



Learning Environment and Facilities in Nature-Based Schools: A Qualitative Case Study at Sekolah Alam Beniso Yogyakarta

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Article Info

Article history:

Received Desember 10, 2025

Revised Desember 21, 2025

Accepted Desember 27, 2025

Keywords:

Learning Environment, Nature-Based School, Learning Facilities.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the learning environment and facilities implemented in a nature-based school through a qualitative case study conducted at Sekolah Alam Beniso Yogyakarta. Unlike conventional schools that rely on fixed classrooms, Sekolah Alam Beniso applies a mobile learning concept where natural and public environments function as primary learning spaces. Data were collected through direct observation and in-depth interviews with the school principal. The findings indicate that learning activities are designed to utilize diverse outdoor environments, emphasizing experiential learning, learner independence, environmental responsibility, and social awareness. School facilities are not limited to physical buildings but include natural settings such as public spaces, roads, parks, and surrounding ecosystems. The study concludes that nature-based learning environments supported by flexible facilities contribute to meaningful learning experiences and character development, making them relevant for broader educational contexts.

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Article Info

Article history:

Received Desember 10, 2025

Revised Desember 21, 2025

Accepted Desember 27, 2025

Keywords:

Lingkungan Belajar, Sekolah Alam, Fasilitas Pembelajaran.

ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji lingkungan belajar dan fasilitas pembelajaran yang diterapkan di sekolah berbasis alam melalui studi kasus kualitatif di Sekolah Alam Beniso Yogyakarta. Berbeda dengan sekolah konvensional yang berpusat pada ruang kelas tetap, Sekolah Alam Beniso menerapkan konsep pembelajaran bergerak dengan memanfaatkan lingkungan alam dan ruang publik sebagai ruang belajar utama. Data penelitian diperoleh melalui observasi langsung dan wawancara mendalam dengan kepala sekolah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kegiatan pembelajaran dirancang untuk memanfaatkan berbagai lingkungan luar ruang yang menekankan pembelajaran berbasis pengalaman, kemandirian peserta didik, tanggung jawab lingkungan, serta kesadaran sosial. Fasilitas pembelajaran tidak terbatas pada bangunan fisik, tetapi mencakup lingkungan alam dan sosial di sekitarnya. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa lingkungan belajar berbasis alam dengan fasilitas yang fleksibel memberikan pengalaman belajar yang bermakna dan relevan bagi pengembangan pendidikan secara umum.



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INTRODUCTION

The learning environment plays a crucial role in shaping meaningful educational experiences. Traditional schooling systems often emphasize structured classrooms and standardized facilities, which may limit learners' opportunities to interact directly with real-world contexts. Recent educational discourse highlights the importance of learning environments that encourage experiential learning, contextual understanding, and learner autonomy (Kolb, 2015; Prince & Felder, 2018).

Nature-based schools offer an alternative approach by positioning the natural and social environment as an integral part of the learning process. Rather than relying solely on physical classrooms, learning activities are conducted in various outdoor and community settings, allowing learners to gain direct experience and practical understanding. Such environments support active learning, problem-solving, and social interaction, which are increasingly relevant in contemporary education (Becker et al., 2017).

Sekolah Alam Beniso Yogyakarta represents a unique implementation of this approach. Although the school has a physical location, it primarily functions as a meeting point rather than the main learning space. Daily learning activities take place in different environments, depending on learning objectives and contextual opportunities. This flexible use of space raises important questions regarding how learning environments and facilities function beyond conventional classroom settings.

This study aims to explore how learning environments and facilities are designed and utilized in a nature-based school context, using Sekolah Alam Beniso as a case study. The research focuses on understanding the role of mobile learning spaces, natural facilities, and environmental interaction in supporting meaningful learning processes. The findings are expected to contribute insights into alternative learning environment design relevant to broader educational practices.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design. The study was conducted at Sekolah Alam Beniso Yogyakarta to obtain an in-depth understanding of the learning environment and facilities applied in a nature-based school setting.

Data collection methods included direct observation and semi-structured interviews. Observations focused on learning activities, use of learning spaces, and interaction between learners, teachers, and the environment. Interviews were conducted with the school principal to gather detailed information regarding the school's educational philosophy, learning environment design, and facility utilization.



The data analysis process involved data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Collected data were systematically categorized based on emerging themes related to learning environments, facilities, and learning practices. To ensure credibility, data triangulation was applied by comparing observational findings with interview data.

RESULTS

The findings reveal that Sekolah Alam Beniso applies a learning environment concept that prioritizes flexibility and mobility. Learning activities are not centered on a fixed classroom but are conducted in various natural and public environments. Each day, learners and teachers move to different locations that are considered safe and relevant to the learning objectives.

Facilities in this context are not limited to buildings or formal learning tools. Natural environments such as parks, public roads, community spaces, and surrounding ecosystems function as learning facilities. These spaces enable learners to engage directly with real-life situations, including social interactions, environmental observation, and practical problem-solving.

The study also found that environmental responsibility is embedded in daily learning activities. Learners are encouraged to maintain cleanliness, manage waste responsibly, and respect public spaces. Such practices are consistently integrated into learning routines rather than treated as separate instructional content.

Furthermore, the learning environment supports learner independence and engagement. The mobile learning approach requires learners to adapt to different settings, manage personal responsibilities, and participate actively in learning activities. These experiences contribute to the development of self-regulation and social awareness.

DISCUSSION

The findings align with experiential learning theory, which emphasizes learning through direct experience and reflection (Kolb, 2015). By utilizing diverse learning environments, Sekolah Alam Beniso provides learners with opportunities to construct knowledge through real-world interaction rather than abstract instruction alone.

The concept of facilities observed in this study challenges conventional definitions of educational infrastructure. Facilities are not viewed merely as physical buildings but as functional spaces that support learning objectives. This perspective is consistent with contemporary educational research highlighting the importance of flexible and adaptive learning environments (Oblinger, 2016).

Environmental engagement observed in the school's practices supports the development of responsible learning behavior. Integrating environmental care into daily routines fosters meaningful values and practical understanding, which are difficult to achieve through classroom-based instruction alone (Chawla & Cushing, 2017).

Overall, the learning environment and facilities at Sekolah Alam Beniso demonstrate how nature-based education can provide rich learning experiences that extend beyond traditional classroom boundaries. This approach offers valuable insights for educators seeking to design learning environments that are contextual, adaptive, and learner-centered.



CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the learning environment and facilities at Sekolah Alam Beniso Yogyakarta are designed to support experiential and contextual learning through flexible and mobile use of natural and public spaces. The absence of fixed classrooms does not hinder learning but instead enhances learner engagement, independence, and environmental awareness. The findings suggest that nature-based learning environments supported by adaptive facilities can contribute meaningfully to educational practices and offer alternative perspectives on effective learning space design.

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