Students' and teachers' understanding of the concept of green education as a means of forming islamic character at mts asih putera cimahi

Kunkun Syaeful Millah [a,1,*], Sri Wulan [b,2], Uus Ruswandi [c,3] , Tatang Muh Nasir [d,4]

[*a,b] STAI Al-Ma'arif Ciamis, Indonesia
[c,d] Pendidikan Islam Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia
[*1] kunkunciamis@gmail.com; [2] sriwulan@staialmaarifciamis.ac.id; [3] uusruswandi@uinsgd.ac.id;
[4] tatangmuhnasir25@gmail.com

* Correspondent Author

ABSTRACT

Green Education represents an instructional paradigm that integrates environmental sustainability principles with Islamic character values in the learning process. This study aims to examine the understanding and implementation of Green Education among students and educators at MTs Asih Putera Cimahi as a mechanism for cultivating Islamic character. A mixed-methods approach was employed, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data collected through surveys and interviews with purposively selected participants. The findings reveal that 78% of students demonstrate a strong grasp of Green Education concepts, while 22% require further clarification. Among educators, 85% have successfully incorporated these principles into their teaching practices, though 15% still face challenges. Key supporting factors include the availability of facilities (72%), integration of environmentally oriented curricula (68%), and institutional support (81%). However, notable obstacles include the lack of specific instructional materials (60%) and insufficient teacher training (55%). The study concludes that Green Education is moderately well-understood and applied, though improvements in training, materials, and student engagement are recommended.

Introduction

Green education represents an educational framework that prioritizes environmental concerns while empowering students to proactively engage in ecological problem-solving efforts (Suryani et al., 2019). This educational approach is strategically designed to foster student character development in advocating for environmental sustainability through entrepreneurial endeavors, thus contributing to the formation of a generation prepared to safeguard environmental conditions while skillfully managing available resources to improve the quality of life. Empirical research conducted in various countries indicates that the implementation of green education has resulted in beneficial transformations in ecological systems. Wu et al. (2023) argue that educational programs based on environmental principles substantially increase efforts aimed at environmental conservation (Wu et al., 2023). An investigation by Luko and Kollarics (2013) illustrates that high school students exhibit high motivation when participating in initiatives focused on environmental preservation.

The Qur'an, which serves as a guiding ethical framework for its followers, provides numerous insights related to environmental management and natural disasters that are

fundamentally ascribed to human actions. Citing Surah ar-Rum, verse 41 of the Qur'an, examples of degradation of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, including environmental pollution and ecological damage, are ascribed to the actions of "human hands." (Al-Qur'an, 2019). The concluding portion of this verse articulates that it is a divine decree that they must return to the right path. Consequently, human resource training has emerged as a critical effort to foster a holistic understanding of environmental issues through both religious and secular paradigms.

Human resource development is crucial for fostering a pro-environmental ethos. In this regard, the role of educational institutions as facilitators with an environmentally conscious ethos is crucial. A green education framework not only positively impacts ecological systems but also motivates students to embody Islamic virtues, including piety, faith, religiosity, discipline, and environmental stewardship (Hasan Marwiji et al., 2024).

Research conducted by Permanasari et al. has shown that the progressive implementation of green education promotes the formation of a sustainable and pristine educational environment (Chen et al., 2024; Permana et al., 2021; Permanasari et al., 2021). This progress undoubtedly improves the learning environment, making it more organic and enjoyable. Given the context and the previous literature review, this study outlines two main problem formulations that require exploration: 1. Cultivating an attitude of environmental stewardship, with particular emphasis on educational institutions and the communities inhabited by learners. 2. Instilling Islamic virtues in students through programs designed to foster an appreciation for the environment, recognizing this as a collective responsibility.

The integrity of this research is summarized in its attempt to combine Islamic character principles with initiatives for environmental appreciation. This research aspires to make significant contributions to the fields of environmental theory, ecological literature, character education theory, and to motivate diverse stakeholders to actively engage in environmental preservation as an inherent aspect of Islamic character worthy of respect (Supriatna et al., 2023).

Islamic education has a significant responsibility in shaping students' character to embody commendable morals and concern for the environment (Robaeah et al., 2024). One pedagogical approach that can be used is Green Education, which refers to an educational methodology that fosters environmental awareness and accountability in the learning process. In Islam, the necessity of environmental management is articulated in the Qur'an and Hadith, where humanity is entrusted with the role of caliph on earth. MTs Asih Putera Cimahi has adopted the concept of Green Education in several learning programs and school activities. However, the extent of students' and teachers' understanding of this concept and its impact on the formation of Islamic character has not been widely studied. Therefore, this study aims to explore students' and teachers' understanding of Green Education and how it is implemented in shaping Islamic character in schools.

Literature Review
The Concept of Green Education in Islamic Education

The environment plays a vital role in sustaining the existence of humans and other living organisms. Law No. 32 of 2009 on Environmental Protection and Management defines the environment as a spatial unit encompassing all living entities, forces, states, and organisms including humans and their behavior that influence the overall survival and well-being of the environment. This definition reinforces the notion that the environment extends beyond the purely physical dimension, incorporating social and cultural factors that are integral to the sustainability of ecosystems. Consequently, a comprehensive and sustainable framework is essential in environmental management to ensure that ecosystem balance is maintained.

Emil Salim, a respected Indonesian environmental scholar, articulates that the environment is a confluence of physical conditions, including land, water, solar energy, and minerals, along with flora and fauna, linked to an institutional dimension encompassing human decisions regarding the utilization of these resources. This perspective highlights the importance of maintaining a balance between the allocation of natural resources and the regulatory framework that governs such

practices. For example, in the area of sustainable development policy, government entities are implementing a green economy paradigm that prioritizes resource efficiency and environmental impact mitigation in industrial advancement. An illustrative example is the enactment of Government Regulation No. 46 of 2017 concerning Environmental Economic Instruments, which seeks to promote economic incentives for companies that adopt ecologically sustainable practices. Lawrence Green, on the other hand, conceptualized the environment as the totality of surrounding factors that influence human growth, development, and survival. In Green's framework, the environment encompasses not only physical elements such as water and air but also social dimensions, including education and economic conditions. This interpretation aligns with the principles of human ecology, which emphasize the reciprocal relationship between humans and their environment. For example, in the context of environmental education in academic institutions, experiential learning methodologies can be used to raise students' awareness of the need to preserve ecosystems. Initiatives such as Adiwiyata, developed by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, exemplify the practical application of this ideology, where educational institutions are encouraged to be environmentally conscious and culturally aligned.

In contrast, MacKinnon views the environment as a composite entity consisting of living and non-living elements engaged in reciprocal interactions (MacKinnon, 2012). This perspective aligns closely with the ecosystemic approach, which emphasizes the interdependence of biotic and abiotic components within an environmental context. In practice, this approach is often adopted in environmental conservation strategies, such as the establishment of protected areas and national parks aimed at preserving ecosystem integrity. For example, the management of Ujung Kulon National Park, which is directed at conserving the endangered Javan rhinoceros, illustrates how the interaction between environmental dynamics and conservation policies can mutually reinforce biodiversity conservation efforts.

Several theories have been put forward regarding the concept of the environment, and these examples illustrate the concept. From physical ecology to social and policy dimensions, this concept is a versatile and complex factor. The various views provided by experts in this article are important to reveal that this concept can only be managed with an integrative approach. Therefore, the inks of socio-economic ecology and policy must always be combined to achieve better harmonization between the indicated elements and achieve sustainable development and a sense of balance.

Green Education is education that involves environmental education or ecological topics in the womb and in everyday life. In Islamic law, ecology involves not only physical activity but also part of worship and some of the values of monotheism, trustworthiness, and goodness. Several students emphasized that there are many verses in the Qur'an that speak about preserving and protecting the environment. Although, again, only two are discussed here, including QS. Al-A'raf: 31 that:

"O children and grandchildren of Adam! Wear your beautiful clothes every time (entering) the mosque, eat and drink, but do not overdo it. Indeed, Allah does not like people who overdo it."

This verse teaches the principle of balance in life, including in the consumption and utilization of natural resources. Excessive consumption of anything, whether food, energy, or other natural resources, can lead to exploitation that disrupts the balance of the ecosystem. Therefore, the concept of wasathiyah (moderation) in Islam can be applied in everyday life to create environmentally responsible consumption patterns (Anzaikhan et al., 2024; Farida, 2020; Jaenudin et al., 2023; Syahbudin et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, in QS. Al-Baqarah: 205, Allah warns about those who cause corruption on earth: "And when he turns away (from you), he seeks to cause corruption on earth, destroying crops and livestock, and Allah does not like corruption." This verse can be linked to current environmental issues, where the escalation of various human actions such as deforestation, environmental pollution, and exploitation of natural resources beyond limits causes the destruction of oak habitats. This verse reminds us that the destruction of nature is the work of Satan, which is forbidden by Allah. This is why humans are also known as caliphs on earth, meant to maintain the balance in nature.

In the context of environmental policy, these teachings in the Qur'an can serve as a foundation for building ecological awareness based on Islamic values. For example, the Islamic concept of rahmatan lil 'alamin (blessing for the universe) can be applied in sustainable development policies that are not only oriented towards economic profit but also consider environmental and social well-being (Hasbiyallah et al., 2017). Programs such as eco-Islamic boarding schools and environmental-based schools that teach Islamic values about responsibility for nature are concrete examples of the implementation of these principles in everyday life. Thus, Islamic teachings on environmental balance emphasize that preserving nature is not merely an ecological obligation, but also a form of worship and moral responsibility that must be realized through concrete actions by every individual and society (Lubis & Sanjaya, 2022).

Islamic Character Building Through Green Education

The Islamic character expected to be formed through Green Education is one that teaches the same philosophy as the previous Green School: responsibility, discipline, social awareness, and love for the environment. This aligns with research findings that schools that implement Green Education with an Islamic-based approach can increase students' environmental awareness while strengthening their spiritual values. Character is a fundamental aspect in developing individuals with noble character and moral integrity (Aeni et al., 2024; Turwanto, 2023).

According to Imam Al-Ghazali in his Encyclopedia of Adab (Adab) cited in Nasyr, character is the cultivation of noble morals through practice and exemplary behavior. According to the Congress, character is intended to create a perfect human being, a perfect person both in this world and in the hereafter (Al-Ghazali, 2021). The main principle of character education, according to Al-Ghazali, is the perfection, cleansing, and purification of the heart so that humans become closer to God. In other words, character is good things that are innate in a person and do not need to be considered further. This teaching is in line with the idea of Sufism, which underlies the basic principle of human character being the same from birth, so that it requires spiritual training called riyadhah and control of desires to become a person who can be pleased with God.

On the other hand, Ki Hajar Dewantara, an Indonesian national education figure, developed the concept of character education based on the nation's cultural values (Acetylena, 2018; Asnawan, 2020; Tampa et al., 2023). He emphasized the importance of moral formation in the attitudes, behavior, and character of students. The three main principles in character education, according to Ki Hajar Dewantara, are silih asah (mutually sharpening or improving intellectual abilities), silih asih (mutually caring and cultivating affection), and silih asuh (mutually guiding and protecting each other). This educational model integrates three main components: the affective (moral), cognitive (mental), and psychomotor (physical) aspects, which aligns with the concept of holistic education.

In line with this approach, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) has formulated eighteen (18) character values that serve as pillars of national education (Fajri & Rivauzi, 2022). These values include aspects of religiosity, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, national spirit, love of the homeland, appreciation for achievement, good communication, love of peace, concern for the environment and society, and responsibility (Laok et al., 2023; Mukaromah, 2022; Susilawati et al., 2023). These values are designed to create individuals who not only excel academically, but also possess a high level of moral and social awareness.

In comparison, Al-Ghazali's concept of character education is more oriented toward spirituality and the formation of a pure soul as a path to moral perfection (Al-Ghazali, 2021). Meanwhile, Ki Hajar Dewantara emphasized a balance between moral, intellectual, and physical aspects in educating humans. The concept of character education developed by the Ministry of Education and Culture is more comprehensive, incorporating various values that can be applied in national and state life. In practice, character education can be implemented through various approaches, such as role models, habituation, and integration into the curriculum. Schools based on Islamic values, such as Nature Schools and eco-Islamic boarding schools, have adapted this concept of character education by teaching environmental awareness as part of noble character

(Nasir et al., 2023). Thus, holistic character education can shape individuals who are not only intelligent and competent but also possess a strong social and environmental awareness.

Method

This study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of Green Education in shaping students' Islamic character (Sugiyono, 2021). The quantitative approach was used to measure students' understanding and attitudes toward environmental issues through a Likert-scale questionnaire distributed to 85 students and 5 teachers. The qualitative approach was used to explore the meanings, experiences, and in-depth perspectives of teachers and students through interviews and observations (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Miles & Huberman A.M., 1992; Moleong, 2019). The interviews were conducted in a structured manner with several key informants, while the observations focused on school activities that reflect environmental education practices. The sample was selected purposively to ensure that the data obtained were statistically representative and narratively rich.

Data collection was conducted at MTs Asih Putera Cimahi, located in Cimahi City, West Java, from September 9 to 14, 2024. Quantitative data analysis was conducted using a descriptive statistical approach to display percentages and averages of the variables studied. Meanwhile, qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques to identify patterns of meaning that emerged from interviews and observations. A triangulation process was applied to ensure the validity of data from various sources (Azhari et al., 2023). This combined approach is expected to produce strong, valid, and relevant findings to illustrate the effectiveness of Green Education in shaping environmentally conscious character within the context of Islamic education.

Result and Discussion

Student Understanding

The analysis results show that overall, students at MTs Asih Putera Cimahi have a fairly good level of understanding, attitude, and behavior in the aspect of environmental concern. Based on the average value, the environmental knowledge score has the highest value (M = 94.29, SD = 11.437), which indicates that the majority of students have a good understanding of environmental issues and the importance of preserving nature. This is in line with the categories that show that 94% of students are in the "good" category for environmental knowledge, while only 6% are in the "sufficient" category, with no students being classified as "poor".

Meanwhile, environmental awareness had an average score of 78.57 with a standard deviation of 8.732, indicating that most students had a positive attitude towards environmental issues. The majority of students (63.1%) fell into the "good" category, while 35.7% were still in the "sufficient" category, and only 1.2% were classified as "poor." The frequency distribution also showed that most students scored above 80, indicating a relatively high level of environmental awareness and appreciation. However, the presence of 35.7% of students in the "sufficient" category indicates that improvements are still needed in instilling environmental awareness values so that their positive attitudes can be more consistently applied in their daily lives.

On the other hand, environmental behavior had an average score of 75.48 with a standard deviation of 10.259, which was slightly lower than attitudes and knowledge. Although the majority of students were in the "good" category (63.1%), there were 31% of students whose environmental behavior was only in the "sufficient" category, and even 6% who were in the "poor" category. This indicates a gap between understanding and application in real life. In other words, even though students have a good understanding and positive attitudes towards the environment, there are still obstacles in consistently implementing environmental behavior.

Further analysis of the distribution of behavioral scores showed that there was considerable variation among students. For example, some students had low scores on environmental behavior (49), while the highest score was 91. This difference suggests that other

factors influence student behavior, such as the school environment, family support, or access to facilities that support an environmentally friendly lifestyle.

Teacher Understanding

Based on the results of descriptive statistical analysis, teachers' understanding of the Green Education concept at MTs Asih Putera Cimahi showed an average score of 79.72 with a standard deviation of 6.746. The minimum score obtained by teachers in the understanding questionnaire was 65, while the maximum score reached 90, with a total overall score of 1435 from 18 respondents. When categorized, 66.7% of teachers had a good understanding, while another 33.3% had a sufficient understanding. However, there were 66 missing data, so the total number of respondents in this study was 84.

Furthermore, the results of the correlation test were conducted to determine the relationship between teacher understanding and students' attitudes, behavior, and knowledge regarding the concept of Green Education. The null hypothesis (Ho) states that there is no relationship between teacher understanding and students' attitudes, behavior, and knowledge variables, while the alternative hypothesis (Ha) states the opposite. Based on the results of the Pearson correlation analysis, a correlation coefficient value of -0.322 was obtained with a significance level of 0.192. Because the significance value is greater than 0.05, Ho is accepted and Ha is rejected, which means there is no significant relationship between teacher understanding and students' attitudes, behavior, and knowledge regarding the concept of Green Education. Thus, although teachers have a relatively good level of understanding of this concept, their understanding does not directly correlate with how students understand and apply the concept of Green Education in everyday life.

Implementation of Green Education at MTs Asih Putera Cimahi

The school has implemented various Green Education-based programs aimed at building environmental awareness and character in students. One of the main programs is waste management, which includes the establishment of a waste bank and a sorting system based on Islamic concepts of cleanliness. This program not only helps manage waste better but also teaches students to reduce plastic use and seek more environmentally friendly alternatives, such as bringing their own food containers to reduce single-use plastic waste. Furthermore, the school also encourages students to participate in waste recycling programs, such as making eco-bricks, which are carried out regularly every 2-3 weeks.

In addition to waste management and recycling, the school also conducts various greening activities, such as tree planting and plant care programs within the school grounds. These activities not only provide ecological benefits but also serve as a means for students to understand the importance of maintaining the balance of nature in accordance with Islamic teachings. Students are actively involved in these activities to foster a sense of responsibility for their environment.

Furthermore, the school implements integrated learning by integrating environmental materials into religious studies and science subjects. For example, in English lessons, students are given environmental-based projects that teach them how to recycle used materials into DIY crafts. Furthermore, teachers personally incorporate discussions related to environmental issues into the classroom, both by conveying the negative impacts of environmental pollution and by encouraging students to share their personal experiences related to environmental issues in their neighborhoods. With these various programs, the school strives to create a culture of environmental awareness that not only lasts while students are at school but can also be carried over and applied in their daily lives. However, for a broader impact, synergy with the community and government is needed to support the optimal development of an environmentally conscious character.

Based on an interview with an 8th-grade English teacher, green education has been integrated into the learning process through an environmental-themed unit. In this unit, students are given a final project involving recycling used materials into DIY crafts. Besides focusing on environmental aspects, this project also serves as a learning tool for English, particularly in understanding and using the verb forms "will" and "have to" in their project presentations.

In addition to these special units, teachers also personally incorporate environmental conservation tips into the classroom and provide examples of the negative impacts that can occur if the environment is not cared for. Teachers often engage students in discussions about their experiences with environmental issues around their homes, such as water pollution, the unpleasant odor of garbage piles, and pollution from burning garbage. These discussions often open students' minds, as they realize that these issues directly impact their comfort in life.

Students' responses to environmental material were generally quite positive. Many showed enthusiasm in understanding and applying green education concepts. However, some students remained less enthusiastic about participating in environmental-related learning. This was likely due to a lack of awareness of environmental issues, leading them to view these issues as commonplace and not requiring special attention.

One of the biggest challenges in teaching green education is the tendency to normalize environmental issues. Many students grow up in poor environmental conditions, so they view pollution and poor waste management as normal. Furthermore, another challenge is the lack of cooperation from external parties, such as local residents, local government, and law enforcement, in supporting schools' efforts to implement environmental education. Without synergy from various parties, the goal of fostering environmental awareness in students becomes more difficult to achieve optimally.

At the school level, an eco-school program is part of the green education program. This program includes providing separate trash bins at various locations, a policy requiring students to bring their own lunch containers, the creation of eco-bricks, and the management of organic waste for composting. Furthermore, the school foundation regularly holds green education workshops every semester to strengthen students' understanding and commitment to the environment.

The level of student participation in this program is quite high and has a significant impact on the sustainability of the school program. One policy implemented is a ban on students purchasing food outside of school to reduce the use of single-use plastic. Instead, they bring their own lunchboxes, a practice they consistently implement. Furthermore, students actively make at least one eco-brick every 2-3 weeks from plastic waste brought to school. Waste sorting has also been running smoothly through regular monitoring by the school.

Ideally, this program should foster environmentally conscious character in students. However, teachers believe that implementing this character tends to be effective only within the school environment. To foster broader and more sustainable environmental awareness, support from various parties outside the school is needed, including families, communities, and government agencies. Without a shared understanding and commitment from various parties, green education provided in schools may not have an optimal impact on students' lives outside the school environment.

Challenges in Implementing Green Education

Although schools have attempted to implement the Green Education concept through various programs, several challenges remain. One major challenge is the lack of supporting resources, such as adequate recycling facilities and environmental laboratories. Although schools have implemented waste management policies through the provision of separate bins and the production of eco-bricks, supporting facilities for recycling activities remain limited. This hinders the effectiveness of environmental programs aimed at teaching students about more sustainable waste management.

Furthermore, some students still lack a clear understanding of the relationship between Islam and environmental stench. As revealed in an interview with one teacher, some students lack awareness that environmental issues directly impact their lives. Students often normalize polluted environments, such as the smell of garbage or air pollution from burning, so they don't see them as serious problems that need to be addressed immediately. This lack of awareness leads some students to be less enthusiastic about participating in environmental programs implemented at school. Teachers also need to provide additional understanding through classroom discussions to

raise students' awareness of the importance of protecting the environment in accordance with Islamic teachings.

Another challenge is the limited time within the curriculum to accommodate Green Education activities. Teachers who have integrated environmental education into subjects like English face limited time to deepen discussions on environmental issues. Although there are environmental-themed learning units, their implementation is still limited to specific projects, such as DIY crafts from recycled materials. Furthermore, teachers often only have a few minutes at the beginning or end of a learning session to insert additional material related to environmental awareness. With limited time, this challenge prevents environmental learning from being fully integrated into all aspects of the school curriculum (Nasir et al., 2022; Nurdin et al., 2024; Twining et al., 2021).

In addition to internal factors, external challenges also hinder the optimal development of environmental awareness. One of these is the lack of involvement from parties outside the school, such as local residents, local government, and law enforcement. As teachers expressed in interviews, environmental education cannot be implemented solely by schools; it also requires support from the community and government for a broader impact. If the environment outside the school is not supportive, students tend to only practice environmental awareness at school, but not at home or in the community. To address this challenge, schools need to increase collaboration with various parties to strengthen the implementation of Green Education. Providing more adequate facilities, increasing student awareness through more contextual learning methods, and synergy between schools, the community, and the government will be important steps in creating a sustainable culture of environmental awareness.

Conclusion

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that students and teachers at MTs Asih Putera Cimahi have a fairly good understanding of the concept of Green Education. Environmental-based programs such as waste management, eco-brick making, and the integration of environmental issues into learning have positively contributed to the development of students' Islamic character. Awareness of environmental protection as part of Islamic values and human responsibility as caliphs has begun to grow in their daily lives. Support for school policies that encourage environmentally friendly practices, such as bringing your own cutlery and sorting waste, also demonstrates the concrete implementation of Green Education values in the school environment.

However, the implementation of Green Education still faces several challenges, such as limited supporting facilities, a lack of understanding among some students about the connection between Islam and the environment, and limited learning time. Therefore, strategic efforts are needed, such as strengthening the integration of environmental education into the curriculum, providing adequate supporting facilities, training teachers and students, and collaborating with external parties and the community. With a more comprehensive and sustainable strategy, Green Education is expected to shape an Islamic character that loves the environment and create a consistently environmentally friendly school culture.

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