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The Urgency of Cultivating Environmental Care Character based on Islamisation of Science in Public Universities

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Abstract

This article aims to examine the urgency of cultivating the character of environmental care based on the Islamisation of science in higher education. The importance of cultivating environmental care character based on Islamisation because the emergence of environmental degradation is motivated by philosophical issues rooted in the wrong worldview towards the conception of nature that comes from the ethics of anthropocentrism and secularism. This paradigm not only affects the conception of modern science, but also affects the perspectives of teachers and lecturers who then penetrate into the structure of education, curriculum and teaching in higher education. This research uses a qualitative approach where data collection is through literature study, interviews, document study and observation. The results of the study found that the perspectives of lecturers, curriculum structures, teaching materials and the implementation of learning general courses (science) are more focused on aspects of strengthening technical field competencies that focus on rational-empirical aspects. The formation of ecological awareness that instils environmental care values involving spiritual elements and aspects of the human soul as well as its relationship with the explanation of religious principles in a metaphysical manner is still very minimal. Similarly, the learning of Islamic Religious Education taught by religious lecturers is still indoctrinative, the course syllabus and curriculum are not fully integrated with general disciplines. This research recommends the importance of developing a model of cultivating environmental care character based on Islamisation or integration of science in higher education.

Keywords: *Cultivating Character, Environmental Care, Islamisation of Science*

1.Introduction

The ecological crisis and environmental degradation have become global tragedies and challenges that threaten the survival of all creatures on earth (Scoones, 2022; Amirullah, 2015; Ilić & Hafner, 2015). The phenomenon of ecological violations is an indicator of low awareness and concern for nature and the lingkungan (Winarno, 2017; Pratama, 2019; Kurnia & Sudarti, 2021). Low environmental awareness as stated in several studies penelitian (Reflita, 2015; Samekto, 2015; DLKH, 2019; Maurya et al., 2020; Scoones, 2022) seems to have become a character that is almost pervasive in every social layer (Millatuzzuhriyah et al., 2020; Sugiarto & Gabriella, 2020). This condition shows that education at various levels has not fully succeeded in instilling values that form real environmental awareness. Good and strong character requires solid value beliefs (Hakam & Nurdin, 2016). The cultivation of environmental care character based on the Islamisation of science or the integration of religion and science has not received widespread attention. Whereas the root cause of the natural and environmental crisis is closely related to the problem of perspective (Keraf, 2006), and epistemological deviations that are understood and spread through the modern Western scientific paradigm (Al-Attas, 2010). The dichotomous and anthropocentric paradigm that views nature as separate from humans and places humans at the centre of the natural system still dominates global mentality and thinking patterns (White, 1967; Ravetz, 1971; Sardar, 1984; Mansoor, 1993 and Naess, 1993). Environmental damage stems from damage to thinking, conception of science and secular worldviews that are partial, not holistic in seeing the relationship between God, humans and nature (Nasr, 1984; Quddus, 2020; Haris, 2024, Al Attas, 1999). The separation between the profane and the sacred, as well as the dualism and dichotomy between subject object raises ontological and epistemological issues which then affect scientific methods, theory formation, and the conception of modern science which is characterised by rational-empirical character (Husein, 2016).

The dominance of Western epistemology since the colonial period has also impacted the education system in the Islamic world, giving rise to the dualism of religious and general education (Kurniyat, 2018; Wahab, 2016; Yatusa'dah, 2021; Steenbrink, 1986). Secularism was systematically absorbed into education through colonial policies, then perpetuated by the political system and media (Fakhrurazi et al., 2024; Iskandar et al., 2021; Wahid, 2014). The curriculum and subject matter of religion and science are not only taught separately, but also based on different scientific paradigms. The different conceptions of science and education obtained by students fail to form holistic understanding and values. As a result, there is an ideological dilemma that triggers intellectual, cultural and social differences, ignores the role of religion, and encourages the secularisation of ethics in education and public life (Afriantoni, 2011; Harris, 2022b; Matovu, 2013). The low awareness and character of environmental care can be caused by the non-integral cultivation of values in religious and science learning (Arman, 2020). To form a complete environmentally concerned character, an Islamicisation of science approach is needed through PAI learning in higher education. Throughout history, theories and models of environmental ethics have been dominated by secular paradigms that influence anthropogenic behaviour to care less about nature (Harris, 2022a). The Islamisation of science paradigm views the natural crisis and environmental degradation as an existential human problem rooted in a crisis of science and spirituality (Amirullah, 2015; Irawan, 2017; Sharma, 2023; Zuhdi, 2012).

2. Literature review

Worldviews play an important role in shaping attitudes towards the environment (Nurhayati, 2020; Supriani et al., 2021; Sutoyo, 2013). Ecological worldview is a key factor in environmental concern (Xiao et al., 2019), and determines responses to anthropogenic impacts (Wynveen et al., 2014). From a philosophical perspective, the global environmental crisis is rooted in secularism and the anthropocentric paradigm of science (Keraf, 2006; 2014). The system of industrial capitalism and colonialism since the 19th century changed the economic structure and human relationship with nature (Itawan, 2023; Scoones, 2022). Arne Naess (1993) asserts that a fundamental change in the way humans view nature is the key to overcoming this crisis. Higher education, as a centre of value and paradigm formation (Sari, 2019) , becomes a medium to influence students' perspective and paradigm of thinking (Rahadian, 2018; Taufik, 2018), has a strategic role in shaping integral ecological awareness. Referring to previous studies, the literature shows three main pillars of discussion: character cultivation, the formation of environmental awareness values, and the urgency of the Islamisation of science as a solution to crises, including the ecological crisis faced by Muslims. All three are interrelated and form the conceptual framework of this research. Character cultivation provides a moral basis, environmental awareness leads to positive ecological behaviour, while the Islamisation of science ensures that the integration of spiritual values and scientific knowledge is in harmony.

2.1 Character cultivation

Education serves as the main medium for instilling values and shaping quality personal character. In the view of Al-Attas (1986), education is the process of instilling knowledge and manners so that humans recognise and acknowledge the place of everything according to its position. Values are seen as stable beliefs and become the basis for decision making and behaviour formation (Hakam & Nurdin, 2016; Rokeach, 1973; Dietz et al., 2005). When values are internalised and actualised in life, they develop into dispositions or characters (Wibowo, 2013; Adisusilo, 2014). Therefore, education must include the transfer of knowledge as well as the formation of manners, which is strengthened by the collaboration of families, educators, and the social environment (Hanafiah, 2024; Kosasih, 2019; Kosasih et al., 2020; Tripura, 2025). Holistic character building still faces challenges of secularism and dualism in the education system that separates religion from science (Djaya et al., 2021; Zakaria, 2018). This separation leads to gaps in understanding of values, curriculum fragmentation, and non-integrated institutional management (Nur Aini & Lazuardy, 2020). Extreme scientific specialisation compartmentalises knowledge, eliminates its holistic meaning, and breaks the continuity of education from primary to tertiary levels (Jumrah, 2012; Mustaqim, 2015). As a result, the value internalisation process becomes partial and less able to form a solid character.

2.2 Environmental Concern

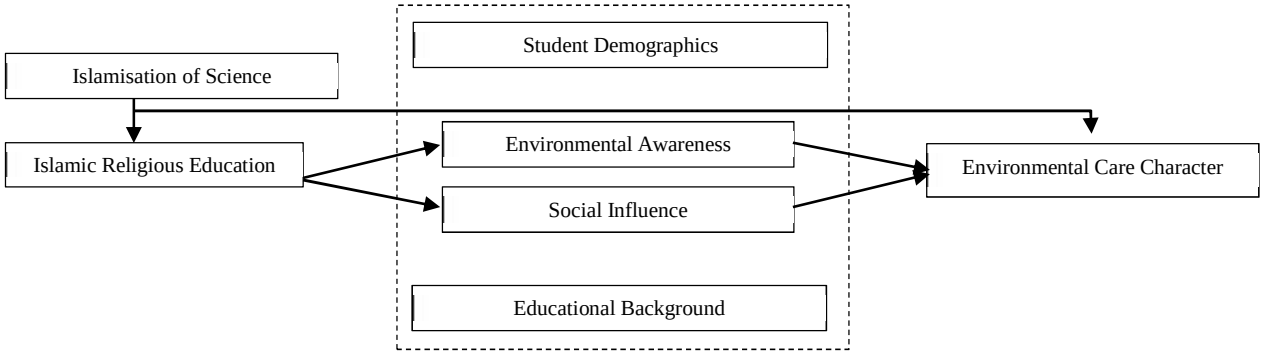
Environmental care is a universal moral value that reflects the attitude of preventing damage to nature and trying to repair the damage that occurs (Wulandari, 2018; Curriculum Centre, 2009; Asmani, 2001). This value must be familiarised from family education to college so that it becomes a belief that forms character (Latifah et al., 2017). Factors that shape environmental awareness include social interactions, role models, and education that instils ecological values (Duarte et al., 2017). Education serves as an important medium for instilling values. Schools and teachers play a major role in shaping the moral and intellectual growth of learners didik (Tripura, 2025). Gardner and Stern (1996) place changing values and worldviews as the main strategy in environmental behaviour change, followed by positive education, incentives, and community management.

The campus academic environment greatly influences the character building of students for which exemplary and integrity of lecturers are (Choli, 2020). Environmental education aims to form a society that cares and is willing to act for ecological solutions. According to Lickona (1991), the formation of environmental character requires the development of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behaviour aspects. With intensive education, students can have the mental readiness and motivation to take positive actions towards the environment (Hasnidar, 2019).

2.3 Islamisation of Science

Islamisation of science is a response to the hegemony of the secular Western science paradigm that separates religion from knowledge and is considered value-free nilai (Khairunnisa et al., 2025; Soelaiman, 2019). This concept was pioneered by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (1977) and developed by Isma'il Raji al-Faruqi (Wan Daud, 1998; Sholeh, 2017; Susilo, 2018). Islamisation of science aims to free the mind from the influence of secularism and replace it with Islamic values (Musa, 2021; Al-Attas (2010), as well as integrating religious and scientific knowledge into the education and learning curriculum (Zain & Vebrianto, 2017; Kemdikbud, 2020; Suasti et al., 2018). This integration is not only conceptual, but also implementative. The study of Al-Najjar, (2022) shows that science curriculum that is Islamised by integrating Quranic quotations into teaching materials, is able to improve concept mastery and student learning motivation. Thus, the Islamisation of science is an effective strategy to create a balance between empirical knowledge and ethical-spiritual values, forming a generation that thinks critically while having spiritual religious awareness (Yuyung et al., 2024).

3. Conceptual Framework



Higher education has a strategic role as a centre for the development of student values and paradigms through the cultivation of character, environmental awareness, and the Islamisation of science through PAI. These three pillars are interrelated, creating a solid conceptual framework to address current environmental challenges. The conceptual framework is not only relevant for education, but also as a strategic step in overcoming the ecological crisis facing humanity today.

i. The concept of character cultivation provides an important moral foundation
ii. Environmental care leads to positive ecological behaviours that are necessary in maintaining sustainability.
iii. iii. Islamisation of science through PAI serves to integrate spiritual values with scientific knowledge

4. Research Questions

This research aims to answer: (1) what are the perspectives of religion and science lecturers on religion-science integration in higher education; (2) what is the structure of the science and religion curriculum and the allocation of credits; and (3) what is the learning model applied by religion and science lecturers. These findings are expected to be the basis for strengthening the character of environmental care through learning that integrates the values of religion and science as a whole.

5. Significance of Study

The importance of this study lies in its contribution in offering a conceptual model of integration of Islamic religious education and environmental science in higher education as a practical and contextual strategy of Islamisation of science. This study not only reveals the real problems of scientific dichotomy and curriculum gaps that have hindered the formation of environmental care character, but also provides implementative steps through the preparation of

learning designs, strengthening the tawhidic worldview, and utilising Islamic religious education as a medium to connect scientific knowledge and Islamic moral values. The findings are expected to be a reference for policy makers, university managers, and educators in formulating hybrid curriculum policies that integrate religious and scientific values to produce graduates who are not only academically competent but also have rahmatan lil'alamin character, able to respond to the challenges of environmental degradation with a scientific approach as well as spiritual ethics.

6. Research Methodology

This research uses a qualitative approach with an exploratory case study design designed to reveal the phenomenon of integration of Islamic values in environmental education in public universities. This design was chosen because it is able to provide an in-depth understanding of the context, actors, and interactions that occur naturally. Data were collected through triangulation of methods including: (1) semi-structured in-depth interviews with eight purposively selected key informants, consisting of four science lecturers and four Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lecturers, using an expert validated interview guide; (2) hermeneutical analysis of curriculum documents on study programme structure, syllabus, and teaching materials; and (3) structured participatory observation in the classroom to comprehensively capture learning dynamics. The entire data collection process was documented in a research logbook to ensure data traceability (auditability). Data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach, which included verbatim transcription, open coding, axial coding, and thematic interpretation. Validity of findings was maintained through four strategies: (1) triangulation of sources and methods by cross-confirming the results of interviews, documents, and observations; (2) member checking to confirm data interpretations with informants; (3) peer debriefing through discussions with peers; and (4) preparation of an audit trail that documents the entire analytical process and decisions. These strategies are used to ensure the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the research results, so that the findings obtained have strong academic reliability.

7. Findings

7.1 Characteristics of Views on the Integration of Religion and Science

The results of in-depth interviews with eight informants (four science lecturers and four Islamic Religious Education lecturers) showed a diversity of perspectives on the integration of religion and science. Some science lecturers view that religion should not be overly involved in science learning due to the limited detail of religious teachings in explaining the technical aspects of nature management. Others recognise the importance of integration, but face the constraints of limited religious insight and teaching time allocation. Meanwhile, PAI lecturers generally consider the integration of religion and science to be very important to form holistic students, despite the time constraints, competence, and wide coverage of PAI materials.

Table 1. Lecturers' Perspectives on the Integration of Religion and Science
(Sumber: Data primer, 2024) (Source: Primary data, 2024)

Respondents	Lecturer	Views on the Integration of Religion & Science
1	Science	Religion should not be brought into general science discussions because religious teachings do not detail the management of nature; religious leaders should focus on theology.
2	Science	Good integration, but constrained by limited religious knowledge and narrow teaching time allocation.
3	Science	Unable to design integrated learning because it is not his field; should be done by religion lecturers.
4	Science	Integration depends on the lecturer; nature conservation tends to be casuistic and related to popular issues
5	Islamic religion	Integration is important to shape students to care for the environment, but not all lecturers understand its urgency.
6	Islamic religion	Religion and science are both sourced from God; constraints on PAI methods that tend to be cognitive and monotonous.
7	Islamic religion	Challenges in time constraints and variations in PAI lecturers' competence.
8	Islamic religion	It is difficult to integrate PAI with environmental issues because there are many aqidah, sharia, and morals materials that must also be taught.

7.2 Domination of Science in the Education Curriculum Structure

Analysis of curriculum documents shows the dominance of science-based courses in almost all semesters. In the first semester, for example, of the 11 courses offered, only one religion course is given, with a load of 3 credits out of a total of 25 credits. Other courses are dominated by social humanities and pure sciences such as mathematics, chemistry, and biology.

Table 2. S Structure of Compulsory Courses for Semester 1
(Source: Primary data, 2024)

Semester I (Package System)				
No.	**Status**	**Course Name**	**Credits**	
1	MKWK	**Religious Education**	**3**	(2-1)
2	MKWK	Pancasila Education	2	(2-0)
3	MKWK	Citizenship Education	2	(2-0)
4	MKWK	Indonesian Language	2	(2-0)
5	Compulsory	English	2	(2-0)
6	MBB	Basic Social & Cultural Sciences	2	(2-0)
7	Compulsory	Maths	2	(2-0)
8	Compulsory	Chemistry	3	(2-1)
9	Compulsory	Biology	3	(2-1)
10	Compulsory	Fundamentals of Management	2	(2-0)
11	Compulsory	Introduction to Forestry Science and Technology	2	(2-0)
11 Compulsory Study Programme Total 25 credits				

Tabel 3. Summary of Curriculum Structure and Study Interests
(Source: Primary data, 2024)

This summary shows that of the total 144 credits that students must take, only 3 credits are allocated for Religious Education. This dominance of science reinforces the finding that the integration of religion in learning has the potential to be marginalised if there is no curriculum policy that supports the balance of material portions.

Summary of Curriculum Structure	**Study Interests**			
	Forest Management 53	**Silviculture 51**	**Product Technology Forest Products Technology 57**	**Forest Resources Conservation & Ecotourism**
Study Programme Compulsory Courses	39 courses 97 CREDITS	39 courses 97 CREDITS	39 courses 97 CREDITS	39 courses 97 CREDITS
Compulsory Study Interest courses	10 courses 23 CREDITS	7 courses 20 CREDITS	14 courses 24 CREDITS	7 courses 20 CREDITS
Elective courses that must be programmed	≥ 4 courses ≥ 12 CREDITS	≥ 5 courses ≥ 15 CREDITS	≥ 4 courses ≥ 11 CREDITS	≥ 5 courses ≥ 15 CREDITS
PKL	3 CREDITS	3 CREDITS	3 CREDITS	3 CREDITS
KKN	3 CREDITS	3 CREDITS	3 CREDITS	3 CREDITS
Final Project (Thesis)	6 CREDITS	6 CREDITS	6 CREDITS	6 CREDITS
Total	**≥ 144 CREDITS**	**≥ 144 CREDITS**	**≥ 144 CREDITS**	**≥ 144 CREDITS**

Source: Compiled and processed by researchers, 2024.

In the summary of the curriculum structure and number of courses, out of a total of between 51-57 courses from 4 interests that students need to complete during their studies, only 1 religion course is provided with a load of 3 credits out of a total of 144 credits that need to be completed.

7.3 Differences in Learning Aspects of Religion and Science Courses

The results of observations and analysis of the RPS show significant differences between the learning of religion courses and science courses. Religion courses emphasise moral and spiritual formation of students through discussion methods, interactive lectures, and book studies, while science courses focus on mastery of concepts, experiments, and data analysis skills.

Table 4. Differences in Learning Aspects of PAI and Science
(Source: Primary data, 2024)

Learning Aspect	Lecturer of MK. PAI (Religious Studies)	Lecturer of Science Studies
Main Focus of Materials	Spiritual moral character building, understanding of religious teachings, Islamic ethics, history of Islamic civilisation, and religious values.	Understanding of concepts, theories, natural laws, scientific methodology, practical applications in the field of science.
Pedagogical Approach	Frequent use of discussion methods, interactive lectures, book studies, sharia-based case studies, and habituation to worship.	More experimental methods, lab work, demonstrations, problem solving, and data analysis.
Learning Objectives	To produce individuals with noble character, faith, piety, and comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings.	Produce individuals who have logical, critical, analytical thinking, and are able to apply scientific principles to solve problems.
Main Learning Resources	The Qur'an, Hadith, classical and contemporary books, tafsir, fiqh, and other religious literature.	Scientific textbooks, research journals, scientific publications, experimental data and current scientific sources.
Learning Emphasis	Emphasis on affective (attitudes and values), psychomotor (worship), and cognitive (understanding of religious concepts) aspects.	More emphasis on cognitive (concept understanding), and psychomotor (practical and research skills) aspects.
Learning Evaluation	Assessment includes understanding of religious concepts, memorisation, worship practices, ethical case studies, and daily behaviour and attitudes.	Assessment includes understanding of concepts, analytical skills, problem solving, lab reports and presentation of research results.
Relevance to Daily Life	Emphasises the integration of Islamic values in every aspect of life, forming morals, and providing guidelines for life.	Emphasises the application of science concepts to explain natural phenomena, develop technology, and improve the quality of life.

8. Discussion

8.1 Dichotomy of Science and Dualistic Thinking Paradigm

The phenomenon of dichotomy between religion and science in public universities is still very striking, both from the perspective of lecturers, curriculum structures, and learning models. Religion and science tend to be seen as two separate domains that have no point of contact, reinforced by the limited religious insight of some science lecturers and the perception that integration is not part of their field of expertise. Meanwhile, some religion lecturers have an awareness of the importance of integration, but are constrained by limited competence, minimal time allocation, and lack of structural support. This imbalance is reflected in the distribution of credits, where out of a total of 144 credits only 3 credits are allocated for religious education. This finding is in line with previous research highlighting the isolation between religious and science disciplines at various levels of education (Abubakar et al., 2016; Febriana & Firmasari, 2021; Iskandar et al., 2021; Kurniyat, 2018). This educational dualism cannot be separated from the colonial legacy and is reinforced by the national political system that maintains institutional separation between religious and general education (Iqbal, 2019; Fakhrurazi et al., 2024). Historically, this dichotomy has been an obstacle to the achievement of the overall goals of Islamic education, including the goals of national education. Without integration, students will lose a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between God, humans and nature, which is the basis for holistic character building. The concept of Islamisation of science, although not yet uniformly understood, offers a dialogical approach that connects science with Islamic values (Yafiz & Daulay, 2023). Some figures such as

Al-Attas (1978) and Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1984) emphasise that the restoration of the Islamic paradigm towards nature is the first step in solving the environmental crisis, considering that this problem is not only technical but also moral (Keraf, 2010). Thus, efforts to integrate religion and science are not just methodological choices, but strategic needs in building higher education that is responsive to the challenges of the times, including environmental degradation.

8.2 Curriculum Gaps and Character Building Challenges

The gap between the proportion of religion and science courses in public universities is very significant. Of the total credits that students must take, around 67.36% (97 credits) are dominated by science courses, while religious education only gets a portion of 2.08% (3 credits). This gap shows the subordination of spiritual values in the curriculum and weakens the process of internalising student character (Akhyar et al., 2023; Febriana & Firmasari, 2021; Wahid, 2014; Yusuf et al., 2021). Learning observations show that science courses emphasise the empirical aspect without linking it to Islamic environmental ethics, while PAI courses tend to be trapped in a cognitive-doctrinal approach. This imbalance has the potential to foster a secular paradigm of colonial heritage that separates science from religious ethics (Nur Aini & Lazuardy, 2020b). This gap not only reduces the holistic meaning of education, but also impacts the formation of students' personalities that are balanced in faith and reason. Previous research proves that a non-integrated curriculum can hinder character building, disrupt personality balance, and reduce students' awareness of environmental conservation as part of worship (Mansir et al., 2023; Yang & Lu, 2024). Therefore, a hybrid curriculum model is needed that inserts Islamic values in science learning and integrates scientific principles in religious education. Innovations such as the "Mizan-based Environmental Chemistry" module can be an example of practical implementation. The success of this model requires policy support, curriculum revision, and lecturer training in designing integrated learning, as has been successfully implemented at the Islamic University Antarbangsa Malaysia (Hamdan et al., 2017).

8.3 Islamisation of Science and Integrative Learning

The dualism paradigm, curriculum gaps, and separate learning methods between religion and science have created an epistemological chasm in higher education. According to Al-Attas (2007), this crisis is rooted in the mistaken worldview of Muslims due to the penetration of secularism through colonisation and the education system. To address this, thinkers such as Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi offer the concept of Islamisation of knowledge. Al-Attas emphasises epistemological cleansing by Islamising language, thoughts and frameworks before touching the curriculum, while Al-Faruqi offers the approach of restructuring the curriculum and compiling integrative textbooks that combine naqli and aqli sciences. These two approaches complement each other-Al-Attas provides the philosophical foundations, while Al-Faruqi provides the practical implementation steps (Hashim & Rossyidi, 2000). In the context of environmental learning, the Islamisation of science means making kauniyah verses (nature) and qauliyah verses (the Qur'an) as inseparable sources of knowledge. For example, the concept of mizan (balance) can be the theoretical basis of ecology courses that link biodiversity studies with the spiritual dimension of conservation (QS. Al Rahman: 7-9). The implementation of this model can be in the form of an "Islamic Environmental Ethics" course that combines theory and practice, such as linking land degradation case studies with the principles of hima (Islamic conservation) and then implementing campus greening projects. The success of this integrative learning model requires cross-disciplinary collaboration, IIIT framework-based lecturer training, and university policy support. Without structural support, resistance from some science lecturers and inequality in the allocation of credits will remain the main obstacles.

9. Conclusion

This research shows that the Islamisation of science as an approach to integrating Islamic values in environmental education in public universities still faces fundamental challenges in the form of the dichotomy of science, curriculum gaps, and learning paradigms that are not yet holistic. The dichotomy of religion and science is evident in the distribution of credits, curriculum structure, and learning practices, which tend to separate the empirical scientific domain from spiritual values. This imbalance has an impact on the weak internalisation of environmental care character and has the potential to strengthen the secular paradigm that separates science from religious ethics. The analysis shows that efforts to Islamise science, as initiated by Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi, can be a strategic solution to overcome this epistemological and moral crisis. Al-Attas' philosophical approach that emphasises paradigm cleansing and the formation of an Islamic worldview needs to be integrated with Al-Faruqi's practical steps that focus on curriculum restructuring and the preparation of integrated teaching materials. The implementation of integrative learning that combines kauniyah verses and qauliyah verses has proven to have the potential to increase students' ecological awareness while strengthening the foundation of their faith. Thus, the integration of Islamic values in environmental education in public universities is urgent not only conceptually, but must be operationalised through institutional policies, lecturer training, integrative learning module development, and national curriculum revision. The synergy

between theoretical and practical approaches will produce graduates who are not only academically competent, but also have rahmatan lil 'alamin characters that are able to answer the challenges of environmental damage and moral crisis in the modern era.

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