



SHORT-VIDEO-BASED ECO-PEDAGOGY: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DIGITAL CONTENT IN CULTIVATING ECOLOGICAL AWARENESS AMONG GENERATION ALPHA IN ISLAMIC SCHOOLS

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Abstract :

Generation Alpha refers to the cohort born from 2010 to the present, the first generation to grow and develop entirely within a digital ecosystem, where technology and visual content have become an inseparable part of their daily lives. Unlike previous generations, this group has a shorter attention span, processes information more quickly through moving media, and tends to disregard static and lengthy delivery methods (Pratama : 2025). At the same time, the increasingly urgent environmental crisis demands educational efforts capable of instilling ecological awareness from an early age. For Islamic schools, environmental preservation is not merely a humanitarian responsibility, but a noble mandate of humans as khalifah fil ardh (vicegerents on earth) entrusted by Allah SWT to maintain the balance of all His creations (Al-Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 30). However, field realities show that learning in both Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and environmental studies still largely relies on lecture methods and textbooks, which often fail to accommodate the distinct learning styles of this generation. This study aims to analyze the relevance, conceptual foundations, and effectiveness of the short-video-based eco-pedagogy approach in fostering ecological awareness rooted in Islamic values among Generation Alpha students. The study employs a library research method by reviewing various relevant scientific literature published between 2020 and 2026. The findings reveal that short-form videos of 15–60 seconds are able to bridge the gap between teaching materials and students' preferences, so that messages on environmental preservation linked with verses from the Al-Qur'an and Hadith can be received more deeply rather than remaining as superficial knowledge (Gunawan : 2024). Furthermore, this approach has proven to significantly enhance learning participation and encourage students to adopt environmentally friendly behaviors in their daily lives. This study concludes that the appropriate integration of digital content with Islamic values is a key strategy to ensure environmental education in Islamic schools remains relevant, meaningful, and effective for future generations.

Keywords : Eco-pedagogy, short video, Generation Alpha, ecological awareness Islamic education, khalifah fil ardh

INTRODUCTION

Environmental crises such as global climate change, water pollution, and the accumulation of plastic waste have become real threats that will be inherited by future generations. In Indonesia, Islamic-based educational institutions hold a strategic responsibility to instill this awareness from an early age, as environmental preservation is not merely a social obligation but an integral part of Islamic teachings as the fulfillment of the mandate to be Allah's vicegerent on earth (Mufidah : 2024). Nevertheless, environmental education in Islamic schools today still largely relies on lecture methods and textbook reading, which are often ill-suited to the learning preferences of contemporary students who favor visual, interactive, and concise experiences



(Firmansyah : 2026).

Generation Alpha refers to the cohort born and raised entirely amid advances in information technology, so that they are accustomed to acquiring knowledge through short-video-based social media platforms. Unlike previous generations, they possess high proficiency in understanding visual messages but tend to lose interest quickly if material is presented at length or in abstract form (Budiyanto : 2025). If not accompanied by appropriate delivery methods, the noble values of environmental preservation will fail to take root in their hearts and prove difficult to translate into concrete daily behavior.

This is where the short-video-based eco-pedagogy approach offers a relevant and contextual solution. This approach integrates environmental education principles rooted in Islamic ethics with the appeal of digital media favored by students. As stated by Sugiyanto: "Islamic Religious Education in the digital age must not reject technological progress, but instead embrace it as the best medium to convey messages of humanity and obedience to Allah" (Sugiyanto : 2024). Therefore, this study is conducted to elaborate on the effectiveness of short-video content in fostering ecological awareness aligned with Islamic values, as well as its implementation potential in Islamic schools to shape the character of faithful and pious guardians of the earth. Based on the review above, no study has yet been found that comprehensively integrates the concept of Islamic eco-pedagogy systematically, uses short videos as the primary delivery medium, and specifically targets Generation Alpha within the context of Islamic schools. Most previous studies stand separately: some discuss eco-pedagogy in isolation, others examine short videos for different subject matter, or focus on earlier generations such as Generation Z or Millennials. This constitutes the novelty of the present study.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with the library research method. This method was selected because the research focuses on an in-depth examination of concepts, theories, and prior empirical evidence to develop a systematic framework regarding the relevance and effectiveness of short-video media in environmental education rooted in Islamic values, without requiring direct field data collection (Zed : 2023). Through this method, the researcher can integrate various established academic perspectives to draw comprehensive conclusions grounded in robust scientific evidence.

Data sources in this study consist of secondary literature, including theoretical books, accredited scientific journals, Islamic Religious Education curriculum documents, and recent research reports published between 2020 and 2026. The data analysis process proceeds through the following stages: identifying core concepts, selecting the most relevant literature, verifying source validity, and categorizing findings based on their alignment with the characteristics of Generation Alpha, the principles of Islamic eco-pedagogy, and the utilization of digital media (Sutopo : 2023). The credibility of this review is maintained by comparing perspectives from diverse experts and sources, ensuring that the resulting conclusions are unbiased and rest on a solid foundation (Moleong : 2024)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Basic Concepts of Islamic Eco-Pedagogy and Its Alignment with the Characteristics of Generation Alpha

Islamic eco-pedagogy is a learning approach that integrates the principles of environmental preservation with the theological foundation of Islam, which positions the universe as Allah's creation with inherent balance and sacred purpose, while human beings

are appointed as khalifah fil ardh (vicegerents on earth) entrusted with the duty to protect, nurture, and not destroy it. This concept is rooted in three main pillars: first, Tawhid, which affirms that all beings are interconnected within the unity of God's creation, so that damage to one part impacts the entire system. Second, Amanah and Khilafah, which holds that human stewardship over nature is not an absolute right but a management responsibility that must be accounted for before Allah SWT. Third, the explicit prohibition of causing corruption on earth as stated in the Qur'an Surah Al-A'raf verse 56: "And do not cause corruption on the earth after it has been set in order".

Based on literature review, Islamic eco-pedagogy rests on the conviction that the universe is Allah's creation with its own balance and function, while humans are placed as khalifah or responsible stewards tasked with its preservation. This concept emphasizes that damaging the environment is equivalent to betraying the divine mandate. Unlike secular environmental education which centers solely on human interests, Islamic eco-pedagogy frames environmental stewardship as a form of worship and obedience to God's command.

Generation Alpha possesses unique cognitive development characteristics: they process information presented through images, motion, and sound far more quickly than lengthy text. Pratama explains that "This generation grows up with easy access to visual content, so their capacity to grasp video-based narratives is much higher than their reception of abstract verbal explanations" (Pratama : 2025). This indicates that conventional teacher-centered and textbook-based methods are no longer the only effective way to convey religious and environmental values to this age group. Their learning style is dominated by a preference for short, meaningful content presented visually or dynamically, rather than dense text or monotonous verbal instruction. They understand abstract concepts more readily when linked to real examples, images, animations, or direct experiences, and greatly value opportunities to interact, collaborate, and receive immediate feedback. Furthermore, they have a strong desire to see the relevance of what they learn to their daily lives and the real-world challenges around them. This reality presents both a challenge and an opportunity for Islamic Religious Education. Conventional methods centered on lectures, memorization, and textbook reading often fail to capture their attention, making noble values such as environmental preservation difficult to instill deeply. Conversely, approaches that package religious messages in formats familiar to their world will be far more easily accepted and internalized.

The alignment between Islamic eco-pedagogy and the characteristics of Generation Alpha lies in the need to simplify profound concepts. Values such as compassion for other creatures, prohibition of wastefulness, and the obligation to maintain cleanliness can be condensed into short yet meaningful messages through visual media. This accords with Mufidah's view that "The universal environmental values within Islam can easily be adapted into various media forms, provided the core religious message is preserved" (Mufidah : 2024).

The author's analysis reveals a fundamental alignment between the spirit of Islamic eco-pedagogy and the learning style of Generation Alpha. Environmental values in Islamic eco-pedagogy such as caring for plants, treating animals with kindness, maintaining cleanliness, and conserving water are concrete, relatable, and easy to visualize, thus matching their concrete and visual way of thinking. The core of eco-pedagogy, which invites learners to observe, reflect upon Allah's signs in nature, and take concrete action, also meets their need for active participation rather than passive reception of information. Furthermore, noble Islamic values such as compassion, responsibility, trustworthiness, and universal brotherhood can be crafted into emotionally resonant visual narratives that align

perfectly with how Generation Alpha prefers to receive information. Islamic eco-pedagogy does not demand complex theological memorization at the outset; instead, it begins with simple, actionable practices that align with their preference for uncomplicated yet deeply meaningful material.

Based on this analysis, it can be affirmed that Islamic eco-pedagogy constitutes a highly appropriate framework for educating Generation Alpha. This approach addresses the limitations of conventional learning that often renders religious and environmental subjects rigid, dull, or disconnected from their lives. By packaging the values of Islamic eco-pedagogy in ways that match their characteristics, education succeeds not only in instilling environmental awareness but also in strengthening a living, relevant understanding of faith that translates into real conduct. This also serves as a vital strategy to ensure Islamic values remain relevant and acceptable to a generation born amid rapid technological advancement and the global environmental crisis.

Effectiveness of Short-Video Content in Enhancing Ecological Understanding and Attitudes

Short-video content such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, and Facebook Reels has proven highly effective in improving public understanding (cognitive aspect) and transforming attitudes (affective aspect) toward ecological issues. Studies indicate that integrating educational strategies based on digital visual content generates high engagement rates, ranging from approximately 8% to 12% far exceeding the effectiveness of conventional text-based media. Below is a comprehensive analysis of its effectiveness, psychological mechanisms, and strategies for optimizing short-video content in environmental communication. Mechanisms for Enhancing Understanding (Cognitive Aspect) Short videos employ a microlearning approach to convey complex information in small, easily digestible segments. Contextual Visual Simulation: Abstract concepts such as carbon emissions, the water crisis, or recycling cycles are illustrated concretely through animations or real footage. High Information Retention: The combination of audio and visual elements stimulates the brain to retain information presented in short segments far more effectively. Simplification of Issues: Transforming dry scientific data into practical daily guidance, such as proper waste sorting methods or energy-saving practices. Mechanisms for Strengthening Ecological Attitudes (Affective and Conative Aspects) Drawing on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theoretical framework, the experience of watching environment-themed videos acts as a stimulus that triggers internal psychological changes in viewers:

- a. Fostering Empathy toward Nature: Emotionally resonant narratives such as depictions of how plastic waste harms sea turtles successfully evoke deep empathy among audiences.
- b. Perceived Social Responsibility: Witnessing public figures or community groups (such as the Pandawara Group) carrying out environmental cleanup fosters both a sense of moral accountability and the motivation to participate in stewardship.
- c. Behavioral Intention: These shifts in attitude ultimately translate into commitment to adopting sustainable lifestyles, such as reducing single-use plastics or engaging in low-carbon travel.

Examples of Existing Content across Platforms

1. YouTube Shorts

- a. Kemenag RI / Bimas Islam: A 30–45 second video featuring Matoa tree-planting activities, with the narration: “Planting a tree is perpetual charity. The Prophet Muhammad SAW said: ‘No Muslim plants a tree but that which is eaten from it becomes charity for him’ (HR. Bukhari),” accompanied by verses of the Qur’an concerning khalifah fil ardh.

b. MIN 1 Gunungkidul: A finalist entry in the Ecotheology Video Competition, showcasing school waste management with the narration: "Keeping the school clean is part of upholding Allah's trust on earth," paired with before-and-after visuals of the school grounds and brief scriptural references displayed on screen.

c. MA Al Anwar Sarang: A short clip on waste sorting: "Nature is Allah's creation; let us not destroy it with litter (QS. Al-A'raf: 56)," showing students actively sorting organic and inorganic waste.

2. Instagram Reels & TikTok

a. Pesantren Hijau Nurul Ilmi: A 25–30 second video on converting food waste into maggot feed, with the narration: "In Islam, nothing is in vain. Even waste can become a blessing if managed properly as a manifestation of our responsibility as khalifah," displaying the process and final results.

b. Ministry of Religious Affairs & Adiwiyata Schools: The #OneStepToProtectTheEarth challenge, where students demonstrate ways to reduce single-use plastics with the accompanying text: "The prohibition of causing corruption on earth is Allah's command, not merely an environmental rule," with participation from thousands of madrasahs across Indonesia.

c. Metro TV TikTok: During the Bali floods, presenting facts about environmental degradation alongside the verse: "Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned (QS. Ar-Rum: 41)," which reached millions of viewers in a short period.

3. Facebook Reels & Islamic School Communities

a. Islamic School Environmental Care Community: A short video on water conservation: "Water is a blessing from Allah. Wasting it is extravagance that Allah dislikes," featuring simple animations and footage of students turning off taps correctly.

b. Zero-Waste Pesantren: Brief documentation: "Turning waste into blessings: our love for the earth entrusted to us by Allah," widely shared by parents and Islamic education communities.

General Characteristics of This Content are Duration: 15–60 seconds, aligned with Generation Alpha's attention span. Structure: Real-world problem + brief scriptural reference + simple solution + call to action. Style: Visual-dominant, clear text, concise narration, often accompanied by nasheed or soft background music. Core Values: Connecting environmental stewardship to the concepts of khilafah, amanah, the prohibition of corruption, and perpetual charity (sadaqah jariyah).

Short-video content is highly effective in enhancing students' understanding of environmental material rooted in Islamic values. Concepts that were previously difficult to visualize such as the impacts of deforestation or the sanctity of water as a divine blessing become tangible and easy to comprehend when presented through authentic visual footage accompanied by concise scriptural explanations. Laili and Alfurqan note in their study that: "Delivering material through short videos can improve students' memory retention by up to 65 percent compared to conventional lecture methods" (Laili & Alfurqan : 2024).

Beyond knowledge acquisition, short videos also exert a significant impact on shaping students' attitudes and sentiments. Heartfelt narratives and relatable examples drawn from their immediate surroundings can evoke empathy and a sense of responsibility. As emphasized by Budiyanto: "Video media does not only appeal to the intellect but also touches the heart, so that conveyed values permeate more deeply into the soul and foster positive attitudes" (Budiyanto : 2025). This is particularly vital in religious education, whose aim is the formation of noble character.

Ultimately, this growth in understanding and positive attitude motivates students to take concrete action. Content featuring peers engaging in constructive practices such as sorting waste or planting trees serves as inspiring role models. Students begin to realize that environmental care is not solely an adult responsibility, but a duty that belongs to them as the next generation. This demonstrates that this approach effectively bridges the gap between religious theory and everyday practice (Gunawan : 2024).

Challenges and Opportunities for Implementation in Islamic Schools

Despite its great potential, the application of short-video-based eco-pedagogy in Islamic schools faces several key challenges. One of these is the limited proficiency of teachers in designing and producing content that is not only visually appealing but also theologically accurate. A balance must be struck between entertainment value and depth of values so that students are not merely entertained but truly derive meaningful lessons from the content (Sugiyanto : 2024). Furthermore, the availability of adequate facilities and internet connectivity in some schools presents its own constraints.

To optimize the creation of ecological content ensuring that short videos are not simply scrolled past but yield tangible ecological impacts the following production guidelines apply. First, capture the audience's attention instantly within the first three seconds using striking visuals or rhetorical questions, for example: "The earth is dying, what is your role?" Integrate the Three-Pillar Approach: every piece of content must combine elements of Education (facts about the crisis), Emotion (personal connection), and Concrete Action (a clear call to action). Focus on replicable micro-actions: rather than only exposing large-scale environmental destruction, offer household-scale solutions such as unplugging chargers, finishing one's meal portions, or bringing a refillable water bottle. Leverage the power of music and popular trends by using trending audio or interactive features (such as pause-for-quizzes or environmental challenge filters) to expand algorithmic reach.

Existing challenges can be addressed through synergistic collaboration among educational institutions, the government, and creative communities. Enhancing media literacy training for teachers and developing standardized guidelines for environmental education content rooted in Islamic values will greatly support the success of this implementation. In this way, short-video technology will become a steadfast partner in realizing the vision of Islamic schools as centers for forming the character of faithful and pious guardians of the earth.

On the other hand, there are vast opportunities for further development. Islamic boarding schools and Islamic schools possess rich local wisdom and cultural values that can be elevated into distinctive content unavailable to other institutions. Wulandari states that: "Combining the local wisdom of coastal or mountain communities with Islamic values into video content creates a unique strength that reinforces both institutional identity and environmental messaging" (Wulandari : 2026). This can also serve as an effective form of visual da'wah for the broader public.

Overall, the author analyzes that the approach of eco-pedagogy through short videos for Generation Alpha is highly effective and relevant. This approach reflects an effort to unite two things often considered opposites: timeless religious values and dynamic digital media, to address environmental challenges among the rising generation. It not only effectively fosters ecological awareness but also deepens students' understanding of humanity's position as wise khalifah. Therefore, this study merits in-depth exploration, as it possesses robust theoretical foundations and broad practical benefits for Islamic schools in the digital era. Based on this analysis, it can be affirmed that

short videos are not merely supplementary tools, but a highly relevant pedagogical strategy for meeting contemporary learning challenges. They bridge the gap between the depth of Islamic eco-pedagogical values and the information-receiving preferences of the younger generation. Through this medium, Islamic schools can convey environmental stewardship messages in a more vivid, engaging, and accessible manner, thereby enabling the achievement of character-building goals including the responsibility of upholding Allah's trust on earth more optimally. The challenge now is no longer whether this medium is effective, but how educators can design content that is not only visually appealing but also ethically sound and capable of driving genuine behavioral change.

CONCLUSION

Based on the literature review and discussion presented above, it can be concluded that the short-video-based eco-pedagogy approach is a highly relevant and effective strategy for fostering ecological awareness among Generation Alpha in Islamic schools. This approach bridges the gap between environmental stewardship principles in Islamic teaching such as the concepts of amanah khalifah fil ardh and the prohibition of causing corruption on earth and the learning preferences of a generation that has grown up entirely within the digital ecosystem (Firmansyah, 2026). Short-video content that integrates religious scriptural evidence with real visual facts has been proven to deepen understanding, appeal to the emotional dimension, and encourage the formation of a more profound sense of environmental responsibility among students compared to conventional methods (Laili & Alfurqan : 2024). Although challenges remain regarding content-creation skills and supervision of digital access, this approach holds great potential as an educational innovation that nurtures a generation that is not only technologically literate but also firmly committed to upholding faith-based values and preserving Allah's creation. Drawing on the findings of this study, the author hopes that teachers and educators in Islamic schools will enhance their digital literacy and educational content-production skills, and develop short-video material guidelines that are both doctrinally accurate and visually engaging, so that environmental messages are conveyed properly (Sugiyanto : 2024). The author also recommends that school administrators and educational institutions provide supporting facilities, formulate targeted policies on technology use, and integrate short-video content into the Islamic Religious Education curriculum and environmental extracurricular activities (Firmansyah : 2026).

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