IJAAR PUBLISHING®

International Journal of Religion and Societal Development | ISSN: 3043-6699
Vol. 3, Issue 1 (2026) | www.ijaar.org/ijrsd

ISLAMIC ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS AND DIGITAL LITERACY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

BY

GANIYU, MOJEED ADEMOLA
DEPARTMENT OF ISLAMIC STUDIES
SCHOOL OF SECONDARY EDUCATION
(ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES PROGRAMME)
OYO STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, LANLATE

Abstract

This study examines the relationship between Islamic environmental ethics and digital literacy as corresponding pathways in advancing sustainable development in Nigeria. Grounded in the ethical principles derived from Islamic teachings such as stewardship (Khalifah), trust (amanah) and moderation (wasatiyyah), the study argues that religious ethical frameworks can significantly influence environmentally responsible behaviors. In additions, the study evaluates the role of digital literacy in enhancing environmental awareness, access to information, and participation in sustainability initiatives in an increasingly digitalized society. Using a mixed methods approach, combining survey data from selected states in Nigeria with key informant interviews, the study assesses the levels of environmental consciousness, digital competence, and their combined influence on sustainable practices. The findings revealed that while Islamic ethical doctrines significantly promote environmental responsibility, limited digital literacy constrains the dissemination and practical application of such values. The study further identifies a positive interaction effect between literacy and ethical orientation in driving sustainable outcomes. It concludes that integrating faith-based environmental education with digital skills development can strengthen community engagement and policy implementation. The paper therefore recommends the incorporation of Islamic environmental ethics into educational curricula alongside targeted digital literacy programs to foster inclusive and sustainable development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Digital literacy, Islamic ethics, Sustainability, Environment, Nigeria.

https://doi.org/10.46654/d4fxzb94

Introduction

The environment consists of all the exterior letting and stimulus that impact living being's life, conduct, progress and maturation. It also provides necessary living natural resource supplied by the environment has assisted human kind to evolve. However, in the due process of evolution, men has ruthlessly exploited environment, with scientific and technological advances, utilization of the environment has induced and excessive employment of modern technology made environmental crisis a grave complex global concern. Attrition and exhaustion of natural resources, the decay of ozone layer, worsening pollution are some of the severe ecological imbalances caused by environmental destruction.

Nevertheless, changes in attitude, and positive behavior towards the environment could contain further environmental could contain further environmental damage. World nations have come together with treaties to decrease ecosystem damage; contagena protocol on Biosafety, Kyoto protocol of ozone layer, Stockholm convention for the law of the sea, and convention of combat of the sea, and Convention of Combat Desertification, to name some. However, human activity as the larger responsible factor and the human's need to be ethical towards the environment is overlooked is most environments. The human activity is an amalgam of complex socio-economic and cultural influences. The unprecedented cultural change, unsuitable political power, and economic progress have greatly influenced people's behavior towards the environs. The human instigated environmental crisis has deepened the production and consumption problems, exhaustion of natural resources and extinction of wildlife terrestrial and marine (Chu, E.W., & Karr, J.R. 2017).

The UNEP reports (UNEP report Global Environment Outlook, 2000) suggest that if the irregular economic growth, population and uneven production and consumption increased, the environment catastrophe would be irrevocable (Rowledge, 1999). The swiftly degrading ecology demands scientific but universally common ethical and valued-base action to save the environment.

The attitude of human beings to behave well in their vicinity needs to be scientifically and ethically encouraged. Environmental ethics are defined norms about the human approach towards the ecosystem and its resources. The norms about the human approach toward s the ecosystem and its resources. The norms carry motivation and justification (Muhammed, N. 2012), Religions around the world play a significant role in defining moral norms. Though perceived in different to each other all the faith have shared perspection towards nature. Religions have a close-affinity with nature and carry a positive attitude towards it. Islam, one of the world's leading religions, places vital importance on conservation of the environment.

The environment has been the main topic of debate and discussions in each and every part of the world, and much has been discussed about the necessity to take action to protect this planet and provide awareness among people in this regard. Promoting appreciation and admiration of the environment among people raises positive environmental behavioral change pollution, water scarcity and crisis, air pollution, poor management of waste materials declining ground water levels, poor protection and conservation system of forests, logs on natural biodiversity and land and soil degradation are some of the main environmental issues faced by the present world (Muhammed, N. 2012).

Literature Review

Islamic Environmental Ethics

Islamic elaborates the relevance of the environment to the civiliztin and life (Alam, A. 2018). As the western world majorities relies on scientific and secular approach towards the environment. Islam's outlook towards the environment builds on the Quran ethical traditions of the prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) preaching and lifestyle. Islam also perceives the crisis of environment from the lens of Quranic sermon (Khalid, F. 2010).

Quran contains verses the obligate the followers to preserve and curb the damage of the ecosystem. It also encourages believers to foster nature and only exploit it as per the necessity. The Quran, in its verses regarding the environment, maintains its primary theme of upholding the character of the universe established by Allah (Fathil, M, Sukendi, S, & Nizar, S, 2015). The Holy text mentions many incentives provided by God to those who cultivate and nurture nature nature. Quran regards human as vicegerent (Khalifah) or guardian of the earth and all the variety of life created by Allah, it also obligates the guardianship is the primary responsibility of human towards God (Muhammad, N. 2012).

Islam also levies strict restriction on the over exploitation and control of the ecosystem. The limitations classify into four principles, namely, unity principle (Tawhid), creation and responsibility principle (Khalid, F. 2010). The Shariah, the Islamic law monitoring Muslim actions, deciphers all the principles into strict norms and refers to corruption penalities (Muhammad, N. 2012). The concept of Adalah (Justice) also deals with the environment.

According to an Islamic scholar, Qaradawi, environment concern is enunciated in all the areas of Islamic culture and preaching (Muhammad, N. 2012).

Islam asserts that man's life and identity are not separate from the environment is considered a sin and safeguarding of it as virtue and justness (Kula, E.2001). Many verses in the Quran instructs the believers to follow a virtuous life as Allah would only be contended with the virtuous one.

> *O children of Adam, take your adornment at masjid, and eat and drink , but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess.*
>
> (Quran 7: 13)

Corruption is one of the critical aspects:

Islam constrains believers. Corruption in Islam, is more comprehensive in scope and applies not just to frauds, malpractices, murder, rape, illegal activities but also to deforestation, excessive exploitation of natural resources, damaging the soil with toxic waste, and polluting resources; these are a grievous violation of Islamic values. It is stated in the Quran that

> *And do not commit abuse on the land. Indeed God does not like corruption.*
>
> (Q2 : 60)

Charity is another concept that weights is Islam. It maintains that one who performs charity is valued and rewarded by God. According to Dehlvis, who said:

> *If a Muslim plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it, it is regarded as charitable (Sadaqah) for him.*
>
> (Dehlvis, 2018)

Additionally, many chapters in the Qur'anare named such as the Sun, the Moon, the Star, the Morning, the Ants, the Spider, the Cattle, the Fig indicate the place of importance on which ecosystem are in Islam. (Ibn Muhammad et al. 2010).

Foltz, a prominent scholar has cited boundless development measures, unawares towards environmental concerns and failure to follow Islamic beliefs, values, and prophetic traditions as the causes of increasing environmental degradation in Islamic nations and multi religious nations including Nigeria. (Ismail, R. 2019).

Indeed, Islam commands a state to consider public welfare as a primary responsibility of which environmental conservation is an essential measure (Khalid, F. 2010). In recent decades, the Islamic nations have come together to contain environmental degradation, one of such instance is the Global environmental forum in partnership with UNEP at Jaddah declaration which sustains that the sustainable development according to the Islamic understanding is the suitable form to conserve the ecosystem and preserve the equilibrium on earth. It also stressed on the need of environmental conservancy along the international climate and environmental conservations pacts. Islam necessities and environment alongside economic development for the future generations and setup protected area (Haram), the land and the living beings of a protected are not exploited. (al. Damkhi, A. M. 2008).

Nomarul Haq (2001) and Deuraseh (2009) elaborated on environmental destructions as a crime against God and explored the eco-philosophy within Islam's idea of the environment (Muhammad, N. 2012). In Islam, human activities against environment are referred to as self-destruction (Dhulm al Nafs) and destructive to humanity and a grievous crime against Allah (Muhammad, N. 2012).

Digital Literacy and Sustainability

Digital literacy refers to the ability to access,' evaluate, and utilize digital information effectively (Eshet, 2022). It plays a critical role in environmental sustainability by facilitating awareness, innovation, and participation in sustainable practices (UNESCO, 2018).

Empirical studies in this regards revealed that higher digital literacy correlates with improved environmental decision-making and adoption of green technologies (Aker & Mbiti, 2020),

Religion, Technology and Sustainability

Recent scholarship highlights the need to integrate ethical frameworks with technological capabilities to address Sustainability challenges (Khan, 2019). However, limited research exists on this integration within the Nigerian context, particularly as it involves Islamic ethics and digital literacy.

Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques using a structured questionnaire administered to 200 respondents randomly selected across the various Nigerian tribes (Hausa, Ibo, Yoruba). The questionnaire was validated using Cronbach's Alpha reliability test method and found worthy of been used. Interviews were equally granted the religious leaders, educator, and environmental experts.

The response to the questionnaire were collated and analyzed. The responses were analyzed based on formulated hypothesis below:. .

HO_1: Islamic environmental ethics does not have any significant effect on sustainable practices.

HO_2: Digital literacy does not have positive influence or notable interaction effect on environmental ethics and sustainable practice.

Below are responses to the items.

Table 1: Hoi: Islamic environmental ethics does not have any significant effect on sustainable practices.

S/N	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Never
1.	Islamic teachings encourage Human being to protect and preserve the Environment	110	70	11	08	01
2.	Caring for the environment is part of Islamic responsibility (khalifah concept)	88	92	08	10	02
3.	Islamic principles discourage wasteful Degradation	89	81	20	07	03
4.	My religious beliefs influence my attitude towards environmental Conservation	98	75	22	03	02
5.	Islamic teachings promote sustainable use of natural resources	85	65	32	18	00
6.	Islamic teachings encourage Human being to avoid wasteful use of electricity, water and other resources	100	70	21	08	01
7.	Islamic ethics teaches people to participate in environmental cleanliness	80	90	13	12	05
8.	I reuse or recycle materials whenever Possible	20	61	89	27	03
9.	My religious encourages us to adopt environmental friendly practices	98	75	22	03	02
10.	Islamic teachings makes people to reduce pollution in their daily activities	65	70	35	28	02

Digital literacy does not have positive influence or notable interaction effect on environmental ethics and sustainable practice.

S/N	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Never
1.	I can effectively use digital technologies to access environmental Information	101	72	15	08	03
2.	I am able to evaluate the credibility of environmental information found Online	80	92	16	10	02
3.	I use digital platforms (e.g. social media, websites) to learn environmental issues	87	81	21	07 *	04
4.	I possess the skills to use digital tools for solving environmental-related Problems	90	75	30	01	04
5.	I believe human being have a normal obligation to protect the environment	85	65	32	18	00
6.	I feel personally responsible for maintaining environmental Sustainability	103	68	26	08	01
7.	Ethical considerations influence my decisions regarding environmental use.	81	91	11	12	05
8.	I use digital knowledge top adopt environmental friendly behaviours	28	61	89	20	02
9.	I apply information obtained online to reduce waste and conserve resources	98	80	17	03	02
10.	I engage in sustainable practices (e.g. recycling, energy conservation) based on digital awareness.	55	50	45	48	02

Results and Discussion

From the respondents' response, it can be deduce that there is high awareness of Islamic environmental principles but moderate levels of digital literacy, most especially in rural areas. It was also revealed that Islamic environmental ethics exhibit a positive and significant effect on sustainable practices. Digital literacy also shows a strong positive influence, with notable interaction effect between the two variables.

Discussion

The findings suggest that ethical values alone are insufficient without the enabling power of digital tools. Digital literacy enhances the practical implementation of Islamic environmental teachings.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study established that environmental ethics and digital literacy are complementary drivers of sustainable development in Nigeria. Their integration offers a robust framework for addressing environmental challenges.

Based on the above, it was therefore recommended that Islamic environmental ethics should be integrated into formal education curricula. Also the promotion of digital literacy programmes especially in rural community should be taking as governmental priority. It was further suggested that religious institutions be engaged in environmental advocacy while digital platforms should be developed for environmental campaigns

References

Abumoghli I., & Mccartney, E., (2020). The role of Environmental ethics and spiritual Ethics in Galvanizing Nature Based Solutions.

Aker, J.C & Mbiti, I.M. (2020). Mobile phones and economic development in Africa Journal of Economic perspective, 24(3), 207 – 302.

Alam, A. (2018). Protection and conservation of Environment; An Important Role of Education-Manager's Journal of Educational Technology, 15(3), 1.

Al-Hamkhi, A.M. (2008). Environmental ethics in Islam principles violations and future perspectives. International Journal of Environmental studies, 65(1). 11-31.

Bin Muhammad, G., Ahmed, A., Shahl-kazemi, R. (2010). The holy Quran and the Environment. Royal Aaal-al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought.

Chu, E.W., Karr, J.R. (2017) Environmental impact, concept, consequences, measurement Reference Module in Life sciences.

Delvi, R. Ghulam. (2018). Islam and Environmental protection; A fresh look at the Quran and Hadith. Source; https;/www.ecomena.org/sustability-Islam.

Eshet, Y. (2022). Thinking in the digital era. A revised model for digital literacy, Issues Informing Sciences and Information Technology. 9, 267-276.

Fathil, M. Saam, Z. Sukendi, S., Nizar, S. (2015). Islam and Environment; Education Perspective Al-Talim Journal, 22(2), 96-106.

Foltz, R.C, F.M., Baharuddin,. (2023), Islam and Ecology; A Bestowed Trust.

Ismail, R., Suputra, J., & Aziz, A.A, (2019). Improving environmental performance in the Muslim World ; Evidence from affluent countries. International Journal of Energy Economic and Journal of Energy Economic

Khalid, F. (2010). Islam and the environment ethics and practice an assessment; Religion compass, 4 (11) 707-716

Kula, E. ((2001). Islam and the environmental conservation; Religion and compass, 5, (12) 1-9.

Muhammad, N, (2012). Revitalizing on eco-justice ethic of Islam by way of environmental education, implications for Islamic education. (Doctoral dissertation, Stellenbosch university).

Rowledge, L. (1999). Global Environment Outlook 2000; UNEP Millenium Report on the Environmemnt.

UNESCO. (2018). A global framework of reference on digital literacy skills. UNESCO Publishing.

World Bank. (2020). World development report 2020 :Trading for development in the age of global value chains, World Bank Publication.

Yusuf, A.A. (1998). The Holy Quran Text, Translation and commentary, Beirut, Lebanon Darul-Arabia.

Zafar, S. (2014). Environment Sustainability in Islam. Source: http:/www.ecomena.org/sustainability.islam.