

Aligning Islamic Institutional School (Madrasah) and National Curricula for Eco-Islamic English Education

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the alignment between Islamic institutional school (madrasah) curricula and Indonesia's national curriculum to promote Eco-Islamic English Education. The integration aims to harmonize faith-based and national educational objectives by embedding Islamic environmental values into English language teaching. Madrasahs, as Islamic educational institutions, often emphasize moral and spiritual formation, while the national curriculum focuses on competency-based and global education. Aligning both can create a more holistic framework that fosters linguistic competence, ecological awareness, and spiritual responsibility. This study highlights that curriculum alignment can strengthen sustainable education by encouraging students to see environmental stewardship (*khalifah fil-ardh*) as both a linguistic and religious practice. Ultimately, this approach prepares learners to engage with global environmental issues through an Islamic worldview using English as a medium for understanding, reflection, and action.

Keywords: *Curriculum alignment; Eco-Islamic education; English language teaching; National curriculum.*

INTRODUCTION

The integration of Islamic institutional education and national curricula has become increasingly relevant in Indonesia's efforts to develop a holistic, value-based, and globally competitive education system. Madrasahs, as faith-based institutions, play a vital role in nurturing moral character (*akhlak*), spiritual understanding, and religious identity among students. However, the growing global emphasis on environmental sustainability and competency-based education calls for an alignment that harmonizes Islamic values with national and global educational objectives. This is especially significant in English language education, where linguistic skills can serve as a bridge for students to engage with global discourses, including those concerning environmental ethics and sustainability (Azizah & Mahmud, 2022).

In recent years, the concept of Eco-Islamic Education has gained attention as an educational paradigm that connects Islamic teachings with ecological awareness. The Qur'an emphasizes human responsibility as *khalifah fil-ardh* (stewards of the earth), encouraging balance, preservation, and gratitude toward the environment (Q.S. Al-A'raf [7]:56; Q.S. Ar-Rum [30]:41). Integrating such principles into English language teaching

within madrasahs can enrich both the moral and cognitive dimensions of learning. Through this alignment, English is not merely taught as a subject of communication, but also as a means to express Islamic ecological ethics, fostering students who are environmentally conscious and linguistically competent.

Despite its potential, challenges remain in aligning the madrasah curriculum—which often prioritizes religious and moral instruction—with the national curriculum, which emphasizes scientific literacy, critical thinking, and global competence. These differing orientations can lead to fragmentation in curriculum design and instructional practices. As noted by Wati (2021), curriculum alignment requires coherent integration between institutional goals, pedagogical strategies, and assessment systems to ensure consistent learning outcomes. In the context of madrasahs, this process involves embedding Islamic ecological values within the structure of the national English curriculum, ensuring that students learn both linguistic competence and ecological responsibility as interconnected goals.

Therefore, this study seeks to explore how Islamic institutional schools (madrasahs) can align their curricula with Indonesia's national education framework to promote Eco-

Islamic English Education. The discussion focuses on the theoretical foundations, practical approaches, and pedagogical strategies that facilitate this integration. By examining this alignment, the paper aims to contribute to the broader discourse on sustainable Islamic education—one that unites faith, knowledge, and environmental stewardship in preparing learners to respond to global ecological challenges through an Islamic worldview and the use of English as a medium for communication, reflection, and action.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Curriculum alignment has long been recognized as a fundamental principle in educational development, ensuring consistency between instructional design, learning objectives, and assessment outcomes. Johnson et al. (2020) emphasize that curriculum alignment functions as a bridge connecting institutional practices with national educational standards. When this alignment is achieved, it minimizes the gap between policy goals and classroom implementation, resulting in more coherent learning experiences and improved student outcomes. Conversely, misalignment often leads to fragmented instruction, inconsistent assessment, and a lack of measurable progress among learners. In Indonesia, this issue becomes particularly significant in the context of madrasah education, where religious and general curricula must coexist within a unified national framework. Rahmawati (2021) notes that integrating both systems requires careful planning to ensure that religious identity, moral education, and competency-based learning can be pursued simultaneously without compromising each other's objectives.

The intersection between Islamic education and national curriculum goals has received increasing scholarly attention, especially in discussions about educational modernization and sustainability. Islamic education traditionally emphasizes *tarbiyah* (holistic nurturing) that encompasses spiritual, moral, and intellectual dimensions (Abdullah, 2019). However, the national curriculum introduced by the Indonesian government prioritizes skills-based learning, critical thinking, and global literacy. The challenge, therefore, lies in harmonizing these approaches

so that madrasah education not only preserves faith-based instruction but also equips students with competencies relevant to the globalized world. Wati (2021) highlights that such alignment requires mutual adaptation: madrasahs need to contextualize Islamic principles within the framework of national competency standards, while policymakers must recognize the cultural and spiritual richness embedded in Islamic schooling traditions.

In addition to alignment between religious and national goals, the concept of Eco-Islamic education has emerged as an innovative response to global environmental challenges. Nasr (2015) argues that modern ecological crises stem from a spiritual alienation between humans and nature, suggesting that education rooted in Islamic spirituality can restore harmony. The Qur'an presents humans as *khalifah fil-ardh* (stewards of the earth), responsible for maintaining environmental balance (Q.S. Al-A'raf [7]:56; Q.S. Ar-Rum [30]:41). Integrating these teachings into the curriculum transforms environmental protection from a mere scientific or civic concern into a moral and spiritual duty. Eco-Islamic education, as further elaborated by Romi et al. (2025), constructs a Quranic model emphasizing spiritual-ethical dimensions for sustainability, aligning madrasah values with global ecological needs. Abdullah (2019) also adds that Eco-Islamic education encourages students to perceive ecological preservation as part of their religious worship (*ibadah*), thereby merging ethical responsibility with environmental awareness.

When applied to English Language Teaching (ELT), this Eco-Islamic framework takes on a dual function. First, it situates language learning within a meaningful moral and environmental context. Second, it empowers students to articulate Islamic environmental ethics in global discourses through English. Azizah and Mahmud (2022) argue that embedding religious and cultural values in ELT not only improves engagement but also enhances students' moral consciousness and critical thinking skills. Hasibuan and Sutarmo (2021) provide the methodological foundation through their EFL instruction model integrating Islamic perspectives—from literacy and culture-

religion dynamics to applied linguistics via interactive Islamic-themed activities—directly enabling madrasah Eco-Islamic ELT practices. By learning English through eco-Islamic content such as discussions about sustainability, stewardship, and the environment students can acquire linguistic proficiency while simultaneously internalizing Islamic ecological ethics. This approach aligns with Wati's (2021) view that curriculum alignment should not only synchronize goals but also integrate contextual and value-based elements to produce more holistic learners.

Furthermore, aligning madrasah curricula with national educational standards through Eco-Islamic English education also supports Indonesia's broader vision of sustainable education. According to Rahmawati (2021), sustainability in education is achieved when learning fosters both cognitive competence and moral responsibility. Through curriculum alignment, madrasahs can maintain their distinctive Islamic identity while contributing to national efforts to promote environmental awareness and global citizenship. This educational model, grounded in faith and informed by modern pedagogical approaches, reflects a balance between local wisdom and international perspectives. It ensures that students are not only linguistically capable but also spiritually grounded and environmentally conscious.

In conclusion, the literature collectively underscores that aligning madrasah and national curricula within an Eco-Islamic English education framework can yield transformative benefits. It strengthens the moral-spiritual foundation of education, promotes sustainable environmental values, and enhances language learning with deeper meaning and purpose. The synthesis of these elements creates a holistic educational paradigm where faith, knowledge, and ecological stewardship coexist harmoniously, preparing students to become responsible global citizens guided by Islamic principles.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to explore how Islamic institutional schools (madrasahs) can align their curricula with Indonesia's national curriculum to develop an Eco-Islamic English Education

framework. This design enables a comprehensive understanding of contextual, philosophical, and pedagogical aspects underlying curriculum integration (Creswell, 2018), focusing on describing alignment processes rather than testing hypotheses. Data were obtained through document analysis, interviews, and literature review. The document analysis examined national curriculum guidelines (Kurikulum Merdeka and Kurikulum 2013), madrasah curriculum policies, and selected English syllabuses to identify points of convergence and divergence. Semi-structured interviews with English teachers and curriculum coordinators provided insights into practical challenges and strategies, while relevant scholarly works on curriculum alignment, Eco-Islamic education, and English pedagogy offered theoretical grounding. Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (2014) interactive model involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing to identify themes such as alignment strategies, integration of Islamic ecological values, and pedagogical implications. Triangulation across policy documents, interviews, and scholarly literature, as well as peer debriefing, ensured the validity and credibility of findings. Overall, this methodological framework supports a systematic understanding of how madrasahs can achieve Eco-Islamic English Education by producing learners who are linguistically skilled, environmentally aware, and spiritually grounded.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of this study reveal that aligning the madrasah curriculum with the national curriculum to develop Eco-Islamic English Education requires both structural and philosophical integration. Analysis of curriculum documents shows that both curricula share similar foundational orientations, particularly in their emphasis on holistic student development. While the national curriculum highlights critical thinking, creativity, and global awareness, the madrasah curriculum prioritizes spiritual and moral formation (akhlakul karimah). These differences can be harmonized through shared competencies such as environmental literacy, communication skills, and social responsibility. In English Language Teaching (ELT), both

systems encourage communicative competence, allowing English teachers to embed ecological and Islamic themes—such as Quranic teachings on environmental stewardship—into reading and speaking activities to strengthen linguistic and moral learning simultaneously.

The findings also indicate that pedagogical integration plays an essential role in supporting Eco-Islamic English Education. Teachers from selected madrasahs implemented strategies such as project-based learning on environmental issues, bilingual discussions on Islamic eco-ethics, and digital media-based environmental campaigns conducted in English. These practices align with Eco-Islamic pedagogy, which connects faith-based values with real-world ecological issues. Salmi Wati et al. (2025) corroborate this through PAI ecopedagogy, where supplementary activities like gardening foster khalifah fil-ardh awareness, validating madrasah ELT's interdisciplinary approach for linguistic and ecological gains. Anshori and Pohl (2025) validate through SMAN case studies, showing triangulation via interviews/observations yields measurable ecological gains, addressing madrasah resource limits via community engagement. Similar studies by Azizah and Mahmud (2022) support that embedding Islamic moral values in ELT increases motivation and critical awareness. Moreover, interdisciplinary learning that integrates English, Islamic studies, and environmental science strengthens the holistic development of learners.

Despite the strong potential for integration, several challenges were also identified. Many teachers reported difficulties in translating abstract Islamic ecological values into measurable English learning outcomes due to the absence of clear curriculum-mapping tools. Salmi Wati et al. (2025) identify parallel PAI gaps in teacher training for fiqh al-biah integration, recommending modules that mirror solutions for madrasah ELT resource constraints and institutional workshops. Teacher preparedness remains another concern, as some educators lack adequate training in environmental education or integrated curriculum design, making it difficult to implement Eco-Islamic themes effectively. Additionally, resource limitations hinder

implementation, with many schools relying on generic English textbooks that fail to reflect Islamic ecological perspectives. Nevertheless, the study found positive signs of institutional support, including teacher workshops, curriculum review committees, and partnerships with environmental organizations, which help improve alignment and overall curriculum coherence.

These findings reinforce that aligning madrasah and national curricula toward Eco-Islamic English Education promotes a balanced educational paradigm that nurtures linguistic competence, ecological awareness, and spiritual integrity. Such alignment reflects Indonesia's broader vision of creating an education system that is both value-oriented and globally relevant. Rather than viewing curriculum alignment as standardization, this study suggests that alignment should operate as a meaningful dialogue between faith, knowledge, and sustainability, allowing both curricula to complement each other through shared competencies and contextualized pedagogical practices.

Furthermore, the integration of Quranic environmental principles into English language instruction marks a shift from traditional ELT toward a transformative learning model. In this model, English becomes not only a medium of communication but also a tool for expressing Islamic ecological values and engaging with global environmental concerns. This approach bridges global knowledge with local Islamic perspectives and enriches the moral purpose of language learning. Ultimately, Eco-Islamic English Education can serve as a sustainable curriculum model for faith-based institutions, ensuring that education contributes to both human and environmental well-being.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that aligning Islamic institutional school (madrasah) curricula with Indonesia's national curriculum to promote Eco-Islamic English Education provides a transformative pathway for educational reform. The integration demonstrates that value-based education grounded in Islamic teachings can coexist harmoniously with competency-based national standards. By embedding Islamic ecological ethics into English language learning,

madrasahs can unify linguistic competence, ecological literacy, and spiritual integrity. This alignment not only reinforces character development but also fosters global citizenship, encouraging students to view environmental care as both a civic responsibility and an act of worship (*ibadah*). Moreover, the incorporation of faith-based values into English instruction empowers students to articulate Islamic environmental ethics in global contexts, making language learning a medium for advocacy, reflection, and responsible action.

In essence, curriculum alignment between madrasah and national frameworks is not merely a technical adjustment but a philosophical synthesis—a meeting point between divine guidance and modern educational needs. The interdisciplinary nature of Eco-Islamic English Education strengthens the linkage between English, Islamic studies, and environmental science, creating a holistic learning environment that responds to global challenges while preserving local religious values. This study recommends continued collaboration among policymakers, educators, and religious institutions to refine this integrated approach. Such sustained efforts will ensure that future generations of learners embody the values of faith, knowledge, and ecological stewardship (*khalifah fil-ardh*), aligning with the Qur’anic vision of human responsibility toward nature (Q.S. Al-A’raf [7]:56; Q.S. Ar-Rum [30]:41).

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