

Reframing Islamic Ecology as a Transformative Ethical Paradigm: Khalīfah, Tawhīd, Mīzān, and the Global Ecological Crisis

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Abstrak

Krisis ekologis global menuntut respons etis yang tidak hanya bersifat teknis, tetapi juga menyentuh dimensi teologis, moral, dan kelembagaan. Penelitian ini bertujuan merekonstruksi prinsip-prinsip ekologi Islam sebagai paradigma etis transformatif dalam merespons kerusakan lingkungan kontemporer. Dengan menggunakan kajian pustaka konseptual-normatif dan analisis tematik terhadap sumber normatif Islam serta literatur akademik mutakhir, penelitian ini mengkaji keterkaitan antara *tawhīd*, *khalīfah*, *amānah*, *mīzān*, *fasād*, *isrāf*, *tabdhīr*, dan *ḥifz al-bī'ah*. Temuan utama menunjukkan bahwa ekologi Islam bukan sekadar kumpulan pesan moral yang terpisah, melainkan paradigma teosentris dan berbasis tanggung jawab yang menghubungkan pandangan dunia, peran manusia, batas ekologis, etika konsumsi, keadilan, dan praksis kelembagaan. Implikasi penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya integrasi etika ekologi Islam dalam pendidikan Islam, tata kelola pesantren dan masjid, kebijakan publik, serta gerakan lingkungan berbasis komunitas.

Kata Kunci: ekologi Islam; krisis ekologis; tawhīd; khalīfah; ḥifz al-bī'ah; etika lingkungan.

Abstract

The global ecological crisis requires an ethical response that goes beyond technical solutions and addresses theological, moral, and institutional dimensions. This study aims to reconstruct Islamic ecological principles as a transformative ethical paradigm for responding to contemporary environmental degradation. Using a conceptual-normative literature review and thematic analysis of Islamic normative sources and recent academic literature, this study examines the interconnection among *tawhīd*, *khalīfah*, *amānah*, *mīzān*, *fasād*, *isrāf*, *tabdhīr*, and *ḥifz al-bī'ah*. The main finding shows that Islamic ecology is not a collection of isolated moral messages, but a theocentric and responsibility-centred paradigm that links worldview, human agency, ecological limits, consumption ethics, justice, and institutional praxis. The study implies that Islamic environmental discourse should move beyond doctrinal affirmation toward practical integration in Islamic education, pesantren and mosque governance, public policy, and community-based ecological movements.

Keywords: Islamic ecology; ecological crisis; tawhīd; khalīfah; ḥifz al-bī'ah; environmental ethics.

Introduction

The global ecological crisis has become one of the defining crises of contemporary civilization, as climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, deforestation, water insecurity, and unsustainable resource extraction increasingly pressure the Earth's life-support systems, intensify global warming and sea-level rise, and push humanity beyond the safe operating space marked by the transgression of six of the nine planetary boundaries (Forster et al., 2026; Richardson et al., 2026; Ripple et al., 2024). Ecological degradation is further intensified by chemical pollution, forest loss, water scarcity, and unequal patterns of global consumption, all of which demonstrate that the crisis cannot be reduced to environmental damage alone (Mo et al., 2023; Persson et al., 2022; Rosa & Sangiorgio, 2025; Tian et al., 2024). These findings indicate that ecological degradation is not merely an environmental problem, but a civilizational crisis involving knowledge, ethics, economics, politics, and culture.

Modern environmental policy has produced technological, regulatory, and economic responses, yet ecological degradation persists because dominant development models remain rooted in extractivism, consumerism, and resource-intensive production, showing that the ecological crisis cannot be resolved through technical efficiency alone but requires a transformation of values, worldviews, and moral commitments, including the role of religion as a moral and cultural resource for sustainability (Han & Dawson, 2024; Ives et al., 2024; Schandl et al., 2024). Within Islam, nature is not understood as a spiritually neutral object, but as *āyāt*, signs of divine wisdom, order, and mercy that call human beings to reflection, gratitude, restraint, and responsibility (Bsoul et al., 2022; Mohidem & Hashim, 2023). This theocentric view positions Islamic environmental ethics as a moral ecology in which all created beings belong to Allah and must be treated with responsibility, balance, and care (Abd-Elsalam & Binay, 2024).

Recent scholarship confirms that Islamic teachings provide ethical foundations for environmental sustainability by grounding ecological responsibility in the Qur'an, Sunnah, theocentric ethics, moderation, public welfare, and the protection of natural resources from exploitation and excess (Abd-Elsalam & Binay, 2024; Bsoul et al., 2022; Gulzar et al., 2021; Mohidem & Hashim, 2023). Studies on Islamic environmental education and eco-pesantren show that ecological values have begun to be integrated into curricula, religious culture, organic farming, waste management, and reforestation-based learning, although their cognitive, ethical, and practical formulation still needs to be strengthened (Albar, 2024; Lutfauziah et al., 2023; Rohman et al., 2024; Wakhidah & Erman, 2022). Applied studies further indicate that Islamic values can support green skills, sustainable behaviour, and waste-to-energy innovation, confirming that Islamic ecology is not an imported discourse but a renewal of ecological values rooted in Islamic normative and intellectual traditions (Derysmono, 2025; Fauziah et al., 2024; Muslih Hidayat et al., 2026).

Nevertheless, several limitations remain in the existing literature. First, Islamic ecological principles are often presented descriptively as isolated concepts without a systematic account of how they relate to one another. Second, the concept of *khalifah* is sometimes interpreted in a dominative way, as though human beings possess unrestricted authority over the earth. Third, Islamic environmental discourse frequently remains at the level of moral exhortation and does not sufficiently explain how theological awareness becomes educational, legal, and institutional praxis. Fourth, studies on Islamic environmental education show that ecological values are present in curricula, but their cognitive, ethical, and practical integration remains underdeveloped. These gaps require a conceptual reframing of Islamic ecology as an integrated ethical paradigm rather than a collection of pious environmental messages.

This article therefore asks: How can Islamic ecological principles be reconstructed as a transformative ethical paradigm for responding to the global ecological crisis? To answer this question, the article analyses the interconnection among tawhīd, khalifah, amānah, mizān, fasād, isrāf, tabdhīr, and ḥifz al-bī'ah. The argument developed here is that Islamic ecology offers a distinctive paradigm because it links ontology, moral anthropology, ecological limits, consumption ethics, justice, and institutional responsibility. The article contributes to contemporary Islamic studies, environmental ethics, and Islamic education by proposing a conceptual model that moves from theological awareness toward ecological transformation.

Method

This study employed a conceptual-normative literature review to reconstruct Islamic ecological ethics as an integrated framework for responding to the global ecological crisis. This design was selected because the article does not aim to measure environmental behaviour empirically, but to analyse, organise, and synthesise key Islamic ecological concepts into a coherent conceptual model. A conceptual review is appropriate for studies that seek to clarify relationships among concepts, develop theoretical propositions, and construct analytical models from existing bodies of knowledge (Jaakkola, 2020; Snyder, 2019). In this article, the conceptual review was combined with thematic textual analysis because the study draws on both Islamic normative sources and contemporary academic literature.

The primary normative corpus consisted of selected Qur'anic verses related to creation, human responsibility, ecological balance, corruption, moderation, and accountability, particularly Q. 2:30, Q. 6:165, Q. 7:56, Q. 30:41, Q. 33:72, and Q. 55:7-9. These verses were read thematically to identify the ethical grammar through which the Qur'an frames the relationship among Allah, human beings, and the earth. The analysis did not provide a detailed philological tafsīr of each verse; rather, it focused on how key Qur'anic concepts constitute a normative framework for ecological responsibility. The secondary corpus consisted of peer-reviewed academic literature published mainly between 2021 and 2026 on Islamic environmental ethics, eco-theology, Islamic environmental education, sustainability, environmental health, maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, and the global ecological crisis.

The literature was selected through purposive academic sampling. The inclusion criteria were: articles or scholarly works that directly discuss Islamic environmental ethics, eco-theology, ecological education, sustainability, environmental responsibility, or global ecological crisis; publications that provide conceptual, theoretical, or empirical relevance to the reconstruction of Islamic ecological ethics; and recent works published mainly within the last five years. The exclusion criteria were: writings that discuss environmental issues without a clear conceptual link to Islamic ethics or sustainability, popular non-academic materials, and sources that do not contribute directly to the analytical framework of the article. This selection strategy allowed the review to remain focused on conceptual relevance rather than exhaustive coverage.

The analysis proceeded through four stages. First, key Islamic ecological concepts were identified from the normative corpus, namely tawhīd, āyāt, khalifah, amānah, mizān, fasād, isrāf, tabdhīr, and ḥifz al-bī'ah. Second, these concepts were coded thematically by examining their ethical meanings and ecological implications. The coding process followed the logic of thematic analysis, in which recurring concepts were organised into interpretive themes rather than treated as isolated textual fragments (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Byrne, 2022). Third, the identified concepts were compared with contemporary sustainability concerns, including planetary boundaries, climate change, environmental health, ecological justice, and sustainable consumption. Fourth, the concepts were synthesized into five analytical dimensions: ontology, moral anthropology, normative limits,

consumption ethics, and institutional praxis. This synthesis enabled the article to move beyond descriptive theological exposition toward a conceptual model of Islamic ecological transformation.

To strengthen analytical trustworthiness, the study applied three strategies. First, conceptual consistency was maintained by linking each Islamic concept to its ethical meaning and ecological implication. Second, source triangulation was used by comparing Qur'anic concepts with contemporary literature on Islamic environmental ethics, sustainability, and environmental education. Third, analytical transparency was ensured by presenting the conceptual categories in an explicit framework, allowing readers to evaluate how the article moves from textual interpretation to theoretical synthesis. The resulting framework is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Analytical framework of Islamic ecological ethics

Dimension	Key Islamic concept	Ethical meaning	Ecological implication
Ontology	Tawhīd and āyāt	Creation belongs to Allah and reflects divine order	Nature has moral and spiritual significance beyond economic utility
Moral anthropology	Khalifah and amānah	Human beings are accountable trustees, not absolute owners	Environmental stewardship becomes a religious and ethical duty
Normative limits	Mizān and prohibition of fasād	Balance must be preserved, and corruption must be prevented	Ecological boundaries, conservation, and anti-destruction norms are required
Consumption ethics	Isrāf and tabdhīr	Excess and waste contradict Islamic moderation	Sustainable lifestyles and resource restraint are moral obligations
Institutional praxis	Ḥifz al-bī'ah	Environmental protection is integral to public benefit and maqāṣid	Islamic education, law, policy, and religious institutions should operationalize ecological ethics

Results and Discussion

From Dominion to Trusteeship: Reinterpreting Khalifah

The concept of *khalifah fī al-arḍ* is central to Islamic ecological thought because it defines human beings not as absolute owners of the earth, but as accountable trustees within a divinely ordered creation. In Q. 2:30, Allah declares that human beings are placed on earth as *khalifah*, a concept often translated as vicegerency, stewardship, or trusteeship. However, its ecological meaning depends on how human authority is interpreted. If *khalifah* is read through a dominative lens, it may legitimise unrestricted control over nature; yet, when interpreted through *amānah*, divine ownership, and accountability, it becomes a moral mandate for responsibility, restraint, and service (Abdul-Matin & Ellison, 2010; Bsoul et al., 2022; Foltz et al., 2003).

A theocentric interpretation of *khalifah* rejects the assumption that human beings possess autonomous authority over the natural world. Nasr's critique of modernity is relevant here because the ecological crisis is rooted in the desacralisation of nature, where the natural world is reduced to passive matter for technical control and economic extraction rather than understood as a sacred order reflecting divine wisdom (Nasr, 1996, 1997). This view is strengthened by contemporary

Islamic environmental studies, which argue that environmental protection is embedded in Islamic normative sources and connected to human well-being, public welfare, and sustainable development (Bsoul et al., 2022; Mohidem & Hashim, 2023). Thus, human superiority in knowledge and agency does not create a licence for exploitation, but generates a heavier responsibility to protect life, maintain balance, and prevent ecological corruption.

The ecological crisis makes this reinterpretation urgent because industrial modernity has frequently treated nature as passive matter available for extraction, accumulation, and consumption. Islamic ecology challenges this assumption by positioning human beings as moral agents whose environmental actions are subject to divine accountability. Khalid argues that contemporary Muslim responses to climate change require a renewal of Islamic ecological consciousness and a reformulation of Islamic legal reasoning so that ecological responsibility becomes central to Muslim public life (Khalid, 2019). This argument is consistent with recent studies showing that Islamic theology and legal reasoning can respond to sustainability challenges, particularly water scarcity, environmental stewardship, and the ethical governance of natural resources (Abd-Elsalam & Binay, 2024; Gulzar et al., 2021). Therefore, deforestation, water pollution, excessive extraction, and wasteful consumption can be interpreted not only as environmental damage, but also as violations of the divine trust placed upon human beings.

This reinterpretation has important implications for Islamic education and public ethics. Learners and communities should not be taught that *khalifah* signifies human privilege alone; they should be taught that *khalifah* means accountable stewardship. Abdul-Matin frames Muslim environmental responsibility through practical commitments to reducing waste, conserving energy, protecting water, and reforming consumption, while Gade shows that Muslim environmentalisms are shaped by religious, legal, ethical, social, and cultural commitments to the earth (Abdul-Matin & Ellison, 2010; Gade, 2019). Recent studies on Islamic environmental education also show that ecological values can be integrated into Islamic religious education curricula, eco-pesantren practices, religious culture, organic farming, waste management, and reforestation-based learning (Albar, 2024; Lutfauziah et al., 2023; Wakhidah & Erman, 2022). Such perspectives can transform environmental education from an external sustainability agenda into an integral part of Islamic moral formation, with the goal of cultivating ecological subjects who understand environmental care as part of faith, worship, justice, and social responsibility.

Tawhīd and the Moral Unity of Creation

Tawhīd is the ontological foundation of Islamic ecology because it affirms that Allah is the sole Creator, Sustainer, and Owner of all existence. This doctrine does not only regulate ritual worship, but also shapes how human beings perceive the natural world as part of a divinely ordered creation. Recent studies on Islamic environmental ethics explain that ecological responsibility in Islam is rooted in the Qur'an, Sunnah, theocentric ethics, moderation, and the protection of natural resources from exploitation and excess (Bsoul et al., 2022; Gulzar et al., 2021). Therefore, nature cannot be treated as morally empty matter or merely as an economic resource, but as *āyāt Allāh* that call human beings to humility, gratitude, restraint, and responsibility.

The ecological significance of *tawhīd* lies in its ability to resist the fragmentation of ethics. Modern ecological degradation often emerges from separating economy from ecology, technology from morality, and human welfare from the welfare of non-human creation. Islamic ecology offers an integrative view by understanding human beings, animals, plants, water, soil, air, and climate as interconnected within one divinely sustained order. This view is supported by studies showing that

Islamic perspectives connect environmental responsibility with human health, public welfare, sustainable development, and the moral flexibility of Islamic theology in responding to contemporary ecological challenges (Abd-Elsalam & Binay, 2024; Mohidem et al., 2023).

The moral unity of creation does not collapse the distinction between the Creator and creation. Rather, it affirms that creation has value because it is created, sustained, and ordered by Allah. This produces an ethic of reverence without pantheism: environmental care is not based on the worship of nature, but on obedience to the Creator and respect for His signs. Recent scholarship on religion and nature also shows that religious worldviews shape how communities value nature, define moral obligation, and construct ecological responsibility (Ives et al., 2024; Rohman et al., 2024). In this sense, ecological responsibility becomes a practical expression of *tawhīd*, not an optional addition to religious life.

The transformative potential of *tawhīd* lies in its capacity to reshape human perception and desire. A society that views nature only as raw material will tend toward extraction, consumption, and accumulation, whereas a society that understands nature as *āyāt Allāh* is more likely to cultivate restraint, gratitude, and care. Studies on Islamic environmental education show that ecological values need to be integrated cognitively, ethically, and practically into Islamic learning so that environmental care becomes part of moral formation rather than an external sustainability agenda (Rohman et al., 2024; Wakhidah & Erman, 2022). Thus, Islamic ecological transformation requires more than environmental information; it requires a moral conversion from seeing nature as commodity to seeing it as trust, sign, and part of the created order entrusted to human responsibility.

Mizān, Fasād, and the Ethics of Ecological Boundaries

The Qur'anic concept of *mizān* provides an ethical language for ecological boundaries by affirming that creation is structured through balance, proportion, and order. In ecological terms, *mizān* means that the earth is not infinitely elastic; ecosystems have thresholds that can be damaged by excessive extraction, pollution, land conversion, and waste production. This principle resonates with contemporary sustainability science, which shows that ecological stability depends on keeping human activity within biophysical limits (Richardson et al., 2026; Tian et al., 2024). Thus, *mizān* allows Islamic ecology to translate scientific warnings about planetary limits into a moral and theological vocabulary meaningful for Muslim communities.

The prohibition of *fasād* complements *mizān* by morally naming practices that destroy the conditions of life. In a contemporary ecological reading, *fasād* includes deforestation, toxic pollution, uncontrolled mining, carbon-intensive development, biodiversity destruction, and the normalisation of waste. Recent studies on Eco-Islam and Islamic environmental ethics show that Islamic concepts such as *amānah*, *khalifah*, moderation, justice, and public responsibility can function as culturally embedded ethical resources for responding to ecological harm (Alhinai & Ringer, 2025; Basri et al., 2025). Environmental destruction, therefore, is not merely an unintended side effect of progress, but a violation of balance, trust, and justice.

The concepts of *mizān* and *fasād* also expand Islamic ecology from individual morality to ecological justice and institutional responsibility. Environmental harm is rarely distributed equally; vulnerable communities and future generations often bear the heaviest burdens while contributing least to ecological degradation. For this reason, *ḥifz al-bī'ah* should be understood as part of the public objectives of Islamic law because environmental protection sustains life, health, wealth, social continuity, and religious responsibility (Azmin Shompa et al., 2024; Khuluq & Asmuni, 2025). In this framework, ecological balance becomes not only a spiritual value, but also a legal, educational, and policy concern.

Isrāf, Tabdhīr, and the Critique of Consumerist Modernity

A distinctive contribution of Islamic ecology lies in its critique of excess. The Qur'anic vocabulary of *isrāf* and *tabdhīr* challenges lifestyles that normalise overconsumption, waste, and unlimited material accumulation. These concepts are highly relevant because ecological degradation is driven not only by production systems, but also by consumption habits, status competition, and resource-intensive lifestyles. Recent studies on Islamic ethical consumption and waste argue that Islamic economics criticises mainstream growth-oriented models for ignoring the long-term social and environmental consequences of wasteful economic behaviour (Ozdogru et al., 2025; Pusparini et al., 2024).

The critique of *isrāf* and *tabdhīr* strengthens the argument that technical efficiency alone cannot solve the ecological crisis because environmental degradation is also rooted in excessive consumption, wasteful behaviour, and the loss of moral restraint. In Islamic consumption ethics, *isrāf* refers to consumption beyond proper limits, while *tabdhīr* refers to the misuse or wasteful dissipation of resources; both violate the principles of balance, responsibility, and purposeful use (Abdelgalil, 2024). Islamic environmental ethics therefore reframes moderation not as deprivation, but as moral discipline, gratitude, and accountability before Allah, other creatures, and future generations. Sustainable living is consequently not merely an environmental preference, but a form of ethical obedience and social responsibility that rejects wastefulness and supports ecological preservation (Derysmono, 2025).

The critique of excess can be operationalised through everyday religious and educational practices. Waste reduction, water conservation, food moderation, energy restraint, sustainable purchasing, and responsible waste management can be framed as forms of ecological worship and public ethics. Recent studies on Islamic sustainable consumption and green behaviour show that religiosity, Islamic values, and ethical awareness can shape responsible consumption, green purchasing, and pro-environmental intentions (Nawaz et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2022). This shows that Islamic ecology becomes more effective when environmental behaviour is connected with familiar religious meanings such as cleanliness, gratitude, accountability, and avoidance of waste.

At the institutional level, mosques, madrasas, pesantren, universities, and Islamic organisations need to translate the ethics of moderation into concrete ecological policies. Reducing single-use plastics, conserving water, managing waste, improving energy use, and integrating ecological ethics into sermons and curricula are practical forms of Islamic environmental responsibility. Studies on *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and sustainable waste management demonstrate that Islamic institutions can operationalise ecological ethics through governance, education, and community-based environmental practices (Derysmono & Al-Kahfi, 2025; Shompa et al., 2025). When these practices become institutional habits, Islamic environmental ethics moves from normative discourse into transformative ecological culture.

Ḥifẓ al-Bī'ah and the Expansion of Maqāṣid-Oriented Ecological Justice

The development of *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah* as a maqāṣid-oriented concept represents an important contemporary contribution to Islamic environmental thought. Classical *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* emphasises the preservation of religion, life, intellect, progeny, and wealth; however, contemporary ecological conditions show that these objectives cannot be protected when the environment is degraded. Environmental destruction threatens life through disease, disaster, food insecurity, and climate vulnerability; weakens livelihoods; disrupts education; damages social stability; and endangers future generations. From a theoretical perspective, Auda's systems approach to *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* provides a foundation for understanding Islamic law as a purposive framework oriented toward welfare, justice, interconnection, and human flourishing (Auda, 2022). In the ecological context, this means that the protection of religion, life, intellect, progeny, and wealth depends on the protection of the environmental conditions that sustain them.

This theoretical foundation is strengthened by recent international scholarship on Islamic environmental law and ethics. Idllalène (2021) argues that Islamic legal traditions contain resources for reviving environmental responsibility through the idea of nature as a trust, while Gada (2024)

positions environmental protection as a moral and religious obligation within Islamic environmental ethics. These works provide the conceptual basis for reading *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah* not as an additional theme outside Islamic law, but as a necessary extension of maqāṣid-oriented reasoning. Therefore, environmental protection should be understood as part of Islamic legal-ethical responsibility because ecological destruction directly threatens the preservation of life, public welfare, and intergenerational justice.

Ḥifẓ al-bī'ah can be developed as part of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* because climate change, ecological degradation, and waste mismanagement directly threaten the preservation of life, wealth, progeny, intellect, religion, and public welfare. Islamic theology and legal reasoning provide a flexible framework for translating environmental responsibility into contextual judgment, sustainable governance, waste management, and ecological justice. In this sense, *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah* functions as a bridge between Islamic moral theology, legal objectives, sustainability policy, and institutional environmental responsibility (Abd-Elsalam & Binay, 2024; Khuluq & Asmuni, 2025; Shompa et al., 2025).

Nevertheless, institutionalising *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah* requires caution. It should not become a slogan attached superficially to environmental programs, but must be translated into measurable commitments. These commitments include curriculum integration, ecological audits of religious institutions, waste management standards, water conservation policies, community education, green campus governance, and advocacy for vulnerable communities affected by ecological harm. A maqāṣid-oriented ecology must also address structural causes of environmental injustice, including extractive development, weak regulation, unequal exposure to pollution, and limited access to ecological resources. In this framework, environmental protection becomes a matter of distributive justice, public benefit, and accountability before Allah.

The ecological expansion of *maqāṣid* also strengthens intergenerational ethics. Future generations have no direct political voice in present decisions, yet they will inherit the ecological consequences of current actions. Islamic accountability extends beyond immediate benefit because human beings are responsible before Allah for the effects of their conduct on life, community, and creation. Thus, *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah* offers a framework for connecting Islamic legal objectives with climate justice, public welfare, and responsibility across generations.

From Theological Awareness to Institutional Praxis

The strongest challenge for Islamic ecological discourse is not the absence of normative resources, but the weak institutionalisation of those resources in education, governance, and communal practice. Islam already possesses a rich vocabulary for ecological responsibility through *tawhīd*, *khalīfah*, *amānah*, *mizān*, *fasād*, *isrāf*, *tabdhīr*, and *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah*. Recent international books on Islam and environment emphasise that Islamic ecological thought should not remain an abstract theological discourse, but must be connected with education, law, economy, ethics, and community practice (Al-Daghistani, 2024; Gada, 2024). This theoretical position shows that Islamic ecology becomes transformative only when theological values are translated into institutional systems and social habits.

Recent journal studies strengthen this argument by showing that Islamic education can become a strategic site for ecological transformation. Eco-theological learning should not merely teach environmental cleanliness, but should connect Qur'anic concepts with concrete ecological problems such as waste, water scarcity, deforestation, pollution, climate vulnerability, and environmental injustice. Rohman et al. (2024) show that eco-theology can be integrated into Islamic religious education to strengthen environmental awareness, while Taufikin (2025) demonstrates that religious pedagogy can foster ecological consciousness through curriculum, learning practice, and school-based environmental action. These studies indicate that Islamic ecological education must involve cognitive understanding, ethical commitment, and practical environmental behaviour.

Religious institutions can also function as ecological actors. Mosques can model water-saving ablution systems, waste reduction, and environmentally responsible sermons. Pesantren can

develop organic farming, composting, circular economy practices, renewable energy initiatives, and ecological discipline. Madrasas can integrate environmental projects into Islamic character education, while Islamic universities can develop research, community service, and green campus policies grounded in Islamic ecological ethics. Recent studies on eco-pesantren show that Islamic boarding schools can institutionalise sustainability through curriculum development, local wisdom, environmental management, community participation, waste conversion, and student-led ecological action (Kejora et al., 2025; Lutfauziah et al., 2023). This confirms that Islamic environmental ethics becomes stronger when it is embedded in institutional culture, not only taught as moral advice.

A transformative Islamic ecological paradigm therefore requires three movements. First, it requires hermeneutical renewal through a non-dominative reading of *khalifah* as trusteeship rather than privilege. Second, it requires ethical renewal by linking faith with restraint, justice, moderation, and responsibility. Third, it requires institutional renewal through education, law, governance, and community action. Without these movements, Islamic eco-theology risks remaining a normative discourse. With them, Islamic ecology can become a socially transformative framework for responding to the ecological crisis.

This article formulates Islamic ecology as an integrated ethical paradigm that connects *tawhīd*, *khalifah*, *amānah*, *mizān*, *fasād*, *isrāf*, *tabdhīr*, and *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah* as mutually related dimensions of ecological transformation. In this model, *tawhīd* provides the worldview, *khalifah* and *amānah* define accountable human agency, *mizān* and *fasād* establish ecological limits, *isrāf* and *tabdhīr* critique excess, and *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah* translates ecological concern into maqāṣid-oriented public ethics. This framework shows that Islamic ecology is neither purely anthropocentric nor purely biocentric, but theocentric and responsibility-centred, because human beings have a distinctive moral role that remains bounded by divine ownership, ecological balance, and accountability. Thus, Islamic environmental discourse can move from doctrinal affirmation toward practical transformation and open dialogue among Islamic studies, environmental humanities, sustainability science, and education.

Conclusion

Islamic ecological principles can be reconstructed as a transformative ethical paradigm by integrating *tawhīd*, *khalifah*, *amānah*, *mizān*, *fasād*, *isrāf*, *tabdhīr*, and *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah* into one coherent framework of ecological responsibility. The main finding is that Islamic ecology is neither a set of isolated moral teachings nor a merely symbolic religious response to environmental crisis; rather, it is a theocentric and responsibility-centred paradigm that links worldview, human agency, ecological limits, consumption ethics, justice, and institutional praxis. This reconstruction answers the article's research question by showing that Islamic ecological thought becomes transformative when theological awareness is translated into accountable stewardship, restraint from ecological destruction, moderation in consumption, and maqāṣid-oriented public ethics. The implication of this study is that Islamic environmental discourse should move beyond doctrinal affirmation toward practical integration in Islamic education, pesantren and mosque governance, legal reasoning, public policy, and community-based ecological movements. Since this study is conceptual-normative in nature, future research needs to test this framework empirically in diverse Islamic educational institutions and Muslim communities.

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