

Environmental Education in an Islamic Perspective: An In-Depth Study Based on Sufism

 Asma'ul Lutfauziah^{1*},  Aris Handriyan²,  Djoko Hartono³,  Fifi Khoirul Fitriyah⁴

^{1,4} Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia

² Pesantren Jagad 'Alimussirry, Surabaya, Indonesia

³ Institut Agama Islam Al-Khoziny, Sidoarjo, Indonesia

 asmaul@unusa.ac.id*

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Keywords:

Environmental education, Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*), Islamic perspective, Sufism study, environmental ethic

Abstract:

Environmental education has not been studied in Islamic boarding schools, so students do not maintain cleanliness and do not understand the meaning of environmental education. In contrast, environmental education is a teaching of Islam. Recently, much research that combines environmental education with Sufism teachings is still not widely done. This study aims to describe environmental education from an Islamic point of view, especially from a Sufism perspective. Qualitative research with a systematic literature review was employed in this study. Three steps consisted of planning, conducting, and reporting were geared to collect the data. The results indicated that 1) Sufism taught environmental ethics. As a result, students had more noble character because Sufism covered various aspects of human activities; 2) The environment functioned as a verse (a sign of God's greatness), as material for reflection (*tafakur*) to take lessons and media to fulfill human needs, as a manifestation of God's form, and as a means for God to introduce Himself to humans; 3) Allah SWT created his creation for two purposes. Those are a servant of Allah SWT and as caliphs on earth, so the people always seek knowledge to recognize Allah (*ma'rifatullah*); and 4) the scope of environmental education in the perspective of Sufism included the physical realm, the spiritual realm, the realm of sentences, and the nature of God's substance. Sufism is needed to establish human morals toward the environment so that humans sincerely preserve and do not damage the environment. This is based on the nature of compassion for the environment as a manifestation of the nature of the mercy of God's womb. The ultimate goal is that humans reach the highest degree, which is knowing God (*ma'rifatullah*).

Kata kunci:

Environmental education, pesantren, perspektif Islam, kajian tasawuf, environmental ethic

Abstrak:

Environmental education belum dipelajari di pesantren sehingga santri kurang menjaga kebersihan dan belum memahami makna environmental education. Padahal environmental education merupakan ajaran agama Islam. Pada saat ini, penelitian yang mengkombinasi environmental education dengan ajaran tasawuf masih belum banyak dilakukan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan pendidikan lingkungan dari sudut pandang Islam khususnya dari perspektif tasawuf. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif with systemtic literature review. The procedures consist of three steps. They are planning, conducting, and reporting. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa 1) ajaran tasawuf mengajarkan etika lingkungan agar manusia semakin berakhlak mulia karena tasawuf mencakup berbagai aspek kegiatan manusia, 2) lingkungan berfungsi sebagai ayat (tanda kebesaran Allah), sebagai bahan renungan (*tafakur*) guna mengambil hikmah dan pelajaran, media untuk pemenuhan kebutuhan manusia, sebagai manifestasi dari wujud Tuhan serta sebagai sarana Tuhan mengenalkan diri-Nya pada

manusia, 3) manusia diciptakan oleh Allah SWT pada dasarnya memiliki dua peran yaitu sebagai hamba Allah SWT dan sebagai khalifah di muka bumi agar manusia mencari ilmu untuk mengenali Allah (*ma'rifatullah*), dan 4) ruang lingkup environmental education dalam perspektif tasawuf meliputi a) alam fisik, b) alam ruhani, c) alam kalimat, dan d) alam zat Allah. Tasawuf diperlukan dalam pembentukan akhlak manusia terhadap lingkungan sehingga manusia secara ikhlas menjaga kelestarian lingkungan dan agar tidak berbuat kerusakan lingkungan. Hal ini didasari karena sifat kasih sayang kepada lingkungan sebagai manifestasi sifat *rahman rahim* Allah. Tujuan akhirnya yaitu manusia mencapai derajat tertinggi yaitu mengenal Tuhan (*ma'rifatullah*).

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1. Introduction

Environmental education is one of the subjects studied at the elementary school, junior high school, high school and college level. According to Stapp et al. (1969), environmental education aimed to establish knowledgeable students about the environment and relate it to environmental problems, solve problems, and implement solutions. Moreover, the four objectives of environmental education are: conveying information, building understanding, enhancing skills, and activating sustainability actions (Monroe et al., 2008). Environmental education specifically examines environmental problems both practically and theoretically. Soykan and Atasoy (2012) explained that environmental education is applied in real terms through two stages (theory and practice). At the theoretical stage, experts teach that an environment is a place that needs to be protected. Then, in the implementation phase, problems are identified, and solutions are proposed based on the knowledge that has been learned.

The diversity of environmental problems in Islamic boarding schools ranges from aspects of cleanliness, tidiness, and environmental sustainability, to infectious diseases. Rohman (2017) explained that the Fadlun Minalloh Islamic Boarding School students were taught about cleanliness, but cleanliness was still becoming a concern, as reflected by their dirty environment. Furthermore, Septiana (2010) contended that the students' perceptions of environmental cleanliness are in the high category. Yet, the participation of students in efforts to manage the environment of the pesantren is in the low sort. This phenomenon is due to students' lack of awareness and concern for environmental issues, the compulsion of students to implement environmental programs, and the lack of involvement of students in planning and evaluating environmental programs. Environmental education does not stop at aspects of environmental theory and the emergence of awareness but must go further on aspects of actual practice in everyday life (Hungerford & Volk, 1990). Wahyudin & Arifin (2015) explained that various unsanitary living behaviors can still be found in salafi pesantren in rural areas. The unsanitary lifestyle in the pesantren is caused by several factors, such as the habits and beliefs of students in interpreting clean living. The healthy living culture at the Assalafiyah Islamic Boarding School did not meet a healthy lifestyle. Moreover, the food was not hygienic (Ningsih, 2009). These unclean and unhealthy habits caused students to be exposed to infectious diseases such as malaria, dengue fever, and scabies (Hapsari, 2014). In conclusion, the santri in the pesantren pay less attention to cleanliness and do not understand the meaning of environmental education.

Ironically, environmental education is a fundamental teaching of Islam. As the word of God in QS. Ar-Rum verse 41 that there has been environmental damage on earth caused by human activities. The damage is caused by human actions that do not take care of the environment. The impact of the damage will return to the humans themselves. This phenomenon happens as a form of God's arrangement so that humans return to the right path, maintaining the cleanliness of the environment and preserving it. Actualizing physically and mentally kaffah Muslims is necessary to theoretically and practically maintain a clean environment in Islamic boarding schools. The actualization can be

achieved by a new paradigm shift using Sufism. Sufism is needed in Islam like the heart to the body (Bilqies, 2014). Sufism plays a role in cleansing the heart. It exudes noble character (Nata, 2010). Putri (2018) explained that the purpose of Sufism is to get closer to Allah SWT, to be a pious personality, to have good morals, and to be a medicine for human spirituality. Therefore we need a new paradigm related to environmental education from the perspective of Sufism.

Recently, research combining environmental education with Sufism teachings is still not widely done. Darmayanti (2013) explained that the concept of "Sufistic Environmental Theology" manifested mahabbah (love) in instilling a love for the environment. In essence, humans and nature (environment) are manifestations of God. Therefore, when humans love God, then humans should love the environment. The form of embodiment of love for the environment in the "Bahurrohmah al-Hidayah" Islamic boarding school is carried out by preserving forests, raising livestock, and farming. Lutfauziah & Handriyan (2018) stated that Allah orders people to pay attention to the environment, so the people may increase their love and get closer to the creator.

To be kaffah Muslims theoretically, practically, physically, and mentally, people need to maintain cleanliness and environmental sustainability based on love for Allah and make nature a means of knowing Allah (ma'rifatullah). Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a study on "Environmental Education in an Islamic Perspective," focusing in-depth on the point of Sufism view. This study aims to describe environmental education from the point of view of Sufism. This research is expected to provide a new paradigm related to environmental education about having a big task as caliphs on earth to manage nature and nature as a means of knowing God (ma'rifatullah).

2. Methods

a. Design and Procedure of Research

This research is qualitative research with a literature review. An in-depth point of view from environmental science and Sufism was conducted in this study. The research procedure consists of 4 steps. They are: 1) choosing a topic, 2) searching and selecting appropriate articles, 3) analyzing and synthesizing the literature, and 4) organizing and writing the review (Ramdhani et al., 2014).

b. The Source of Research Data

The research data were obtained from several relevant works of literature related to environmental education and Sufism. Sources of research data were taken from research journal articles and books. In addition, the sources from Google Scholar, corresponding with the research topic in the last ten years, were the set criteria in this study. There were three topics in this research. These topics included 1) Are there Sufism teachings related to the environment? 2) what are the views of Sufism on environmental education? and 3) what is the urgency of Sufism in implementing environmental education?

c. Reduction and Data Analysis

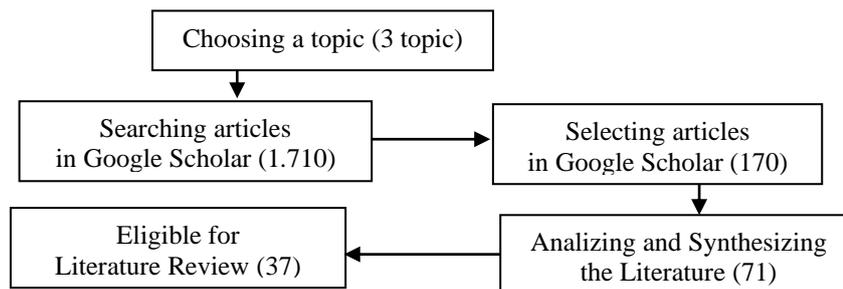


Figure 1. Data Reduction (Adapted from Ramdhani, 2014)

The literature was selected according to the research topic. The literature was reviewed and organized based on seven sub-topics that have been determined by the researcher. The data obtained were then reduced. In detail, the data reduction stage is shown in Figure 1. The data were analyzed by several analyses (phenomenological, functionalist, and critical). In addition, discussions were held with Sufism experts (Mursyid) at the Jagad Alimussirry Islamic boarding school, Surabaya, to find the true analysis results.

3. Results and Discussions

a. Sufism Teachings Related to the Environment

The word Sufism comes from the word shuffah (the veranda of the Prophet's mosque, which was inhabited by most of the Ansar's companions), shaf (row), shafa (clean or clear), shufanah (name of wood embedded in the desert). Linguistically, Sufism is a person's mental attitude in maintaining his worship and purity, living a simple life, being wise, and being willing to sacrifice for the good (Nata, 2010). Terminologically, Sufism is defined as a human effort to purify oneself through *zuhud* and knowing Allah as the goal. Sufism is an act of surrendering to the power of Allah and trying to internalize the power of Allah to themselves. Sufism aims to establish a level of human perfection and to obtain true happiness by adhering to the teachings of Islam (Tamrin, 2010). Sufism is a science that studies a person's ways to be as close as possible to Allah SWT (Nasution, 1992). The term Sufism includes aspects of philosophy and practice that lead to direct communion between God and humans (Ghosh & Mir, 2016). In addition, the practitioners of Sufism are called Sufis.

Sufism taught environmental ethics because Sufism covered various aspects of human activity in the economic, social, cultural, and political fields, including the environment. Sufism played a role in cleaning the heart. Therefore, it can emit noble character or humans become ethical (Nata, 2010). Sufism, as defined by al-Junaid, is morals (ethics), so whoever does more ethics becomes more pious in doing Sufism (Munji, 2014). This definition reflected the substantial relationship between Sufism and environmental ethics.

The Qur'an is clear evidence of the existence of Sufism in Islam because Sufism is the inner dimension of revelation. The Qur'an is a revelation that Allah SWT revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. The Qur'an is a divine word that can shake mountains and split the earth is an illustration showing the awesomeness of Sufism related to the natural surroundings. Moreover, Ar-Ra'd verse 31 and Al-Hasyr verse 21 indirectly illustrated that Sufism could function to change human civilization was a surprisingly shocking fact. There are two kinds of civilization changes: revolutionary and evolutionary. Revolutionary change occurs rapidly or massively, whereas evolutionary change occurs gradually. For example, Rasulullah SAW preached Islamic teachings, but the community did not receive his teachings well (there was a shock or rejection). Rasulullah PBUH. taught Islam to his families, friends, the broader community in Medina, and finally, to all corners of the world. Based on Al-Hasyr verse 21, people were commanded to think about natural events so it may increase their faith and get closer to the creator of nature (Allah). Therefore, Sufism indirectly taught humans to reflect on nature. The teachings of Sufism also discussed environmental ethics.

b. Environmental Education in Sufism Perspective

1) The Role of Environment in Sufism Perspective

The environment as a human habitat has an essential role in human survival. Allah SWT created the environment in a balanced state according to its size (Surah Al-Mulk: 3-4). The environment was created by Allah SWT so that humans can take benefit from it (Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 29). Tafsir al-Maraghi explained Al-Baqarah verse 30 that people can take advantage of the environment to support physical survival such as food or jewelry. In addition, humans can benefit from the environment

through knowledge or lessons. This is the human soul's need because humans can reflect on and take lessons from nature so they can know the power of Allah SWT as its creator. The arguments about the role of the environment in human life can be seen in Table 1. Therefore, the Sufis, in their spiritual ascent, never separated from the guidebook, the Qur'an, because many verses explain the importance of nature.

Table 1. Verses of the Qur'an about the Role of the Environment and the Role of Humans.

No	Name of Surah in the Qur'an	The contents of the verses of the Qur'an
A The Role of the Environment for Human Life		
1	QS. al-Mulk: 3-4	Allah created His creation (environment) in balance.
2	QS. al-Baqarah: 29	Everything was created to be used for humans.
B The Role of Humans on the Environment		
1	QS. al-Baqarah: 30	Humans as caliphs on earth to manage and care for the earth and life on earth with the signs of the Qur'an.
2	QS. al-A'raf: 129	Allah made humans as caliphs on earth.
3	QS. an-Naml: 62	Allah removes the difficulties and troubles of humans and makes humans as caliphs on earth.
4	QS. Shaad: 165	Humans as caliphs (rulers) and obstacles to give fair decisions to humans.
5	QS. Fatir: 39	Allah made humans as caliphs on earth.

Ibn 'Arabi stated that the environment serves as evidence of the greatness of Allah (verse) and to meet human needs. Environment as a verse means "the environment can be used as material for life lessons and reflection so that humans take wisdom (al-hikmah al-ilahiyah)". In addition, nature is a fulfillment of needs (Munji, 2014). Nature is a true teacher. It reflects that it is necessary to be careful and appreciate any changes to get a lesson (Harsono, 2008). This can be done with dhikr of nature or contemplation of nature. As hadith Qudsi stated, "I am a hidden treasure, and I long to be known, so I created creatures so that I may be known". The hadith explained that nature is a means to know God (Royyani, 2018). The famous expression of wisdom among the Sufis is "man 'arofa nafsahu faqad 'arofa rabbahu." It means whoever knows himself will know his Lord. Furthermore, Munji (2014) explained that the existence of God as the creator of nature could be seen from the uniqueness and regularity of nature.

2) The Role of Humans on the Environment in Sufism Perspective

Humans have two roles: internal (servants of Allah SWT) and external (caliphate on earth). The caliph has the task of managing and maintaining the environment and life, referring to the Qur'an, while humans have the task of caring for and managing the earth for the welfare of humanity. Humans can change the environment because humans are given intellectuals to think and distinguish between right and wrong, good or bad. The intellect is intended to make people do good deeds before Allah SWT (lillah) and do beneficial things for human life. Allah SWT created humans as caliphs on earth (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:30; Surah al-A'raf, 7: 129; Surah an-Naml, 27: 62; Surah Shaad, 28: 165 & Surah Fatir, 35:39). The caliph means the successive people, century after century, generation after generation who inhabit the earth, but a caliph is the person who will settle disputes between humans to decide the law for all events (Ibn-Katsir, 1998). The arguments about the role of humans as caliphs can be seen in Table 1.

This showed that: 1) humans had a position as God's vicegerent (substitute of Allah) to maintain, preserve, manage the environment and utilize the environment to realize the welfare of human life, 2) angels doubt that humans will damage earth in advance (Ibn-Katsir, 1998). In the perspective of Sufism, tawhidul asma means "all names in nature are essentially one form of the

essence of God." Therefore, Sufis do not do environmental damage and do nothing arbitrary to the environment because Sufis realize that the environment is a manifestation of the form of Allah (Royyani, 2018). The purpose of human creation is for humans to seek knowledge to recognize Allah (ma'rifatullah). Hence, do makrifat in this world so that Allah will identify you hereafter, creating humans and jinn so humans can know the Creator (ma'rifatullah). There are three kinds of human knowledge related to God: 1) God is one based on the shahada (knowledge of the layman), 2) God is one through the logic of reason (knowledge of scholars), and 3) God is one according to conscience (Sufi knowledge) (Nasution, 1992). In conclusion, humans can know God through contemplation or contemplation of the environment.

3) Scope of Environmental Education in Sufism Perspective

The environment is a natural asset (Mangunjaya, 2015). Law 32 of 2009 explained that the environment was a unitary space that included all objects, conditions, power, and living things (including humans and their behavior). The environment can also affect the survival of the organisms in it and human welfare. Hence, Soerjani (2009) divided the environment into three groups: the social, natural, and built environment, as observed in the Environment (Figure 2). However, Hamzah (2013) was divided environment into four: the artificial, the natural, the spatial, and the social environment. The artificial environment is related to human creations in changing the landscape. The natural environment includes living (biotic) and non-living (abiotic) things that are naturally available in nature, such as water, fire, soil, and sunlight. The spatial environment includes aspects of density, distance, direction, and location in the environment. Finally, the social environment includes human interactions.

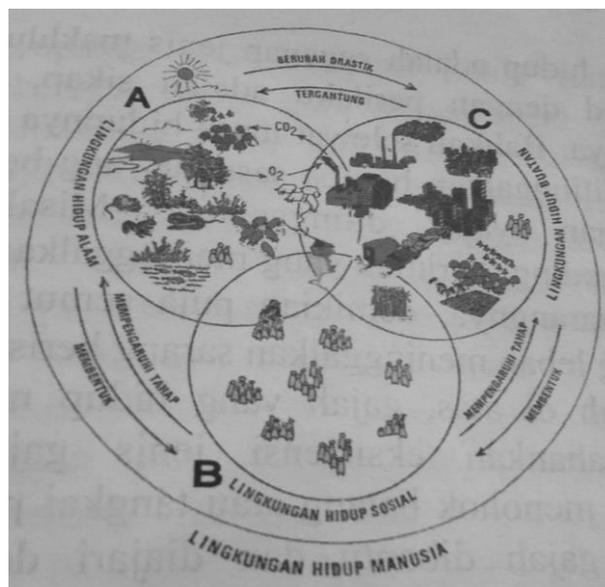


Figure 2. General Scope of Environmental Education (Soerjani, 2009)

In the Islamic perspective, the environment was grouped into four: the physical (material), the spiritual, the kalamullah environment, and the dzatullah environment. The physical environment included the elements of water, fire, air, and earth. The spiritual environment was inhabited by angels, jinn, dreams, heaven, and hell. The environment of kalamullah was like lauhul mahfuz as a source of messages from Allah. This divine environment could not be expressed in words, names, and only Allah knows best (Al-Jailani, 2002).

In conclusion, the scope of environmental education in the Sufism perspective included 1) the physical nature (social nature, natural nature, artificial nature, spatial nature), 2) spiritual nature, 3) the realm of God's words, and 4) the nature of God matter. The division of nature can be seen in Figure 3.

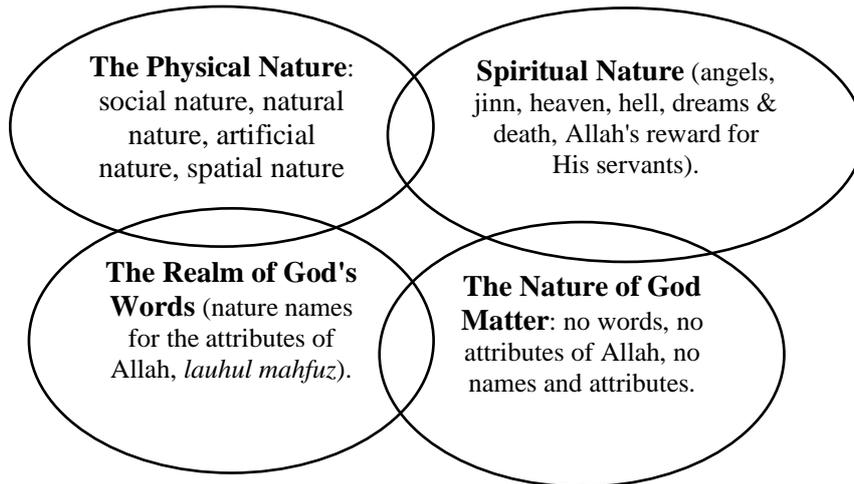


Figure 3. Scope of Environmental Education in Sufism Perspective.

Allah SWT created the environment with all its uniqueness, beauty, and diversity so that humans reflect on nature. Humans reflected on their natural surroundings to gain knowledge. Allah SWT created nature with various fruit such as dates, grapes, olives, mangoes, apples, cucumbers, etc. to make humans reflected the power of Allah through the environment (Surah an-Nahl: 11; QS. ad-Dukhan: 55; QS. Fatir: 27; QS. al-Baqarah: 266; QS. al-A' raf: 57 & QS. an-Nahl: 69). Moreover, the creation of various fruit with various colors and tastes as a sign of the power of Allah SWT. Allah SWT had the power to create mangoes with a sweet or sour taste, red apples, yellow apples or green apples. The natural environment included all types of plants and animals. Allah SWT created various kinds of plants (Surah Taha verse 5 & QS. al-An'am: 99). Allah SWT showed His power by creating colorful plants (Surat az-Zumar: 11), good plants (Surat ash-Shuara: 7 & QS. Luqman: 10), and beautiful plants (Surat al-Shuara: 10). -Haj: 5 & QS. Qaf: 7). Furthermore, Allah also completes the creation of nature with various types of animals (Surah Luqman: 10 & QS. al-Fatir: 27). Allah SWT created this as sustenance for humans (Surah al-Qasas: 57). Various types of plants and animals in the world for human use.

4) The Importance of Protecting the Environment in Sufism Perspective

Environmental damage could arise when humans do not use their minds properly, and humans follow their desires and greed. Environmental damage on land and at sea is caused by human actions (Surah ar-Rum, 30: 41). Allah SWT forbids humans from making mischief on earth (Surah al-Syu'ara, 26: 183). Allah SWT does not like humans who make mischief (Surah al-Qasas, 28: 27). Allah SWT gave some of the consequences of human actions (disaster) because humans have done damage to make humans reflect on the calamity and so that humans return to the right path or doing good (Surah ar-Rum, 30: 41). The arguments for environmental damage can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Verses of the Qur'an on Environmental Damage and Human Responsibilities

No	Name of Surah in the Qur'an	Contents of the Qur'an
A	Environmental damage	
1	QS. ar-Rum: 41	There has been damage on land and at sea due to the actions of human hands. Therefore, Allah gives some of the consequences of human activities so that humans return to the right path.
2	QS. al-Qashas: 27	Do not make mischief on earth because Allah does not like those who make mischief.
3	QS. asy-Syu'ara: 183	Do not make mischief in the earth, and do not make repairs.

B	Responsible Attitude towards Environmental Quality	
1	QS. al-Mudatsir: 38	Every human being is responsible for what he has done.
2	QS. al-Zalzalah: 7-8	Every human being who does well as big as zarrah will be rewarded by Allah SWT with goodness and humans who do bad as big as zarrah will be rewarded by Allah with ugliness as well.
3	QS. al-Qalam: 31-32	Woe to those who transgress.

Humans must protect and manage the environment. Humans will be responsible for these tasks humans (*hablu minannas*), and Allah SWT is the environment's creator (*hablu minallah*). Therefore, humans as caliphs on earth must have a responsible attitude towards environmental quality (Surah al-Mudatsir, 74: 38). Allah SWT will repay the good deeds of humans with double goodness. Allah SWT will repay the harmful acts of humans with evil and punishment in this world and the hereafter (Surah al-Zalzalah, 99: 7-8). The arguments regarding the attitude of responsibility towards environmental quality can be seen in Table 2.

c. Urgency of Sufism to Implement Environmental Education

Sufism is needed in Islam, like the heart to the body. In Islam, Sufism is the inner dimension of revelation or inspiration. Sufism can be explained from the perspective of three basic frameworks of Islamic teachings, namely Islam, Iman, and Ihsan (Bilqies, 2014). Sufism is a manifestation of Ihsan. Sufism is a part of Islamic teachings. Therefore, Sufi behavior must remain in the corridor of Islamic teachings. The Prophet's words in Sahih Muslim: "Should when you worship Allah as if you see Him if you can not see Him, (then be aware) He always sees you." As the spirit of a Muslim's actions, Ihsan includes outer and inner aspects. Faith is a form of belief in the heart of a Muslim. Islam is a manifestation of the act of birth. The combination of his loyalty will form a noble character. This is also studied from three human elements, namely the outer element (*al-zahirah*), the inner (*al-sarirah*), and the conscience (*al-damirah*). Outwardly can be beautiful with the presence of Islam. The human heart becomes beautiful with faith; conscience becomes beautiful with Ihsan; faith is studied in the science of monotheism or the science of kalam, and Islam is studied in the science of fiqh or the science of shari'ah, while Ihsan is studied in the science of Sufism. (Tamrin, 2010). This corresponded with the statement of Hartono & Lutfauziah (2012) stated that the main teachings of Islam were grouped into three parts: *aqidah*, *shari'ah* (*fiqh*), and *tasawuf* (morals).

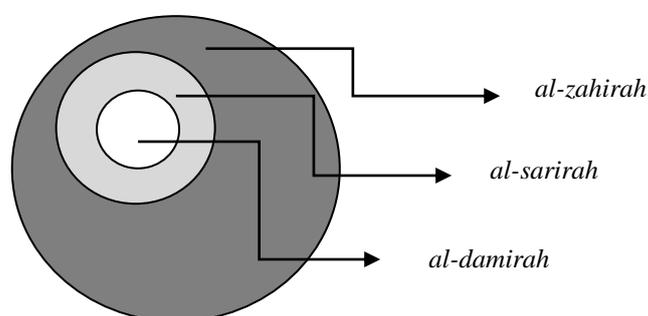


Figure 4. Three Human Elements in Sufism Perspective

Humans, as caliphs on earth, have the task of maintaining and managing the environment for the welfare of human life. Therefore, humans will be responsible for these tasks (*hablu minannas*) and Allah SWT (*hablu minallah*). According to Shaykh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani that the purpose of God creating humans is for humans to seek knowledge to recognize God (*ma'rifatullah*) (Al-Jailani, 2002). Sufism is needed in forming human morals toward the environment so that humans sincerely preserve and do not damage the environment. In addition, it can be clear that humans have a big task as caliphs on earth to manage nature and through nature until finally, they can know His Lord (*ma'rifatullah*).

Sufism is a means of achieving Tawhid. The creed (La ilaha ill'Allah) symbolizes unity in the universal sense. Sufis have realized the mystery of monotheism, understand the meaning of monotheism, and ma'rifatullah (Bilqies, 2014).

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, this study reveals that 1) Sufism taught environmental ethics because Sufism covered various aspects of human activities so that humans became more noble, 2) the environment functioned as a verse (a sign of God's greatness), as material for reflection or contemplation to take lessons, media for the fulfillment of human needs and for the Sufis the environment (nature) was a manifestation of the form of God and the environment (nature) as a means of God introducing Himself to humans, 3) humans created by Allah SWT have two roles, namely as servants of Allah SWT and as caliph on earth so that people seek knowledge to recognize Allah (ma'rifatullah), and 4) the scope of environmental education in the perspective of Sufism included a) the physical nature (social nature, natural nature, artificial nature), b) spiritual nature (jinn, angels, heaven and hell), c) the realm of Allah's words (the nature of the names of Allah, the attributes of Allah, and lauhul mahfuz), and d) the nature of Allah's substance (no words, no names, no attributes).

Sufism was needed to form human morals toward the environment so that humans sincerely preserve and do not damage the environment. Sufism was based on compassion for the environment and the manifestation of Allah's nature (Rahman and Rahim). The ultimate goal was that humans could reach the highest degree of knowing God (ma'rifatullah).

Acknowledgments

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