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Increasing Environmental Awareness in Pakistani Society by Incorporating it into Islamic Studies Curriculum in Pakistan

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Abstract

This paper aims to increase Environmental Awareness in Pakistani Elementary School Learners by incorporating it into the Islamic Studies Curriculum. The study aimed to find ways to increase the sensitivity of elementary school learners toward the ongoing Environmental Crisis. The experimental study was conducted for six weeks in a selected school setting in one of the sections of grade 8. The study was conducted to enable elementary school learners to see it through another lens, besides Science keeping our society's foundations in mind. The results of the students improved over time and, their keenness on environmental issues improved and, they became eager to cope with it on all fronts.

Key Words: Environmental Awareness, Environmental Protection, Environmental Concern, and Elementary School Curriculum.

1. Introduction

Environmental Education became part of the UK school curriculum for several years like many other developed nations of the world (Goodson, 1993). It was integrated as an independent subject under Environmental Studies or Environmental Science. Nonetheless, it failed to get the desired learners' attention and interest in comparison with the classical subjects (Layton,1972), this indicates, that learners' interest towards the topic is to be evoked. Therefore, later on, an alternative framework was suggested to bring positive changes in learners' behavior toward the Environment by Gayford (1996).

Keeping in mind, the foundations of Western Society, this alternative framework was suggested. Keeping in mind, the foundations of Pakistani Society, an experimental study was conducted, in which it was suggested to integrate Environmental Education into the Islamic Studies Curriculum, where learners can have an insight based on religion.

2. Statement of the Problem

Environmental awareness refers to making people understand the importance of the environment, how fragile and delicate our biosphere is, how to take care of it, and how to protect it from human evils. It is vital for our survival and existence. The environment has rights, that are given to it by our religion. Environmental decay is a challenge, and we must cope with it on all fronts. Environmental protection can be handled via scientific campaigns and religious campaigns, especially in the context of our nation. Religion is an essential pillar of our society and major practices are drawn from it. Therefore, to make people understand its importance, rights, and wisdom, people should be taught it predominantly in religious contexts besides scientific and logical contexts (Punzalan, 2020).

Religion is a guiding principle in our society. The majority of our people claim to follow it. Therefore, it is indispensable to help them understand the environment and its rights to religion. Islam is a predominant religion in our country. More than 90% of the people are adherents of Islam in our society. Islam predominantly advocates the environment and its rights. Islamic teachings are drawn from the Quran and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Numerous sayings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) emphasize environmental rights and protection. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has prohibited his followers from abusing natural resources and depleting them by indiscriminate utilization. He (SAW) was the proponent of environmental protection and conservation. He (SAW) advocated frugal and meticulous utilization of natural resources. Therefore, in light of the above discussion, it is vital to include different topics related to the environment, highlighting its importance, protection, rights, preservation, and conservation in the Islamic Studies curriculum at the elementary level in Pakistan (Begum, 2021).

It is vital to include it at the elementary level because students have responsive behavior at this level and are at the age of forming habits. Therefore, it is recommended to entertain such aspects at the Elementary level, which will become part of their habits and personalities (Sukma, 2020).

Not to mention keeping in mind our society and its mindset it is paramount to teach such concepts through a religious perspective to attain much-needed outcomes (Begum, 2021).

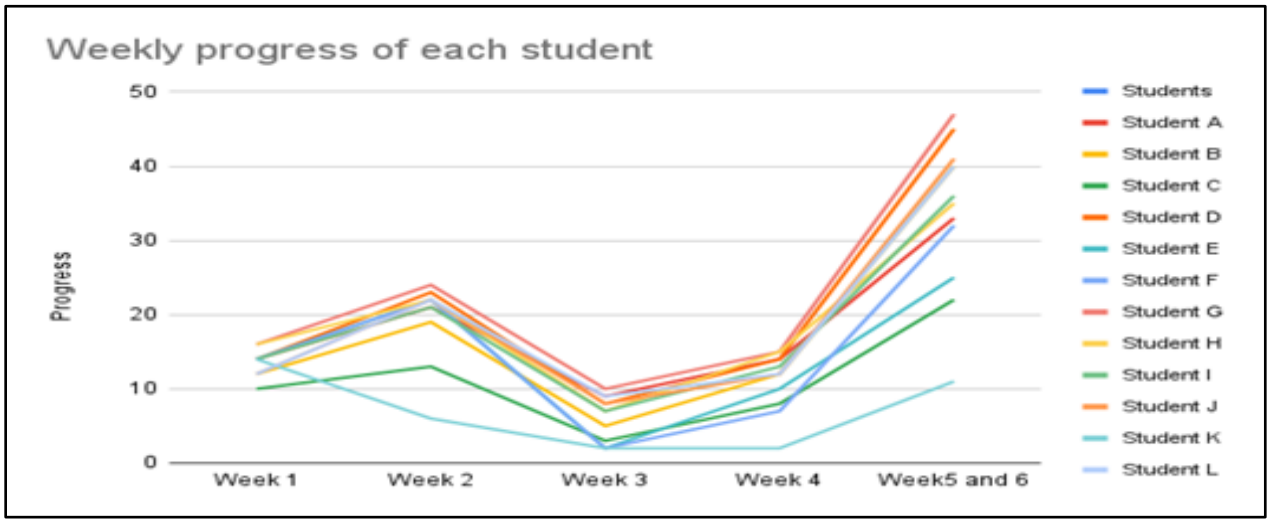
3. Methodology

An experimental research study was designed to see if elementary school learners' understanding and sensitivity toward the environment increase if they can see it through a religious lens. The experimental study was designed for six weeks, in which learners' prior knowledge, understanding, and, behavior towards the environment were evaluated, and then, after integrating

topics related to the environment they were taught through a religious lens. Throughout the research period, the constructivist approach was employed, emphasizing learner-centered, activity-based learning, so that learners can contribute to society (Huang, & Liaw, 2018).

4. Data and Findings

The data analysis is presented in the following sequence: Data analysis of elementary class learners' performance during the experiment and following it. Both formative and summative assessments were taken to get the true picture at the end of the experiment. Significant positive changes in learners' behavior towards the environment were recorded.

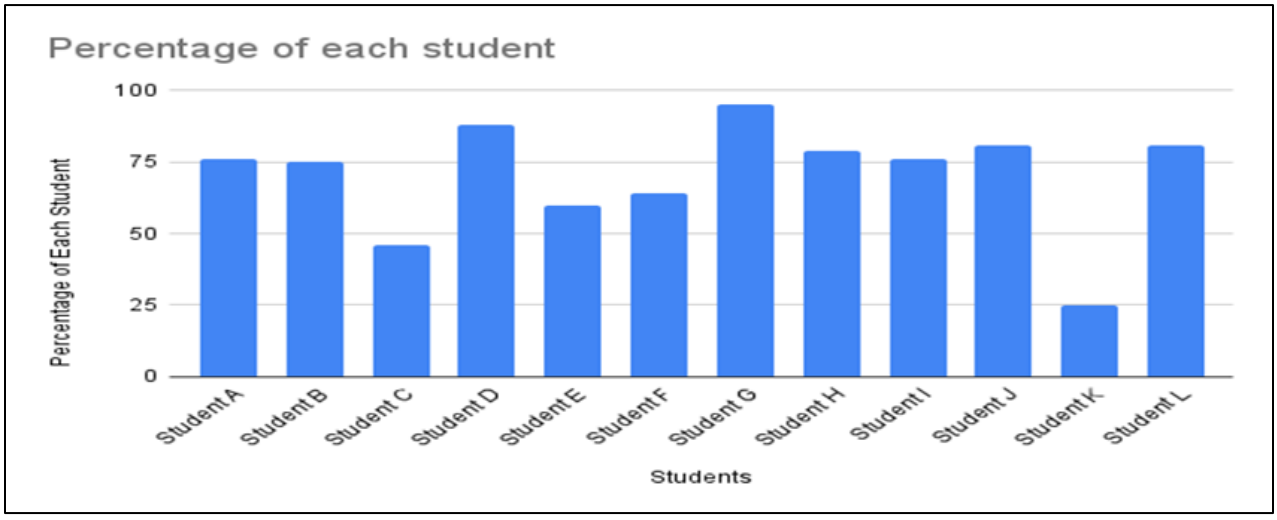


The graph shows the weekly progress of each student in a class. The y-axis represents the progress of each student, with a higher score indicating more progress. The x-axis represents the number of weeks that each student has been studying. Nevertheless, students' performance has shown some improvement by the end of week 6, which highlights the fact that students have learned something from the lessons being taught and have gotten an insight into how it can be implemented.

The student with the most progress is Student G, who has consistently scored high on the weekly assessments. Student D is also making good progress, however, slight fluctuations in scores are observed over time. Students J and K are making steady progress, nevertheless, their scores are not as high as Student G or Student D. Student H is progressing, nonetheless, scores reveal little more effort is required. Students A and I have shown progress by degrees, and their scores reveal that they need to work hard and need to be regular in class to benefit from the lessons taught.

Student B is making some progress, however, scores are not as high as Student G and D. Students F and E are showing irregular patterns due to their erratic behavior. Their scores are showing some progress, but their scores are not as high as other students even when compared with average students. Student C has revealed a minimal degree of progress, due to short attention spans and rapidly changing behavior. However, student K has not even shown meager progress during the entire designated study period. Both formative and summative assessments reveal student K, lagging behind the rest of their classmates, nonetheless, this can be attributed to the student's weak background knowledge, which may have slowed down his progress and may have been the reason for his being slothing in the class.

Overall, the graph shows that Student G is making the most progress, followed by Student D. Students J, Student L, Student H, and both Student A and I have shown progress fairly good progress. Student B, Student F, and Student E have shown some progress over time. However, Student C and Student K need to work hard to pace with their classmates. The graph can be used to identify students who are making good progress and students who need additional help. In the future, this information can be used to adjust teaching methods and provide the necessary support to help all students succeed.

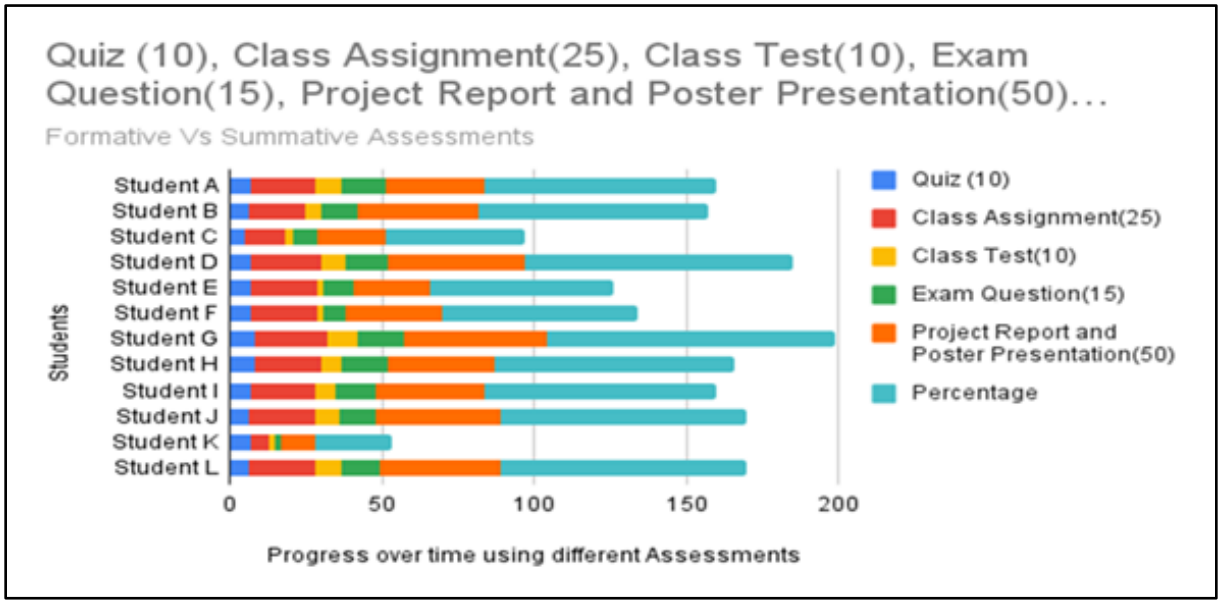


The graph shows the overall percentage each student obtained at the end of the designated study period. The x-axis represents each student using English alphabets, and the y-axis represents the percentage.

The student with the highest percentage is **Student G, who scored 95%**. **Student D** is in second place **with 88%**, followed by **Student J and L with 81%. Student H scored 79%**; **Student A and I scored 76%**, and **Student B scored 75%.** The remaining students have scored below

75%. **Student F scored 64%**, **Student E scored 60%**, **Student C scored 46%**, and **Student K** scored the lowest percentage, **with only 25%.**

The graph shows that there is a wide range of performance among the students. Student G has mastered the material, while Student K is struggling. We should work with each student individually to identify their strengths and weaknesses and provide them with the necessary support to improve their grades, nonetheless, struggling students need special attention and care. Maybe an extra hour or two can help one overcome his weakness.



The graph shows the progress of each student over time using different assessment methods. The x-axis represents the different assessment methods, starting with a quiz, followed by a class assignment, a class test, an exam question, a project report, and a poster presentation. The y-axis represents each student, starting with Student A and ending with Student L.

The colors of the lines represent the different types of assessments. Formative assessments are represented by blue, red, and orange lines, while summative assessments are represented by orange and a lighter shade of blue lines.

The graph shows that students generally performed better on formative assessments than on summative assessments, however, exceptions were also observed, owing to differences in learners' behaviors and styles. The reason why some students performed better in formative assessments than summative assessments is perhaps because formative assessments require less time and are convenient to attempt compared with summative assessments which are time-consuming, require lots of time, hard work, and determination, and sometimes end up being

cumbersome for the learners, in contrast to the erstwhile ones which gives students more opportunities to practice and have fun doing them. Nonetheless, it cannot be taken as a general rule as exceptions are always found.

5. Discussion

Figure 2 on the weekly progress of each student provides us with the following insight:

Student G: Student G has consistently scored high on the weekly assessments, indicating that they are making significant progress. They clearly understand the material and can apply it to new problems. We should continue to challenge Student G and provide her with opportunities to learn new concepts, even better.

Student D: Student D is also making good progress, however, scores have fluctuated a bit over time. This may be due to several factors, such as distractions in the classroom or changes in their personal life. We should work with Student D to identify any factors that may be affecting his performance and provide support to help him stay on track.

Student J and L: Student J and L are making reasonable progress, nonetheless, their scores are not as high as Student G or Student D. This may be because both of them were not working as hard as the other brilliant students in the class. We should work with them both to identify areas where additional help is needed and provide the necessary support.

Student H: Student H is progressing, nonetheless, scores have remained the same over the period. This was because student H did not read the provided handouts and relied mostly on class lessons. This means student H should be encouraged to read the provided handouts to improve their understanding of the taught concepts. We should work with student H to identify the root of the problem, as maybe back at home, student H indulges in other unnecessary activities and thus fail to reinforce the taught concepts. Necessary support should be provided to help further.

Student A and I: Students A and I have shown steady progress, and their scores have changed slightly over time. A little harder work on their part and additional support from the instructor can enhance their performance.

Student B: Student B has shown borderline achievement. This is because student B often misses the lessons and pays little attention in class.

Students E and F: Students E and F have shown very little progress. This requires both the instructor and learners to have a conversation and attempt to improve on the part of the instructor and the learners as well.

Students C and K: Student C and Student K have not shown progress, nonetheless, their progress may have been hindered due to some sort of erratic behavior, irregularity, distractions, and weak background knowledge. In the future, these students need counseling to observe positive changes in their behavior to get the desired learning outcomes.

Figure 3, the percentage of each student provides the following insight:

Student G: Student G has scored 95%, which is an excellent achievement. This highlights that the topics being taught have been mastered by the learner. The material provided has been read adequately and can apply learned concepts to solve upcoming problems. This shows that the learner's problem-solving and decision-making skills have significantly improved during the designated study period. Student G is a top student and should be encouraged to continue to work hard.

Student D: Student D scored 88%, which is also a very good achievement. Student D has shown an understanding of the taught topics and the reading material being provided and is making good progress. Student D should be kept on track and challenged to continue learning new concepts.

Student J and L: Students J and L scored 81%, which is a solid achievement. They are understanding the taught topics and developing an understanding of the reading material provided, and are making good progress. These students should be encouraged to perform even better, to get to the list of high achievers.

Student H: Student H scored 79%, which is a good achievement, compared to many others. This shows learner has developed an understanding of the taught topics and fairly comprehended the reading material being provided and is making good progress. Student H should be encouraged to put a little more effort into being among the top students.

Student A and I: Students A and I scored 76%, which is a satisfactory achievement. They have shown a fairly good understanding of the taught topics and the reading material being provided, but they could be making more progress. Student A and I should be encouraged to work harder and to seek help from the teacher if they find anything difficult or confusing.

Student B: Student B scored 75%, which is a borderline achievement. This shows that the learner has understood the taught topics and the reading material provided quite well. This shows the learner can improve but needs to work hard to improve one's grades. Student B should be encouraged to work harder and to seek help from the teacher if struggling.

Student F: Student F scored 64%, which makes one fall in the category of average achievement. The learner is unable to fairly understand both the taught topics and the reading material provided, perhaps, however, the score shows that the learner can perform better with diligence and hard work. Student F should certainly seek help from the teacher to improve grades.

Student E: Student H scored 60%, which makes one fall in the category of below-average achievement. The learner is lacking in understanding the taught topics and the reading material provided enough to serve the required purpose. Student F needs to work hard and requires additional help and support from the teacher to show noticeable improvement.

Student C: Student C scored 46%, which makes one fall in the category of below-par students. This reveals that the taught topics and the reading material provided are not being understood. Inadequacy and insufficiency in the understanding of the taught topics and reading material provided are evident. Sincere and tireless efforts are needed by the learner to cope with the impending stress.

Student K: Student K scored 25%, which shows serious deficit and inadequacy on the part of the learner. Unfortunately, the result shows that the learner has failed to comprehend the taught topics and the reading material provided. This requires school counselors and parents to pay serious concentration to the learner and work with the teacher strategy to have the learner get an opportunity to work out the solution for lagging behind the rest of the class fellows. Nonetheless, the learner needs to take charge of one's learning habits and should make sincere efforts to improve.

Figure 4 shows progress over time using different assessments and gives the following insight:

The graph also exhibits the difference in learners' aptitude. Some solve their problems using critical thinking, problem–solving, and decision-making approaches. At the same time, others solve their problems by being creative and innovative. Both approaches are useful and go hand in hand while looking into any problem that we come across. Nonetheless, the outstanding are those who use both skills simultaneously to resolve their problems. The solutions they devise are holistic and rounded in nature. Their rationality, logic, and thinking out of the box render them incredible solutions to their problems.

This suggests that different assessment methods are better suited for different types of learning. For example, quizzes and class tests are good for assessing mathematical skills, while class assignments, project reports, and poster presentations are good for assessing writing skills.

Fundamentally, the graph represents the progress report of each student in both formative and summative assessments over a designated study period. This graph has helped make an independent analysis of each student, in each of the assessments taken, as well as provided with an opportunity to make a comparative analysis too, before deriving the conclusion.

The formative assessment was used as feedback for all the learners during the designated study period. This helped the instructor, to get an idea of learners' interests, inclinations, and aptitude towards the study conducted. It helped the researcher to draw a fruitful conclusion at the end of the study period, as learners' behavior and styles can be gauged adequately if recorded from day one of the experiment.

The summative assessment was used to measure student learning at the end of a unit or course. It was meant to evaluate the progress of each student at the end of the study period. By thoroughly analyzing the results of each student, the researcher was able to derive concrete and tangible conclusions.

6. Conclusion

Figure 2, the graph serves as a valuable tool for us to use to track the progress of each student over time. By identifying students who are making good progress and students who need additional help, we can adjust the teaching methods and provide the necessary support to help all students succeed.

Nonetheless, the progress over time made by the students reveals the fact that environmental education should be made part of the Islamic Studies Curriculum at the Elementary Level to further our commitment to the environment as a nation. Additionally, many contributing factors influence the overall results of any student, which are being highlighted with each student in the aforementioned description.

Figure 3, the graph serves as a valuable tool for the teacher to use to track the progress of each student. Besides, students' regular result reports, this also highlights the fact that if environmental education is included in the Islamic Studies Curriculum at the Elementary Level, it will serve our purpose of better Earth, keeping in mind the results of those who have shown considerable progress.

Besides, the inadequate performance of a few students is owing to their negligent behavior or other causes, which do arise regularly, because the learner gets distracted, and not the curriculum.

Figure 4, the graph exhibited that most learners improved over time. This indicates that learners' progress is correlated with the bulk of information they have on the taught topics. As with time, their knowledge of the taught topics increased so did their interest in the taught topics and ultimately their results also improved. Thus, the graph provided valuable insights into the relationship between the learner's overall performance and knowledge of the taught topics.

Both types of assessments increased the effectiveness of the study conducted. Measurable scores and results substantially back the results drawn. Together, they provided the complete picture and reliable results at the end of the experiment.

7. Recommendations

The results of the research study substantively recommend:

1. Learners' sensitivity and, concern, and, their keenness to deal with the ongoing environmental crisis increased over time, as they studied it through a religious lens, as exhibited by their improved results, thus establishing the point, to incorporate environmental education into the Islamic Studies Curriculum at the Elementary Level in Pakistan.

2. Learners' performance improved over time, this also establishes the point that learners' were better able to understand the taught topics once taught through a religious lens, besides Science, thus accentuating the point, to incorporate environmental education into the Islamic Studies Curriculum at the Elementary Level in Pakistan.

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