

Ecotheology in the Perspective of Islamic Education: A Conceptual Review

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ABSTRACT

Massive environmental degradation, climate change, and other ecological crises demand responses that are not only technocratic but also transformative in terms of values and worldview. Islamic education with an ecotheology paradigm can be an instrument of social transformation towards a more sustainable and ecologically just civilization. Therefore, this study aims to underscore the growing urgency of incorporating ecotheology into Islamic education in the Anthropocene era. With a qualitative approach and literature review, this work reveals that ecotheology in Islamic education requires a holistic and integrated approach, from the philosophical to the practical level. The curriculum, learning methods, and the role of educators must be aligned to create a transformative learning experience. The existing challenges can be overcome through a comprehensive strategy and strong commitment from all stakeholders. Islamic education that integrates ecotheology will be able to produce a generation of Muslims who are not only individually pious but also have high ecological awareness and responsibility. They will become agents of change who can contribute to building a sustainable and ecologically just civilization.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The increasingly worrying global environmental crisis has prompted humanity to seek comprehensive solutions that are not only technical and economic but also spiritual and moral (Tønnessen, 2021; Dhanurendra, 2023). In this context, ecotheology, or ecological theology, has emerged as a new paradigm that seeks to integrate theological understanding with concern for the environment (Luetz & Leo, 2021). Ecotheology is a theological reflection on the relationship between God, humans, and the universe that aims to build spiritual awareness and responsibility in environmental conservation (Masoga, 2023; Runtuwene, 2025).

Islam, as a comprehensive religion, has a very strong foundation in building ecological awareness (Abdelzaher et al., 2019; Bsoul et al., 2022). Islamic teachings not

only regulate the vertical relationship between humans and Allah but also the horizontal relationship between humans and each other and the natural environment ([Wakhidah & Erman, 2022](#)). The concept of khalifah fil ardh (caliph on earth) places humans as managers and protectors of nature, not as exploitative rulers. The values of monotheism, balance (mizan), and sustainability (istiqomah) are a strong philosophical foundation for the development of Islamic ecotheology.

Islamic education has a strategic role in transmitting ecotheological values to the younger generation ([Hidayatulloh et al., 2024](#)). Through an integrative education system, environmental awareness values can be internalized from an early age, thus forming a Muslim character that is not only individually pious but also responsible for the preservation of nature. Islamic education that integrates ecotheology will be able to produce a generation that has both spiritual awareness and high ecological awareness ([Mohamed, 2014](#); [Hidayat, 2023](#)).

The urgency of integrating ecotheology in Islamic education is increasingly felt in this Anthropocene era, where human activities have become a dominant factor in changing the earth's system ([Ngwenya, 2022](#); [Fountoulakis & Alkhouri, 2024](#)). Massive environmental damage, climate change, and other ecological crises demand a response that is not only technocratic but also transformative in terms of values and worldview. Islamic education with an ecotheology paradigm can be an instrument of social transformation towards a more sustainable and ecologically just civilization ([Rohman, 2024](#)).

Islamic ecotheology is based on a fundamental understanding of the unity and interconnectedness of all of Allah creations ([Rasngat & Jusnaidi, 2015](#)). The concept of tawhid, which is the core of Islamic teachings, not only contains a theological dimension of the oneness of Allah but also a cosmological dimension of the unity and harmony of the universe. Everything in the heavens and on earth glorifies Allah in its own way, as Allah says in Surah Al-Isra verse 44: "The seven heavens, the earth, and all that is in them glorify Allah." This understanding shows that the universe has intrinsic value as a creature of Allah, which also functions as kauniyah verses (natural signs) that indicate the greatness of Allah.

The concept of khalifah fil ardh is the second pillar in Islamic ecotheology, which defines the position and role of humans on earth ([Shahid, 2020](#); [Rakhmat, 2022](#)). Khalifah in this context does not mean an absolute ruler who can do whatever he wants with nature, but rather a representative or manager who is responsible to Allah. The duties of the khalifah include aspects of imarah (prospering) and hirasah (guarding) the earth. This concept contains a very heavy dimension of trust, as mentioned in Surah Al-Ahzab verse 72. This trust is rejected by the heavens, the earth, and the mountains but is borne by humans.

The principle of scale or balance is the third fundamental concept in Islamic ecotheology ([Abdelzاهر et al., 2019](#)). Allah created everything in the right size and balance, as He says in Surah Ar-Rahman verses 7-8: "And He has raised the heavens and set the scale (balance), so that you do not transgress the scale." Violation of the

balance of nature will result in damage and disaster. Therefore, human activities must always consider the principle of ecological balance.

The concept of haram al-ifsat (prohibition of causing damage) explicitly prohibits humans from damaging the environment (Fauzi, 2022). In Surah Al-Baqarah verses 11-12, Allah emphasizes, "And when it is said to them, 'Do not cause damage on the earth.'" They say, "We're just reformers," but they don't see that they cause harm. This verse highlights environmental damage as a significant sin that every Muslim should strive to avoid.

The concept of rahmatan lil alamin (mercy for all nature) emphasizes that Islam and its people must be a source of goodness for all creation, including the natural environment (Alhasbi et al., 2024; Ramadhan, 2024). This mercy is not limited to fellow human beings but extends to all living things and ecosystems. The Prophet Muhammad SAW said, "Whoever has mercy on the creatures on earth, then the One in the heavens will have mercy on him." This hadith shows that compassion for other creatures is a reflection of faith in Allah SWT (Haeriah et al., 2025). Therefore, based on the above concept, this study aims to underscore the growing urgency of incorporating ecotheology into Islamic education in the Anthropocene era.

2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with a library research approach. Library research encompasses a sequence of tasks pertaining to methods for collecting library data, libraries, reading, documenting, and analyzing scholarly materials (Connaway & Radford, 2021). In desk-based research, a writer must focus on several key features, including Initially, it is essential to determine if the author or researcher is engaging with textual (Nash) or digital material directly. Second, the library's data is 'out of the box,' meaning researchers mostly use library resources instead of fieldwork. This concept suggests that researchers obtain papers or data from sources that were already established before the initial field data collection. The library's data is unrestricted by spatial and temporal constraints. Figure 1 illustrates the flow of the library research model.

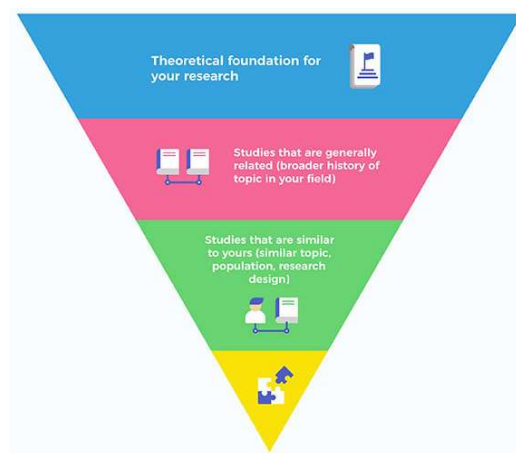


Figure 1. Library Research Model

We collected data from various sources, including books, psychology literature, and scientific articles. The analysis was conducted using a descriptive-analytical approach to relate how the urgency of integrating ecotheology in Islamic education is increasingly felt in the Anthropocene era.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Normative Foundations of Ecotheology in the Al-Quran and Hadith

The Koran, as the main source of Islamic teachings, contains many verses that talk about the universe, the environment, and the relationship between humans and nature (Fathil et al., 2015). Surah Al-Baqarah verse 164 mentions various natural phenomena as Allah's verses for people of understanding: "Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, the alternation of night and day, the arks that sail on the sea carry what is useful for humans, and what Allah sends down from the sky in the form of water; then with that water He revives the earth after it had died (dry), and He spreads on the earth all kinds of animals, and the circulation of the winds and clouds that are subject between the heavens and the earth; truly (there are) signs (of the oneness and greatness of Allah) for a people who think" (Annibras & Afham, 2024).

The Koran also explains the concept of ecological cycles and interdependence in ecosystems (Hayat et al., 2023). Surah Al-Hijr verses 19-22 describe how Allah regulates the water cycle, plant growth, and natural balance: "And We have spread out the earth and made mountains on it, and We have grown on it all kinds of plants according to equal measures. And We have made for you on the earth the necessities of life, and (We also created) creatures for which you are not in any way a provider of sustenance. And there is nothing but the treasure with Us, and We have not sent it down but with a certain measure. And We have blown the wind to breed (plants), and We sent down rain from the sky, then We gave you water to drink, and you are not the one who keeps it."

The hadiths of Rasulullah also provide practical guidance on environmental conservation (Abd Rahman & Jalil, 2021). The hadith on waste (israf) and excess (itraf) is pertinent to consumerism, a cause of environmental harm. Rasulullah said, "Eat, drink, give alms, and dress as long as you are not excessive and not arrogant." This principle of simplicity does not only apply in personal consumption but also in the use of natural resources.

Hadiths about water conservation This principle shows Islam's concern for the conservation of natural resources. Rasulullah prohibited wasting water even when in fast-flowing rivers. He also taught ethics in using water for ablution and bathing. Another hadith states that Rasulullah once reprimanded a friend who performed ablution excessively on the riverbank by saying, "Don't overdo it, don't overdo it."

The concept of *ihya al-mawat* (bringing life to dead land) in the hadith shows recommendations for land rehabilitation and reforestation. Rasulullah said, "Whoever gives life to dead land, then that land becomes his." This hadith not only talks about land

ownership but also contains recommendations for conservation and rehabilitation of damaged land.

The hadith about planting trees until the end of time shows the importance of forest preservation and reforestation: "If the Day of Resurrection comes and one of you has a date palm sapling in his hand, let him plant it if he is able." This hadith shows that environmental preservation is an act of worship that must be carried out until the end of life.

Principles of Ecotheology in the Islamic Worldview

The Islamic worldview has unique characteristics that strongly support the development of ecological awareness (Hasan, 2022). The first principle is monotheism, which contains not only theological but also cosmological dimensions. Monotheism in the cosmological dimension means the recognition that the entire universe is an integrated unity under the power of Allah (Khoiruddin & Zamroni, 2023). There is no dichotomy between the sacred and the profane, between the spiritual and the material. All human activities, including their interactions with nature, have a spiritual dimension and will be accounted for before Allah.

The second principle is interconnectedness and interdependence (*taraabut*). Islam teaches that all creations are interrelated and dependent on each other in carrying out their respective functions (Malik, 2023). Humans cannot live separately from nature, and likewise nature needs humans who act as wise caliphs. Awareness of this interconnectedness provides rise to an attitude of empathy and concern for all of Allah's creations.

The third principle is the principle of balance and justice (*mizan and adl*). Justice in Islam applies not only to relationships between humans but also to those between humans and nature (Choudhury, 2019). Excessive exploitation of nature is a form of injustice that is contrary to the principle of justice. Ecological balance must be maintained so that all creatures can obtain their rights to live and develop.

The fourth principle is trust and responsibility (*amanah wa mas'uliyah*). Allah bestows the trust on humans to manage the earth and holds them accountable for this trust (Amiruddin, 2021). Awareness of this responsibility provides birth to a careful and considerate attitude in every decision related to the environment. Any action that harms the environment betrays Allah's trust.

The fifth principle is sustainability and regeneration (*istidamah wa tajdid*). Islam emphasizes the importance of long-term thinking in every decision. The concept of the afterlife in Islam encourages humans to prioritize momentary profit and consider the long-term impact of every action. This principle is very relevant to the concept of sustainable development, which emphasizes meeting the needs of the current generation without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their own.

Implementation of Ecotheology in Islamic Education Curriculum

The implementation of ecotheology in the Islamic education curriculum requires a systematic and integrated approach (Karman et al., 2023). We can integrate at various levels, beginning with the educational philosophy, learning objectives, teaching

materials, and learning methods, and ending with evaluation. At the philosophical level, Islamic education must adopt a holistic paradigm that views humans as an integral part of the universe, not as a separate and superior entity.

In the Aqidah Akhlak subject, the concept of tauhid can be expanded to include an understanding of the unity and interconnectedness of all of Allah's creations. We teach students that caring for all of Allah's creations is a consequence of their faith in Him. Material on asmaul husna can be associated with the attributes of Allah reflected in nature, such as Ar-Rahman (the Most Gracious), whose mercy encompasses the entire universe.

The Fiqh subject can integrate Islamic laws related to the environment. The concepts of haram, makruh, mubah, sunnah, and wajib can be applied in the context of behavior toward the environment. For example, littering can be categorized as a haram act because it damages the environment and harms others. Saving water and energy can be categorized as a sunnah act or even wajib in certain situations.

The study of the Quran and Hadith can place special emphasis on verses and hadiths related to nature and the environment. Students learn to read, memorize, and apply these lessons to daily life. Interpretation of verses about nature can be linked to contemporary ecological phenomena.

The history of Islamic culture can present examples of environmentally friendly practices in classical Islamic civilization, such as sustainable irrigation systems, environmentally friendly architecture, and organic farming practices. Students can learn that Islam not only has a theory about environmental conservation but also a history of concrete practices (Rohman, 2024).

General subjects such as science, social studies, and language can also be integrated with Islamic ecotheological values. In science learning, ecological concepts can be linked to verses of the Quran about the balance of nature (Bsoul et al., 2022). Social studies learning can discuss global environmental issues from an Islamic perspective. Language learning can use texts related to the environment and nature.

Ecotheology Learning Method in Islamic Education

Ecotheology learning in Islamic education requires a variety of methods and emphasizes direct experience and spiritual reflection (Mohamed, 2017). Traditional lecture methods need to be combined with a more interactive and experiential approach. One effective method is outdoor education, or learning in the open air (Yang et al., 2023). Students are invited to make direct observations of natural phenomena while contemplating the verses of Allah contained therein.

Field trips to various ecosystems such as forests, beaches, lakes, or city parks can be a very effective learning medium. During the field trip, students not only make scientific observations but also spiritual reflections on the greatness of Allah's creation. They can do dhikr and tasbeih while enjoying the beauty of nature so that an emotional and spiritual connection with the environment is formed.

Schools can apply the project-based learning method to develop environmentally friendly projects (Hernández-Barco et al., 2021). Students can be involved in creating

school gardens, composting programs, waste management, or energy-saving campaigns. These projects develop practical skills and internalize environmental values.

The storytelling method can be used to convey inspiring stories about Muslim figures who care about the environment, both from classical and contemporary times. Stories about environmentally friendly practices in the lives of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions can be examples that inspire students to apply similar values in their lives.

We can use group discussions and debates to explore contemporary environmental issues from an Islamic perspective (Bsoul et al., 2022). You can invite students to analyze various environmental problems and find solutions based on Islamic teachings. This method develops critical thinking and argumentation skills based on Islamic values.

Reflection and journaling methods can help students internalize learning about ecotheology. We ask students to write daily reflections about their relationship with nature and how they can apply Islamic teachings in environmental conservation. This spiritual journal can be a medium to develop self-awareness and commitment to environmental conservation.

The Role of Educators in the Transmission of Ecotheological Values

Educators have a very crucial role in transmitting ecotheological values to students. As role models, educators must demonstrate consistency between what is taught and what is practiced in everyday life. The credibility of educators in teaching ecotheology is highly dependent on their exemplary behavior towards the environment (Cholil & Parker, 2021).

The first competency that educators must have is a deep understanding of Islamic teachings related to the environment. Educators must master the arguments of the Quran and Hadith related to nature and the environment and be able to integrate them with modern scientific knowledge about ecology. The ability to bridge classical texts with contemporary reality is essential to make learning relevant and meaningful.

Educators must also develop ecological sensitivity, namely the ability to feel and understand the conditions of the surrounding environment. This sensitivity will help educators to identify the right learning moments and use the surrounding environment as an effective learning medium. Educators who are sensitive to the environment will be able to create contextual and meaningful learning (Reddy, 2021).

Teaching ecotheology also requires specific pedagogical skills (Rohman, 2024). Educators must be able to use various learning methods that are in accordance with the characteristics of ecotheology material, such as outdoor learning, project-based learning, and reflective learning. The ability to integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of ecotheology learning is very important to achieving holistic learning goals.

The role as a spiritual facilitator is also crucial for educators in ecotheology learning (Milton, 2023). Educators must be able to guide students to develop a spiritual connection with nature and find spiritual meaning in every interaction with the environment. This requires the ability to create a sacred and meaningful learning atmosphere.

Educators also act as agents of change who can inspire students to become environmental activists based on Islamic values (Begum et al., 2021). Through inspiring and transformative learning, educators can raise students' awareness and commitment to be actively involved in the environmental conservation movement.

Implementation Challenges and Barriers

The implementation of ecotheology in Islamic education faces various challenges and obstacles that need to be systematically identified and addressed (Mohamed, 2014). The first challenge is the lack of a comprehensive understanding of ecotheology among educators and managers of Islamic education. Many educators still view environmental issues as the domain of science and technology alone, without considering their spiritual and theological dimensions.

The second challenge is related to the curriculum, which is still fragmented and not yet integrated. Religious subjects are often taught separately from general subjects, making it difficult to integrate ecotheological values holistically. The rigid and overly dense curriculum structure is also an obstacle to accommodating new materials on ecotheology.

Limited resources and facilities are also significant challenges. Many Islamic schools do not yet have adequate facilities for outdoor learning or environmentally friendly practices (Yusuf, 2024). Budget constraints also hamper the development of ecotheology programs that require investment in infrastructure and training.

The increasingly strong culture of consumerism and materialism in society is also a major challenge. Students are often exposed to consumerist values through the media and social environment, which are contrary to the values of simplicity and sustainability taught in Islamic ecotheology. Addressing these negative influences requires a comprehensive and sustainable strategy.

Lack of support from parents and the community can also be an obstacle. If ecotheological values taught in schools aren't supported at home and in the community, learning will be ineffective. Synergy between schools, families, and communities is needed to create an environment that supports the internalization of ecotheological values (Cholil & Parker, 2021).

Resistance to change also often arises from various parties who feel comfortable with the existing system. Changing the educational paradigm requires a long time and strong commitment from all stakeholders. Lack of political will from policymakers can also be a significant obstacle.

Ecotheology Development Strategy in Islamic Education

To overcome these challenges, we need a comprehensive and systematic strategy to develop ecotheology in Islamic education. The first strategy is the development of human resources through training programs and continuing education for educators. Training programs should cover the theological, pedagogical, and practical aspects of Islamic ecotheology. Collaboration with universities and research institutions can enrich the training programs offered.

The second strategy is the revision and development of an integrated curriculum. To identify entry points for ecotheology integration, a comprehensive review of the Islamic education curriculum is necessary. The development of teaching materials and learning media that are specific to Islamic ecotheology is also an important priority.

The development of infrastructure and supporting facilities is the third strategy that is no less important. Islamic schools need to develop a green campus that can become a laboratory for learning ecotheology (Karman et al., 2023). Facilities such as school gardens, waste management systems, and environmentally friendly technology can be effective learning media.

The fourth strategy is the development of partnerships with various parties, including environmental organizations, research institutions, and local communities. These partnerships can enrich learning resources and provide opportunities for students to be involved in real environmental conservation programs.

Campaigns and outreach to the wider community are also important strategies. We need to educate the public about the importance of Islamic ecotheology and how they can contribute to its implementation (Rohman, 2024). Social media and digital platforms can be utilized to expand the reach of socialization.

The development of a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system will help in measuring the effectiveness of ecotheology implementation. Clear indicators need to be developed to measure the achievement of learning objectives and changes in student behavior toward the environment.

4. CONCLUSION

In the context of Islamic education, ecotheology presents a crucial and pressing paradigm for addressing the global ecological crisis. Islam as a religion of rahmatan lil alamin has a strong theological foundation to build ecological awareness and responsibility. Fundamental concepts such as khalifah fil ardh, mizan, and tauhid provide a solid foundation for the development of an environmentally friendly worldview.

The implementation of ecotheology in Islamic education requires a holistic and integrated approach, from the philosophical to the practical level. The curriculum, learning methods, and the role of educators must be aligned to create a transformative learning experience. The existing challenges can be overcome through a comprehensive strategy and strong commitment from all stakeholders. Additionally, Islamic education that integrates ecotheology will be able to produce a generation of Muslims who are not only pious individually but also have high ecological awareness and responsibility. They will become agents of change who can contribute to building a sustainable and ecologically just civilization.

The future of planet earth and the survival of humanity depend greatly on our ability to change paradigms and behaviors towards the environment. Islamic ecotheology can be one of the transformative forces that bring positive changes toward a more sustainable world. Therefore, we cannot continue to delay the development of ecotheology in Islamic education.

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