

Research Article

## The Integration of Islamic Economic Education in Developing Strategies for Sustainable Green Economic Transformation

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**Abstract:** This study explores the integration of Islamic economic education with green economy principles, focusing on environmental stewardship and sustainability. Islamic education plays a pivotal role in fostering ecological awareness, integrating values such as *khalifah* (stewardship), *maslahah* (public welfare), and *adl* (justice), which align with green economic practices. The research investigates how these values are taught in Islamic educational settings, particularly in pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), and how they promote sustainable practices such as tree planting and livestock cultivation. The study highlights the role of Islamic financial mechanisms, such as zakat, waqf, and green financing, in supporting sustainable development and equitable resource distribution. It also examines how Islamic education instills eco-spiritual values and encourages sustainable behaviors among students. The findings suggest that Islamic universities emphasize ethical economic principles more than secular institutions, while secular institutions focus more on sustainability content. The study calls for a more integrated approach, where both ethical economic practices and sustainability principles are harmonized to equip students for leadership roles in a green economy. This integration is crucial for fostering responsible global citizens capable of addressing the intertwined challenges of economic growth and environmental preservation.

**Keywords:** Circular Economy; Environmental Stewardship; Green Economy; Green Finance; Islamic Economic Education.

### 1. Introduction

Islamic education plays a crucial role in fostering ecological awareness and promoting environmental management by integrating core Islamic values *khalifah* (stewardship/leadership of the environment), *maslahah* (public welfare), and *adl* (justice) into the principles of a green economy. The concept of *khalifah* emphasizes human responsibility as guardians of the Earth, realized through educational innovations in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), such as tree planting and livestock cultivation to cultivate students' environmental awareness (Maslani et al., 2023; Anshori & Pohl, 2022). These practices reflect an Islamic environmental ethic that stresses leadership, interconnectedness, and moderation (Setianingrum et al., 2024).

The principle of *maslahah* extends environmental responsibility to social welfare and sustainability. Islamic financial mechanisms, such as zakat, waqf, and green financing, based on *maqasid al-shari'ah*, support sustainable development and equitable resource distribution (Rosman & Marzuki, 2024; Abdullah & Haron, 2024). Consequently, economic activities not only enhance collective welfare but also preserve ecosystem sustainability.

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Islamic ethical values align with green economic principles, emphasizing rational, environmentally friendly, and equitable resource use. Research indicates that Sharia-based economic practices can enhance sustainable green development and address global challenges such as resource depletion and climate change (Mursid et al., 2024; Mirzal et al., 2024; Shovkhalov, 2024). Islamic green finance demonstrates the integration of Sharia principles with Sustainable and Responsible Investment (SRI). Instruments such as SRI sukuk support environmentally and socially responsible projects, strengthening financial integrity while promoting a low-carbon, inclusive economy (Abdullah & Haron, 2024).

Islamic education, particularly in pesantren, plays a significant role in instilling eco-spiritual values and environmental responsibility in young generations. Integrating environmental education into the curriculum shapes an ecological culture and pro-sustainability behaviors among students (Lutfauziah et al., 2024; Fua et al., 2018). Participatory learning methods and environmental cleanliness initiatives foster ecological awareness from an Islamic perspective.

Environmental degradation, including climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, and pollution, represents a serious global threat (Krosinsky & Cort, 2018). Industrialization, urbanization, and excessive consumption accelerate ecosystem damage and natural resource depletion (Kulkarni, 2024; Cordella & Sala, 2022; Vishnudas & Lekshmi, 2024). Addressing these challenges requires an economic paradigm shift and sustainability-oriented policies. Transitioning to a sustainable economic system aims to decouple economic growth from environmental harm. Strategies include resource efficiency, circularity, and international collaboration to ensure economic growth aligns with environmental preservation (Cordella & Sala, 2022; de Murieta & Galarraga, 2024; Krosinsky & Cort, 2018).

Another key strategy is the Green Energy Transition (GET), replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and hydropower. This reduces carbon emissions while fostering green technology innovation (Wang et al., 2024). Sustainable finance channels capital to environmentally friendly projects, including biodiversity conservation and low-carbon technologies (de Murieta & Galarraga, 2024; Wang et al., 2024). Although sustainability awareness is increasing, challenges such as political inertia and fragmented policy implementation remain (Kulkarni, 2024; Cordella & Sala, 2022). Successful global agendas require political will, long-term vision, and international cooperation, as reflected in the Paris Agreement.

Integrating Islamic economic education supports sustainable green economic transformation by instilling leadership values, ethical behavior, and social responsibility. Islamic financial principles, including sukuk, zakat, and waqf, combined with practical experiences such as eco-bazaars and community-based projects, form a holistic approach to sustainability (Alosaimi et al., 2024; Rahim et al., 2024; Mirzal et al., 2024; Muhamad et al., 2024; Muchlis et al., 2024; Rosman & Marzuki, 2024).

The Islamic economics curriculum also promotes green transformation through financial instruments and experiential learning methods. Sukuk, zakat, and waqf encourage ethical investment, social welfare, and environmental protection, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Rahim et al., 2024; Abdullah & Haron, 2024). Programs such as eco-bazaars, environmental awareness campaigns, and community projects allow students to apply Islamic ethical values in real contexts, fostering ecological and moral awareness more effectively than secular models (Mirzal et al., 2024; Muchlis et al., 2024).

## 2. Literature Review

### Islamic Economic Education

#### *Fundamental Concepts, Objectives, and Principles*

Islamic economic education emphasizes core principles that shape ethical economic behavior and social welfare. Justice is central to Islamic economics, focusing on the equitable distribution of wealth and resources while preventing exploitation of individuals or communities (Hemissi & Dia-Eddine, 2022; Shovkhalov, 2024). Balance is another

foundational concept, referring to the equilibrium between material and spiritual needs, ensuring economic growth aligns with societal well-being (Mohd et al., 2024). Social responsibility is integral, encouraging ethical practices such as zakat and responsible investments that benefit society as a whole (Hemissi & Dia-Eddine, 2022; Mohd Zain et al., 2024; Shovkhalov, 2024).

### ***Integration of Maqasid al-Shariah Principles within Economic Education***

Maqasid al-Shariah principles aim to safeguard religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth, providing ethical guidance to economic activities for societal well-being (Mohd Zain et al., 2024; Ismail et al., 2018). Islamic educational institutions, particularly pesantren, integrate these principles to harmonize contemporary economic practices with Islamic values, improving both educational outcomes and economic growth (Othman et al., 2017; Mohd Zain et al., 2024; Bashori et al., 2024). Frameworks such as the Tahfiz Empowerment Index (TEI) employ Maqasid al-Shariah to evaluate and enhance the quality of Islamic education, ensuring alignment with national educational objectives (Mohd Zain et al., 2024).

### **Green Economy and Sustainability**

#### ***Definition and Principles of the Green Economy***

The green economy is an economic model designed to improve societal welfare, mitigate environmental risks, and promote resource efficiency, integrating social, economic, and environmental sustainability (El-Haggag & Samaha, 2019; Pakina & Gorbanyov, 2019). Its principles include sustainability, pollution control, waste reduction, and adoption of environmentally beneficial technologies (El-Haggag & Samaha, 2019; Kolokolova et al., 2024).

#### ***The Role of Education in Supporting Sustainable Economic Transformation***

Education plays a transformative role in advancing sustainable development, fostering societal change and supporting the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Tikly, 2019; Krayneva et al., 2021). Higher education institutions are instrumental in promoting sustainability through innovative curricula that cultivate problem-solving skills, resilience, and ethical value creation, directly contributing to SDGs (Uddin & Khan, 2024; Erjavac, 2020; Wang & Zhu, 2024). Despite these efforts, challenges persist, including overconsumption and unequal resource distribution, necessitating the integration of sufficiency-based approaches into sustainability education to achieve broader societal impact (Tikly, 2019; Shovkhalov, 2024).

### **Islamic Perspective on Environmental Stewardship**

#### ***Qur'anic and Prophetic Teachings Regarding Human Responsibility Toward Nature***

Islamic teachings place a strong emphasis on environmental stewardship, rooted in both the Qur'an and Hadith. Humans are described as stewards (Khalifa) of the earth, entrusted with maintaining balance (mizan) and preventing corruption (fasad) (Muhammad et al., 2024; Fuseini & Lever, 2021; Kurbiyanto et al., 2024). This stewardship reflects the ethical dimension of faith, where individuals are expected to exercise gratitude (shakur) and avoid wastefulness (israf) (Muhammad et al., 2024; Baharuddin & Musa, 2017). Prophetic teachings reinforce these principles by advocating conservation, cleanliness, and compassion for all living beings (Fuseini & Lever, 2021; Baharuddin & Musa, 2017). The interconnectedness of all creation is a recurrent theme, highlighting that disruptions in nature have consequences for the entire ecosystem (Kurbiyanto et al., 2024).

#### ***Environmental Ethics from an Islamic Economic Viewpoint***

From an Islamic economic perspective, environmental ethics are embedded within the principles of Tawhid (oneness of God) and Ihsan (excellence in conduct), which guide Muslims toward responsible environmental behavior (Baharuddin & Musa, 2017). The Islamic economic system discourages exploitative practices and promotes sustainable consumption and resource management, ensuring that economic activities align with ecological preservation (Alnabulsi & Jreisat, 2024; Fuseini & Lever, 2021). Integrating ecological ethics with finance, for example, through green Islamic finance initiatives,

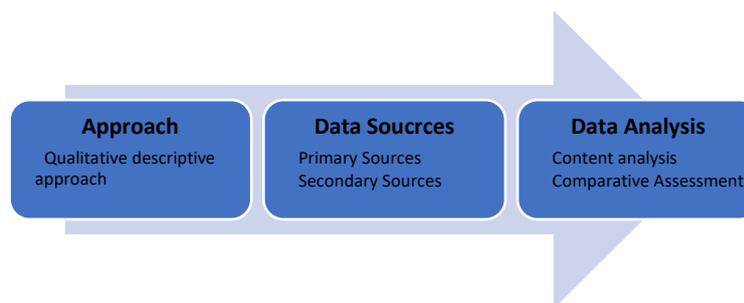
demonstrates the potential for Islamic economic principles to support sustainability while fostering economic growth (Alnabulsi & Jreisat, 2024).

### ***Integration of Environmental Health and Ethics in Islamic Education***

Islamic education also contributes to fostering environmental consciousness and sustainability. Practices in Islamic institutions emphasize the integration of environmental responsibility with health and well-being, highlighting that human health is interdependent with environmental stewardship (Mohidem & Hashim, 2023). Ethical principles derived from the Qur'an encourage moderation, responsible use of resources, and social responsibility, reinforcing the notion that humans have both rights and duties toward nature (Muhammad et al., 2024; Baharuddin & Musa, 2017). Such educational approaches cultivate awareness and ethical decision-making, preparing communities to implement sustainable practices in both everyday life and economic activities (Kurbianto et al., 2024).

### **3. Research and Method**

Before delving into the methodology, it is essential to understand the overarching framework guiding this research. This study aims to explore the integration of Islamic economic education with the principles of the green economy, focusing on both theoretical and practical aspects. By employing a qualitative descriptive research approach, the study seeks to offer a comprehensive analysis of how curricula, teaching methods, and educational objectives align with the values of ethics and sustainability. The research methodology is designed to provide detailed insights into the content and implementation of educational programs across both Islamic and secular institutions, allowing for a nuanced understanding of how sustainability principles are being incorporated into higher education. The following diagram outlines the key steps in the research methodology, showcasing the systematic approach taken to gather, analyze, and interpret the data.



**Figure 1.** Research Methodology Steps: Approach, Data Sources, and Data Analysis.

#### **Approach**

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research approach, focusing on understanding and interpreting the integration of Islamic economic education with green economy principles. By utilizing descriptive methods, the research seeks to provide an in-depth exploration of curricula content, teaching methods, and the alignment of educational objectives with ethical and sustainability goals. This approach allows for a comprehensive examination of both theoretical perspectives and practical implementations within educational programs.

#### **Data Sources**

Data sources for this research consist of both primary and secondary materials. Primary sources include curricula documents from Islamic universities and secular higher education institutions, which provide direct insights into how subjects related to Islamic economic values and sustainable practices are incorporated. Secondary sources consist of books, journal articles, and policy reports relevant to Islamic economic education and green economy concepts. These sources provide a broader understanding of theoretical frameworks, educational strategies, and policy contexts that guide curriculum development.

### Data Analysis

For data analysis, the study employs content analysis to examine the objectives, content, and teaching methods outlined within the curricula. This involves systematically categorizing and interpreting the information to identify themes and patterns related to ethical and environmental sustainability integration. Additionally, a comparative assessment is conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of integrating these principles across different institutions. The analysis emphasizes both the scope and depth of ethical and sustainability content, offering insights into best practices and potential gaps in curriculum implementation.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### Results

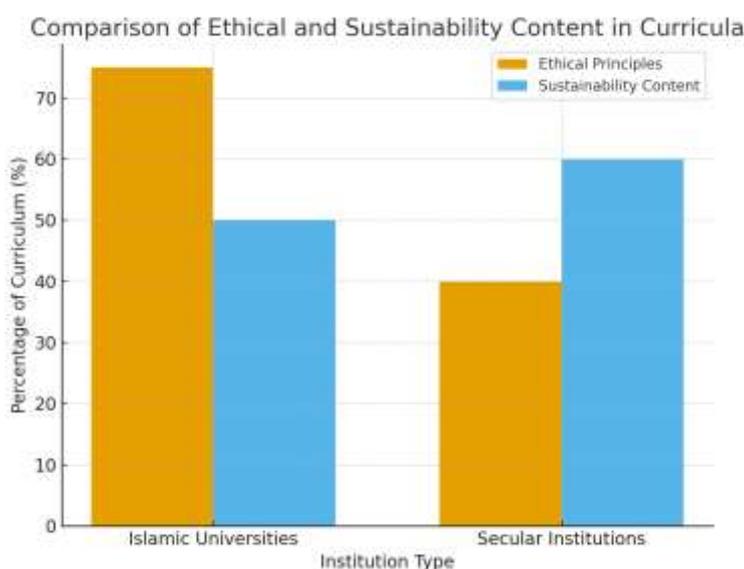
The data collected from both the Islamic universities and secular institutions reveal significant differences in the integration of sustainability principles within their curricula. Based on content analysis, two major themes emerged: the inclusion of ethical economic principles in Islamic economic education and the application of sustainability principles in green economy-related courses. This section summarizes these findings.

**Table 1.** Distribution of Ethical and Sustainability Content in Curricula.

Institution Type	Ethical Economic Principles (%)	Sustainability Content (%)
Islamic Universities	75	50
Secular Institutions	40	60
Comparative Difference	35	-10

Table 1 shows the percentage of curricula content related to ethical economic principles and sustainability across the institutions surveyed. Islamic universities tend to emphasize ethical principles more heavily, while secular institutions focus more on sustainability content.

The following diagram illustrates the comparative assessment of ethical and sustainability integration across different types of institutions. The data is visually represented to highlight the varying priorities placed on each content area.



**Figure 2.** Ethical vs. Sustainability Integration.

The chart illustrates that Islamic universities place a higher emphasis on ethical economic principles (75%) compared to secular institutions (40%). In contrast, secular institutions prioritize sustainability content (60%) over ethical economic principles (50%) in their curricula.

### Discussion

The results indicate that Islamic universities integrate ethical economic principles more significantly than secular institutions. This aligns with the core principles of Islamic economics, which emphasize fairness, justice, and the equitable distribution of resources. The higher percentage of ethical content in Islamic universities likely reflects the curriculum's alignment with Islamic teachings, which encourage ethical behavior in economic activities. In contrast, secular institutions show a stronger focus on sustainability content, likely due to the global emphasis on sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the increasing integration of environmental concerns into various fields of study. The 60% sustainability content in secular institutions demonstrates the growing importance of addressing environmental issues through economic policies, strategies, and education.

The 35% difference in ethical economic content suggests that Islamic universities offer a more holistic approach to economic education, merging ethical considerations with practical economic frameworks. This integration helps students understand that economic decisions should consider not only profitability but also their social and environmental impact. On the other hand, the negative difference (-10%) in sustainability content in Islamic universities implies that while these institutions emphasize ethical behavior, there may still be room for improvement in incorporating sustainability practices. This gap presents an opportunity for Islamic universities to integrate green economy principles into their curricula, which would allow students to address sustainability challenges from an ethical perspective.

The visual representation in Diagram 1 further illustrates the integration patterns across both institutions, highlighting the ethical focus of Islamic universities and the sustainability focus of secular institutions. This comparison is essential for understanding broader educational trends and guiding future curriculum development. It provides valuable insights into how both sectors can evolve to incorporate more balanced content that integrates ethical and sustainability concerns.

## 5. Comparison

The data reveals clear distinctions between the emphasis placed on ethical economic principles and sustainability content within the curricula of Islamic universities and secular institutions. Islamic universities place a greater emphasis on ethical economic principles, with 75% of their curriculum reflecting these values, compared to just 40% in secular institutions. This significant difference highlights the unique role Islamic teachings play in shaping economic education, where fairness, justice, and the equitable distribution of resources are central. The stronger focus on ethics in Islamic universities aligns with the core tenets of Islamic economics, which promote ethical behavior in all aspects of life, including economic activities.

In contrast, secular institutions prioritize sustainability, with 60% of their curricula dedicated to content related to sustainable practices and environmental concerns, as compared to 50% in Islamic universities. This shift in focus can be attributed to the global trend toward sustainable development and the increasing importance of environmental issues across academic disciplines. Secular institutions are more aligned with global initiatives such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which have led to a growing emphasis on sustainable economic practices, environmental conservation, and social responsibility.

The comparative assessment between these two types of institutions reveals a distinctive difference in how each institution integrates ethical and sustainability principles into their curricula. While Islamic universities lean towards ethical economic practices, secular institutions tend to emphasize environmental sustainability. This difference is important as it

reflects the broader educational trends that shape the future of economic education, particularly in terms of preparing students for global challenges related to both ethical decision-making and environmental sustainability.

Furthermore, the negative difference of -10% in sustainability content in Islamic universities indicates an area for potential growth. Integrating more content on sustainability within the Islamic economic curriculum could offer a more balanced approach, where students are not only equipped with ethical decision-making skills but are also prepared to address environmental challenges within the context of Islamic teachings. This integration could provide a more holistic approach to preparing students for leadership roles in the green economy, bridging the gap between ethical economics and sustainable development.

## 6. Conclusion

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate the differences in how Islamic universities and secular institutions prioritize ethical economic principles and sustainability content within their curricula. Islamic universities place a higher emphasis on ethical economic principles, which are deeply rooted in Islamic teachings about justice, fairness, and the equitable distribution of resources. On the other hand, secular institutions tend to focus more on sustainability content, reflecting the global shift towards sustainability in education and the increasing importance of environmental concerns in academic disciplines.

However, despite these differences, both types of institutions play crucial roles in shaping students' perspectives on economic decision-making and sustainability. The emphasis on ethical economic principles in Islamic universities offers students a moral framework for addressing the economic challenges of the future. Meanwhile, the focus on sustainability in secular institutions provides students with the tools to tackle pressing environmental issues. Each approach offers distinct advantages, but together, they can form a more comprehensive understanding of how to balance economic growth with social and environmental responsibility.

It is evident that there is a significant opportunity for both types of institutions to enhance their curricula by integrating elements from each other's focus areas. Islamic universities could benefit from expanding their coverage of sustainability-related content, ensuring that students are not only aware of ethical economic practices but also equipped with the knowledge to address environmental challenges. Similarly, secular institutions could strengthen the ethical components of their curricula to promote more balanced and socially responsible economic practices.

In conclusion, this study highlights the need for a more integrated approach to economic education that combines ethical decision-making with sustainability practices. By blending these two crucial elements, educational institutions can prepare students to be not only skilled professionals but also responsible global citizens capable of addressing both economic and environmental challenges in a sustainable and ethical manner.

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