of environmental consciousness and religious adherence. The findings suggest that integrating Islamic education with environmental programs can significantly enhance students' environmental awareness and character development. This study provides insights for policymakers and educators on promoting sustainable development through religious education. Future research could explore similar integrations in different regions to broaden the understanding of Islamic education's role in environmental sustainability. This study contributes uniquely by highlighting how Islamic education can support environmental programs in schools, demonstrating effective strategies for character building and environmental love. It underscores the potential of religious education in fostering sustainable living, providing a model for other schools and educational policymakers.

Keywords: Islamic education, environmental programs, character development, sustainable education, Indonesia

Introduction

Humans depend on their surroundings for survival; however, excessive intervention has led to significant environmental changes that are harmful and threatening. This phenomenon, known as the environmental crisis, arises from the tremendous losses of life and resources due to environmental degradation (Nahdi & Ghofron, 2006). Pollution problems resulting from human negligence and indifference to the environment have become a persistent issue in Indonesia, threatening ecosystem sustainability and depleting natural resources. In 2017, the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) reported 2,271 disasters, resulting in 372 deaths, 3.45 million displaced people, and damage to 44,539 housing units, with 93% caused by flash floods and landslides. These statistics highlight a 9% increase in affected individuals

from the previous year, underscoring the low environmental awareness among Indonesians (Galih, 2017).

To address these environmental challenges, the Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of the Environment, initiated the Adiwiyata School program. This program, based on Ministry of Environment Regulation No. 5 of 2013 and No. 2 of 2009, encourages all teachers to integrate environmental education into their subjects. Launched in 2006, the Adiwiyata program aims to promote environmental sustainability by involving all schools in the country in protecting and maintaining the environment (Adiwiyata, 2013). As of 2019, 434 schools in Indonesia, comprising 376 public and 58 private schools from 164 cities/regencies in 32 provinces, have participated, with 333 receiving the National Adiwiyata award and 101 receiving the Adiwiyata Mandiri award (KLHK, 2019).

Character education, particularly fostering a love for the environment, is crucial for both elementary and tertiary students, as outlined in the 18-character version of the Ministry of Education and Culture (Suyadi, 2013). Islamic education (PAI), as an integral part of character education in schools, plays a vital role in providing an environmentally friendly education model. It promotes the formation of religious character and environmental consciousness among students (Pade Mande, 2018).

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of character education and environmental awareness, yet there is limited research on the specific contributions of Islamic education in this context. For example, Salazar et al. (2022) found that public schools are more likely to participate in environmental educational programs compared to private schools and that schools with more teachers have a higher probability of participating in such programs. Similarly, Abe (2021) highlighted that religious leaders in Iran are engaging with environmental issues, exploring the moral dimensions of the environment through religious ethics. Karpudewan (2021) emphasized that ethnicity and socio-demographic characteristics influence pro-environmental attitudes, highlighting the urgency of educating the public on these attitudes. Begum et al. (2021) demonstrated that environmental education positively influences ecologically friendly behavior and that environmental responsibility partially mediates the relationship between environmental education and behavior.

Irawan (2022) explored the interconnectedness of pesantren, Sufism, and the environment, noting that Sufistic doctrines in pesantren promote environmental preservation and gardening activities. Additionally, Irawan's research on the relationship between indigenous societies and place-based education expands the boundaries of contaminated environments for comparative learning. Abd Rahman et al. (2023) discussed the implementation of environmental education through both formal and informal education, supported by administrators, while Affandi and Nuryadien (2023) illustrated how environmental-based Islamic education can be applied to schools at different levels, involving components such as objectives, materials, methods, media, and evaluation.

Anshori and Pohl (2022) highlighted the critical role of education in Islamic schools in raising public awareness of environmental problems, with Pesantren Annuqayah in East Java being a notable example in Indonesia's Green Pesantren program. Wakifah (2022) confirmed the positive role of the Adiwiyata program in linking environmental education with the Islamic Religious Education curriculum. Efendi et al. (2022) found that students have a very good understanding and attitude towards environmental education and disaster mitigation.

Therefore, this study focuses on the theme "Internalization of Islamic Education into environmental programs in schools," with a specific examination of State High Schools 2 and 7 Malang (SMAN 2 and 7). These schools have implemented unique programs and various religious and environmental activities that can serve as models for other elementary and high school levels in Indonesia. This research aims to fill the gap in understanding how Islamic

education can be effectively integrated into environmental programs, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on sustainable education practices and character development.

In summary, this study aims to address the critical issue of environmental sustainability through the lens of Islamic education, offering a unique contribution to both educational theory and practice. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and researchers interested in promoting sustainable development and character education in schools.

Method

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach, specifically phenomenology, to obtain an in-depth understanding of environmental-culture education in State High Schools 2 and 7 Malang (SMAN 2 and 7). Phenomenology was chosen as it seeks to understand the meaning of events or specific situations and their relation to people. This approach is appropriate for exploring the lived experiences of individuals within their natural settings, providing rich, detailed insights into the phenomena under study (Creswell, 2013).

Participants and Sampling

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that the respondents could provide relevant and detailed information pertinent to the study objectives. The sample included:

- 2 principals
- 4 vice principals
- 16 teachers
- 4 staff members
- 16 students

The selection criteria focused on individuals actively involved in or knowledgeable about the schools' environmental education programs. Composite descriptions were used to protect participant confidentiality and present a collective perspective rather than individual viewpoints.

Data Collection

Data were collected through multiple methods to ensure triangulation and enhance the study's credibility:

- Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with principals, vice principals, teachers, staff, and students. The interview guide included questions designed to elicit detailed responses about participants' experiences and perceptions of environmental education.
- Observations: Classroom activities, school events, and environmental programs were observed to gather concrete examples of environmental education in practice.

- Documentation: Written data, such as school profiles, curriculum documents, and records of Adiwiyata and ecotourism programs, were collected to provide contextual information and support the analysis.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using a systematic and iterative process, as recommended by Creswell (2013). The analysis involved three main steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification:

- Data Reduction: Data were organized and coded to identify key themes and patterns. Initial codes were derived from the research questions and refined through repeated reading and coding of the data. Examples of codes included "environmental awareness," "teaching strategies," and "community involvement."
- Data Display: The coded data were displayed in a narrative and systematic format to facilitate interpretation. Themes were identified and described in detail, illustrating how they addressed the research questions.
- Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Conclusions were drawn by identifying patterns and relationships within the data. These conclusions were continuously checked and verified against the data to ensure accuracy and reliability.

Ensuring Rigor and Trustworthiness

Several strategies were employed to ensure the rigor and trustworthiness of the study:

- Triangulation: Using multiple data sources (interviews, observations, documentation) helped corroborate findings and provided a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena.
- Member Checking: Participants were asked to review and provide feedback on the findings to ensure their perspectives were accurately represented.
- Thick Description: Detailed descriptions of the research context, participants, and findings were provided to enable transferability.
- Peer Debriefing: Discussions with colleagues and experts in the field helped refine the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Researcher Positionality

As the primary researcher, my background in Islamic education and environmental studies influenced my interest in this topic. I gained access to the field through established contacts within the schools and conducted the research independently, with occasional assistance from research assistants for data collection.

This study aims to explore the integration of Islamic education into environmental programs in SMAN 2 and 7 Malang, contributing to the broader discourse on sustainable education practices and character development. By providing a detailed and rigorous account of the research process, this methodology section ensures that the study's findings are credible, transferable, and valuable for policymakers, educators, and researchers interested in promoting sustainable development and character education in schools.

Findings

The following results pertain to State High Schools (SMAN) 2 Malang's strategy to build a religious attitude with environmental insight through Islamic education'

Commitment to Environmental and Religious Education

SMAN 2 Malang's commitment to environmental and religious education is evident in its vision and mission statements. The vision includes excelling in achievement, having a noble character, being environmentally cultured, and possessing a global perspective. The missions highlight implementing conducive and innovative learning activities, conducting coaching and service activities according to students' interests and talents, performing character development, establishing a harmonious school environment, implementing transparent and accountable school management, and increasing environmental awareness and love among the school community by preventing pollution and protecting biodiversity.

Integration of Environmental Programs

The school integrates environmental education through various programs and collaborations, such as the JKPKA (Water Quality Monitoring Communication Networks). This includes guidance by Jasa Tirta, monitoring the Brantas River Water Quality, constructing infiltration wells, conducting environmental workshops, and fostering scientific paper competitions. SMAN 2 students have achieved recognition in these areas, such as winning third place in an environmental essay competition and receiving silver medals in the 2021 World Science Environment and Engineering Competition (WSEEC).

Awards and Recognition

SMAN 2 has received numerous awards for its environmental efforts, including the Adiwiyata Mandiri award. These achievements demonstrate the school's serious commitment to integrating environmental education into its curriculum, including Islamic education.

Strategies for Integrating Islamic Education and Environmental Love

SMAN 2 employs several strategies to integrate religious attitudes and environmental awareness:

1. **Spiritual and Environmental Programs:** Programs like SMANDA Darling and SMANDA Bijak encourage students to care for the environment and use resources wisely.

2. Curricular Integration: Environmental themes are integrated into Islamic Education and Guidance and Counseling lessons, emphasizing sound ecological management.
3. School Habituation: Regular activities, such as spontaneous cleaning and using environmental themes in religious competitions, promote environmental consciousness.
4. Plant Classification: Manual classification of plants with banners in classrooms and gardens enhances environmental learning.

State High Schools (SMAN) 7 Malang's Commitment to Environmental and Religious Education

SMAN 7 Malang's vision is "Commendable in image, Superior in achievement, Preserving the environment, and Indonesian cultural arts." Its mission, SAPTACITRA SABHATANSA, includes improving personality and noble character, academic and non-academic achievement, integrating environmental management in all learning activities, creating a safe and healthy school environment, preserving biodiversity, reducing pollution, and protecting cultural arts.

Programs and Activities

SMAN 7 Malang conducts various programs under the "sabhatansa" concept, which includes:

1. Sabhatansa Religious: Activities such as Juz amma readings, ASC (Quran Study Club), and integration of environmental love in the classroom learning plan.
2. Sabhatansa Cinta Lingkungan: Activities to care for the environment, like zero waste initiatives, waste sorting, eco-brick production, and collaboration with local communities for waste management.
3. Sabhatansa Berseri: Cleaning and caring for the school environment, supported by religious activities and school budget allocations for waste management programs.

Environmental-Based Worship Facilities

The school has developed environmental-based worship facilities, such as an IPAL-based mosque that channels filtered ablution wastewater into fish ponds. This initiative, along with religious laboratories, halls, mosques, and libraries, supports the integration of religious and environmental programs.

Table 1*Strategies for Inculcating Religious Attitudes with Environmental Insight*

School	Difference	Equality
SMAN 2 Malang	Environmental theme management is manual	Environmental love is integrated with Islamic Education
SMAN 7 Malang	Environmental theme management uses IT	Both include environmental love and religious attitudes in their vision and mission

The Process of Internalizing the Value of Islamic Education to Develop the Character of Environmental Love

State High Schools (SMAN) 2 Malang

1. School Conditioning: Initial stage during the MOS (student orientation period) where students are introduced to the school environment, rules, and programs, including Adiwiyata and religious activities.
2. Instilling Islamic Education Values: Teachers guide and direct students to practice religious values through daily activities, supported by slogans and posters promoting environmental care.
3. Practice of Islamic Education Values: Students practice these values through scheduled activities, creating a culture of environmental and religious adherence.
4. Immersion in Islamic Education Values: Students internalize and appreciate the values, leading to disciplined and environmentally conscious behavior.
5. Improving the Value of Islamic Education: Community programs, such as "Sambang Dudur Sambang Desa," involve alumni and community members, ensuring the continuation of these values beyond school.

State High Schools (SMAN) 7 Malang

1. Instilling Islamic Education Values: Through teacher guidance, students are motivated to adhere to religious and environmental programs, fostering personal awareness and exemplary behavior.
2. Internalization of Values: Programs like waste bank management and creative environmental initiatives encourage students to care for their surroundings.
3. Appreciation of Values: Students' attitudes and behaviors improve, reflected in their evaluation results, demonstrating the successful internalization of these values.

In summary, both SMAN 2 and SMAN 7 Malang have developed comprehensive strategies to integrate religious attitudes with environmental education. These strategies

involve curricular integration, school habituation, community engagement, and the development of environmental-based facilities, ensuring that students internalize and practice these values in their daily lives.

Discussion

The school's strategy to build a religious attitude with environmental insights through Islamic Education involved building character, especially religious feelings and attitudes, is a complex task that requires continuous evaluation. Given that religious education is limited to four hours per week in public schools, a precise strategy is necessary for proper internalization. Character is essential, as J. Hawes stated, "A good name is seldom regained, and when the character is gone, one of the richest jewels of life is lost forever" (Lidyasari, 2014; Samani & Hariyanto, 2012).

Furthermore, the effectiveness of integrating religious education with environmental programs may be enhanced by paying attention to students' emotional or affective responses. Schwarz and Clore (1998) emphasize that affective states significantly inform individuals' judgments, attitudes, and behaviors, suggesting that fostering positive emotional experiences through religious-environmental education can effectively shape students' character and environmental consciousness. This aligns with recent findings indicating that innovative pedagogies in Indonesian Islamic schools effectively shape students' character and leadership toward sustainability (Susanti et al., 2024). Character education begins with forming attitudes based on specific matters, such as religion, culture, and state ideology (Fahmy et al., 2015). Effective character education planning focuses on achieving objectives such as religiosity, morality, and leadership (Sukendar et al., 2019). Environmental love is part of this framework, as individuals who care about their surroundings exhibit good character (Naim, 2012). The integration of religiosity into environmental education can guide students to cultivate sustainable living, which Islam considers a duty (Shihab, 1998; Sumantri, 2010).

Islamic education with an environmental perspective aims to engender religious character in students and supports the Adiwiyata program. This integration of Islamic education and environmental love programs was evident in the schools studied, similar to previous research by Siswanto et al. (2019), which highlighted the integration of environmental-cultured education across subjects.

Our findings align with Siswanto et al. (2019) in showing the integration of environmental education across various subjects and activities. However, our study specifically highlights how Islamic education is combined with environmental programs to reinforce religious and environmental values. This is a unique aspect that contrasts with other studies focused solely on secular environmental education.

The study reveals differences in the educational objectives and processes between State High Schools (SMAN) 2 and 7 Malang. While both schools aim to integrate environmental and religious education, their approaches differ. SMAN 2 uses contextual examples within Islamic education lessons, whereas SMAN 7 includes these lessons in the learning design itself. This distinction reflects different philosophical and pedagogical principles:

- Contextual Examples (SMAN 2): This approach involves using real-life examples and scenarios to teach environmental values within the context of Islamic education. This method aims to make learning more relatable and practical.

- Learning Design (SMAN 7): Here, environmental education is embedded in the curriculum design, ensuring that environmental values are systematically taught alongside religious teachings.

The differences in approaches can be traced to the theological and philosophical contexts of the schools. SMAN 2 emphasizes practical application and real-world relevance, reflecting a pragmatic philosophy. SMAN 7, on the other hand, adopts a more systematic approach, possibly influenced by a more structured educational philosophy.

These differences also reflect the schools' historical, demographical, and geographical contexts. SMAN 2's approach may be shaped by its urban setting, which necessitates practical solutions to environmental issues. SMAN 7, located in a more traditional area, might emphasize structured learning to align with local cultural expectations.

This study has several limitations. The focus on only two schools in Malang limits the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study's qualitative nature means the results are context-specific and may not be applicable to other settings. The reliance on self-reported data from interviews may also introduce bias.

While qualitative research does not aim for broad generalizability, the insights gained can inform similar contexts. The strategies used by SMAN 2 and SMAN 7 can serve as models for other schools aiming to integrate Islamic and environmental education.

Implications for Stakeholders

1. Future Research: Future studies could explore similar integrations in different regions or contexts, providing a broader understanding of how Islamic education can support environmental sustainability.
2. Practice: Educators can adopt the strategies identified in this study to enhance the integration of religious and environmental education, fostering a holistic approach to character building.
3. Policy: Policymakers could consider incorporating environmental education more explicitly within the framework of religious education, ensuring that students develop a comprehensive understanding of their responsibilities towards the environment.

Environmentally-minded Islamic education, as employed by SMAN 2 and SMAN 7 Malang, demonstrates effective strategies for developing characters of environmental love. By integrating environmental programs into Islamic education lessons, both schools promote the internalization of values through various stages. SMAN 7 operates in three phases—attitude cultivation, indoctrination, and appreciation—while SMAN 2 follows five steps: conditioning, attitude cultivation, practice, absorption, and improvement. These approaches highlight the potential for religious education to significantly contribute to environmental sustainability efforts in educational settings.

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