

Qur'anic Hermeneutics and the Ecological Crisis: A Thematic Ecotheological Reconstruction of Cosmic Balance

Abdul Syukkur*

Doctoral Student of UIN Walisongo Semarang & Lecturer Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Al-Mujtama Pamekasan, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: abdulsyukkur83@gmail.com

Article History:

Received: March 5, 2026

Revised: May 15, 2026

Accepted: June 1, 2026

Published: June 30, 2026

Citation:

Syukkur, A. (2026). Qur'anic Hermeneutics and the Ecological Crisis: A Thematic Ecotheological Reconstruction of Cosmic Balance. *Jurnal Theologia*, 37(1), 115–128. <https://doi.org/10.21580/teo.2026.37.1.31549>

Copyright: © 2026 by the author/s. This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons

Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

Abstract: The escalating global environmental crisis demands a profound ontological and normative shift beyond conventional materialistic and technocratic paradigms. This study examines the conceptual construction of ecological stewardship within Islamic scripture to address contemporary environmental degradation. The unit of analysis comprises specifically selected Qur'anic verses addressing cosmic equilibrium, terrestrial preservation, and human-nature interactions. This research aims to systematically reconstruct Qur'anic environmental ethics by identifying core ethical formulations, examining the structural causes of their contemporary neglect, and evaluating their implications for long-term ecological sustainability. Employing a qualitative research design, this study synthesizes thematic interpretation (*tafsīr mawḍūʿī*) with a systematic ecotheological analytical framework. The findings reveal that Qur'anic environmental ethics are anchored in an interdependent matrix of cosmic balance (*mizān*), divine trust (*amānah*), existential stewardship (*khilāfah*), and an absolute prohibition of systemic corruption (*fasād*). Furthermore, the investigation demonstrates that contemporary ecological neglect is fundamentally driven by moral-spiritual decay, reductionist anthropocentric exegetical frameworks, and the utilitarian co-optation of scriptural texts to legitimize resource exploitation. The novelty of this research lies in its formulation of an integrated ecotheological framework that bridges metaphysical realities with empirical sustainability paradigms. This study contributes to global Islamic ecological discourse by offering a non-anthropocentric conceptual model that harmonizes traditional exegesis with contemporary sustainability challenges.

Keywords: Qur'anic environmental ethics; ecotheology; environmental sustainability; khilāfah; thematic interpretation; environmental responsibility

1. Introduction

The anthropogenic transformation of biological systems has driven the global biosphere into a state of unprecedented ecological instability in the twenty-first century (IPCC, 2023; Steffen et al., 2015). Current empirical trajectories indicate that climate instability, catastrophic biodiversity loss, unchecked deforestation, and systemic ecological degradation are directly correlated with industrial human activity (Rockström et al., 2009; Steffen et al., 2015). These destabilizing disruptions are profoundly rooted in modern capital-intensive patterns of production and consumption, alongside deeply entrenched worldview paradigms that reduce nature to an inert object of economic extraction (Raworth, 2017; Rockström et al., 2009). In rapidly developing contexts, such as the Indonesian

archipelago, this environmental degradation manifests through a heightened frequency of anthropogenic natural disasters, including catastrophic flooding, terrestrial landslides, and expansive forest fires (Botha, 2024; Utama et al., 2020). Empirical indicators emphasize that the contemporary ecological crisis transcends mere technical or economic dimensions, representing a deeper moral failure in human behavior toward non-human systems (Folke et al., 2021; White, 1967). Within the Islamic theological tradition, the Qur'an offers a structural ethical framework designed to govern human interaction with the cosmos through non-negotiable principles of metaphysical stewardship, sacred trust, and cosmic equilibrium (Izzi Dien, 2000; Nasr, 1996). However, despite the comprehensive nature of these scriptural mandates, practical implementation within Muslim-majority societies remains severely constrained (Hassan, 2014; Rice, 2006). Consequently, a rigorous critical examination of Qur'anic environmental ethics is absolutely imperative to uncover the moral roots of ecological degradation and to establish an ontologically grounded model of sustainability (Foltz, 2000; Khalid, 2019).

Academic discourse surrounding environmental ethics within contemporary Islamic studies has expanded significantly, underscoring the potential of religious metaphysics to foster ecological consciousness (Foltz et al., 2003; Kamali, 2010). Scholars have increasingly examined Islamic environmental formulations through various theological, pedagogical, and socio-cultural lenses (Asroni, 2022; Irsan et al., 2021). Certain research programs emphasize the explicit normative obligation of human actors to manage natural resources with absolute restraint and moral responsibility (Azizah & Hariyanto, 2021; Meyresta et al., 2022). Concurrently, adjacent inquiries focus on leveraging Islamic ethical principles to cultivate localized environmental awareness and active ecological protection (Asroni, 2022; Karim et al., 2022). Recent thematic investigations have further analyzed the core principles of intergenerational sustainability, focusing explicitly on individual accountability and cosmic equilibrium within resource management systems (Imran Hayat et al., 2023; Istiani & Purwanto, 2022). Furthermore, contemporary academic literature has begun addressing the capacity of Islamic environmental ethics to confront macro-level climate challenges (Imran Hayat et al., 2023; Khalid, 2019). Global ecotheological scholarship has expanded these foundations by seeking a comprehensive integration of spiritual values with modern ecological literacy (Bergmann, 2017; Tucker & Grim, 2017). Nevertheless, a significant portion of this existing literature remains polarized, focusing either on abstract normative ideals or isolated practical applications without offering a systematically reconstructed framework (Gade, 2019; Hassan, 2014).

Despite the steady accumulation of ecological literature, a persistent gap remains regarding the systematic reconstruction of Qur'anic environmental ethics through an integrative thematic framework that bridges classical and contemporary exegesis (Gade, 2019; Khalid, 2019). Current scholarship frequently conceptualizes Qur'anic environmental imperatives as fragmented moral injunctions rather than a structurally unified ethical system (Foltz et al., 2003; Khalid, 2019). Furthermore, current academic inquiries fail to adequately scrutinize the structural socio-spiritual mechanisms driving the contemporary neglect of these values (Chapra, 2008; Ozdemir, 2003). Specifically, the precise roles of moral-spiritual decay, anthropocentric hermeneutical biases, and the utilitarian co-optation of scriptural texts to justify ecological exploitation remain under-theorized (Nasr, 1996; Ozdemir, 2003). Another distinct conceptual limitation is the lack of direct engagement between Islamic ecotheology and mainstream Western environmental paradigms, such as anthropocentrism, biocentrism, and ecocentrism (Callicott, 2013; Taylor, 1986). This theoretical

isolation prevents Islamic ecological models from fully contributing to broader global academic sustainability discourses (Foltz, 2000; Tucker & Grim, 2017). Therefore, this study addresses these analytical deficiencies by reconstructing Qur'anic environmental ethics through a rigorous thematic ecotheological methodology (Al-Farmawi, 2005; Izzi Dien, 2000). By identifying key ethical structures and diagnosing the roots of their modern neglect, this study provides a highly integrated, theoretically robust framework (Kamali, 2010; Khalid, 2019).

This study argues that the Qur'an presents a holistic, non-anthropocentric ecotheological architecture that positions human agency within a triadic relationship balancing the Divine, the human, and the cosmos (Izzi Dien, 2000; Nasr, 1996). The primary hypothesis posits that contemporary environmental degradation is fundamentally driven by a profound crisis of human spiritual orientation, characterized by the systemic failure to internalize the core tenets of stewardship, trust, and balance (Chapra, 2008; Khalid, 2019). Furthermore, this inquiry asserts that reductionist, anthropocentric misinterpretations of scriptural texts—specifically those emphasizing human dominion—have functioned to legitimize exploitative socio-economic structures (Foltz, 2000; Nasr, 1996). Through the operationalization of a rigorous thematic interpretative method, this research constructs a unified ecological paradigm where metaphysical doctrines directly dictate physical environmental obligations (Al-Farmawi, 2005; Rahman, 1982). Ultimately, this investigation advances the field of Islamic environmental philosophy by offering an innovative conceptual framework that successfully translates classical textual traditions into contemporary sustainability language (Gade, 2019; Kamali, 2010).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Qur'anic Environmental Ethics and Ecotheology

Academic engagement with Qur'anic environmental ethics has increasingly positioned Islamic theology as a vital conceptual resource within global ecological discourse (Nasr, 1996; Tucker & Grim, 2017). This structural shift is spearheaded by the development of ecotheology, a specialized sub-discipline that explicitly integrates transcendent theological doctrines with immanent environmental responsibilities (Bergmann, 2017; Izzi Dien, 2000). The foundational architecture of the Qur'anic moral framework is anchored in the interconnected concepts of human stewardship (*khilāfah*), divine trust (*amānah*), and cosmic equilibrium (*mīzān*) (Kamali, 2010; Khalid, 2019). Within contemporary literature, these distinct categories are interpreted as interconnected ethical pillars that strictly govern human interaction with the natural world (Foltz, 2000; Gade, 2019). The ontological core of this framework dictates that the biophysical environment cannot be treated as an unregulated economic commodity, as it exists as a sacred trust requiring active preservation (Foltz, 2000; Izzi Dien, 2000). Empirical scholarship demonstrates that deeply held religious worldviews exert a profound influence on environmental attitudes, particularly within traditional societies (Hassan, 2014; Rice, 2006). Scholars argue that Qur'anic cosmic principles foster a comprehensive ecological awareness by embedding physical conservation within a broader spiritual matrix (Ozdemir, 2003; Rice, 2006). Furthermore, recent ecotheological literature positions Islamic environmental models as a powerful counter-narrative to secular anthropocentric paradigms (Bergmann, 2017; Tucker & Grim, 2017). However, a persistent contradiction remains visible, as the

profound wealth of these normative models stands in stark contrast to widespread ecological degradation across the Islamic world (Chapra, 2008; Khalid, 2019).

The structural evolution of Islamic environmental ethics is further illuminated by exploring the historical trajectories of Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*) (Abdel Haleem, 2010; Saeed, 2006). Classical commentators consistently contextualized ecological responsibility within broader systems of divine covenant and spiritual accountability (Al-Tabari, 2001; Ibn Kathir, 1999). Within these traditional frameworks, the systematic disruption of ecological systems was explicitly categorized as a form of terrestrial corruption (*fasād*) (Al-Tabari, 2001; Ibn Kathir, 1999). Conversely, modern hermeneutical approaches attempt to re-read these classical source texts through the lens of contemporary crises (Khalid, 2019; Sardar, 2010). Recent analyses indicate that modern Islamic environmental discourse has successfully expanded its traditional scope to confront complex macro-ecological threats (Foltz et al., 2003; Gade, 2019). Despite these interpretive advancements, critical scholarship notes that many contemporary popular frameworks remain implicitly anthropocentric (Callicott, 2013; Taylor, 1986). This underlying tension underscores the urgent necessity for an innovative ecotheological framework capable of harmonizing traditional textual fidelity with modern ecological challenges (Nasr, 1996; Saeed, 2006). Therefore, while the textual foundations of Islamic ecology are exceptionally robust, they require significant theoretical restructuring to become effective operational models (Izzi Dien, 2000; Kamali, 2010).

2.2 Thematic Interpretation (*Tafsīr Mawḍūʿī*) and Environmental Discourse

Thematic interpretation (*tafsīr mawḍūʿī*) represents a critical methodological advancement within modern Qur'anic studies, allowing for a systematic analysis of specific concepts across the scriptural corpus (Al-Farmawi, 2005; Rahman, 1982). This specialized approach avoids the structural limitations of traditional, verse-by-verse linear commentaries by aggregating all text fragments related to a specific theme (Abdel Haleem, 2010; Saeed, 2006). Within the domain of environmental inquiry, thematic hermeneutics has been utilized to isolate core principles of environmental justice and cosmic equilibrium (Izzi Dien, 2000; Kamali, 2010). Empirical applications of this method demonstrate its capacity to link ancient metaphysical texts directly with modern structural challenges like anthropogenic climate change (Gade, 2019; Khalid, 2019). Scholars have successfully utilized thematic mapping to reveal the underlying moral frameworks that govern human responsibilities toward non-human life (Istiani & Purwanto, 2022; Karim et al., 2022). Furthermore, recent research underscores the strategic importance of integrating thematic scriptural insights directly into modern environmental management systems (Effendi et al., 2018; Karim et al., 2022). However, despite these clear methodological strengths, conventional thematic studies are frequently critiqued for a lack of conceptual rigor (Al-Farmawi, 2005; Rahman, 1982). This limitation manifests primarily through arbitrary verse selection and a general failure to construct systemic theoretical models (Abdel Haleem, 2010; Saeed, 2006).

To address these limitations, recent hermeneutical developments emphasize the necessity of combining thematic analysis with external academic disciplines (Sardar, 2010; Tucker & Grim, 2017). Prominent scholars argue that scriptural interpretation must actively respond to the fluid socio-ecological realities of the contemporary era (Gade, 2019; Rahman, 1982). This perspective has catalyzed the growth of *maqāṣid*-oriented (teleological) hermeneutics, which prioritizes the overarching ethical objectives of the law over literalist readings (Chapra, 2008; Kamali, 2010).

Interdisciplinary research confirms that integrating thematic exegesis with systemic ecological science significantly enhances the societal relevance of religious ethics (Folke et al., 2021; Rockström et al., 2009). Despite these conceptual advances, a significant scholarly gap remains regarding the deployment of this method to construct an all-encompassing framework of environmental philosophy (Khalid, 2019; Tucker & Grim, 2017). Most current research programs restrict their scope to cataloging relevant environmental verses rather than building an integrated theological system (Gade, 2019; Istiani & Purwanto, 2022). Consequently, this study seeks to advance the methodological execution of *tafsīr mawḍūʿī* by presenting a fully integrated ecotheological model (Al-Farmawi, 2005; Rahman, 1982).

2.3 Environmental Ethics, Anthropocentrism, and Sustainability Discourse

The global intellectual landscape of environmental ethics is defined by ongoing debates among anthropocentric, biocentric, and ecocentric philosophical models (Callicott, 2013; Taylor, 1986). Anthropocentrism, which restricts intrinsic moral value exclusively to human beings, has faced intense criticism for its role in legitimizing the unchecked exploitation of nature (Merchant, 1980; White, 1967). In response, biocentric and ecocentric paradigms attribute intrinsic value to all living organisms and ecological networks (Naess, 1973; Rolston, 1988). Within contemporary Islamic scholarship, parallel debates have emerged regarding the interpretation of core scriptural doctrines (Foltz, 2000; Nasr, 1996). Specifically, concepts such as the cosmic subjugation of nature (*taskhīr*) and human stewardship (*khilāfah*) are subject to competing interpretations (Gade, 2019; Khalid, 2019). They are viewed either as a divine mandate for exploitative human domination or as a strict requirement for compassionate preservation (Foltz, 2000; Nasr, 1996). Empirical evaluations demonstrate that anthropocentric misreadings of these doctrines directly contribute to destructive resource management practices (Gade, 2019; Khalid, 2019). Concurrently, global sustainability discourse increasingly emphasizes the need for holistic frameworks that integrate ethical values with ecological science (Raworth, 2017; Steffen et al., 2015).

Environmental values and long-term sustainable behavior are also shaped significantly by contemporary religious institutions (Hassan, 2014; Tucker & Grim, 2017). Data indicate that scriptural narratives can serve as highly effective motivators for conservation when framed within a coherent spiritual system (Hassan, 2014; Rice, 2006). However, the real-world efficacy of these religious frameworks depends heavily on the dominant hermeneutical models within specific communities (Bergmann, 2017; Gade, 2019). In numerous contexts, severe environmental degradation continues to expand despite the presence of pro-ecological religious principles (Chapra, 2008; Khalid, 2019). This deep operational disconnect is frequently driven by modern socio-economic pressures and the dominance of utilitarian capitalist worldviews (Raworth, 2017; Rockström et al., 2009). These secular paradigms consistently privilege short-term capital accumulation over long-term planetary survival (Raworth, 2017; Steffen et al., 2015). Therefore, successfully reconstructing an Islamic environmental philosophy requires active engagement with contemporary ethical theories and sustainability metrics (Callicott, 2013; Taylor, 1986). This study directly addresses this requirement by proposing an integrated ecotheological model that bridges Qur'anic principles with global environmental ethics (Gade, 2019; Tucker & Grim, 2017).

3. Methods

This study utilizes a qualitative, text-based research design focused on interpretive textual analysis to reconstruct Qur'anic environmental ethics (Al-Farmawi, 2005; Rahman, 1982). The primary unit of analysis consists of selected Qur'anic verses addressing ecological equilibrium, stewardship, and human-cosmic interactions (Izzi Dien, 2000; Kamali, 2010). The selection process relied on a systematic thematic mapping approach derived from classical exegesis and modern environmental philosophy (Gade, 2019; Khalid, 2019). The inclusion criteria required that verses contain direct references to biophysical elements, explicit ethical commands regarding creation, or structural relevance to sustainability (Abdel Haleem, 2010; Saeed, 2006).

The formal execution of this study relies on the thematic interpretation method (*tafsīr mawḍūʿī*) to analyze scriptural data systematically (Al-Farmawi, 2005; Rahman, 1982). The operational procedure was executed through three distinct phases to ensure maximum analytical consistency (Abdel Haleem, 2010; Al-Farmawi, 2005). First, all relevant verses were gathered using precise ecological keywords and cross-referenced with classical lexicons (Al-Farmawi, 2005; Rahman, 1982). Second, the gathered text fragments were organized into thematic clusters focusing on preservation, destruction, and non-human rights (Izzi Dien, 2000; Kamali, 2010). Third, each verse was analyzed by comparing classical commentaries with contemporary hermeneutical models to balance historical context with modern ecological issues (Al-Tabari, 2001; Ibn Kathir, 1999).

To move beyond descriptive reporting toward conceptual reconstruction, this study integrates thematic exegesis with a structured ecotheological framework (Bergmann, 2017; Tucker & Grim, 2017). This analytical approach examines the relationship between metaphysical doctrines and empirical environmental ethics (Nasr, 1996; Ozdemir, 2003). The isolated themes were synthesized into broader ethical principles, creating a comprehensive framework for Qur'anic environmental philosophy (Gade, 2019; Khalid, 2019). Furthermore, these scriptural models were critically evaluated alongside contemporary secular paradigms—including anthropocentrism, biocentrism, and ecocentrism—to assess their relevance to modern sustainability challenges (Callicott, 2013; Taylor, 1986).

The validity and reliability of the interpretive findings were maintained through specific academic strategies (Al-Farmawi, 2005; Saeed, 2006). First, data triangulation was achieved by analyzing multiple classical and contemporary commentary traditions to avoid sectarian or localized bias (Al-Tabari, 2001; Ibn Kathir, 1999). Second, conceptual validation was maintained by consistently aligning the textual findings with established models in environmental ethics (Callicott, 2013; Taylor, 1986). Third, procedural transparency was preserved by documenting all stages of verse selection, clustering, and analysis (Al-Farmawi, 2005; Rahman, 1982). This multi-layered approach ensures the conceptual framework remains robust and academically verifiable (Abdel Haleem, 2010; Saeed, 2006).

Finally, it is necessary to state that this study is strictly limited to normative textual analysis and does not incorporate empirical field data (Al-Farmawi, 2005; Kamali, 2010). Consequently, the resulting framework is intended to contribute to conceptual and theoretical development rather than direct policy implementation (Gade, 2019; Khalid, 2019). However, by presenting a structured model of Qur'anic environmental ethics, this study provides a clear theoretical foundation for future

empirical research (Hassan, 2014; Tucker & Grim, 2017). These future inquiries can build upon these findings to bridge textual ethics with real-world conservation practices (Foltz et al., 2003; Rice, 2006).

4. Result

4.1 Qur'anic Foundations of Environmental Ethics

The structural analysis of the scriptural data demonstrates that Qur'anic environmental ethics are organized as a unified theological-ethical system (Izzi Dien, 2000; Nasr, 1996). The selected verses consistently present the biophysical cosmos as a finely calibrated system characterized by absolute equilibrium (*mīzān*), divine purpose, and structural interdependence (Kamali, 2010; Khalid, 2019). This finding aligns with established scholarship showing that Islamic cosmology frames the natural world as a network of sacred signs (*āyāt*) (Nasr, 1996; Ozdemir, 2003). These signs are designed to generate moral reflection and strict accountability within human actors (Foltz, 2000; Izzi Dien, 2000). Empirical research confirms that religious worldviews influence environmental behavior when nature is viewed as possessing intrinsic spiritual value (Hassan, 2014; Rice, 2006). Furthermore, contemporary environmental literature demonstrates that attributing moral status to non-human systems increases pro-environmental actions (Callicott, 2013; Taylor, 1986). The Qur'anic emphasis on intellectual reflection (*tafakkur*) reinforces this connection by linking environmental literacy with spiritual maturity (Abdel Haleem, 2010; Al-Maraghi, 1946). Thus, the data confirm that Qur'anic environmental ethics are grounded in an epistemological framework where spiritual belief dictates ecological action (Gade, 2019; Khalid, 2019).

The empirical data further indicate that Qur'anic environmental ethics function through explicit prohibitions against ecological disruption alongside positive commands for conservation (Al-Tabari, 2001; Ibn Kathir, 1999). Scriptural mandates explicitly prohibit the execution of *fasād* (corruption), a term that classical and contemporary commentators define as ecological destruction (Al-Tabari, 2001; Khalid, 2019). This interpretive finding corresponds with modern environmental science, which conceptualizes ecological degradation as a form of systemic instability caused by human disruption (Rockström et al., 2009; Steffen et al., 2015). Additionally, the Qur'anic focus on resource moderation and socio-ecological justice aligns with contemporary sustainability frameworks that champion planetary boundaries (Raworth, 2017; Steffen et al., 2015). Empirical studies indicate that resource consumption practices are significantly shaped by ethical norms derived from religious frameworks (Folke et al., 2021; Rice, 2006). Therefore, the findings confirm that Qur'anic environmental ethics function as regulatory principles designed to preserve the structural integrity of ecosystems (Izzi Dien, 2000; Kamali, 2010).

Finally, the textual analysis reveals that the Qur'an establishes a relational model of human-nature interaction defined by mutual interdependence rather than absolute dominion (Foltz, 2000; Nasr, 1996). The concept of cosmic subjugation (*taskhīr*) is consistently bound to strict ethical conditions, including active gratitude, moral restraint, and continuous accountability (Al-Tabari, 2001; Ibn Kathir, 1999). This structural pattern aligns with modern critiques of anthropocentrism, which identify dominion-oriented worldviews as primary drivers of global ecological degradation (Callicott, 2013; Taylor, 1986). Empirical insights from sustainability science confirm that relational and non-hierarchical frameworks are highly effective at building ecological resilience (Folke et al., 2021; Rockström et al., 2009). Consequently, the data demonstrate that Qur'anic environmental

ethics are organized as a balanced system that integrates human resource use with ecological protection (Gade, 2019; Khalid, 2019).

4.2 Causes of the Neglect of Qur'anic Environmental Ethics

The structural findings indicate that the contemporary neglect of Qur'anic environmental ethics is deeply linked to a systemic decline in moral responsibility (Chapra, 2008; Khalid, 2019). While the scriptural text positions human actors as moral custodians (*khulafā'*) of the earth, empirical realities indicate this responsibility is widely ignored (Gade, 2019; Rice, 2006). This finding corresponds with sociological studies demonstrating that environmental degradation is correlated with the weakening of ethical values (Chapra, 2008; Ozdemir, 2003). Research in environmental psychology supports this finding, showing that individuals with low moral commitment routinely engage in destructive behaviors (Gifford & Nilsson, 2014; Jackson, 2005). The data suggest that the contemporary neglect of Islamic environmental mandates is driven by a failure to internalize these values rather than a lack of textual information (Hassan, 2014; Kamali, 2010).

Another distinct factor identified during the analysis is the spread of moral-spiritual decay, which manifests as hyper-consumption and exploitative resource extraction (Chapra, 2008; Khalid, 2019). The explicit Qur'anic prohibitions against wasteful excess (*isrāf*) establish clear ethical limits for resource consumption, yet these limits are regularly violated (Al-Tabari, 2001; Ibn Kathir, 1999). Empirical sustainability data confirm that overconsumption is the primary driver of global environmental crises, leading to resource depletion and climate instability (IPCC, 2023; Steffen et al., 2015). Furthermore, sociological research indicates that modern consumerism relies on value systems that prioritize short-term material wealth over long-term ethics (Jackson, 2005; Raworth, 2017). The data indicate that moral decline plays a central role in driving ecological degradation, confirming the Qur'anic principle that internal spiritual imbalance generates external environmental instability (Nasr, 1996; Ozdemir, 2003).

The structural analysis also reveals that the misinterpretation of sacred texts contributes directly to the legitimization of environmental exploitation (Foltz, 2000; White, 1967). Specifically, reductionist and anthropocentric readings of concepts like *taskhīr* have been co-opted to justify unchecked human domination over the biosphere (Nasr, 1996; Ozdemir, 2003). This finding aligns with historical critiques of religious anthropocentrism, which argue that misinterpreting scripture can reinforce exploitative practices (Merchant, 1980; White, 1967). Empirical research in religious environmentalism demonstrates that hermeneutical models are highly influential in shaping ecological attitudes (Gade, 2019; Tucker & Grim, 2017). Therefore, the data confirm that the contemporary neglect of Qur'anic environmental values is caused by interpretive distortions rather than the text itself (Saeed, 2006; Sardar, 2010).

4.3 Implications for the Reconstruction of Environmental Ethics

The research findings indicate that neglecting Qur'anic environmental ethics leads to a fragmented approach to environmental interpretation (Gade, 2019; Khalid, 2019). This fragmentation isolates ecological issues as technical problems, separating them from their moral and spiritual contexts (Nasr, 1996; Ozdemir, 2003). Empirical sustainability science confirms that technocratic approaches cannot solve complex ecological crises without integrated ethical

frameworks (Folke et al., 2021; Raworth, 2017). The data suggest that successfully reconstructing environmental ethics requires reintegrating spiritual values into mainstream ecological discourse (Bergmann, 2017; Tucker & Grim, 2017).

Another distinct implication identified is the rise of an unchecked anthropocentric worldview that privileges human utility over cosmic equilibrium (Callicott, 2013; Taylor, 1986). The data indicate that when scriptural principles are stripped of their ethical constraints, they are reduced to utilitarian tools that justify exploitation (Foltz, 2000; Nasr, 1996). This finding corresponds with environmental philosophy, which identifies anthropocentrism as a primary driver of ecological degradation (Merchant, 1980; White, 1967). Empirical evidence shows that shifting toward ecocentric and holistic perspectives significantly improves conservation outcomes (Naess, 1973; Rolston, 1988). Therefore, reconstructing Qur'anic environmental ethics must address this conceptual imbalance by restoring a non-anthropocentric worldview (Izzi Dien, 2000; Kamali, 2010).

Finally, the findings demonstrate that reconstructing Qur'anic environmental ethics requires a systematic reinterpretation of key theological concepts (Abdel Haleem, 2010; Saeed, 2006). The data show that when *khilāfah*, *amānah*, and *mizān* are interpreted holistically, they provide a robust foundation for sustainability (Gade, 2019; Khalid, 2019). This finding aligns with contemporary scholarship highlighting the capacity of religious ethics to drive public engagement with conservation (Hassan, 2014; Tucker & Grim, 2017). Empirical evaluations indicate that integrating religious values into environmental policy increases long-term compliance and community support (Folke et al., 2021; Rice, 2006). Consequently, reconstructing Qur'anic environmental ethics offers a viable conceptual model for addressing contemporary global environmental challenges (Izzi Dien, 2000; Kamali, 2010).

5. Discussion

The structural findings of this study demonstrate that Qur'anic environmental ethics constitute a coherent ecotheological framework that integrates theological principles, moral responsibility, and ecological awareness into a unified system (Izzi Dien, 2000; Nasr, 1996). This result directly challenges the dominant assumption in certain strands of secular environmental discourse that religious ethics are purely normative and lack analytical depth (Callicott, 2013; White, 1967). Instead, the Qur'an presents environmental preservation as an internal requirement of its primary worldview, where cosmology, morality, and human agency are deeply interconnected (Kamali, 2010; Khalid, 2019). This structural alignment corresponds with broader scholarly arguments that religious traditions offer value-based frameworks that complement scientific and policy-driven sustainability approaches (Bergmann, 2017; Tucker & Grim, 2017). The integration of ethical principles such as *khilāfah*, *amānah*, and *mizān* with ecological responsibility indicates that, within the Qur'anic perspective, sustainability is a moral and spiritual obligation rather than a technocratic issue (Foltz, 2000; Gade, 2019). This insight reinforces contemporary sustainability scholarship, which increasingly recognizes that environmental crises are rooted in ethical failures rather than technical limitations (Folke et al., 2021; Raworth, 2017). Therefore, the findings suggest that Qur'anic environmental ethics can contribute to reframing global sustainability discourse by introducing moral and spiritual dimensions that are absent in secular models (Hassan, 2014; Rice, 2006).

At the same time, this study reveals a significant tension between the Qur'an's normative framework and its practical application in contemporary Muslim societies (Chapra, 2008; Khalid, 2019). The persistence of environmental degradation in regions where Islamic teachings are widely recognized indicates a profound gap between ethical ideals and lived realities (Gade, 2019; Rice, 2006). This operational disconnect can be analyzed through the lens of moral disengagement and the weakening of ethical consciousness, which are key drivers of unsustainable behavior (Gifford & Nilsson, 2014; Jackson, 2005). The findings show that neglecting environmental ethics is closely linked to the erosion of the concept of *khilāfah* as moral stewardship, where responsibility has been replaced by utilitarian extraction (Nasr, 1996; Ozdemir, 2003). This observation resonates with critiques of modernity that highlight the dominance of instrumental rationality and consumerist values in shaping human interactions with nature (Raworth, 2017; Steffen et al., 2015). In this context, the Qur'anic emphasis on accountability, moderation, and cosmic balance offers a counter-narrative to economic paradigms that prioritize growth over sustainability (Izzi Dien, 2000; Kamali, 2010). Thus, the discussion highlights the importance of internalizing ethical principles as a prerequisite for translating normative teachings into pro-environmental behaviors (Foltz, 2000; Hassan, 2014).

Another critical insight emerging from this investigation is the role of interpretive frameworks in shaping environmental behavior (Abdel Haleem, 2010; Saeed, 2006). The findings indicate that the misinterpretation of key Qur'anic concepts, particularly *taskhīr*, has contributed to the legitimization of exploitative attitudes toward nature (Foltz, 2000; White, 1967). While the scriptural text presents nature as being made available for human use, this availability is bound to strict ethical conditions, including responsibility, gratitude, and restraint (Al-Tabari, 2001; Ibn Kathir, 1999). However, when these conditions are ignored, the concept of *taskhīr* is reduced to a justification for domination (Nasr, 1996; Ozdemir, 2003). This interpretive shift reflects a broader pattern in religious environmental studies, where sacred texts are selectively interpreted to align with prevailing socio-economic interests (Gade, 2019; Khalid, 2019). The findings underscore the necessity of adopting a holistic hermeneutical approach that situates individual verses within the broader ethical framework of the Qur'an (Al-Farmawi, 2005; Rahman, 1982). This interpretive model aligns with contemporary Qur'anic hermeneutics, which emphasizes the relationship between text, context, and interpretation (Saeed, 2006; Sardar, 2010). Consequently, reconstructing Qur'anic environmental ethics requires critically examining the interpretive frameworks that shape scriptural application (Kamali, 2010; Tucker & Grim, 2017).

Furthermore, this study contributes to the ongoing debate on anthropocentrism in environmental ethics by demonstrating that Qur'anic teachings support a relational rather than dominion-based model (Callicott, 2013; Taylor, 1986). While humans are granted a special status as moral agents, this status is accompanied by obligations that limit their authority over nature (Foltz, 2000; Izzi Dien, 2000). This finding challenges earlier academic critiques that equate religious worldviews with anthropocentric domination, suggesting that the Qur'an promotes an interdependent relationship (Nasr, 1996; Ozdemir, 2003). This perspective aligns with contemporary environmental ethics, particularly ecocentric and relational approaches that emphasize the interconnectedness of living systems (Naess, 1973; Rolston, 1988). Empirical studies in sustainability science support the effectiveness of relational frameworks in fostering ecological resilience and long-term sustainability (Folke et al., 2021; Rockström et al., 2009). By situating human

agency within a broader ecological and theological context, the Qur'anic framework offers a balanced alternative to extreme anthropocentrism and radical ecocentrism (Gade, 2019; Khalid, 2019). Therefore, the discussion highlights the potential of Qur'anic environmental ethics to contribute to an integrative understanding of human-nature relationships (Kamali, 2010; Tucker & Grim, 2017).

Finally, the findings emphasize the practical importance of bridging the gap between ethical theory and operational application in environmental sustainability (Raworth, 2017; Steffen et al., 2015). While the Qur'an provides a comprehensive ethical architecture, its real-world efficacy depends on its translation into concrete policies and local conservation practices (Gade, 2019; Khalid, 2019). Contemporary research indicates that integrating ethical and cultural values into environmental governance increases public engagement and improves sustainability outcomes (Folke et al., 2021; Rice, 2006). In this regard, the reconstructed ecotheological framework proposed in this study offers a foundation for developing context-specific strategies that align environmental policies with spiritual values (Chapra, 2008; Izzi Dien, 2000). For example, concepts such as *amānah* and *khilāfah* can be operationalized in policy frameworks that emphasize accountability, sustainability, and social justice (Kamali, 2010; Nasr, 1996). Similarly, incorporating Qur'anic environmental ethics into educational curricula can foster ecological awareness and ethical responsibility among individuals (Asroni, 2022; Hassan, 2014). Thus, the discussion underscores that the relevance of Qur'anic environmental ethics lies in its potential to inform practical solutions to contemporary global environmental challenges (Gade, 2019; Tucker & Grim, 2017).

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that Qur'anic environmental ethics constitute a coherent and integrative ecotheological framework that connects theological principles, moral responsibility, and ecological sustainability. Through a thematic interpretive approach, the findings demonstrate that the Qur'an articulates environmental ethics through interconnected concepts such as *khilāfah* (stewardship), *amānah* (trust), *mizān* (balance), and the prohibition of *fasād* (corruption). Together, these principles form a normative structure governing human interaction with the natural world. These principles position environmental sustainability not merely as a technical or ecological concern but as a moral and spiritual obligation embedded within human accountability before God. Thus, the Qur'an offers a holistic ethical paradigm that integrates cosmology, morality, and human responsibility into a unified vision of environmental care.

The study further finds that the contemporary neglect of Qur'anic environmental ethics is driven by moral-spiritual decay, anthropocentric interpretations, and the misinterpretation of key theological concepts. This neglect results in a fragmented understanding of environmental issues, where ecological challenges are detached from their ethical and spiritual foundations. Consequently, environmental degradation is not only a reflection of material imbalance but also of deeper ethical disorientation. These findings reinforce the argument that contemporary ecological crises are fundamentally rooted in the erosion of moral values and the failure to internalize ethical responsibility, rather than technical or policy limitations.

In response to these challenges, this study proposes a reconstructed ecotheological framework that reinterprets Qur'anic environmental ethics as a holistic system integrating theological, moral, and ecological dimensions. This reconstruction contributes to the field of Islamic environmental

ethics by offering a conceptual model that bridges classical Qur'anic teachings with contemporary sustainability discourse. It also provides a theoretical foundation for developing environmentally responsible practices, policies, and educational frameworks grounded in ethical and spiritual values. By situating environmental responsibility within a broader moral and theological context, this study expands the analytical scope of sustainability studies and highlights the relevance of religious ethics in addressing global environmental challenges.

However, this study is limited to normative textual analysis and does not include empirical investigation of how Qur'anic environmental ethics are implemented in real-world contexts. Future research is therefore recommended to explore the practical application of these ethical principles through interdisciplinary approaches, including empirical studies, policy analysis, and comparative research across different socio-cultural settings. Such studies would provide deeper insights into the relationship between religious ethics and environmental behavior, thereby strengthening Islamic ecotheology's contribution to global sustainability efforts.

References

- Abdel Haleem, M. A. S. (2010). *Understanding the Qur'an: Themes and style* (pp. 45–67). I.B. Tauris.
- Al-Farmawi, A. H. (2005). *Al-bidayah fi al-tafsir al-mawdu'i* (pp. 21–35). Dar al-Tafsir.
- Al-Maraghi, A. M. (1946). *Tafsir al-Maraghi* (Vol. 1, pp. 92–95). Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi.
- Al-Tabari, M. J. (2001). *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān* (pp. 145–168). Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah.
- Andariati, L. (2019). Relevansi mitos Kali Pemali dengan etika lingkungan Islam. *Jurnal SMART*, 5(2), 275–289. <https://doi.org/10.18784/smartv5i2.870>
- Asroni, A. (2022). Etika lingkungan dalam perspektif Islam. *Konferensi Integrasi Interkoneksi Islam dan Sains*, 4(1), 54–59.
- Azizah, M., & Hariyanto, H. (2021). Implementasi etika bisnis Islam terhadap konsep green economics. *Supremasi Hukum*, 10(2), 237–252. <https://doi.org/10.14421/sh.v10i2.2392>
- Bergmann, S. (2017). *Religion, space, and the environment* (pp. 112–134). Routledge.
- Botha, P. M. (2024). Penanaman mangrove untuk kelestarian alam. *Jurnal Lingkungan*, 4(1), 202–207.
- Callicott, J. B. (2013). *Thinking like a planet: The land ethic and the earth ethic* (pp. 89–112). Oxford University Press.
- Chapra, M. U. (2008). *The Islamic vision of development in the light of maqasid al-Shariah* (pp. 55–78). IRTI.
- Effendi, R., Salsabila, H., & Malik, A. (2018). Pemahaman tentang lingkungan berkelanjutan. *Modul*, 18(2), 75–82. <https://doi.org/10.14710/mdl.18.2.2018.75-82>
- Folke, C., Polasky, S., Rockström, J., et al. (2021). Our future in the Anthropocene biosphere. *Ambio*, 50(4), 834–869. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13280-021-01544-8>
- Foltz, R. C. (2000). *Islam and ecology: A bestowed trust* (pp. 15–40). Harvard University Press.

- Foltz, R. C., Denny, F. M., & Baharuddin, A. (2003). *Islam and ecology: A bestowed trust* (pp. 1–20). Harvard University Press.
- Gade, A. M. (2019). *Muslim environmentalisms* (pp. 75–98). Columbia University Press.
- Gifford, R., & Nilsson, A. (2014). Personal and social factors that influence pro-environmental concern. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 39(1), 141–157. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ijop.12034>
- Ibn Kathir. (1999). *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim* (Vol. 2, pp. 210–235). Dar Tayyibah.
- Imran Hayat, M., et al. (2023). Islamic environmental ethics and climate challenges. *Journal of Islamic Ecotheology*, 4(2), 89–104.
- Irsan, M., et al. (2021). Responsibility and natural resource management in Islamic law. *Islamic Law Review*, 17(3), 201–215.
- Istiani, M., & Purwanto, M. R. (2022). Fiqh bi'ah dalam perspektif Al-Qur'an. *Jurnal Pemikiran Islam*, 6(2), 112–125.
- Izzi Dien, M. (2000). *Environmental dimensions of Islam* (pp. 33–60). Lutterworth Press.
- Jackson, T. (2005). Motivating sustainable consumption, 55(3), 1–154.
- Kamali, M. H. (2010). *The environment in Islam* (pp. 12–40). Islamic Foundation.
- Karim, A., Fuqohak, M. A. Z., & Atabik, A. (2022). Strategi pelestarian lingkungan perspektif Al-Qur'an. *Jurnal Ekologi Teologis*, 8(1), 45–60.
- Khalid, F. (2019). *Signs on the earth: Islam, modernity and the climate crisis* (pp. 101–130).
- Kube Publishing. Merchant, C. (1980). *The death of nature: Women, ecology, and the scientific revolution* (pp. 68–95).
- Harper & Row. Meyresta, L., Fasa, M. I., & Suharto. (2022). Etika pengelolaan sumber daya alam berkelanjutan dalam perspektif Islam. *Jurnal Dinamika Ekonomi Syariah*, 9(2), 85–96. <https://doi.org/10.53429/jdes.v9i2.389>
- Naess, A. (1973). The shallow and the deep ecology movement. *Inquiry*, 16(1–4), 95–100. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00201747308601682>
- Nasr, S. H. (1996). *Religion and the order of nature* (pp. 121–150). Oxford University Press.
- Ozdemir, I. (2003). Toward an understanding of environmental ethics from a Qur'anic perspective. *Islamic Studies*, 42(4), 637–651.
- Raworth, K. (2017). *Doughnut economics* (pp. 25–50).
- Rice, G. Pro-environmental Behavior in Egypt: Is there a Role for Islamic Environmental Ethics?. *J Bus Ethics* 65, 373–390 (2006). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-006-0010-9>
- Rockström, J., Steffen, W., Noone, K., et al. (2009). A safe operating space for humanity. *Nature*, 461(7263), 472–475. <https://doi.org/10.1038/461472a>
- Rolston, H. (1988). *Environmental ethics: Duties to and values in the natural world* (pp. 120–145). Temple University Press.
- Saeed, A. (2006). *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a contemporary approach* (pp. 88–110). Routledge.

- Sardar, Z. (2010). *Reading the Qur'an: The contemporary relevance of the sacred text* (pp. 150–175).
- Saniotis, A. Muslims and ecology: fostering Islamic environmental ethics. *Cont Islam* 6, 155–171 (2012). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-011-0173-8>
- Hurst & Company. Steffen, W., Broadgate, W., Deutsch, L., et al. (2015). The trajectory of the Anthropocene. *The Anthropocene Review*, 2(1), 81–98. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053019614564785>
- Taylor, P. W. (1986). *Respect for nature* (pp. 55–79). Princeton University Press.
- Tucker, M. E., & Grim, J. (2017). *Religion and ecology* (pp. 1–25). Yale University Press.
- Utama, P. B., Gunawan, T., & Marfai, M. A. (2020). Kajian kerusakan lingkungan akibat longsor. *Jurnal Geografi*, 12(2), 180–195.
- White, L. (1967). The historical roots of our ecological crisis. *Science*, 155(3767), 1203–1207. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.155.3767.1203>

