



# The Role of Islamic Education in Overcoming the Social-Ecological Crisis in the Modern Era

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## Abstract

The socio-ecological crisis in the modern era has become a global challenge that threatens the sustainability of human life, ranging from environmental damage, ecological poverty, to social inequality as a result of uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources. This study aims to analyze the role of Islamic Education in providing strategic solutions to overcome this crisis through strengthening spiritual values, ecological ethics, and sustainability character. The research uses a qualitative method with a content analysis approach to classical Islamic literature, contemporary research results, and national education policies related to the environment. The results show that Islamic education has significant potential in building ecological awareness based on tauhid, *amanah*, and *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, integrating eco-theological values into the curriculum, and encouraging action-oriented educational practices through the habit of environmentally friendly behavior. The implications of the research emphasize the need to reorient the Islamic Religious Education curriculum, strengthen ecological pedagogy, and foster collaboration among educational institutions to create a generation of Muslims who play an active role in mitigating the socio-ecological crisis in a sustainable manner.

## INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in shaping people's perspectives on nature and the environment. Amidst the global socio-ecological crisis of environmental degradation, pollution, climate change, and social injustice, education has become a strategic arena for building ecological awareness, environmental ethics, and moral responsibility towards nature (Sianturi et al., 2024). However, many conventional education systems place too much emphasis on cognitive or technical aspects without equipping students with the values and spirituality that encourage respect for nature as a trust (Liyantono & Setiawan, 2022).

Within the Muslim world, Islamic-based education provides a strong value framework for addressing ecological issues comprehensively. Islamic teachings, which contain the values of stewardship (*khalifah*), trust (*amanah*), balance (*mizan*), and mercy to all creation (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*), view humans as stewards of the earth, not as rulers who exploit nature (Rahmat, 2025). Therefore, Islamic education can serve as a bridge between faith, morals, and concrete actions in protecting the environment. In the Muslim world, Islamic-based education offers a potential

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value framework for addressing ecological challenges holistically. Islamic teachings that contain the values of stewardship (*khalifah*), trustworthiness, balance (*mizan*), and *rahmatan lil 'alamin* view humans as stewards of the earth, not exploitative rulers (Basri et al., 2024). Therefore, Islamic education can be a bridge between faith, morals, and concrete ecological action.

Contemporary studies have begun to highlight the importance of integrating ecological values into Islamic education. For example, in the article “Integrating Ecopedagogy into the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum to Foster Ecological Awareness,” it was found that the current Islamic Religious Education curriculum tends to focus on theological aspects, worship, and ritual morality, while the ecological dimensions of Islamic teachings, such as *khalifah fil ard* and *fiqh al-bi'ah*, have not been adequately accommodated (Wati et al., 2025). This shows that there is a gap between the potential of religious-ecological values and their implementation in education in the field.

In addition, Islamic education models that integrate eco-theology continue to develop. The article “Green Islam Education: An Ecopedagogical Learning Model Based on Environmental Fiqh in Urban Islamic Schools” shows that Islamic principles such as *khalifah*, *maslahah*, *hima*, and the prohibition of *ifsad* (destruction) can be used as a normative basis for an environment-based curriculum, especially in urban Islamic schools that face challenges of pollution, limited green space, and a consumptive culture (Zaimina & Munib, 2025).

Thus, Islamic education does not merely teach rituals and beliefs, but can also be oriented towards instilling ecological awareness and responsibility towards nature, making faith the foundation of environmental ethics and pro-environmental actions. However, there is still little research that comprehensively examines how Islamic education can be designed (curriculum, pedagogy, practice) to truly contribute to mitigating the socio-ecological crisis. Many studies are fragmented: some focus on eco-theology theory, some on curriculum, and some on practices in Islamic boarding schools or schools alone.

Therefore, research that combines classical Islamic literature, contemporary research findings, and environmental education policies is needed to provide a holistic picture. For example, the article “Ecotheology in the Perspective of Islamic Education: A Conceptual Review” shows that the Islamic education paradigm based on ecotheology requires a holistic approach from the philosophical and theological levels to practical implementation (Syafaruddin, 2025). Similarly, the study “Eco-Theology: Islamic Ethics and Environmental Transformation in Islamic Boarding Schools” describes how Islamic ethical values can encourage real behavioral change in educational communities as part of environmental conservation efforts (Maslani, 2023).

Furthermore, a contextual approach combining Islamic education and sustainability practices has been implemented in various institutions. For example, in institutions that promote eco-pesantren, as reported in the article “The Urgency of Islamic Education in Shaping the Ecological Piety of Students in Eco-Pesantren-Based Islamic Boarding Schools” (Sianturi et al., 2024). It is evident that Islamic boarding schools can be an important space for shaping the “ecological piety” of santri, namely awareness and responsibility towards the environment.

Islamic education has strategic potential to shape ecological awareness and behavior when systematically directed through the integration of the values of tawhid, amanah, and environmental ethics into the educational process. By applying Islamic teachings within the framework of eco-theology and sustainable education, Muslim generations can be shaped into individuals who are not only ritualistically religious, but also have a moral commitment to environmental preservation and social justice as part of their worship. This study was conducted to examine in depth

how Islamic education can be an effective instrument in mitigating the socio-ecological crisis through a review of classical literature, contemporary research, and related education policies.

The results of this study are expected to contribute to strengthening Islamic education theory and developing practices that are more responsive to sustainability issues, while offering relevant ecological curriculum and pedagogical models for modern challenges. Unlike previous studies, which tended to be partial, this research presents a comprehensive analysis of theological aspects, pro-environmental Islamic values, and implementative strategies, thereby emphasizing the role of Islamic education in responding to ecological and social crises in the present and future.

## METHODS

The research method used in this study was a literature review, which was conducted by examining various scientific sources related to Islamic Education and socio-ecological issues (Engkizar et al., 2024, 2025; Kenny et al., 2022; Mustafa, 2025; Wati et al., 2025). This research stems from the need to collect and synthesize theoretical and empirical data discussing the concepts of Islamic eco-theology, sustainability values, and the reform of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum (Zaimina & Munib, 2025). This study includes a search of primary and secondary works, such as books, journal articles, research reports, and national policy documents relevant to the integration of ecological values in Islamic education (Pendidikan & Islamic, 2024). The literature analyzed includes studies on the application of eco-pedagogy in Islamic Religious Education, environmental fiqh-based learning models, and strategies for developing ecological literacy in Islamic educational institutions. In addition, this study also refers to studies that explain the correlation between Islamic spiritual values such as *taubid*, *amanah*, *mizān*, and *rahmatan lil 'alamin* with environmental education (Change, 2025). All sources were selected using the purposive document sampling technique, which is the selection of documents based on their level of relevance, credibility, and public accessibility.

The data and information found in various literature were then analyzed using three approaches: inductive, deductive, and comparative. Inductive analysis was used to find patterns and themes that emerged from the literature. Deductive analysis was used to test the suitability of Islamic eco-theological theories with current environmental issues. Comparative analysis was used to compare findings and approaches between literature to produce a more complete picture of the role of Islamic Education in mitigating socio-ecological crises.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study Integrating Eco-Theology In Islamic Education: A Case Study On Fostering Ecological Awareness Through Religious Pedagogy shows that when Islamic eco-theological values such as *khalifah*, *amanah*, and *mizān* are integrated into the Islamic school curriculum through subjects, environmental programs, and extracurricular activities, students demonstrate a deeper understanding of ecological responsibility and exhibit real pro-environmental behaviors such as reforestation, waste management, and energy efficiency (Maesak et al., 2024; Taufikin, 2025).

However, the study also shows that major obstacles arise from limited teaching materials, minimal teacher training, and the absence of formal institutional policies to fully support eco-theology at the school level. The study Integrating Ecopedagogy into the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum to Foster Ecological Awareness emphasizes that many conventional Islamic Religious Education curricula still place too much emphasis on rituals, morality, and worship, so that the ecological dimension of Islamic teachings is often neglected. Therefore, the author suggests curriculum reform to incorporate the principles of ecopedagogy so that Muslim

generations gain environmental awareness as part of character education (Wati et al., 2025).

In the context of Islamic boarding schools, the article *Islamic Education in Agricultural Boarding Schools to Build Eco-Philosophy for Environmental Preservation* shows that Islamic education, when directed with environmental awareness and combined with agricultural/ecological practices, can produce “*santri*-agents of change”: a young generation with ecological awareness and a commitment to protecting the environment (Rini et al., 2022). Furthermore, the study *Internalizing Islamic Ecotheology through School Culture to Foster Eco-Character* describes how Islamic schools that build a school culture based on ecotheology can facilitate the deep internalization of ecological values. The process includes: value transformation → value transaction → value transinternalization, which ultimately results in an environmentally conscious character in students (e.g., 5R habits, waste management, energy conservation) (Sabtina & Mahariah, 2025).

In terms of curriculum, the article *Green Islam Education: An Ecopedagogical Learning Model Based on Environmental Fiqh in Urban Islamic Schools* offers a concrete model: integrating Islamic principles such as *khalifah*, *maslahah*, *hima* (protected zones), and the prohibition of *ifsad* (destruction) into learning in Islamic schools located in urban environments so that they are relevant to urban challenges: pollution, consumerism, and lack of green space (Zaimina & Munib, 2025). Conceptual studies such as the article *Green Islam Education: Instilling Ecotheological Awareness in the Islamic Education Curriculum* show that the Islamic ecotheology framework has great potential as a normative basis for sustainable education, shaping ecological awareness based on *tauhid* and *amanah* and connecting spirituality with responsibility towards nature (Yudi et al., 2025).

Empirical research in the article *Islamic Education and Environmental Awareness Development* confirms that Islamic education in various institutions (madrasahs, Islamic schools), if designed with an environmental perspective, can foster in students the abilities, attitudes, and skills to appreciate the interaction between humans, culture, and the biotic environment, thereby developing a holistic environmental awareness (Nurulloh, 2019).

In addition to formal schools, the *pesantren* tradition has also proven to be relevant: research on *Quranic Learning Based on Islamic Eco-Theology at Pesantren* shows that the process of learning the Quran combined with an eco-theological perspective has a significant impact on changing the ecological behavior of the *pesantren* community in terms of the environment, gardens, sanitation, and waste management as part of worship and moral responsibility. The article “*Eco-Theology in Islamic Education: Internalizing Environmental Awareness as Part of Worship at Dayah Fathul Ainiyah Al-Aziziyah*” shows that it is not only theory at traditional Dayah/pondok, but practices such as planting trees, maintaining cleanliness, and managing waste have become part of the daily lives of *santri* as part of their worship. This indicates that eco-theology can serve as a spiritual and ethical foundation for concrete actions to protect the environment (Aryasutha et al., 2025; Engkizar et al., 2023; Putri et al., 2025; Rahawarin et al., 2025; Wekke et al., 2024; Zulfikar, 2025).

From the perspective of education management, the article *Eco-Pesantren-Based Islamic Education Management* discusses the challenges and strategies for implementing the eco-*pesantren* model holistically, covering aspects of curriculum, institutional culture, facilities, and daily practices. Despite obstacles such as resources and old habits, this model offers a sustainable framework if there is long-term commitment (Hermawansyah, 2025).

From an environmental ethics perspective, studies on *Ecology-Based Islamic Education* conclude that integrating Islamic education with ecology effectively fosters ecological awareness in students. 85% of students involved showed

commitment to environmental conservation, reforestation, waste management, and an increased awareness that protecting nature is part of humanity's responsibility as *khaliifah* (Ishomudin et al., 2025).

Thus, Islamic education, when implemented through a supportive school/*pesantren* curriculum and culture, can shape a generation of Muslims who have ecological awareness, social sensitivity, and practical commitment to environmental preservation and social justice. However, to respond to the global socio-ecological crisis systematically, a transformation of the structure of Islamic education is needed: reorientation of the curriculum, teacher training, institutional policies, and the integration of ecological values into all aspects of education, not just as additional content. These findings imply that the Islamic educational approach to the environment should not be merely symbolic or normative, but must involve concrete actions, direct experiences, and habit formation in order to bring about long-term changes in attitudes and behavior.

From a social and justice perspective, the integration of eco-theology enables Islamic education to contribute to building a more just and sustainable society, not only by preserving nature, but also by paying attention to aspects of *maslahah* (public interest), distribution of justice, and community welfare (Zaimina & Munib, 2025). Models such as eco-*pesantren*, eco-schools, and urban Islamic schools with green curricula show that local contexts (urban, rural, *pesantren*) can be accommodated, meaning that Islamic education is flexible enough to adapt to specific environmental challenges in various regions.

However, consistency and continuity are key. Without institutional policies (from the school level to the government), teacher training, and resources (teaching materials, facilities, collaboration), the application of eco-theology in Islamic education will remain fragmented and suboptimal, limiting its contribution to mitigating the socio-ecological crisis.

Thus, empirical and conceptual literature from the latest decade shows that Islamic education has strategic potential as an instrument of socio-ecological transformation. To realize this potential, a shared commitment is needed: from educators, institutions, policymakers, and communities so that Islamic values of *amanah*, *khaliifah*, and *rahmatan lil alamin* are truly translated into concrete actions to protect nature and environmental justice.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Islamic education has strategic potential in overcoming the socio-ecological crisis in the modern era through the integration of the values of tauhid, *khaliifah*, *amanah*, *mizān*, and *rahmatan lil 'alamin* into the curriculum, pedagogy, and culture of educational institutions. The results of the study show that when the concept of Islamic eco-theology is systematically applied in schools, madrasas, and Islamic boarding schools through action-based learning, environmental habits, and the strengthening of a green school culture, the ecological awareness, attitudes, and behavior of students increase significantly. However, implementation in the field still faces challenges such as limited teaching materials, minimal teacher training, and the absence of consistent institutional policies. Therefore, structural transformation in the form of reorienting the Islamic Religious Education curriculum, improving educator competence, and supporting sustainable policies are important steps for Islamic Education to contribute significantly to mitigating the socio-ecological crisis and shaping a generation of Muslims who care about the environment and social justice.



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