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Darul Muttaqin Islamic Boarding School and the Eco-Theological Movement: Initiation, Concretization, and Deconstruction

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Abstract

This study examines the eco-theological movement at *Pesantren Darul Muttaqin* as a model of faith-based ecological transformation grounded in Islamic epistemology. Against the backdrop of the contemporary global ecological crisis understood not merely as a technical problem but as an ethical and cosmological rupture the research explores how Islamic theological concepts are reconstructed, institutionalized, and rearticulated within a *pesantren* setting. Employing a qualitative intrinsic case study design within a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm, the study analyzes interviews, participant observation, and institutional documents through thematic and critical discourse analysis. The findings reveal three interrelated dimensions of transformation. First, initiation involves the normative reconstruction of *tawhīd*, *khalīfah*, and *amānah* as ecological mandates, generating theological legitimation for environmental responsibility. Second, concretization refers to the institutionalization of these values within curriculum, governance structures, and daily practices, forming an ecological institutional habitus that embeds sustainability into communal life. Third, deconstruction marks a paradigmatic shift from ritual-centered and anthropocentric religiosity toward an ecological relationalism that repositions nature as *āyāt kauniyyah* cosmic signs possessing intrinsic value. The study proposes a *pesantren*-based eco-theological transformation model integrating normative legitimation, institutional embodiment, and collective consciousness formation. Theoretically, it extends Islamic ecotheology beyond normative textual discourse toward empirical institutional analysis. Empirically, it demonstrates that traditional Islamic educational institutions possess the hermeneutical flexibility and organizational capacity to serve as laboratories of sustainable religious reform. The case of *Pesantren Darul Muttaqin* contributes to global religion-and-ecology discourse by illustrating how internal theological reconstruction can generate systemic, socially embedded ecological transformation.

Keywords: *Islamic ecotheology, pesantren, environmental ethics, institutional transformation, ecological movement.*

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Introduction

The global ecological crisis in the twenty-first century has entered what many scholars describe as a multidimensional systemic emergency, characterized by accelerating climate change, rapid biodiversity loss, large-scale deforestation, and an increasing frequency of anthropogenically induced ecological disasters. The Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change confirms that global surface temperature has risen by approximately 1.1°C above pre-industrial levels and is likely to exceed the 1.5°C threshold within the coming decades without immediate and deep greenhouse gas emission reductions. Parallel to this, the *Global Environment Outlook 6* emphasizes that environmental degradation is not merely the result of technical policy failures but is deeply embedded in dominant production–consumption regimes and an exploitative anthropocentric worldview. In this regard, the ecological crisis must be understood not solely as a scientific or technological problem but as a profound ethical and cosmological crisis that challenges the moral architecture of modern civilization (Tucker & Grim, 2014; White Jr., 1967)

The intellectual genealogy of religion environment discourse is often traced to Lynn White Jr.'s seminal article, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," which argued that Western Christian theology particularly its interpretation of human dominion over nature contributed to ecological degradation by legitimizing anthropocentric domination (White Jr., 1967). Although White's thesis has been critically debated, it catalyzed an enduring academic engagement with ecotheology across religious traditions. The central premise that ecological destruction is rooted in religio-cultural paradigms implies that ecological solutions must involve theological transformation. Consequently, diverse strands of ecotheology have emerged, including within Islamic thought (Foltz et al., 2003; Nasr, 1996)

Within Islam, the normative foundations of ecological ethics are deeply embedded in Qur'anic cosmology. The concept of *khalīfah fī al-ard* (Q. 2:30) frames humanity as vicegerent entrusted with stewardship of the earth; *amānah* (Q. 33:72) underscores moral responsibility; and the prohibition of *fasād fī al-ard* (Q. 7:56) explicitly condemns ecological corruption. Together, these concepts articulate a relational ontology in which humans are accountable agents within a divinely ordered cosmos (Izzi Dien, 2000; Khalid, 2019). Seyyed Hossein Nasr contends that the contemporary environmental crisis is fundamentally the result of the desacralization of nature in modernity; therefore, any authentic Islamic response must begin with the re-sacralization of the natural order through the restoration of *tawhīdic* consciousness (Nasr, 1996). This epistemological reorientation challenges the dualism between sacred and profane as well as between humanity and nature, reasserting the unity (*tawhīd*) of existence as the metaphysical basis for ecological ethics.

Recent developments in Islamic ecotheology indicate a shift from purely normative-textual exegesis toward analyses of lived practice, environmental activism, and community-based religious movements (Gade, 2019; Khalid, 2019). Nevertheless, much of the existing scholarship remains concentrated on reconstructing theological doctrines rather than examining how eco-theological principles are institutionalized and operationalized within Islamic educational structures. This lacuna is significant because educational institutions play a pivotal role in shaping ecological habitus and public morality through processes of socialization and knowledge reproduction (Berger & Luckmann, 1966a). In Indonesia, *pesantren* Islamic boarding schools constitute one of the most influential religious educational institutions, endowed with strong cultural authority and extensive grassroots networks (Azra, 2015). Their embeddedness in local communities positions them as potential agents of ecological transformation grounded in Islamic ethical traditions.

Over the past two decades, the emergence of "green *pesantren*" initiatives has illustrated the growing intersection between Islamic education and sustainability practices. These initiatives integrate religious instruction with environmental management programs, including waste reduction systems, water conservation, organic farming, and renewable energy adoption (Fawaid, 2020; Zamhari & Howell, 2012). Such developments suggest that *pesantren* are not merely guardians of orthodoxy but dynamic social laboratories capable of rearticulating Islamic teachings in response to contemporary ecological challenges. However, a critical analytical question remains: do these initiatives represent pragmatic adaptations to global sustainable development agendas, or do they embody a conscious and reflective eco-theological project rooted in Islamic epistemology?

Pesantren Darul Muttaqin offers a compelling case study for addressing this question. The ecological initiatives undertaken within this institution extend beyond technical environmental programs and are explicitly framed as theological manifestations of human responsibility as *khalīfah*.

This study conceptualizes the movement within three interrelated dimensions: (1) initiation the epistemological and normative processes through which ecological consciousness is cultivated within Islamic doctrinal frameworks; (2) concretization the translation of theological values into institutional policies, curricula, and everyday practices; and (3) deconstruction the critical reconfiguration of previously dominant ritualistic and anthropocentric paradigms toward a relational-ecological model of religiosity. The notion of deconstruction employed here draws on Derrida's critical interrogation of hierarchical structures of meaning (Derrida, 1976) and its theological reinterpretations (Caputo, 1997), enabling a reassessment of how religious discourse constructs the human nature relationship within Islamic ethical horizons.

Conceptually, this article positions Islamic ecotheology as an epistemological reconstruction project that challenges entrenched dualisms human versus nature, sacred versus profane by reasserting the integrative metaphysics of *tawhīd* (Nasr, 1996; Tucker & Grim, 2014). To examine how such theological ideas are socially embodied, the study integrates the sociology of knowledge framework, particularly the processes of institutionalization and legitimation of meaning systems (Berger & Luckmann, 1966b). Through this lens, *Pesantren Darul Muttaqin* is analyzed not merely as an educational entity but as a discursive arena in which religious-ecological knowledge is produced, negotiated, and transformed.

This article advances three principal contributions. First, it extends Islamic eco-theological scholarship from normative textual analysis to institutional and empirical examination grounded in a *pesantren*-based case study. Second, it proposes an analytical model linking initiation, concretization, and deconstruction as dynamic phases within eco-theological movements in Islamic educational settings. Third, it contributes to global religion-and-ecology discourse by foregrounding the Indonesian *pesantren* experience as a localized yet globally relevant form of faith-based ecological transformation. Ultimately, this study argues that *pesantren* can function as significant loci for operational and transformative eco-theological articulation, offering an integrative model of religious engagement capable of addressing the ethical and cosmological dimensions of the contemporary ecological crisis.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with an intrinsic case study design to analyze the eco-theological movement at *Pesantren Darul Muttaqin*. A case study strategy is selected because it enables an in-depth exploration of a contemporary phenomenon within its complex and context-bound real-life setting (Yin, 2018). Within the qualitative research tradition, case studies are not merely descriptive tools; they function analytically to uncover structures of meaning, power relations, and discursive dynamics that shape social phenomena. This approach is particularly appropriate because the *pesantren*'s eco-theological movement is an institutional phenomenon embedded within intertwined social, theological, and cultural contexts that cannot be meaningfully isolated from its lived environment.

Epistemologically, the research is grounded in a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm, which conceives social reality as the outcome of meaning-making processes produced through social and institutional interaction (Berger & Luckmann, 1966a; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Within this framework, ecotheology is not treated as a static doctrinal system but as a dynamic discourse that is constructed, negotiated, and institutionalized within the educational practices of the *pesantren*. Accordingly, this study seeks to capture how key actors *kiai* (religious leaders), teachers, students, and institutional administrators interpret the theological relationship between humans and nature, and how these interpretations are translated into policies, curricula, and everyday practices.

The analytical design is structured around three conceptual dimensions: initiation, concretization, and deconstruction. The dimension of initiation examines the epistemological and normative processes through which ecological consciousness is generated within Islamic doctrinal frameworks, including the theological references and exegetical traditions mobilized. Concretization investigates how eco-theological values are operationalized in institutional governance, environmental management systems, and pedagogical activities. Deconstruction analyzes the transformation of religious paradigms from ritualistic and anthropocentric orientations toward a relational-ecological model of religiosity. The notion of deconstruction employed here draws upon Derrida's critique of dominant structures of meaning (Derrida, 1976) and its theological reinterpretation (Caputo, 1997), enabling a critical reassessment of how religious discourse

constructs the human–nature relationship within Islamic ethical horizons.

Primary data are collected through in-depth interviews with *pesantren* leaders, educators, and students involved in environmental initiatives. Semi-structured interviews are utilized to allow flexible yet focused exploration of theological narratives and actors' reflective interpretations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In addition, participant observation is conducted to examine concrete practices such as waste management, water conservation, and organic farming programs implemented within the *pesantren*. Observational methods are essential in qualitative inquiry to identify potential discrepancies between normative discourse and embodied practice (Spradley, 1980)

Secondary data are obtained through document analysis, including institutional curricula, internal guidelines, teaching materials, and official publications. Document analysis serves to trace the discursive construction of ecotheology within formal institutional texts (Bowen, 2009). Data triangulation is conducted by systematically comparing interview findings, observational evidence, and documentary sources in order to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data analysis follows a thematic analysis approach involving systematic data reduction, categorization, and interpretative synthesis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Open coding is applied to identify recurring themes related to value initiation, practical concretization, and paradigm deconstruction. This process is complemented by critical discourse analysis to examine how theological language, symbolic references, and institutional narratives shape the construction of ecological meaning (Fairclough, 1995) To ensure validity and methodological rigor, member checking with key informants and the maintenance of an audit trail throughout the analytical process are implemented (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) Such transparency is essential in qualitative research to ensure interpretative accountability and scholarly robustness.

Results and Discussion

Initiation of Eco-theological Consciousness: Reconstruction of Normative Foundations

The findings indicate that the eco-theological movement at *Pesantren Darul Muttaqin* did not emerge as a reactive response to global environmental discourse; rather, it originated from a normative initiation process grounded in the reinterpretation of *tawhīd*, the concept of *khalīfah fī al-ard* (vicegerency on earth), and *amānah* (trust) as ecological mandates. The notion of *khalīfah* (Q. 2:30) is understood not merely as symbolic human superiority but as a theological articulation of responsibility for maintaining cosmic order. Likewise, *amānah* (Q. 33:72) is interpreted as a moral burden that entails ecological accountability before God, reinforcing the ethical dimension of environmental stewardship (Izzi Dien, 2000; Khalid, 2019). Within this framework, the prohibition of *fasād fī al-ard* (Q. 7:56) is reinterpreted not as a general moral injunction alone but as a foundational ecological principle rejecting destructive exploitation and environmental corruption.

Ecological consciousness within the *pesantren* thus arises from internal theological reflection mediated by the *kiai* as epistemic authority. Through religious gatherings (*pengajian*) and study circles (*halaqah*), the human–nature relationship is framed as a divine trust, positioning environmental action within an eschatological horizon of accountability. Environmental responsibility is therefore articulated as part of religious obedience, integrating ecological conduct into the broader structure of piety. This pattern corresponds with broader scholarly arguments that ecological transformation within religious traditions frequently depends upon authoritative theological reinterpretation produced by recognized religious leaders (Tucker & Grim, 2014) The case of *Pesantren Darul Muttaqin* demonstrates that faith-based ecological change requires normative legitimation from within the tradition itself, rather than the mere adoption of externally driven sustainability agendas.

The initiation process further reveals an epistemological shift from a predominantly ritual-centered religiosity toward an integrative cosmological awareness. *Tawhīd* is no longer confined to its metaphysical assertion of divine unity; it is reconceptualized as an ontological principle affirming the existential unity and interconnectedness of all creation. In this perspective, the environment is not an inert object but part of a sacred cosmic order reflecting divine signs (*āyāt kawniyyah*). Seyyed Hossein Nasr argues that the modern environmental crisis is rooted in the desacralization of nature and the erosion of *tawhīdic* consciousness (Nasr, 1987), and that restoring the sacred vision of the cosmos is a prerequisite for authentic Islamic environmental ethics. Within the *pesantren* context, this cosmological reinterpretation yields a clear ethical implication: environmental destruction

constitutes a violation of divinely ordained harmony. Such a position aligns with the broader Islamic environmental ethics discourse, which emphasizes the inseparability of metaphysical unity and moral responsibility (Foltz et al., 2003).

Consequently, the initiation of eco-theological consciousness at *Pesantren Darul Muttaqin* represents a deliberate reconstruction of normative foundations. It transforms classical theological concepts into an operational moral framework capable of addressing contemporary ecological challenges. Rather than functioning as a peripheral moral addendum, ecology becomes embedded within the theological grammar of the institution, reshaping the meaning of piety and expanding the scope of religious responsibility to include the preservation of the natural world.

Furthermore, at the stage of initiation, eco-theology functions as a framework of normative legitimation that provides the moral foundation for institutional transformation. It operates as a *moral grammar* that restructures the very meaning of piety within the *pesantren*. Piety is no longer confined to vertical ritual devotion—such as prayer, fasting, or recitation but is expanded to encompass horizontal responsibility toward the natural world as an integral dimension of worship. In this reformulation, ecological care becomes embedded within the theological structure of obedience, thereby redefining what it means to live a devout Islamic life. From the perspective of the sociology of knowledge, this process illustrates how religious meanings are socially constructed, objectified, and institutionalized through mechanisms of symbolic legitimation (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) The *pesantren* thus transforms ecological responsibility into a collectively recognized moral obligation, sustained not merely by policy but by shared theological conviction.

The initiation phase also reveals a deliberate process of selection, contextualization, and actualization of religious texts. Qur'anic verses concerning *fasād fī al-ard* (corruption on earth) and Prophetic traditions emphasizing the virtue of planting trees are reinterpreted within the horizon of contemporary ecological crisis. These scriptural sources are not invoked as abstract moral slogans; rather, they are hermeneutically reconstructed to address modern environmental degradation, climate instability, and resource depletion. Such a process reflects the dynamic hermeneutical tradition within Islam, wherein texts are continuously engaged in dialectical interaction with changing social realities (Khalid & Ozdemir, 2003) Scripture, therefore, is not treated as a static repository of timeless injunctions detached from context, but as a living source of normative guidance capable of responding to historical contingencies.

In this light, the eco-theological discourse developed at *Pesantren Darul Muttaqin* cannot be reduced to an imitation of global sustainability narratives. Instead, it represents an internal articulation of Islamic tradition that reconstructs its own normative sources in order to confront ecological challenges. The *pesantren's* approach demonstrates that religious environmentalism gains durability and authenticity when it emerges from within the epistemological and cosmological foundations of the tradition itself.

Overall, the initiation of eco-theological consciousness underscores that *pesantren*-based ecological transformation begins with the reconstruction of normative and cosmological foundations. Social and institutional change becomes viable only when anchored in robust theological legitimation. Consequently, ecological initiatives are not perceived as technical or managerial programs, but as manifestations of an inherent religious responsibility embedded within Islamic doctrine. Through this normative reconstruction, ecological action is elevated from optional activism to a constitutive dimension of Islamic ethical life.

Concretization of Values: Institutionalization in Curriculum and Governance

The second dimension identified in this study is the concretization of eco-theological values through their institutionalization within the structural framework of the *pesantren*. The normative principles formulated during the initiation phase grounded in the concepts of *khalīfah*, *amānah*, and the prohibition of *fasād fī al-ard* do not remain at the level of theological rhetoric. Instead, they are translated into curricular policies, extracurricular programs, and environmental governance systems within the institution. This transformation reflects a process whereby theological ideas undergo objectivation within social structures, consistent with the sociology of knowledge framework that explains how meanings become institutionalized and socially legitimized (Berger & Luckmann, 1966b). In this sense, ecotheology shifts from discursive affirmation to structured practice, becoming embedded in the normative order of the institution.

At the curricular level, the *pesantren* has begun integrating environmental jurisprudence (*fiqh*

al-bī'ah) into thematic religious studies, both through the reading of classical Islamic texts and through contextual discussions addressing contemporary ecological crises. This curricular development aligns with the expanding discourse on Islamic environmental jurisprudence, which situates ecological protection within the broader framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (higher objectives of Islamic law), particularly in relation to the preservation of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) and intergenerational sustainability (Izzi Dien, 2000; Khalid & Ozdemir, 2003). Environmental responsibility is therefore framed not as an optional ethical addendum but as an intrinsic dimension of Islamic legal and moral reasoning.

Moreover, issues of cleanliness, waste management, and water conservation are institutionalized as part of the daily discipline of the students. These practices are not presented merely as administrative regulations but as religious obligations rooted in theological principles. By embedding ecological conduct into everyday routines, the *pesantren* transforms environmental ethics into a collective norm rather than an individual preference. Such institutional embedding demonstrates how theological commitments gain transformative power when enacted through structured and repetitive social practices (Tucker & Grim, 2014)

In this regard, the institutionalization of eco-theological values generates what may be described as an ecological institutional habitus a durable set of dispositions shaping how members of the *pesantren* perceive, interpret, and interact with the natural environment. Through structured governance mechanisms and curricular integration, ecological responsibility becomes normalized within the institutional culture. The concretization process thus illustrates that sustainable religious environmentalism requires more than doctrinal affirmation; it demands systemic incorporation into educational design, administrative policy, and daily life. By translating normative theology into institutional governance, *Pesantren Darul Muttaqin* demonstrates how faith-based environmental ethics can move beyond symbolic discourse and become a structurally sustained mode of religious practice.

The concretization of eco-theological principles within *Pesantren Darul Muttaqin* demonstrates that ecotheology has evolved into what may be described as an *institutional habitus* a structured set of collective dispositions that shape how members of the *pesantren* perceive, interpret, and act toward the natural environment. In this context, integrated waste management systems, efficient water usage, and the development of organic agriculture are not regarded merely as technical environmental strategies; rather, they are framed as embodied expressions of religious obedience grounded in the theological mandates of *khalīfah* and *amānah* (Izzi Dien, 2000; Khalid & Ozdemir, 2003). Through this transformation, ecological practices acquire moral and spiritual significance, becoming integral to the lived expression of Islamic piety.

From the perspective of religion and ecology, theological values attain transformative efficacy when they are embedded in structured and repetitive social practices that shape collective consciousness (Tucker & Grim, 2014). The institutionalization of ecotheology thus functions as a mediating mechanism that bridges normative theological commitments with concrete ecological action. In line with the sociology of knowledge, once meanings are objectified and routinized within institutional frameworks, they acquire durability and normative force, shaping collective behavior over time (Berger & Luckmann, 1966a). In this sense, institutionalization converts abstract moral principles into sustainable patterns of practice that regulate everyday conduct.

Furthermore, the integration of religious teachings with environmental practices generates a distinctive form of ecological pedagogy. The *pesantren* does not merely transmit doctrinal knowledge concerning environmental responsibility; it creates experiential learning environments in which students actively engage in conservation activities, resource management, and sustainable agriculture. This pedagogical orientation reflects the broader Islamic environmental discourse, which emphasizes that ethical transformation requires the integration of metaphysical principles with lived action (Foltz et al., 2003; Khalid, 2019). By directly participating in environmental stewardship, students internalize ecological responsibility as a dimension of religious devotion rather than as an external civic obligation.

Within this framework, the *pesantren* operates as a site for the formation of religious-ecological subjects individuals who integrate sustainability values into their moral identity and theological self-understanding. Such subject formation resonates with the argument that ecological ethics in Islam is grounded in the unity of metaphysics and morality, where safeguarding creation constitutes a manifestation of faith (Izzi Dien, 2000; Nasr, 1996). Consequently, ecological

consciousness becomes embodied and performative, extending beyond cognitive awareness to shape habitual practice.

Conceptually, this concretization process underscores that the success of an eco-theological movement depends upon the institution's ability to translate normative legitimacy into durable structures of governance and education. Without institutional embedding in curriculum, administrative policy, and daily discipline, ecotheology risks remaining confined to symbolic discourse. However, when theological principles are systematically incorporated into institutional life, they generate a collective ecological culture capable of sustained social and intergenerational reproduction (Berger & Luckmann, 1966a; Tucker & Grim, 2014). The experience of *Pesantren Darul Muttaqin* therefore illustrates that the integration of theology and institutional governance constitutes a necessary precondition for systemic and sustainable faith-based ecological transformation.

Deconstruction of Religious Paradigm: From Anthropocentrism to Ecological Relationalism

The findings demonstrate that the eco-theological movement at *Pesantren Darul Muttaqin* extends beyond normative articulation and institutional implementation, reaching a deeper deconstructive dimension that critically reconfigures established religious paradigms. The previously dominant model of religiosity primarily ritual-centered and focused on the vertical relationship between humans and God has gradually evolved into a relational paradigm that situates the natural environment as an intrinsic component of piety. In this reconstructed framework, ecological consciousness is not treated as a supplementary ethical agenda but as a constitutive element of Islamic spirituality and moral responsibility. Such a shift echoes longstanding critiques of anthropocentric religious cosmologies that have contributed, directly or indirectly, to environmental degradation by legitimizing human exceptionalism and domination over nature (Merchant, 1980; White Jr., 1967). At the same time, it corresponds with contemporary developments in Islamic environmental thought that call for a rearticulation of theology in light of planetary ecological crises.

This transformation signifies a movement away from an implicitly anthropocentric reading of religious doctrine toward what may be termed ecological relationalism. Within this orientation, the human being is no longer conceived as an isolated moral agent standing above creation but as an interconnected participant within a divinely ordered cosmos. Such a perspective resonates with Islamic cosmological principles of balance (*mīzān*) and stewardship, which frame ecological responsibility as an integral aspect of ethical life (Izzi Dien, 2000; Nasr, 1996). By embedding environmental responsibility within the structure of devotion, the *pesantren* redefines the scope of piety itself, expanding it beyond ritual compliance to include relational accountability toward all forms of life.

Crucially, this deconstructive movement does not entail a rupture with Islamic tradition. Rather, it involves a critical hermeneutical re-reading of inherited interpretive hierarchies that have historically positioned nature as merely instrumental to human interests. Drawing upon the philosophical logic of deconstruction, hierarchical binaries such as human versus nature, subject versus object, sacred versus profane are interrogated in order to reveal the latent structures of dominance embedded within them (Derrida, 1976; Kearney, 2004). Such interrogation does not dissolve theological categories but destabilizes their rigid oppositions, allowing for a more relational and ethically responsive configuration of meaning. In this sense, deconstruction functions not as negation but as critical retrieval, opening space for renewed theological articulation.

Within the *pesantren* context, this hermeneutical shift enables a reconfiguration of theological meaning while maintaining fidelity to foundational doctrines. Qur'anic references to the natural world as *āyāt kauniyyah* cosmic signs manifesting divine wisdom—are foregrounded to emphasize the intrinsic value and sacredness of creation. This interpretive move aligns with broader scholarship in religion and ecology, which highlights that religious traditions contain internal resources capable of reimagining human–nature relationships beyond exploitative frameworks (Gottlieb, 2006; Tucker & Grim, 2014). By repositioning the environment as a locus of divine disclosure rather than a passive resource, ecological engagement becomes a form of spiritual attentiveness.

Moreover, this paradigm shift reflects a transition from a theology of dominance to a theology of responsibility. Rather than affirming human supremacy, the *pesantren's* eco-theological discourse underscores moral accountability and interdependence. Such an orientation parallels contemporary

theological arguments that authentic religious renewal must address ecological vulnerability as a central ethical concern (Gade, 2019; Khalid & Ozdemir, 2003). In this reconstructed paradigm, ecological care is reframed as an act of worship and a manifestation of *tawhīdic* consciousness, wherein the unity of God implies the unity and interconnectedness of creation (Foltz et al., 2003; Nasr, 1968).

Taken together, these findings illustrate that *Pesantren Darul Muttaqin* embodies a model of internal theological reform that engages critically with its own discursive heritage while remaining anchored in Islamic normative sources. Through deconstructive reinterpretation and relational rearticulation, the *pesantren* demonstrates that Islamic tradition possesses hermeneutical flexibility and cosmological depth sufficient to generate an ecologically responsive paradigm. This shift from anthropocentrism to ecological relationalism not only redefines piety but also positions the *pesantren* as an active contributor to broader global conversations on religion and environmental ethics.

This theological repositioning resonates strongly with contemporary scholarship in religion and ecology, which argues that religious traditions are not inherently environmentally regressive but instead contain rich internal resources for reimagining human–nature relationships beyond exploitative and instrumentalist paradigms (Jenkins, 2009; Tucker & Grim, 2014). Rather than viewing religion solely as a contributor to ecological crisis as suggested in early critiques of anthropocentric theology recent scholarship highlights its capacity to generate alternative cosmologies grounded in reverence, restraint, and relationality (Taylor, 2010). Within this broader intellectual trajectory, Islamic cosmology offers a particularly robust metaphysical framework in which nature is understood not as a desacralized or morally neutral domain but as a manifestation of divine order (*nizām*) and balance (*mīzān*). The Qur’anic notion of balance implies that creation is structured according to a divinely ordained equilibrium, and any disruption of that balance constitutes not merely ecological mismanagement but a violation of a sacred moral order.

In this sense, environmental destruction is interpreted not simply as a technical or administrative failure but as a spiritual and ethical rupture that undermines the harmony of creation. Such a perspective aligns with Islamic environmental thought that frames ecological degradation as a consequence of moral imbalance and loss of *tawhīdic* consciousness (Foltz et al., 2003; Khalid & Ozdemir, 2003). By restoring awareness of nature as a locus of divine signs (*āyāt kauniyyah*), ecological engagement is reframed as an act of reverence toward divine creation rather than as participation in a secular environmentalist agenda. The moral weight of ecological responsibility is thus grounded in theological anthropology and cosmology, not merely in utilitarian calculations of sustainability.

Through this rearticulation, the *pesantren* moves from what may be described as a theology of dominance where human centrality and control are implicitly assumed toward a theology of relational responsibility rooted in interconnectedness and accountability. This transformation parallels broader calls within environmental ethics to shift from anthropocentrism to relational or ecocentric frameworks that recognize the intrinsic value of non-human creation (Gottlieb, 2006; Jenkins, 2009). Within the *pesantren*’s theological discourse, the environment is no longer treated as a passive resource to be managed but as an active participant within the moral universe of Islam, deserving of ethical consideration as part of God’s entrusted creation.

This shift profoundly reorients the structure of religious consciousness. Ecological responsibility becomes embedded within devotional life, reshaping how piety is conceptualized, evaluated, and practiced. Acts such as conservation, waste reduction, and sustainable agriculture are interpreted as extensions of worship and obedience, thereby integrating environmental ethics into the spiritual formation of the community. By critically revisiting and reinterpreting its own discursive heritage, *Pesantren Darul Muttaqin* demonstrates that Islamic tradition possesses significant hermeneutical flexibility and cosmological depth. Such flexibility enables the articulation of an ecologically relational paradigm without severing continuity with foundational theological commitments. In this way, the *pesantren* exemplifies how religious renewal can occur through internal reinterpretation rather than external rupture, contributing meaningfully to contemporary global debates on faith-based environmental responsibility.

Social Implications and the Model of *Pesantren*-Based Eco-theological Transformation

The eco-theological movement at *Pesantren Darul Muttaqin* demonstrates social implications that extend beyond the institutional boundaries of the *pesantren* as an educational entity. Within the

sociology of religion, religious institutions possess the capacity to function as *moral communities* that shape the ethical orientation of the societies in which they are embedded (Durkheim, 1912/1995). With its strong cultural authority and extensive social networks, the *pesantren* operates as an agent of social change, transmitting sustainability values into the local public sphere. Environmental management programs, water conservation initiatives, and ecological education developed within the institution not only affect students and internal stakeholders but also encourage surrounding communities to participate in conservation practices and sustainable resource management. This phenomenon corresponds with research indicating that faith-based environmental movements often achieve broad social influence because they are grounded in moral legitimacy and community trust (Schlosberg, 2007; Veldman et al., 2013).

These social implications illustrate that the *pesantren* functions as a node of community-based environmental transformation. When theological values concerning ecological responsibility are translated into collective practices, mechanisms of social learning emerge, enabling gradual and participatory behavioral change (Wals, 2007). In this context, the *pesantren* does not merely transmit doctrinal teachings but actively cultivates an ecological culture reproduced through social interaction, communal discipline, and the exemplary leadership of religious authorities. Environmental ethics thus becomes embedded within communal life rather than remaining an abstract moral exhortation.

Based on these findings, a *pesantren*-based eco-theological transformation model can be conceptualized as unfolding in three interrelated and continuous stages. First, normative legitimation through theological reinterpretation, whereby religious authorities provide the epistemological foundation for environmental ethics. This stage ensures that ecological initiatives possess moral credibility within the framework of Islamic teachings. Second, institutionalization of values within policies and organizational practices, translating theological principles into curricular design, governance systems, and routine social conduct. Third, transformation of collective consciousness through habituation and community participation, resulting in the internalization of sustainability values as part of religious identity. This model suggests that the effectiveness of eco-theological movements depends on the integration of symbolic authority, organizational structure, and sustained social practice, consistent with structuration theory's emphasis on the recursive relationship between agency and institutional frameworks (Giddens, 1984)

Theoretically, these findings expand the discourse of Islamic ecotheology beyond predominantly normative-textual arguments toward concrete institutional and social praxis. This perspective aligns with approaches in the political ecology of religion, which underscore the strategic role of religious institutions in shaping public ethics and environmental policy orientations (Taylor, 2010). *Pesantren Darul Muttaqin* demonstrates that traditional Islamic educational institutions possess the capacity to function as laboratories of ecological transformation grounded in *tawhīdic* values, where cosmological awareness is translated into sustainable social structures.

Accordingly, the *pesantren* can no longer be understood merely as a guardian of religious orthodoxy, but rather as a strategic actor in responding to the global ecological crisis through epistemological reconstruction and sustained praxis. This transformation illustrates that religion when reflectively reinterpreted and systematically institutionalized can serve as an effective normative and social resource for cultivating cultures of sustainability at both local and global levels.

Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the eco-theological movement at *Pesantren Darul Muttaqin* originates from a normative reconstruction grounded in the reinterpretation of *tawhīd*, the concept of *khalīfah*, and *amānah* as ecological mandates. Ecological awareness within the *pesantren* did not emerge as a pragmatic response to global sustainability discourse; rather, it developed through an internal epistemological transformation that redefines the meaning of piety. *Tawhīd* is understood as a principle of cosmic unity that affirms the interconnectedness of humanity and nature, thereby framing environmental destruction as a violation of divine order. In this sense, ecotheology functions as a moral framework that integrates ecological responsibility into the core structure of Islamic spirituality.

At the level of concretization, these theological values have been institutionalized within the *pesantren*'s curriculum, governance system, and daily practices. The integration of environmental jurisprudence, integrated waste management, water conservation, and organic agriculture illustrates

that ecotheology moves beyond discursive affirmation and becomes an institutional habitus shaping collective patterns of thought and action. Through this institutionalization, normative theological principles are translated into concrete ecological practices, enabling sustainability consciousness to be reproduced socially and intergenerationally through habituation and experiential pedagogy.

Furthermore, the deconstructive dimension of the movement marks a paradigmatic shift from a theology of dominance toward a theology of relational responsibility. Nature is repositioned as part of the *āyāt kauniyyah* cosmic signs possessing intrinsic value rather than as a mere object of human exploitation. This shift expands the criteria of piety from ritual compliance to ecological responsibility embedded within religious identity. Overall, *Pesantren* Darul Muttaqin demonstrates that traditional Islamic educational institutions possess the hermeneutical and institutional capacity to develop a *tawhīdic*-based ecological transformation model that is systemic, sustainable, and relevant to addressing the contemporary global ecological crisis.

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