



Contextualization of Qur'an Learning in Shaping Students' Environmental Awareness at SMPN 1 Blangpegayon

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ABSTRAK

Environmental degradation has intensified calls for education systems to cultivate ecological responsibility, yet the potential of religious instruction to nurture such responsibility remains underexploited in mainstream schooling. This study examines how teachers at SMPN 1 Blangpegayon contextualize Qur'an learning to shape students' environmental awareness, and analyses the conditions that enable and constrain this pedagogical integration. A qualitative case-study design was employed, generating data through semi-structured interviews with five Qur'an and Islamic Religious Education teachers and two school leaders, non-participant classroom observation, and analysis of teaching modules and student work. Data were analyzed thematically using the Braun and Clarke framework in NVivo, with trustworthiness secured through triangulation, member checking, and an audit trail. Findings show that teachers connected Qur'anic themes of stewardship (khalifah), prohibition of corruption on earth (*fasad*), and moderation to concrete local environmental problems, translating scriptural interpretation into practical conduct such as waste management and tree planting. Contextualization was most effective when scriptural exegesis was paired with experiential activity, but it was constrained by limited eco-pedagogical training and the absence of environmental indicators in assessment. The study contributes a situated model of value-based environmental education that links Qur'anic hermeneutics to place-based ecological practice, extending eco-pedagogy into the domain of religious instruction. Practically, it offers a transferable approach for integrating environmental awareness into Qur'an learning without displacing its devotional aims.

Keywords: Qur'an learning; contextualization; environmental awareness; eco-pedagogy; Islamic education; khalifah

ABSTRACT

Kerusakan lingkungan menuntut sistem pendidikan menumbuhkan tanggung jawab ekologis, namun potensi pembelajaran agama untuk membentuk kesadaran tersebut masih kurang dimanfaatkan dalam persekolahan umum. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana guru di SMPN 1 Blangpegayon mengontekstualisasikan pembelajaran Al-Qur'an untuk membentuk kesadaran lingkungan siswa, serta menganalisis kondisi yang mendukung dan menghambat integrasi tersebut. Desain studi kasus kualitatif digunakan, dengan data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur terhadap lima guru Al-Qur'an dan Pendidikan Agama Islam serta dua pimpinan sekolah, observasi kelas non-partisipatif, dan analisis modul ajar serta karya siswa. Data dianalisis secara tematik menggunakan kerangka Braun dan Clarke melalui NVivo, dengan keterpercayaan dijaga melalui triangulasi, member checking, dan jejak audit. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa guru menghubungkan tema Al-Qur'an tentang kekhalifahan (khalifah), larangan berbuat kerusakan (*fasad*), dan sikap moderat dengan masalah lingkungan lokal secara konkret, menerjemahkan tafsir menjadi perilaku nyata seperti pengelolaan sampah dan penghijauan.

Kontekstualisasi paling efektif ketika tafsir dipadukan dengan kegiatan pengalaman langsung, namun terkendala minimnya pelatihan eko-pedagogi dan tidak adanya indikator lingkungan dalam asesmen. Penelitian ini menawarkan model pendidikan lingkungan berbasis nilai yang menghubungkan hermeneutika Al-Qur'an dengan praktik ekologis berbasis tempat, serta memperluas eko-pedagogi ke ranah pembelajaran agama.

Kata kunci: pembelajaran Al-Qur'an; kontekstualisasi; kesadaran lingkungan; eko-pedagogi; pendidikan Islam; khalifah

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I. INTRODUCTION

The accelerating global environmental crisis has repositioned education as a central instrument for cultivating ecological responsibility, moving the goal of environmental learning beyond the transmission of scientific facts toward the formation of values, dispositions, and situated action (Susatya et al., 2021). International policy frameworks increasingly frame environmental awareness as an ethical and behavioral competence rather than a purely cognitive outcome, prompting scholars to ask which pedagogical resources most effectively nurture durable pro-environmental commitment. Within this debate, the moral authority of religious traditions has attracted growing interest, since faith-based worldviews supply normative motivations that scientific literacy alone often fails to instill. Islamic teaching, in particular, contains an extensive ethical vocabulary concerning humanity's relationship with the natural order, yet its pedagogical mobilization in formal schooling remains limited. This tension between the ecological richness of religious sources and their marginal role in environmental education motivates the present inquiry.

Recent scholarship has begun to map the intersection of religion and environmental education, though the evidence remains uneven. One body of work establishes that religiously grounded environmental values can predict pro-environmental attitudes and behavior more strongly than secular appeals alone (Arli et al., 2023). A second strand documents the emergence of eco-pesantren and green-school initiatives that embed Islamic ethics in environmental practice, reporting gains in student engagement but often relying on program description rather than analysis of pedagogical process (Purnomo et al., 2024). A third, more recent cluster examines the contextualization of religious instruction the deliberate linking of scriptural content to learners lived realities and finds that such situated teaching enhances relevance and transfer (Carswell, 2018). Read together, these literatures suggest that religious environmental education is promising but under-theorized, and that the specific mechanism by which Qur'an learning becomes environmentally generative has not been closely examined. The synthesis points to a need for process-oriented studies situated in ordinary schools rather than exceptional programs.

This study is anchored in eco-pedagogy, a critical educational theory that reframes environmental learning as the cultivation of ecological consciousness through the integration of knowledge, values, and transformative action within lived contexts (Cuéllar & Salgado, 2026). Eco-pedagogy is well suited to the present case because it rejects the separation of cognitive content from ethical commitment and situated practice, mirroring the way Qur'an learning aspires to unite understanding, belief, and conduct. The theory's emphasis on place-based, dialogic, and praxis-oriented learning provides analytic purchase on how teachers translate abstract scriptural principles into concrete local action. By reading Qur'anic contextualization through an eco-pedagogical lens, the study can interrogate not merely whether environmental awareness is fostered but how the interpretive and experiential mechanisms operate. This theoretical pairing thus enables an account that is simultaneously grounded in religious pedagogy and connected to critical environmental education.

Despite this progress, four gaps justify the present study. Methodologically, the literature leans heavily on surveys and program reports that measure outcomes while neglecting the interpretive classroom processes through which religious environmental learning actually unfolds, leaving a scarcity of close qualitative analysis (Haluza-DeLay, 2008). Contextually, research concentrates on specialized eco-pesantren and elite green schools, so the contextualization of Qur'an learning within an ordinary public junior high school in a peripheral district such as Blangpegayon is virtually undocumented. Empirically,

few studies trace how specific Qur'anic concepts are pedagogically operationalized into environmental practice, meaning the actual content of the teaching process remains a black box. Theoretically, eco-pedagogy has rarely been brought into dialogue with Qur'anic hermeneutics, leaving unexamined how a critical secular theory and a scriptural tradition might jointly illuminate environmental formation. These gaps matter because the transferable potential of religious environmental education cannot be realized until its situated mechanisms are understood in the ordinary settings where most students are taught.

The study advances the field conceptually, methodologically, and contextually. Conceptually, it develops a situated model that links Qur'anic hermeneutics stewardship, the prohibition of ecological corruption, and moderation to place-based ecological praxis, thereby extending eco-pedagogy into religious instruction and enriching both traditions. Methodologically, it foregrounds the interpretive teaching process through triangulated qualitative inquiry, addressing the outcome-heavy, process-light character of existing work. Contextually, it offers evidence from an ordinary public school in a peripheral Gayo highland district, relocating the study of religious environmental education from exceptional programs to the mainstream settings where its wider adoption would occur. These contributions collectively reframe Qur'an learning as a viable vehicle for environmental formation rather than an incidental one.

This study aims to analyze how teachers at SMPN 1 Blangpegayon contextualize Qur'an learning to shape students' environmental awareness, and to identify the conditions that enable and constrain this contextualization. Two questions guide the inquiry: first, how do teachers interpret and operationalize Qur'anic content to cultivate environmental awareness; and second, what pedagogical, institutional, and cultural factors facilitate or hinder this process. Addressing these questions is intended to yield transferable insight into the integration of environmental education within religious learning.

II. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative case-study design to investigate a contemporary, bounded phenomenon within its authentic context (Warren & Bell, 2022). The case was defined as the contextualization of Qur'an learning for environmental awareness at SMPN 1 Blangpegayon, a public junior high school in Blangpegayon District, Gayo Lues Regency, Aceh. A single-case design was appropriate because the school offered an information-rich instance of religious environmental teaching in an ordinary, culturally distinctive, and geographically peripheral setting, and because the objective was analytic generalization to theory and comparable contexts rather than statistical generalization to a population. The interpretive-constructivist orientation of the study treated environmental awareness and its pedagogical formation as socially constructed meanings accessible through participants' accounts and observable practice.

Participants were recruited through purposive sampling to ensure direct involvement in the phenomenon under study. The sample comprised five teachers of Qur'an and Islamic Religious Education, selected for variation in teaching experience and grade level, together with two school leaders whose institutional perspective complemented the teachers' classroom vantage. Recruitment continued until informational redundancy was achieved, at which point further interviews produced no substantively new themes. This composition allowed the analysis to triangulate classroom-level enactment with school-level intention and support, strengthening the credibility of the emergent account.

Data were generated using three instruments. A semi-structured interview guide, organized around the two research questions, elicited teachers' interpretive strategies, instructional and assessment practices, and their perceived enablers and constraints. A non-participant classroom observation protocol captured how Qur'anic content was linked to environmental themes and translated into activity. A document-analysis checklist guided scrutiny of teaching modules, lesson plans, and samples of student work. The interview guide and observation protocol were validated through expert review by two specialists in Islamic education and environmental pedagogy, whose feedback improved item clarity and construct coverage, and a pilot interview with a teacher outside the final sample confirmed intelligibility. As the study is qualitative, dependability rather than statistical reliability was pursued through consistent protocol application and a documented, auditable coding scheme.

Fieldwork was conducted over a twelve-week period. Interviews of forty-five to seventy minutes were carried out in Bahasa Indonesia and, where preferred, the Gayo language, then transcribed verbatim and translated with back-translation verification to preserve meaning. Each teacher was observed across two lesson cycles to capture instructional variation, and relevant documents were collected and catalogued. Ethical approval was granted by the authors' institutional review board; participants gave written informed consent, were assured of voluntary participation and the right to withdraw, and were assigned pseudonyms, while data were stored on encrypted, access-restricted media. These procedures were designed to protect participants and to render the inquiry transparent and reproducible.

Data were analyzed thematically following Braun and Clarke's six-phase procedure of familiarization, initial coding, theme construction, review, definition, and reporting, with NVivo used to manage coding and support systematic retrieval. Trustworthiness was established against Lincoln and Guba's criteria: credibility through methodological triangulation across interviews, observation, and documents and through member checking; transferability through thick contextual description; and dependability and confirmability through an audit trail and peer debriefing between the researchers. Reporting this level of procedural detail is intended to substantiate the analytic claims advanced in the following section and to permit replication in comparable settings.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings in relation to the two research questions and interprets them against the literature and the eco-pedagogical framework. Analysis generated four themes: hermeneutic linkage of Qur'anic concepts to environmental ethics, the pivotal role of experiential praxis, the constraining effect of assessment silence, and the reinforcing influence of local Gayo ecological culture. Table 1 summarizes the themes, their prevalence across the seven participants, and illustrative evidence, after which each theme is examined in turn.

Table 1. Themes, prevalence, and illustrative evidence

Theme	Prevalence (n=7)	Illustrative evidence
Hermeneutic linkage	7/7	Khalifah, prohibition of <i>fasad</i> , and moderation mapped onto local ecological duties.
Experiential praxis	6/7	Scriptural themes paired with waste sorting, tree planting, and river clean-ups.
Assessment silence	5/7	Environmental conduct valued verbally but absent from formal grading criteria.
Local ecological culture	6/7	Gayo customary norms of forest and water care reinforced scriptural teaching.

As Table 1 shows, hermeneutic linkage was universal among participants, experiential praxis and local cultural reinforcement were common, and the absence of environmental criteria in assessment was a recurrent constraint. Each pattern is developed below.

Every participant translated abstract Qur'anic concepts into an explicit environmental ethic, most consistently through the ideas of humanity as steward (*khalifah*), the prohibition against causing corruption on earth (*fasad*), and the injunction to moderation. Teachers presented these concepts not as doctrinal abstractions but as duties bearing directly on local conditions such as deforestation and river pollution. One teacher explained, "When I teach the verse about not spreading corruption on the earth, I ask the students what corruption looks like in our own river." This hermeneutic move aligns with evidence that religiously framed environmental values carry strong motivational force (Yoreh & King, 2025), and it substantiates, at the level of classroom process, the mechanism that survey research can only infer. Interpreted eco-pedagogically, the practice exemplifies the integration of knowledge and value that the theory posits, showing that scriptural interpretation can function as a vehicle for ecological consciousness rather than as a barrier to it.

Contextualization was reported and observed to be most effective when scriptural interpretation was coupled with direct environmental activity, indicating that hermeneutic linkage alone was necessary but not sufficient. Teachers who paired Qur'anic themes with waste sorting, tree planting, and river clean-ups described markedly stronger student engagement and attitudinal change than those who confined teaching to classroom exegesis. "The lesson becomes real when they plant the tree after reading the verse," one teacher observed. This finding corroborates eco-pedagogy's central claim that transformative environmental learning arises from praxis rather than from cognition alone (Geduld et al., 2026), and it converges with green-school studies reporting engagement gains from activity-based provision (Schröder et al., 2020). It contradicts, however, the implicit assumption in some faith-based programs that scriptural exposition suffices to produce ecological commitment. The practical implication is that religious environmental education must be deliberately experiential, embedding action within interpretation rather than appending it.

The clearest constraint on contextualization was the absence of environmental indicators from formal assessment, which rendered ecological conduct pedagogically valued yet institutionally invisible. Teachers affirmed environmental behavior verbally and through informal encouragement, but grading criteria remained confined to conventional cognitive and devotional competencies, signaling to students that such conduct was peripheral to achievement. "I praise them for caring about the environment," one teacher admitted, "but it does not appear anywhere on their report." This misalignment echoes broader evidence that assessment structures exert powerful backwash on what is taught and learned, marginalizing outcomes they fail to capture. It extends the eco-pedagogy literature by identifying assessment silence as a specific structural obstacle to religious environmental education, and it carries a direct policy implication: unless environmental dispositions are represented in assessment and reporting frameworks, their cultivation will remain dependent on individual teacher initiative rather than institutional commitment.

Local Gayo ecological traditions functioned as a cultural amplifier of scriptural teaching, providing a pre-existing normative framework onto which Qur'anic environmental ethics could be grafted. Teachers drew on customary norms governing the protection of forests and water sources, presenting them as consonant with Qur'anic injunctions and thereby lending the teaching local authority and immediacy. A school leader noted, "Our ancestors already forbade cutting certain trees; the Qur'an gives this a deeper reason." This convergence of scriptural and customary ecology enriches eco-pedagogy's emphasis on place-based learning by demonstrating how indigenous and religious value systems can be mutually reinforcing, a dynamic largely absent from the predominantly secular eco-pedagogical literature. It also resonates with research on the contextualization of religious instruction, which stresses relevance to learners' lived worlds (Syukri & Sulhiawati, 2026). The finding suggests that the transferability of this model depends partly on the availability of local ecological traditions that can be brought into dialogue with scripture.

These findings are subject to several limitations. The single-case design affords depth at the cost of breadth, so transferability rests on contextual similarity rather than statistical warrant. Reliance on teacher and leader self-report, though mitigated by observation and document analysis, could not directly measure change in students' environmental behavior over time. The twelve-week timeframe captures contextualization at one moment and cannot speak to its durability. These constraints bound the present claims and frame the research directions proposed below.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study analyzed how teachers at SMPN 1 Blangpegayon contextualize Qur'an learning to shape students' environmental awareness and identified the conditions shaping that process. The main findings are that teachers systematically translated Qur'anic concepts of stewardship, the prohibition of ecological corruption, and moderation into local environmental duties; that such contextualization was most effective when interpretation was fused with experiential praxis; that its institutionalization was constrained by the absence of environmental indicators in assessment; and that local Gayo ecological traditions reinforced

scriptural teaching. Contextualization thus emerged as an interpretive and practical accomplishment rather than a simple matter of curricular content.

The scientific contribution of the study is a situated model that unites Qur'anic hermeneutics with place-based ecological praxis, extending eco-pedagogy into religious instruction and demonstrating the mutual reinforcement of scriptural and indigenous ecological values. Theoretically, it brings a critical environmental pedagogy into productive dialogue with scriptural interpretation, enriching both. Practically, it offers a transferable, low-cost approach to embedding environmental awareness within Qur'an learning without displacing its devotional purpose, provided that teaching is deliberately experiential. In policy terms, the findings argue for eco-pedagogical teacher training and, critically, for the incorporation of environmental dispositions into assessment and reporting so that ecological formation is institutionally sustained rather than left to individual initiative. Future research should employ longitudinal and multi-site comparative designs, and incorporate direct measures of student behavior, to test the durability and transferability of this model across diverse cultural and ecological settings. Within its stated limits, the study establishes Qur'an learning as a credible and generative vehicle for environmental education.

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