Education, Ecology, and Islamic Ethics: An Attempt to Find a Paradigm

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the search for a new paradigm of character education for environmental care (CEEC) and offers the concept of CEEC based on Islamic ethical values. This research uses a qualitative approach that is descriptive-explorative. The environmental damage that has occurred a lot does not only require repair and recovery, but also efforts to prevent environmental damage. CEEC is the main key in the effort to prevent environmental damage. CEEC based on Islamic ethical values, such as qanā'ah (contentment), Ihsān (kindness), ri'āyah (care), and masūliyyah (responsibility). Qanā'ah is believed to be able to overcome the tendency of greed and consumerism, both of which are recognized as the cause of environmental damage. Ihsān means kindness, fosters a gentle attitude and prudence in acting on the environment. Ri'āyah will encourage measures to protect and care for the environment. Masūliyyah will increase awareness of duties and obligations to preserve the environment.

1 INTRODUCTION

Humans cannot live without nature, and preserving the environment is an obligation to humanity. Today, there has been so much environmental degradation such as resource depletion, ecosystem and habitat destruction, and pollution (Johnson, et al., 1997), and also global warming through increasing the average air temperature of the earth's surface (Braasch, 2009), which has an effect on species loss, extreme weather, natural disasters, disease, hunger, and poverty (Donohoe, 2010).

Efforts to preserve the environment can be categorized into two approaches, preventive and curative. Preventive focuses on measures to control, prevent and reduce the possibility of environmental damage, such as seeking infrastructure and products that are environmentally friendly, using renewable energy, and education for sustainable development. Curative focuses on treating, reducing, restoring environmental damage, this is a remediation of environmental damage, such as planting trees for conservation, recycling waste, and converting polluted air into clean air. Prevention of environmental damage must be the main priority of the balance of recovery of environmental damage, as the saying "prevention is better than cure".

In this paper, we will discuss the character education based on eco-friendly islamic values, as an effort to build awareness, thought and attitude to preserve the environment for children. we think character education for environmental care (CEEC) is the beginning of all measures to prevent environmental damage. The questions "why character education?", "Why are Islamic ethical values?", and "what Islamic ethical values are discussed?" will discuss in the following pages.

The paper is organized as follows. In Section 2 we give an overview related work. In Section 3 we present our research method. In Section 4 we give an overview of the analytical framework, and in Section 5 we present the obtained results and discussion organized according to our research questions, and finally in Section 6 we conclude the paper with a brief summary and suggestion for further research.

2 RELATED WORK

There are several previous studies that are similar to this research, but have fundamental differences. First, research by Verdugo, Fonem, and Valdez (2015), which has discussed the link existing between sustainable behavior (SB) and the character strengths (CS), and confirmed empirically the idea that SB consists of actions of CS. The findings that the CS

factor is strongly related to SB (Verdugo, 2015). Second, Ha-Brookshire, et al. (2017), Second, Brookshire, et al. (2017), who has studied the need for moral development education of current and future professionals, and their implications to help build sustainable companies (Ha-Brookshire, et al., 2017).

3 METHODOLOGY

This research method uses a qualitative approach that is descriptive-explorative. Using dexcriptive-exploratory, I aim to present a new paradigm of character education for environmental care (CEEC). Data related to the themes are explored creatively and classified to form the concept of CEEC.

4 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Character education has become a hot topic, and with the approaches advocated by different academics, educators, politicians, and policymakers are as plentiful and diverse as they are controversial (Bohlin, 2005).

In general, character education is the teaching of core values. Character education for environmental care (CEC) is a term loosely used to describe the teaching of core values towards children, the core values based on eco-friendly Islamic values, such as *qanā'ah* (contentment), *Ihsān* (kindness), *ri'āyah* (care), and *masūliyyah* (responsibility).

The aim of the CEEC is to help children become responsible, caring and contributing citizens to environmental sustainability.

5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1 The Importance of Character Education for Sustainability

Environmental damage is increasing and natural disasters occur everywhere. As creatures that live on earth, who need and utilize natural resources, it is proper for humans to be responsible for preserving nature, making prevention and repairing environmental damage, and passing on a good environment to the next generation.

Advances in science and technology which was originally aimed at the welfare of humans, but in reality, both become tools to exploit nature, damage the environment. This begins with a wrong

perspective on science and technology, which is ignores good and bad moral judgments on the development of knowledge and technology as well as the impact of both on the environment (Keraf, 2002). The effects of technology on the environment are extrapolated to the future inevitably lead to resource depletion and environmental pollution, therefore, the environmental movement considers technology as the main source of environmental damage (Foray and Grobler, 1996). Although there has been a change in perspective on modern technology, eco-friendly technology, which is expected to affect sustainability, but it is expensive. There is more efficient effort to preserve the environment, namely through education.

The education is the key to any sustainable development program. One of the goals of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is to build an environmentally friendly society. ESD empowers people to change the way they think and work towards a sustainable future (UNESCO, 2015). According to Shohel and Howes, education for sustainable development (ESD) is basically about the relationship between human consciousness as a whole in nature and its supporting social systems and the health of the planet we live in now and future (Shohel and Howes, 2011). Education that is relevant to shaping thoughts and behavior is character education. A character is a group of relatively stable traits connected with practical choice and action, such as courage, moderation, and justice (Nussbaum, 2001). According to Lickona, good character consists of knowing, desiring and doing the good. The role of educational institution helps children understand core values, adopt, commit, and act with them in their daily lives (Lickona, 1993). Character is not formed automatically, but are developed through teaching, example, and practice (Arthur, 2014). Ryan and Bohlin define character education as developing virtues and dispositions that lead students to become responsible and mature (Ryan and Bohlin, 1999).

UNESCO explains the relationship of values education and sustainable:

> "…education constitutes the central pillar of strategies to promote such values. Alongside positive spiritual motivations, education is our best chance of promoting and rooting the values and behaviours which sustainable development implies" (UNESCO, 2015).

Teaching environmental in building character has two goals, increasing environmental awareness to prevent destructive behavior of the environment, and developing an understanding that environmental preservation will lead to a comfortable life, which in turn improves the quality of life of the community

(Panea and Rina Patriana, 2016). According to Swan and Stapp, awareness of the environment is an important aspect of environmental management because awareness of the environment is a form of one's concern for environmental quality (Swan and Stapp 1974).

Creating awareness of the environment and taking a role in protecting the environment basically helps children to have good moral values (Setyowati, 2013). Building character to care for the environment through educational activities is one of the strategies that must be conducted by schools to teach environmental education to children (Fua1, et al., 2018).

Education is an important aspect that has a central role in shaping the character of children. Seeing how severe environmental damage has occurred, which is caused by humans. Human understanding that considers nature and the environment is an object that must be exploited to the maximum extent possible, assisted by technology and capitalist economic ideology, environmental damage becomes out of control. Therefore, it's time for humans to start caring about the environment, protect and caring for it. Understanding the children that humans cannot live without nature and environment, humans depend on nature, the nature sustainability is human sustainability.

5.2 Environment and Islamic Ethics

The most strong motivation for moral behavior is religion (Bertens, 2007). Ethics can be considered as the basic pillar for a healthy society, the society which is devoid of ethical values would always be having problems. Therefore, all scholars agreed on the importance of ethics in every individual and society, and considered ethics as the foundation of every society. According to them, the first step in promoting an ideal human society is to advocate morality (Rahim, 2013). And according to Bourdeau, environmental ethics is that part of applied ethics which examines the moral basis of out responsibility toward the environment (Bourdeau, 2004).

Religious values and ethical beliefs shape behavior towards others, including our relationship with all beings such as plants and animals (Dwivedi, 2004). Environmental ethics based on religious ethics are far more effective to urge humans to preserve the environment than environmental ethics that are not based on non-religious ethics. Even environmental ethics presented by secularists, ultimately have a religious basis (Nasr, 2013), and using the religious dimension to promote sustainability (Johnston, 2014). Also capitalist ethics,

in fact, is recognized as being unable to provide solutions to environmental protection problems (Sen, 2001).

Islam as a religion that carries universal moral values commands people to do justice and goodness on earth, not only to fellow humans, but also to other living beings. Allah said, "Allah commands justice, the doing of good..." (an-Nahl, 16: 90) and "And do good as Allah has done good to you…" (al-Qasas, 28: 77). According to Ibn Kathīr, this is an order to do good to all of God's creatures (Kaṯīr, 1999). From an Islamic perspective, human action is ethically right when humans do their action according to God's command. Acting towards nature based on divine commands is a clear case in Islam where humans are commanded to respect the environment (Sarvestani and Shahvali, 2008).

There are two main sources of Islamic ethics, Quran and sunnah. The Qur'an, as a set of beliefs and directives for actions, is a major source of Islamic ethics. And the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, ascribed to the last messenger of God which characterizes his ethical practice (Ebrahimi and Yusoff, 2017). Both of which are called scriptural morality (Fakhry, 1991).

Muhammad prayed for rain when he was reminded that water was short, the trees suffering from drought, and animals dying. He begged for God's mercy to fall upon his creatures (Deen, 2004). Prophet's best friend, Abū Bakr, respects the environment, which he ordered the army not to harm animals, destroy crops or cut down trees (Khalid, 2003).

Nature as natural resources, have been created by Allah the Almighty with purpose principally to provide sustenance to man's life on earth, furthermore as a testing-ground for man's morality in executing his trusteeship role (Sarkawi, Abdullah and Dali, 2016). According to al-Jayyousi, sustainability represents an ideal entry into philosophy and ethics. Hence, the contextualisation of Islamic principles in education for sustainable development is of special significance to evolve local solutions inspired from culture (al-Jayyousi, 2016).

5.3 Eco-Friendly Islamic Values

Islam emphasizes the importance of good character, the Prophet said; "I have only been sent to perfect good moral character," (al-Baihaqī, 1925).

In the context of environmental conservation, the eco-friendly values offered by Islam in building character to children and suitable for sustainable development are *qanā'ah*, *ihsān*, *ri'āyah*, and *masūliyyah*.

5.3.1 *Qanā'ah*

Qanā'ah means contentment and resignation (Hughes and Hughes, 2001). Ibn Miskawaih defines *qanā'ah* as being contented with the small and reasonable amount of food and clothing (Ansari, 1964). Imam Qusyairi mentioned, *qanā'ah* is satisfied with what they have and leave greed for what they don't have (al-Qushayrī, 1989). *Qanā'ah* is a feeling of being sufficient and satisfied with the gift given by Allah, the *qanā'ah* value is simplicity in living life.

The opposite of *qanā'ah* is *ḥirṣ* "greed". According to Fromm, greed is a bottomless pit that makes the person in an endless effort to satisfy needs without ever achieving satisfaction (Fromm, 1939). Fulfillment of greed is also a major cause of suffering throughout the world (D'Souza, 2015). Mahatma Gandhi said that nature is enough to meet everyone's needs, but not for anyone's greed. The current crisis of environmental degradation is the result of human greed (Bhatt, 2010). According to Cafaro, greed causes environmental damage in three ways. First, when profits are placed above all other goals, greed causes businesses to violate environmental laws. Second, greed undermines the democratic political process, such as collusion between businessman and government. Third, greed encourages consumerism in the society (Cafaro, 2005).

Overcoming the greedy attitude is by character education, through understanding and training the *qanā'ah* value to children. Yaacob et al. included *qanā'ah* as one of the environmentally ethical behaviors (Yaacob, et. al., 2017). *Qanā'ah* is an important ethical value for the human character, in the context of our attitude towards natural resources. Through *qanā'ah*, the community can control the nature of dependence on the material world (Ali, 2014). They only take natural resources to meet the needs of life, not for the fulfillment of pleasure and greed, they put forward the fulfillment of needs rather than fulfillment of desires, they live a life of simplicity. According to Etzioni, living simply can reduce consumerism, away from a stress disorder, sources of satisfaction, and becoming more environmentally conscious (Etzioni, 2004). The practice of *qanā'ah*, Ibn Qudāmah suggested controlling habits, limiting desires, staying away from pleasure in luxury, and preparing yourself mentally (al-Qudāmah, 2005).

The way to understand the importance of *qanā'ah* for environmental sustainability to children is to explain the environmental damage that has been caused by humans due to their greediness, and natural disasters caused by excessive exploitation of nature, pollution of the environment by waste resulting from high levels of consumption of society.

5.3.2 *Ihsān*

Ihsān means to confer favours, or to perform an action in a perfect manner (Hughes and Hughes, 2001). Ihsān in Sufism refers to doing what is beautiful – spontaneous virtue and spiritual perfection (Chittick, 2008). According to al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī, *ihsān* is more than 'adl, because 'adl means giving what is obligatory and only taking what is right, while *ihsān* means giving more than one is obliged to, and taking less than one deserves (Moghul, 2017).

One of the eco-friendly Islamic values is *ihsān* to all the elements of the environment including humans, animal, vegetation, water and air (al-Qaraḍāwī, 2001). *Ihsān* is one of the three pillars of Islam, Ihsān is the highest moral character, and perfects Islam and faith. *Ihsān* towards the environment is being careful and perfection, not carelessness, neglect and waste. *Ihsān* towards the environment can be done by caring for, respecting, and gentleness (al-Qaraḍāwī, 2001).

Aburounia and Sexton mention that Ihsan is one of key Islamic terms related or indicator of sustainable development agenda (Aburounia and Sexton, 2006; Mansor, et al., 2013). As khalifah Allah on earth, humans must do good, preserve the environment, and pass on a good environment to the next generation. Allah said, "And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters". Rasulullah said, "Allah has decreed proficiency (*ihsān*) in all things, so when you kill, kill well, and when you slaughter (animal), slaughter well...," (Sunan al-Nasā'ī: 4417) (al-Nasā'ī, 2007).

Iḥsān as value for social capital, through its benevolent society would bring the well-being (*maqāsid al-sharī'ah*) of the community through its inclusive way. In the same manner, at the macro level, it will lead to the maximization of the economic well-being of individuals along with the promotion of social wellbeing and human life without neglecting the promotion of environmental sustainability (Malik, 2014).

The deeper feeling and embodiment of the sense of beauty and excellence (*ihsān*) is likely to transcend national boundaries and will have a universal meaning to deal with the global aesthetic degradation as manifested in physical pollution, human alienation, injustice, species extinction, deforestation, consumerism and unjustified wars for economic gains

to control energy and material resources (al-Jayyousi, 2016).

Every good will return to the person who does it, even doing good to animals and plants. There is a principle of causality in every human act, as the quote says: "you reap what you sow".

5.3.3 Ri'āyah

Ri'āyah means "care" for the environment, which according to al-Qaraḍāwī, has an understanding as an effort to preserve the environment and protect it from damage (al-Qaraḍāwī, 2001). The care for the environment must be encouraged, because of the nature of dependence between animals and plants, it requires the protection of their existence. If an animal or plant species becomes extinct, it will have an impact on the extinction of other species (Hobson, 1998). Islam encourages people to care for all environmental components without exception, so that there is a balance of the cosmos between humans, animals, plants, and other natural resources.

The importance of the environment and the earth for humankind, raises a caring attitude to care for, and spread virtue and benevolence on the earth. It is the duty of a Muslim to care for the environment. Sharia law explicitly extends human obligations to the environment. Muslims are not only encouraged to feed the poor, but also plant trees, treat animals well, and avoid contaminating running water (Nasr, 1990). There is a reward for those who care for the environment, and sin for those who do damage on earth. Because caring for the environment is a religious obligation.

A story is told of 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb saw that an old man, Khuzaymah ibn Thābit, had neglected his land. 'Umar asked what was preventing him from cultivating it. Khuzaymah explained that he was old and could be expected to die soon. Nevertheless, Umar insisted that he should plant it. Eventually, Khuzaymah and 'Umar planted the uncultivated land together (Deen, 2004). Sustained care of all aspects of the environment fits into Islam's concept of charity, for charity is not only for the present generation but also for those in the future (Deen, 2004).

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:
> "There is none amongst the Muslims who plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it, but is regarded as a charitable gift for him," (Bukhari, 1992).

Therefore, there must be an effort to foster environmental care from an early age, through character education. The aim is for children to have attitudes and actions that always strive to preserve the environment, and they are able to develop efforts to repair the natural damage that has occurred.

The way is through various environmental activities that are carried out regularly and involve children. So that it forms a habit for them and eventually grows into a character caring for the environment. Such as maintaining, caring for, and protecting the environment from something that pollutes and destroys it.

5.3.4 Masūliyyah

Masūliyyah means responsibility. In "responsibility" there is a sense of "cause", therefore a person is responsible for something caused by him (Bertens, 2007). A person is responsible for his actions, because he has the power to act, know the values, and the freedom to choose. Human beings have been given enormous ability to do both good and evil; with ability comes responsibility. Nasr puts responsibility for nature in fourth place in the hierarchy of Muslim's responsibilities, after responsibility to Allah, himself, and society (Nasr, 2004).

Moving on from the role of humans on this earth as khalifah Allah, Islam has placed responsibility for humans on the natural environment (Mortada, 2003). As khilāfah, man carries very heavy responsibility to act with prudence because any violation of this trust itself would be unethical. This responsibility demands prudent management of earth's resources, care and concern for animals, and protection of the natural environment (Kamali, 2011).

Every human action must be in harmony with natural sustainability and preserve the environment. Nasr sees that the world reflects the higher reality of the transcendent God, it is a demand to protect the natural world (Hope and Young 1994).

In The Assisi Declarations on Nature, 1986, in Italy, Muslims declare that:
> "The central concept of Islam is Tawhid or the Unity of God. Allah is Unity; and His Unity is also reflected in the unity of mankind, and the unity of man and nature. His trustees are responsible for maintaining the unity of His creation, the integrity of the Earth, its flora and fauna, its wildlife and natural environment... (The Assisi Declarations, 1986)".

Muslims as "*ummah*", will form collective responsibility to care for the environment. For example, if throwing garbage in its place is a responsibility, then picking up garbage on the road and throwing it in the trash is a form of caring attitude towards the environment. Restoring a damaged environment is a collective responsibility for Muslims. Responsible and caring attitude toward the

environment similar to the concept of fard ain and fardhu kifayah.

Understanding the importance of being responsible for environmental sustainability for children can be done through introducing them to the nature around them; invited to pay attention to the surrounding nature; and explained that the environment in which living things are living is an important element in this life, it is our duty and obligation to preserve it.

6 CONCLUSIONS

This paper is intended to propose the concept of character education on environmental care (CEEC) based on Islamic values, which serves as an alternative to existing CEEC. Education must be prioritized in environmental conservation efforts and prevention of environmental damage, especially character education. Through exploration of the literature on Islamic studies and the environment, found four ethical values that eco-friendly, such as *qanā'ah*, *Ihsān*, *ri'āyah*, and *masūliyyah*. *Qanā'ah* is believed to be able to overcome greed and consumerism, both of which are sources of environmental damage. *Ihsān* is kindness to all living things, without exception, it forms soft attitude and respect for the environment. *Ri'āyah* will encourage measures to protect and care for the environment. *Masūliyyah* will increase awareness of obligations to preserve the environment. This research still needs further research that has research subjects, so there are empirical findings regarding this issue. If possible, there must be the development of certain hypotheses, as testers of the concept of CEEC.

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