



Islamic Environmental Ethics in Global Context: A Trends, Gaps, and Theological Contributions

Adnan Nuril Anwar^{1*}, Muh Bahrul Afif², Anti Anfaul Lisani³,
Moch. Farich Alfani⁴, Safinatul Umami⁵

¹⁴⁵*Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Al-Hikmah 2, Brebes, Indonesia*

²*Universitas Al Asyariah Mandar, Polewali Mandar, Indonesia*

³*Universitas Islam Negeri Profesor Kiai Haji Saifuddin Zuhri, Purwokerto, Indonesia*

Corresponding Author: adnannurilanwar@gmail.com

Article History:

Submitted:

2026-04-09

Accepted:

2026-06-12

Published:

2026-07-16

Abstract

This study shows that Islam's contribution to the discourse on eco-theology and environmental ethics tends to be limited. In fact, Islam possesses a strong theological-ethical foundation through the concept of Islamic Environmental Ethics (IEE). Using the PRISMA method and VOSViewer software, the author conducted a search using the keywords "Islamic AND Environmental AND Ethics" and identified 265 articles from 2004 through May 31, 2026. After undergoing an inclusion and exclusion process, 30 relevant articles were selected for analysis. The results of the bibliometric analysis indicate that IEE studies have developed significantly, focusing on the themes of khalifah, masalah, and 'adl (justice); however, the majority remain normatively and legalistically oriented without strengthening their theological foundations. Visual analysis indicates that IEE serves as a bridge between Islamic concepts and global environmental issues (responsibility, sustainability, and conservation). The author proposes the Ash'ari theological framework as an alternative approach to reconstructing IEE into an integrative paradigm of ecological theology, while also opening space for interfaith dialogue in building a just and sustainable global environmental ethics.

Keywords: Islamic environmental ethics; Ash'ari theology; Asy'arian Eco-Theology Framework; bibliometric analysis; theological ecology

1. Introduction

Claims that the Earth has shown signs of instability in sustaining life must be taken seriously, especially when they directly threaten food security, water availability, and the living space of organisms around the world. A report by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services indicates that more than one million species are threatened

with extinction, while ecosystem degradation is increasing exponentially due to human activities.¹ This crisis underscores that environmental issues are no longer merely a matter of technology or policy, but also a matter of values, spirituality, and epistemology that shape humanity's relationship with nature. In a global context, the United Nations, through its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda, emphasizes that the response to the ecological crisis must be multidisciplinary and inclusive, incorporating the contributions of religion as a moral and cultural foundation for building a paradigm of sustainability.²

However, a number of empirical studies point to a gap between Islamic ethics which still tend to be "normative" and the ecological practices carried out by Muslim communities. Saniotis, in "Muslims and Ecology: Fostering Islamic Environmental Ethics," points out that in various Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Pakistan, Islamic values regarding environmental sustainability are often acknowledged but rarely implemented due to institutional and political constraints, as well as a colonial legacy that has shifted the ethical paradigm toward utilitarianism and exploitation.³ This issue is epistemic in nature namely, how Islam, as a system of knowledge, can be translated into concrete and sustainable ecological actions,⁴ yet remains grounded in the tradition of Islamic thought, particularly Islamic theology. In short, Islamic environmental ethics is understood not merely as a system of norms, but as an expression that emerges from a deeper theological structure namely, Islam's understanding of God, humanity, and nature. As Foltz notes, this situation highlights the need to develop a theological approach that can integrate the paradigms of Islamic theology and ecology into a single coherent epistemological framework.⁵

Similarly, in the academic sphere, Islam's contribution to the discourse on environmental ethics has yet to be systematically explored in internationally indexed literature such as Scopus, even though Islamic tradition holds significant theological and ethical potential that could be incorporated into the global conversation on environmental ethics.⁶ The main academic issue stems from the fact that, although concepts such as *khalifah*, *mizān*, and *amānah* have been widely discussed, most studies remain at the normative or legalistic level and have not yet explicitly established an epistemological framework that integrates faith, cosmology, and ecological action.⁷ In other words, the study of Islamic environmental ethics (IEE) still lacks a theological foundation that systematically explains the position of humanity and nature within the framework of Islamic metaphysics.

The results of the literature survey conducted by the author using the Scopus database (as of May 31, 2026) show that of the 265 publications containing the keywords "Islamic AND Environmental AND Ethics," only 30 articles met the criteria after the PRISMA selection process and the exclusion of book chapters, reviews, conference papers, notes, and articles in press. Bibliometric analysis using VOSViewer indicates that the dominant keywords in this study include stewardship, sustainability,

¹ IPBES, *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*.

² Programme, *Faith for Earth Coalition - Achievement Report 2025*; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023*.

³ Saniotis, "Muslims and Ecology: Fostering Islamic Environmental Ethics"; Syihabuddin et al., "Elucidating Eco-Religious in Islamic Studies and the Future of Environmental Ethics."

⁴ Haider et al., "Shī'ī Imāmī Thought on Existence, Life, and Extraterrestrials"; IPBES, *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*.

⁵ Foltz, *Islam and Ecology*.

⁶ Malick, "Muslim Environmentalisms"; Sugiant and Shahrudin, *Holy Earth*.

⁷ Amri and Mohd@Amat, "A Review on Islamic Environmental Ethics"; Ismail and Sukron, "Qur'anic Critique of Exploitative Anthropocentrism."

khalifah, *masalah*, and justice (*‘adl*). However, theological concepts such as *tawhīd*, *irādah Allah*, and *tajdīd al-khalq* are scarcely mentioned. These findings reveal an epistemological reduction in which the spiritual dimension of Islam has not been fully integrated into the framework of theological ecology.⁸

To address this gap, this study aims to reconstruct Islamic environmental ethics (IEE) through the perspective of Ash‘ari theology, which is one of the most influential schools of classical Islamic theology. Ash‘ari theology emphasizes the concept of continuous creation (*tajdīd al-khalq*), God’s absolute will (*irādah Allah*), and human responsibility as limited moral agents (*kasb*), who nevertheless bear ethical obligations toward the preservation of creation.⁹ By integrating these principles, this study proposes the Asy‘arian Eco-Theology Framework (AETF) as a new epistemological model for understanding IEE. This framework places ecological action¹⁰ as a manifestation of theological awareness and a spiritual expression of God, not merely moral obedience to the law.¹¹

Based on this review, this study formulates three fundamental research questions: (RQ1) What are the main research trends in Islamic environmental ethics in the Scopus database?; (RQ2) What thematic structures and keyword clusters characterize the literature on Islamic environmental ethics?; and (RQ3) How can Islamic theological perspectives contribute to the contemporary discourse on Islamic environmental ethics?

By integrating a systematic literature review (SLR) and bibliometric mapping, this study provides a comprehensive overview of the development of Islamic environmental ethics within the global academic discourse. Furthermore, this study identifies thematic structures in the literature and proposes a theological perspective that highlights Islamic thought’s potential contribution to contemporary environmental ethics.

2. Literature Review

Over time, research on IEE can be categorized into several main orientations: the philosophical-theological approach, the ethical-normative approach, and the social-practical approach regarding the Muslim community’s engagement with environmental issues.

One of the early studies on the development of IEE was influenced by the thought of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, who viewed the modern environmental crisis as a consequence of the loss of the spiritual dimension in humanity’s relationship with nature. From Nasr’s perspective, secular modernity has given rise to a worldview that treats nature as nothing more than an object of exploitation; thus, a reconstruction of the ecological paradigm based on sacred cosmology is necessary. Nasr’s thought provides a philosophical foundation asserting that Islamic environmental ethics cannot be understood merely as a set of moral rules but must stem from a metaphysical understanding of the relationship between God, humanity, and nature. Thus, nature possesses intrinsic value as it is a manifestation of the signs of God (*āyāt Allah*) within the cosmic order.¹²

Furthermore, research on IEE has evolved through a more interdisciplinary approach. Richard

⁸ Basri et al., “Islamic Environmental Ethics”; Wu et al., “Regional Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and Policy Experience within the IPBES Framework.”

⁹ Suarning, “The Concept of Al-Kasb Theory in Islamic Theology.”

¹⁰ Syihabuddin et al., “Elucidating Eco-Religious in Islamic Studies and the Future of Environmental Ethics.”

¹¹ Foltz, *Islam and Ecology*; Khasani, “Khilāfah, Taskhīr, and Sustainability.”

¹² Mughal et al., “A Critical Study of the Views of Sayyed Hossein Nasr on the Philosophical Foundation of Islamic Science”; Nasr, *Religion & the Order of Nature*.

Foltz, in his work *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust*, asserts that Islam possesses an ethical framework that facilitates dialogue between religion and ecology through the concepts of trust, responsibility, and the interconnectedness of humanity with all of creation. This study represents a significant contribution to the field of religion and ecology, as it demonstrates that religion is not only a source of moral motivation but also provides a conceptual framework for a deeper understanding of ecological relationships.¹³

At the empirical and social levels, Saniotis's research on "Muslims and Ecology: Fostering Islamic Environmental Ethics" examines how Islamic values are translated into the ecological practices of Muslim communities. This study shows that Muslim communities in several contexts—such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Pakistan possess a normative awareness of the importance of protecting the environment, but the implementation of these values often faces various social, political, and institutional barriers. Saniotis's research reveals a gap between the normative discourse of Islamic ethics and the reality of Muslim communities' ecological behavior.¹⁴

A more comprehensive study was conducted by Anna M. Gade through her research on Muslim Environmentalisms. Gade expands on the IEE's analysis by demonstrating that the relationship between Islam and the environment is not limited to religious texts but also unfolds through social practices, Islamic law, education, environmental activism, and Muslim community movements. Gade asserts that Islamic environmental ethics has the potential to contribute to the global discourse on ecological justice, the rights of nature, and the relationship between humans and non-human beings. However, Gade also points out that the study of Muslim environmentalism still requires theoretical development so that it becomes not only a practical response to the environmental crisis but also an ethical framework with a strong conceptual foundation.¹⁵

Furthermore, recent research on Islamic eco-theology indicates a new trend toward shifting the study of the environment in Islam from a normative approach to a theological one. Several studies emphasize that concepts such as *tawhīd*, *khalīfah*, *mīzān*, and *amānah* need to be understood not only as moral principles but as part of the Islamic cosmological framework that explains the ontological relationship between God, humanity, and nature. This approach opens the door for the development of Islamic eco-theology as a paradigm capable of integrating spiritual and ecological dimensions.¹⁶

3. Method

This study employs a systematic literature review (SLR) approach combined with bibliometric analysis to map the development and direction of research on Islamic environmental ethics (IEE). This approach was chosen because it provides a comprehensive understanding of a field's scientific landscape while identifying research trends, thematic structures, and opportunities for theoretical development.¹⁷ The literature review process followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic

¹³ Haider, "An Analytical Study of Islamic Faith and Ethics in the Context of Environmental Sustainability"; Foltz, *Islam and Ecology*.

¹⁴ Shaleh and Islam, "Averting the Existential Threat of the Planet: Islamic Environmental Ethics to Address the Contemporary Environmental Crisis," 2024; Saniotis, "Muslims and Ecology: Fostering Islamic Environmental Ethics."

¹⁵ Haider, "An Analytical Study of Islamic Faith and Ethics in the Context of Environmental Sustainability"; Gade, "Environment, Sustainability, and the Work of Constructive Muslim Theology"; Gade, "Muslim Environmentalisms and Environmental Ethics."

¹⁶ Gade, "Environment, Sustainability, and the Work of Constructive Muslim Theology"; Rakhmat, "Islamic Ecotheology."

¹⁷ Snyder, "Literature Review as a Research Methodology."

Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, which emphasize transparency, reproducibility, and the validity of the topic under study.¹⁸

The research data were obtained from the Scopus database, as it covers reputable international journals across various disciplines and provides relevant and comprehensive metadata for bibliometric analysis.¹⁹ The search was conducted on May 31, 2026, using the keywords: Islamic AND Environmental AND Ethics in the fields “article title, abstract, and keywords.” The initial search yielded 265 publications. Articles with the specific keyword “Islamic Environmental Ethics” (n = 50) were filtered to ensure topic relevance. Next, an exclusion process was conducted based on document type (book chapter = 12, review = 3, conference paper = 1, and note = 1) and publication status (article in press = 3). Following the selection and screening process using the PRISMA guidelines, 30 articles that met the inclusion criteria were identified and will be analyzed further.

The inclusion criteria used in this study are as follows: (1) Articles published through May 31, 2026; (2) publications in English; and (3) a focus on the topic of Islamic environmental ethics. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria include: (1) opinion pieces or editorials without empirical data; (2) duplicated publications; and (3) studies that do not explicitly address Islamic environmental ethics. The PRISMA procedure was used to document the processes of identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion.²⁰

The data analysis phase was conducted using two approaches. First, a bibliometric analysis was performed using VOSViewer software to map keyword patterns, inter-topic relationships, and thematic clusters that illustrate the scholarly network of Islamic environmental ethics. This analysis enabled the identification of dominant topics, conceptual co-occurrence, and the evolution of terminology over time.²¹ Second, a qualitative analysis was conducted through an in-depth review of the selected articles to examine the conceptual frameworks, methodological approaches, and theoretical orientations used by previous researchers.²²

4. Result and Discussion

The Major Research Trends in Islamic Environmental Ethics in the Scopus Database

The exploration of Islamic environmental ethics (IEE) as a distinct academic field has gradually emerged in the discourse of Islamic thought and environmental humanities. The first research question (RQ1) in this study aims to identify the current state and significance of scientific research on IEE through an analysis of publication trends, publication sources, authorship patterns, geographic distribution, and institutional affiliations. Through this mapping, we can understand how the academic community positions the Islamic ethical perspective in responding to global ecological challenges. The following analysis presents a systematic review based on Scopus-indexed data, illustrating how research on IEE has evolved, spread, and begun to establish its intellectual presence over the past two decades.

Based on data obtained from the Scopus database (Figure 1), the development of IEE studies shows a slow but significant upward trend. From 2004 to 2020, scientific publications in this field

¹⁸ Page et al., “The PRISMA 2020 Statement.”

¹⁹ Donthu et al., “How to Conduct a Bibliometric Analysis.”

²⁰ Page et al., “The PRISMA 2020 Statement.”

²¹ Van Eck and Waltman, “Citation-Based Clustering of Publications Using CitNetExplorer and VOSviewer.”

²² Tranfield et al., “Towards a Methodology for Developing Evidence-Informed Management Knowledge by Means of Systematic Review”; Xiao and Watson, “Guidance on Conducting a Systematic Literature Review.”

remained sporadic, with only one or two articles appearing in certain years.²³ This indicates that IEE had not yet become an established research topic. The number of publications began to increase after 2021, in line with intensifying global discourse on the climate crisis and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).²⁴ The most striking growth occurred from 2024 to 2025, with the highest number reaching 13 publications in 2025 and 6 publications through May 2026, indicating that scholars increasingly view IEE as a relevant conceptual framework within the fields of environmental humanities and contemporary Islamic thought.²⁵

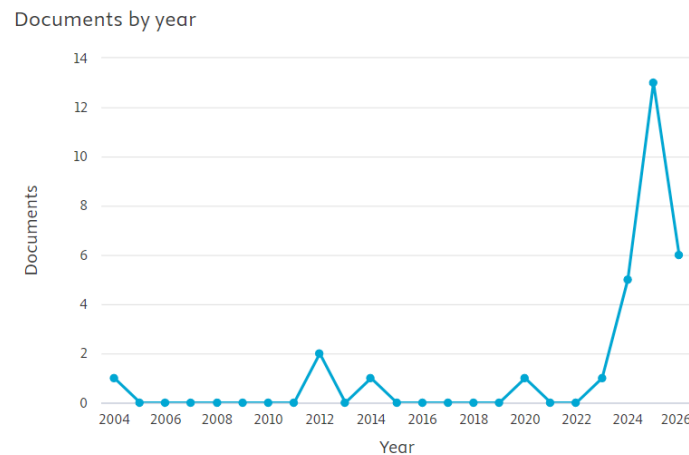


Figure 1. Annual Publication Trends in Islamic Environmental Ethics in the Scopus Database (2004–2026)

This trend reflects a growing academic awareness of the connection between the Islamic ethical paradigm and global environmental challenges.²⁶ The surge in publications over the past five years signals a paradigm shift from fragmented conceptual discussions toward more systematic academic research. Nevertheless, the overall number of publications remains limited compared to other religion-based environmental ethical frameworks,²⁷ such as Christian or Buddhist environmental ethics.²⁸ This situation indicates that IEE research is still in its emerging and exploratory stages, while

²³ Amiruddin et al., “Empowering Indigenous Coastal Conservation: Eco-Muamalat as a Model for Sustainable Marine Practices”; Amiruddin et al., “Empowering Indigenous Coastal Conservation: Eco-Muamalat as a Model for Sustainable Marine Practices”; Saniotis, “Muslims and Ecology: Fostering Islamic Environmental Ethics”; Al-Naki, “How Do We Communicate Environmental Ethics? Reflections on Environmental Education from a Kuwaiti Perspective.”

²⁴ Al-Tamimi and Abdellatif, “Maqāṣid Al-Sharī‘ah (the Higher Objectives of Islamic Law) as an Alternative Perspective for Contemporary Environmental Sustainability”; Amiruddin et al., “Empowering Indigenous Coastal Conservation: Eco-Muamalat as a Model for Sustainable Marine Practices”; Shaleh and Islam, “Averting the Existential Threat of the Planet: Islamic Environmental Ethics to Address the Contemporary Environmental Crisis,” 2024.

²⁵ Widiyanto, “Günümüz İslam Dünyasında Bilgi ve Kozmik Sürdürülebilirlik: Çevre Etiğinden Yeşil Bilgi Kültürüne,” 2025; Susana et al., “Reconstructing Islamic Legal Norms in Environmental Governance: A Maqasid-Based Legal Critique of Indonesia’s Resource Policies”; Ismail et al., “Authoritative Ecological Convergence between Hadith and Pasang Ri Kajang: Wilāyat al-Amr as Constitutional Legitimacy for Environmental Governance”; Al-Tamimi and Abdellatif, “Maqāṣid Al-Sharī‘ah (the Higher Objectives of Islamic Law) as an Alternative Perspective for Contemporary Environmental Sustainability.”

²⁶ Widiyanto, “Günümüz İslam Dünyasında Bilgi ve Kozmik Sürdürülebilirlik: Çevre Etiğinden Yeşil Bilgi Kültürüne,” 2025; Pratisti, “The Ethical Relationships of People and Place: Theoretical Analysis on Muslim Communities Environmental Responsibility,” 2024.

²⁷ Saniotis, “Muslims and Ecology: Fostering Islamic Environmental Ethics.”

²⁸ Suryani et al., “Eco-Theology in the Catholic Perspective (A Study on Environmental Conservation Verses) at Santa Maria Cathedral Church, Palembang”; Stenschke, “The Purpose and Promise of Creation According to the Letter to the Romans. A Contribution to Christian Environmental Ethics”; Tham et al., *Multicultural and Religious Perspectives on Protecting the Environment, the Biosphere, and Biodiversity*.

also opening up significant opportunities for future researchers to expand its theoretical scope, comparative potential, and contribution to resolving the global ecological crisis.

Next, the distribution of IEE scientific publications spans five major academic sources (Figure 2), reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of this field of study. Journals contributing to this topic include *Advances in Natural and Applied Sciences* (2012),²⁹ *Studia Islamika* (2025),³⁰ *Al-Istinbath: Journal of Islamic Law* (2025),³¹ *Pharos Journal of Theology* (2026),³² and *Al Manahij* (2026).³³ This distribution indicates that research on IEE does not yet have a thematically concentrated publication platform but remains scattered across broader disciplinary contexts such as Islamic studies, law, and applied sciences.

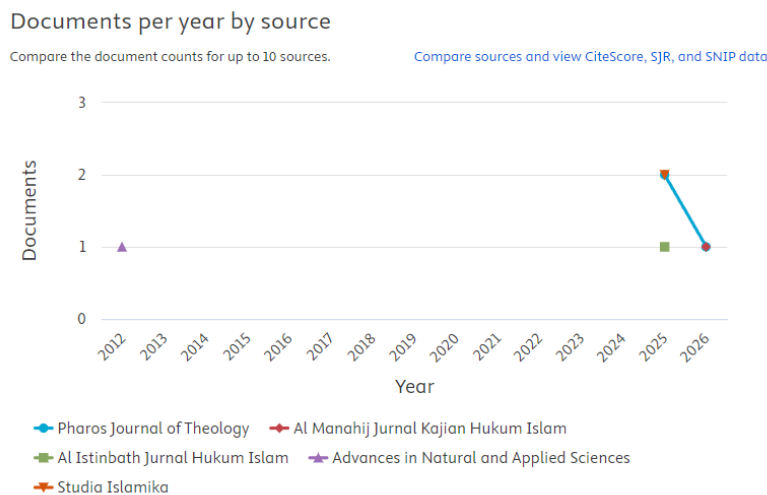


Figure 2. Distribution of Publications on Islamic Environmental Ethics by Journal/Source Name

This distribution pattern also indicates that academic exploration of IEE transcends the boundaries between applied science journals and Islamic studies, signaling a convergence between theological discourse and environmental pragmatism. The involvement of journals such as *Al Istinbath* and *Al Manahij* demonstrates growing interest among Islamic law scholars in integrating ecological responsibility into the discourses of fiqh and Sharia ethics.³⁴ Meanwhile, the presence of *Intellectual*

²⁹ Amiruddin et al., “Empowering Indigenous Coastal Conservation: Eco-Muamalat as a Model for Sustainable Marine Practices.”plainCitation”: Amiruddin et al., “Empowering Indigenous Coastal Conservation: Eco-Muamalat as a Model for Sustainable Marine Practices.”

³⁰ Amiruddin et al., “Empowering Indigenous Coastal Conservation: Eco-Muamalat as a Model for Sustainable Marine Practices”; “Rejecting Geothermal Projects: Muslim Environmentalism in The SAPAR Movement for Ecological Justice and Sustainable Natural Resources.”

³¹ Susana et al., “Reconstructing Islamic Legal Norms in Environmental Governance: A Maqasid-Based Legal Critique of Indonesia’s Resource Policies.”

³² Jamal et al., “Theology of Marine Ecosystems from the Perspective of the Al-Qur’an and Its Relevance to Indonesia for Marine Areas Strengthening Pursuant to Law No. 32 of 2014”; Yudha, “Integrating Islam and Local Culture: An Islamic Ethical Framework in the Marsiadapari Toba Tradition”; Sya’roni et al., “Ecotheological Insights from Prophetic Hadiths: Reframing Islamic Environmental Ethics Based on SDGs.”

³³ Tutik et al., “Reconstructing Eco-Maqāṣid al-Sharī’ah for CSR Policy and Radioactive Waste Management: An SDGs-Based Study in Banten and West Java.”

³⁴ Susana et al., “Reconstructing Islamic Legal Norms in Environmental Governance: A Maqasid-Based Legal Critique of Indonesia’s Resource Policies”; Tutik et al., “Reconstructing Eco-Maqāṣid al-Sharī’ah for CSR Policy and Radioactive Waste Management: An SDGs-Based Study in Banten and West Java.”plainCitation”: Susana et al., “Reconstructing Islamic Legal Norms in Environmental Governance: A Maqasid-Based Legal Critique of Indonesia’s Resource Policies”; Tutik et al., “Reconstructing Eco-Maqāṣid al-Sharī’ah for CSR Policy and Radioactive Waste Management: An SDGs-Based Study in Banten and West Java.”

*Discourse and Contemporary Islam*³⁵ demonstrates the expansion of the discussion of environmental ethics into the mainstream of contemporary Islamic thought. Overall, these findings indicate that IEE studies are still in their early stages but are beginning to build bridges between the Islamic scholarly tradition and the global discourse on environmental ethics.

The distribution of authors in IEE publications reveals a decentralized pattern, in which each author contributes only one publication (Figure 3). This pattern indicates that no single researcher or research group has consistently dominated or served as a primary reference in the development of IEE studies. This fragmented authorship landscape suggests that the field of IEE studies is still in its early stages of development, with research interests that are sporadic and not yet integrated into established institutional research agendas.

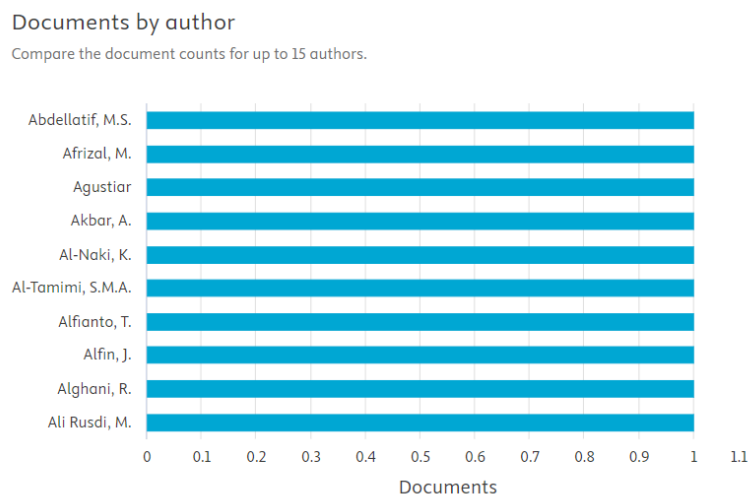


Figure 3. Author Productivity and Distribution in Research on Islamic Environmental Ethics

This diverse pattern of authorship can also be interpreted as a sign of increasing interdisciplinary exploration,³⁶ in which various academic backgrounds—ranging from Islamic studies and theology to law, environmental science, and ethics—each make their own distinct contributions. The absence of recurring patterns of author collaboration indicates that intellectual networks surrounding IEE have not yet been consolidated, thereby opening opportunities for the formation of thematic research collaborations and academic networks in the future. Thus, its evolving nature makes IEE a promising field for strengthening theoretical coherence, developing shared methodologies, and fostering a scientific community.

In addition to the distribution of authors, the geographic distribution of IEE research shows a clear concentration in the Southeast Asian region³⁷ (Figure 4), particularly in Indonesia (16 publications) and Malaysia (5 publications). This dominance underscores the central role of countries with

³⁵ Saniotis, “Muslims and Ecology: Fostering Islamic Environmental Ethics.”

³⁶ Jamal et al., “Theology of Marine Ecosystems from the Perspective of the Al-Qur’an and Its Relevance to Indonesia for Marine Areas Strengthening Pursuant to Law No. 32 of 2014”; Pratisti, “The Ethical Relationships of People and Place: Theoretical Analysis on Muslim Communities Environmental Responsibility,” 2024.

³⁷ Ismail et al., “Authoritative Ecological Convergence Between Hadith and Pasang Ri Kajang: Wilāyat al-Amr as Constitutional Legitimacy For Environmental Governance”; Jamal et al., “Theology of Marine Ecosystems from the Perspective of the Al-Qur’an and Its Relevance to Indonesia for Marine Areas Strengthening Pursuant to Law No. 32 of 2014”; Saniotis, “Muslims and Ecology: Fostering Islamic Environmental Ethics.”

Muslim-majority populations in developing an Islamic-based environmental ethics discourse.³⁸ The emergence of research from other countries, though relatively small in number, further strengthens theological and ethical awareness of ecological responsibility in the contemporary Islamic world.

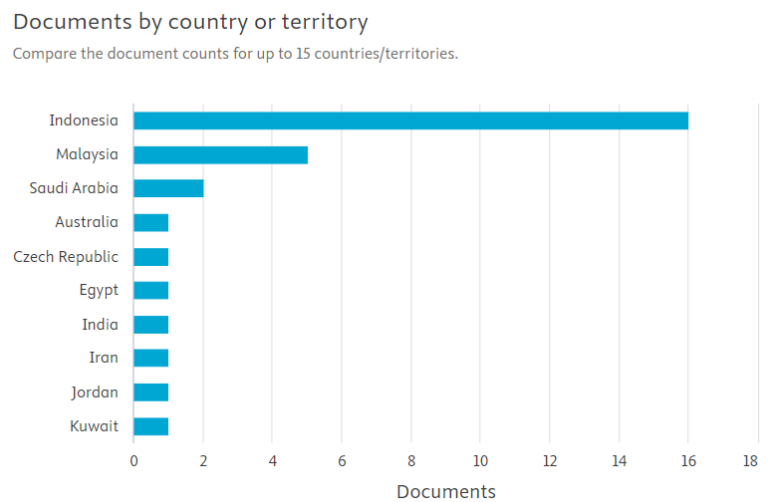


Figure 4. Geographic Distribution of Publications on Islamic Environmental Ethics by Country

Interestingly, the existence of publications from non-Muslim countries such as Australia, the Czech Republic, and India demonstrates international engagement in IEE studies, transcending cultural and geographical boundaries. This trend indicates that IEE is not merely an internal Islamic discourse but is also beginning to be recognized as part of the global humanities discourse. Nevertheless, the fact that the majority of publications are still concentrated in Southeast Asia also suggests that intellectual output in this field remains regional in nature, thereby opening opportunities for strengthening cross-regional collaboration and developing a framework for comparative research between Muslim and non-Muslim academic contexts.

Similarly, the institutional distribution of IEE research is still dominated by academic institutions and government agencies in countries with Muslim-majority populations.³⁹ Currently, the leading contributor is the State Islamic Institute of Parepare with three publications, followed by several institutions that each contributed two publications, such as Diponegoro University, the Islamic Science University of Malaysia, and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati. The diversity of the institutions involved demonstrates cross-sectoral interest in integrating ethical and theological perspectives into environmental discourse.

³⁸ "Rejecting Geothermal Projects: Muslim Environmentalism in The SAPAR Movement for Ecological Justice and Sustainable Natural Resources"; Shaleh and Islam, "Averting the Existential Threat of the Planet: Islamic Environmental Ethics to Address the Contemporary Environmental Crisis," 2024.

³⁹ {Formatting Citation}

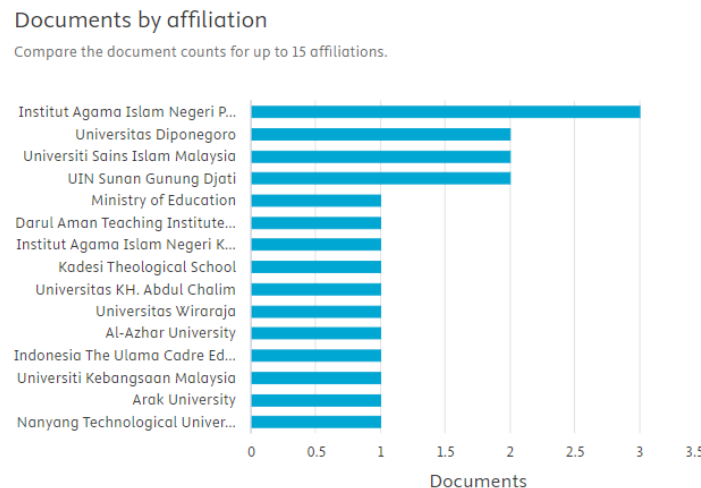


Figure 5. Top Institutional Affiliations Contributing to Research on Islamic Environmental Ethics

This distribution highlights an interesting pattern: IEE research has so far been produced more by Islamic universities than by environmental research centers. This suggests that IEE studies remain firmly rooted in the realms of religion and philosophy, rather than in an empirical ecological approach. The involvement of institutions such as Al-Azhar University and Nanyang Technological University reflects cross-national recognition of IEE as an emerging academic field.⁴⁰ However, the apparent lack of consistent institutional collaboration also indicates that research networks among Islamic universities remain limited. Therefore, strengthening inter-institutional collaboration and developing a shared research framework are strategic steps to solidify the consolidation and enhance the global visibility of IEE studies in the future.

In summary, the findings of RQ1 indicate that research on IEE remains limited in volume but is becoming increasingly relevant in global environmental discourse. The gradual increase in publications, the diversity of contributing journals and authors, and the dominance of institutions in the Southeast Asian region confirm that this field is still emerging but shows a promising trajectory of development. These findings suggest that although IEE has not yet reached theoretical maturity, it holds great potential for interdisciplinary and cross-regional development. This trajectory serves as a crucial foundation for the discussion of RQ2, which will further examine how academic attention to IEE is distributed conceptually and methodologically within the existing literature.

Thematic Structures and Keyword Groups Characterize the Literature on Islamic Environmental Ethics

Over the past two decades, Islamic environmental ethics (IEE) has emerged as a new field of discourse that seeks to integrate Islamic values with global ecological challenges. However, this development remains sporadic and fragmented. The results of a systematic review of 30 Scopus-indexed articles show that IEE studies have not yet reached epistemological maturity,⁴¹ as most

⁴⁰ shaleh and islam, "averting the existential threat of the planet: islamic environmental ethics to address the contemporary environmental crisis," 2024; nilda et al., "ecological awareness in buying and selling: fiqh al-bi'ah analysis on plastic bag use at tanjung bajure market, indonesia."

⁴¹ al-tamimi and abdellatif, "maqāṣid al-sharī'ah (the higher objectives of islamic law) as an alternative perspective for contemporary environmental sustainability"; sya'roni et al., "ecothological insights from prophetic hadiths: reframing islamic environmental ethics based on sdgs."

research remains at the normative and moralistic level without establishing a systematic theoretical framework.

To explore the orientations and epistemological gaps in the IEE literature, the researchers conducted a bibliometric analysis using VOSViewer software, mapping the interconnections between concepts through key terms that appeared in the research corpus. The mapping results yielded 24 key terms with a total of 63 link strengths distributed across five main clusters. Each cluster reflects a distinct thematic direction—ranging from theological, moral, and social dimensions to institutional ones.

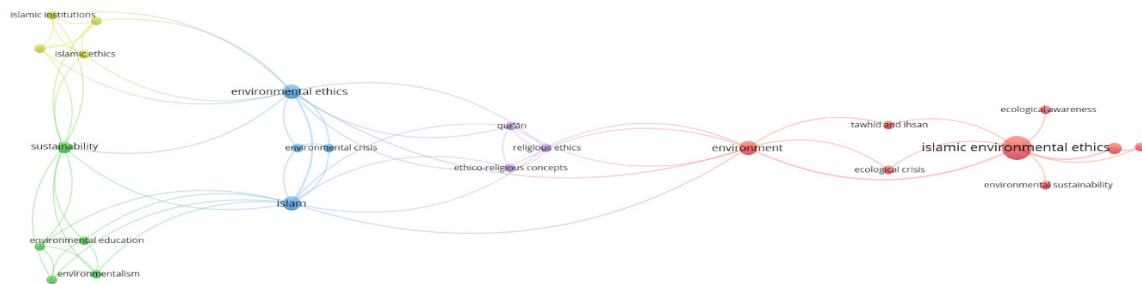


Figure 6. Visualization of Keyword Co-occurrence Networks in the Literature on Islamic Environmental Ethics (Scopus Database, VOSViewer)

The conceptual map above depicts five main thematic clusters that illustrate the epistemic landscape of IEE research. The patterns of interconnections between nodes indicate that IEE serves as a bridging node between religious concepts and ecological issues, but has not yet formed a cohesive epistemological network. The descriptions and interpretations of each cluster are as follows:

a. Cluster 1 (Red) – Ecological Theology and Spiritual Awareness

This cluster consists of eight terms: Islamic environmental ethics, environment, ecological awareness, ecological crisis, environmental responsibility, environmental sustainability, environmentally ethical behavior, tawhid, and ihsan. This cluster occupies the most central position and serves as the main axis of the IEE network. The strong connection between Islamic environmental ethics and environmental responsibility indicates that the literature views religion as a source of moral values in addressing the ecological crisis.⁴² However, the connection to *tawhīd* and *ihsān*—two key concepts in Islamic spirituality—remains tenuous. This means that ecological spirituality has not yet been explicitly articulated as the epistemological foundation of environmental ethics.

This points to a theological deficit in the literature: although religious aspects are present, they are more often reduced to moral motivators rather than a theoretical framework that explains the cosmic order (order of nature) as described by Nasr and Foltz. In fact, the concept of *tawhīd* affirms the ontological unity between God, humanity, and nature—a crucial foundation for the paradigm of theological ecology.

⁴² gade, ““muslim environmentalisms and environmental ethics”; amiruddin et al., “empowering indigenous coastal conservation: eco-muamalat as a model for sustainable marine practices.”

b. Cluster 2 (Green) – Social Ethics, Education, and Sustainability

This cluster consists of five terms: environmental education, environmentalism, ethics, Islam, and sustainability. The main focus of this cluster is the social and educational dimensions of the application of Islamic environmental ethics. The “sustainability” node serves as a link between Islamic values and issues of sustainable development. This reflects academic awareness of Islam’s contribution within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁴³

However, this relationship remains instrumental in nature and does not reflect an epistemological integration between the concept of sustainability and Islamic cosmology. The dominant approach is the “Islamic justification model”—that is, using religious texts to justify modern environmental ethics, without developing an independent theory grounded in Islamic epistemology.⁴⁴ As a result, the practical dimension of IEE is stronger than its metaphysical dimension.

c. Cluster 3 (Blue) – Islamic Discourse and the Global Ecological Crisis

This cluster contains four terms: environmental crisis, environmental ethics, Islam, and Islamic environmentalism. The “Islam” node occupies a strategic position as a bridge between Clusters 1 and 2. This indicates an effort to connect Islamic values with global issues such as climate change and environmental degradation.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, research in this cluster remains descriptive in nature—it explains Islam’s stance on the environmental crisis rather than developing an Islamic ethical theory capable of explaining the theological causes of that crisis.

In other words, Islam is still treated as a normative identity rather than an epistemological framework. As a result, there is an epistemological gap between religious discourse and ecological theory.⁴⁶ In fact, as Bishop emphasizes, every religion-based environmental ethics system must be able to coherently articulate its ontological, axiological, and teleological dimensions.⁴⁷

d. Cluster 4 (Yellow) – Institutionalization of Islamic Ethics and a Legalistic Approach

The four terms in this cluster are Islamic ethics, Islamic institutions, nature, and *sharī’ah*. This cluster reflects efforts to institutionalize Islamic ethical values through religious institutions and Islamic law. This pattern indicates a strong legal-normative orientation, in which environmental ethics is primarily studied within the framework of *fiqh al-bi’ah* (Islamic environmental law).

The connection between Sharia and Islamic institutions demonstrates a focus on the role of Islamic institutions in fostering environmental awareness. However, this legal orientation has not yet been accompanied by a deep theological reflection on the relationship between humans and nature. According to Suarning, the Ash’ari theological approach—which emphasizes *kasb* (limited moral agency) and *irādah* Allah (God’s will)—can actually broaden the perspective of Islamic ethics beyond legalistic boundaries toward an ontological awareness of the sustainability of creation.⁴⁸

⁴³ grim, ecology and religion.

⁴⁴ rakhmat, “Islamic ecotheology.” Islamic theology as the divine discourse is required to participate in overcoming it at the conceptual level starting from the relationship between humans and the environment. The concept of human in Islamic theological discourse is defined as the center of universal consciousness through the concept of the vicegerent of God on earth (khalifatullah fil ard

⁴⁵ Basri et al., “Islamic Environmental Ethics.”

⁴⁶ Gade, “Muslim Environmentalisms and Environmental Ethics”; Gade, “Environment, Sustainability, and the Work of Constructive Muslim Theology.”

⁴⁷ Bishop and Perszyk, *Religious Naturalism*.

⁴⁸ Suarning, “The Concept of Al-Kasb Theory in Islamic Theology.”

e. Cluster 5 (Purple) – Epistemology of Revelation and Religious Ethics

The final cluster consists of three terms: the Qur'an, ethico-religious concepts, and religious ethics. This cluster represents the epistemological roots of IEE, which are grounded in sacred texts. However, this cluster is relatively isolated from the main cluster (Islamic environmental ethics). This pattern indicates that interpretive and textual approaches have not yet been directly integrated into the development of environmental ethics theory.

In fact, in classical Islamic epistemology, the relationship between revelation (*naql*) and reason (*'aql*) constitutes the pillars of knowledge that complement one another.⁴⁹ The absence of a direct epistemological connection between the Qur'an and environmental ethics indicates an epistemic disconnection between Islamic normative sources and contemporary eco-theological discourse.

Based on the network analysis above, it can be concluded that the IEE literature exhibits significant epistemological and methodological fragmentation. Three main types of gaps can be identified:

Table 1. Major Epistemological, Methodological, and Ontological Gaps in the Islamic Environmental Ethics Literature

Types of Gaps	Description	Impact on IEE
Epistemological Gap	The lack of integration between Islamic theology (<i>tawhīd</i> , <i>mīzān</i>) and modern environmental ethics theory	This makes the IEE moralistic in nature, rather than theological
Methodological Gap	The predominance of conceptual and qualitative studies without empirical or interdisciplinary approaches	A lack of evidence for implementation in policy and society
Ontological Gap	The Islamic cosmological perspective has not yet become the basis for interpreting the ecological crisis	Failure to explain the spiritual dimension of environmental degradation

Although it possesses a strong normative consciousness, it has not yet developed a theoretical paradigm that explains the structure of the relationship between God, humanity, and nature in the context of modern ecology. This fragmentation indicates that Islamic environmental ethics (IEE) currently finds itself in a pre-paradigmatic stage, as described by Kuhn.⁵⁰

To move beyond this phase, an epistemological reconstruction is needed that situates IEE within the framework of theological ecology—namely, the integration of revelation, reason, and ecological consciousness. This approach can be developed through Asy'ari theology, which emphasizes the concepts of *tajdīd al-khalq* (sustainable creation) and *kasb* (human moral agency under divine will). This framework will be further developed in RQ3 through the formulation of the Asy'arian Eco-Theology Framework (AETF) as a conceptual model to address epistemological and methodological gaps in IEE studies.

⁴⁹ Nasr, "Islam And Science"; Winter, *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*.

⁵⁰ Alkemade et al., "Global Epistemologies and Philosophies of Science: Global Dialogues and New Directions for Philosophy of Science."

The Islamic theological perspective contribute to the discourse on contemporary Islamic environmental ethics

From Normative Ethics to Theological Eco-Theology

The results of the bibliometric analysis in the previous section indicate that studies on Islamic environmental ethics (IEE) remain fragmented across moral, legal, and social aspects, with a major weakness in the theological dimension. While the majority of research links environmental issues to Islamic moral and legal responsibilities, only a few address the ontology of creation and the metaphysical relationship between God, humanity, and nature as the foundation of ecological ethics.⁵¹ Therefore, it is important to deepen our understanding of these relationships in order to develop a more comprehensive ethical framework within the context of IEE and current environmental challenges. This gap signifies the absence of an Islamic environmental theological framework capable of explaining the ecological crisis as part of a disruption to the divine order (*mīzān*). In this context, the approach of classical Islamic theology—particularly Ash‘ari theology—offers a rich conceptual foundation for reconstructing IEE into a more integrative paradigm.

Ash‘ari theology is known for emphasizing a balance between God’s absolute power (*irādah* Allah) and human moral responsibility (*kasb*).⁵² In an ecological context, this perspective offers a new model of relationship that rejects two extremes: passive theological determinism and exploitative modern anthropocentrism.⁵³ This approach positions humans not as rulers over nature, but as limited moral agents who participate in God’s will to preserve the sustainability of creation (*tajdīd al-khalq*). This perspective offers a deeper understanding of how Ash‘ari theology can address emerging ecological issues today. In addition to serving as a foundation for making significant contributions to the development of environmental ethics within the IEE context—one that is more responsive to global challenges—Ash‘ari theology can serve as an alternative pillar in developing a more holistic approach to environmental ethics that integrates theological dimensions with social and moral aspects.⁵⁴ Thus, this approach not only strengthens the theological framework but also encourages broader collaboration in efforts to maintain ecological balance.

Philosophical and Theological Foundations of the Ash‘ari Eco-Theology Framework

1. *Tajdīd al-Khalq* (Sustained Creation)

According to Ash‘ari theology, the universe is continuously recreated in every moment by God’s will. This view is known as the *kalāmī* theory of atomism—namely, that all reality is composed of “atoms of existence” that are constantly renewed by Allah. In line with this theory, Kaufman, in his book titled “A Religious Interpretation of Emergence: Creativity as God,” emphasizes that creation is not a one-time event but rather an ongoing process, reflecting the dynamic relationship between God and His creation. Thus, this understanding affirms that ecological sustainability must be viewed as an integral part of our faith and our responsibility toward creation. The ecological implications of this concept are profound: nature is not a static entity, but rather an ongoing manifestation of the Divine Will. Ecological awareness from the Ash‘ari perspective means spiritual awareness of the

⁵¹ Frank, “The Aš‘arite Ontology.” ḥaqīqa, ḥadd, ma‘na

⁵² Abrahamov, “A Re-Examination of al-Ash‘arī’s Theory of ‘Kasb’ According to ‘Kitāb al-Luma’”; Suarnig, “The Concept of Al-Kasb Theory in Islamic Theology.”

⁵³ Griffel, *The Formation of Post-Classical Philosophy in Islam*; Winter, *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*.

⁵⁴ Tucker, “World Religions, Ethics, and the Earth Charter for a Sustainable Future.”

continuity of God's creation in the world (*tajdīd al-khalq*). At this point, it is crucial to emphasize that every human action toward nature constitutes an ethical intervention in the creative process itself.

In the context of environmental ethics, this means that the destruction of ecosystems is not merely a violation of moral law, but a denial of the Divine process of renewal. As emphasized by Nasr and Dallal, awareness of *tajdīd al-khalq* gives rise to a form of "Islamic eco-spirituality" in which caring for nature means participating in God's creative act.⁵⁵ This concept emphasizes that caring for nature is part of our responsibility as created beings, who should reflect God's will and values in our actions, rather than destroying what God has created for humanity.

2. *Irādah Allah* (God's Absolute Will) and the Order of the Cosmos

The second principle is *irādah Allah*, God's absolute will over all things. In Ash'ari theology, all natural phenomena are subject to the Divine will, not to independent natural laws.⁵⁶ However, this will is not arbitrary; rather, it reflects Divine wisdom that governs the order of the cosmos (*mīzān*).⁵⁷ This order reflects a harmonious relationship between God, humanity, and nature, in which every human action must take into account its impact on ecological balance.

The implication for environmental ethics is that ecological balance has a sacred theological foundation. A violation of nature constitutes a violation of the Divine Will that establishes the harmony of creation. As Chittick (2007) explains, this perspective fosters a spiritual awareness that ecology is a tangible manifestation of *tawhīd*—any action that disrupts the balance of nature is, in essence, a form of rejection of Divine unity.⁵⁸ Thus, Allah's will becomes the highest normative principle for Islamic ecotheology: humans cannot to dominate nature, for nature is an extension of God's own will.

3. *Kasb* and *Amānah*: Human Moral Agency in Ecology

The principle of *kasb* (the acquisition of action) explains humanity's position as a responsible moral agent, yet one without absolute autonomy over the outcomes of its actions.⁵⁹ In an ecological context, humans possess the freedom to choose between ethical and destructive actions, but every action remains within the domain of God's will. This concept gives rise to an ecological ethical paradigm grounded in an awareness of human limitations. Unlike the Western paradigm, which positions humans as autonomous stewards, Asy'ariyah theology asserts that humans are *khalifah* who merely "participate" in the Divine will, not rulers over nature.

Ecological responsibility within this framework is transcendent in nature: it is not merely a social responsibility toward future generations, but an existential act of worship toward God. This awareness shifts the paradigm from "anthropocentrism" to "ecological theocentrism" or, in Nasr's (1996) terms, theocentric environmental ethics. According to Nasr, every human action must be

⁵⁵ Dallal, *Islam, Science, and the Challenge of History*; Nasr, "Religion and Religions."

⁵⁶ al-Juwayni et al., *Kitab Al-Irshad ila Qawati al-Adillah Fi Usul al-i'tiqad*; Al-Ghazali, *الاقتصاد في الاعتقاد*.

⁵⁷ Chittick, "Reason, Intellect, and Consciousness in Islamic Thought."

⁵⁸ Chittick, *Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul*.

⁵⁹ Anwar, "HUMANISM IN PESANTREN; HERMENEUTICAL ANALYSIS OF MONOTHEISM IN THE BOOK OF UMM AL-BARĀ'ĤĤĀ'N." as one of the democratic countries that uphold human values, is not immune to the humanitarian problems that often arise among the people. How not, contemporary situations that imply various forms of repression of humanity (discrimination, intimidation of beliefs, restrictions, and restrictions on religious activities, expressions of hatred in the name of religion, etc.

grounded in an awareness of interconnectedness with other creatures, urging us to protect and preserve the environment as a manifestation of God's will.⁶⁰

Asy'arian Eco-Theology Framework (AETF): An Epistemological Reconstruction of IEE

Based on the three theological pillars above, this study proposes the conceptual model of the Asy'arian Eco-Theology Framework (AETF) as an effort toward the epistemological reconstruction of Islamic Environmental Ethics. This model asserts that ecological awareness in Islam must be rooted in the theological structure of kalam, which integrates faith, rationality, and ethical action.

Table 2. The Asy'arian Eco-Theology Framework (AETF): Ontological, Epistemological, and Axiological Dimensions

Dimension	The Asy'ariyah Theological Concept	Key Principles	Implications for IEE	Global Relevance (Interfaith Dialogue/ Eco-Theology)
Ontological Dimensions	<i>Tajdid al-Khalq</i> (sustainable creation) and Allah's <i>Irādah</i> (God's absolute will)	Nature is a dynamic manifestation of God's will; all existence possesses spiritual continuity	Nature is not autonomous; every ecological element holds sacred value as it serves as a sign (<i>āyah</i>) from God. Environmental crises are understood as a disharmony with the <i>mīzān</i> (the balance of the divine cosmos)	Addressing the debate between pantheism and deism in environmental theology. Aligned with process theology and the perspective of sacred cosmology ⁶¹
Epistemological Dimensions	<i>Kasb</i> (human moral agency) and <i>Mīzān</i> (the order of divine balance)	Knowledge of nature is obtained through the interaction of ' <i>aql-naql</i> ' (reason and revelation). Ecological truth is theocentric, not anthropocentric	IEE rejects the dichotomy between science and religion; environmental science becomes a form of <i>ta'ammul fī āyātillāh</i> (contemplation of God's signs)	In line with the religious epistemology of ecology and integrative knowledge
Axiological (Ethical) Dimensions	<i>Amānah</i> (spiritual responsibility) and <i>Ihsān</i> (ethics of ecological goodness)	Environmental ethics is rooted in tauhidiyyah consciousness: ecological action = worship of God	Ecological obligations are not merely social but transcendent. Respecting nature means respecting God. This gives rise to the paradigm of eco-' <i>ibādah</i> ': ecological piety	Correcting secular anthropocentrism; aligned with deep ecology and religious ecology ⁶²

⁶⁰ Nasr, "Religion and Religions"; Nugraha and Naupal, "DIALOGUE BETWEEN ISLAM AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS THROUGH THE SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR THOUGHT."

⁶¹ Nasr, "Religion and Religions."

⁶² Grim, *Ecology and Religion*.

1. Ontological Dimension: Tawhidiyyah Cosmology and the Continuity of Creation

In Asy'ari ontology, all of reality is understood as a continuous manifestation of God's will (*tajdīd al-khalq*).⁶³ No existence stands on its own without Divine involvement. This view gives rise to a Tawhidiyyah cosmology, in which nature is not treated as an object of exploitation, but as an *āyah* (sign) that reflects God's attributes. The concept of Allah's *irādah* underscores the Divine order within the structure of the cosmos. Nature possesses an inherent balance (*mīzān*), as mentioned in Surah ar-Rahman [55]:7–8: "And He has raised the heavens and established balance, so that you may not disrupt that balance." Thus, the environmental crisis is not merely a technological consequence but rather a form of ontological disruption to the divine order. In a global context, the ontological dimension of AETF places Islam on par with contemporary environmental theologies such as process theology, which emphasizes the participation of creatures in God's creative act. However, Asy'ariyah differs in that it affirms an ontological distance between God and nature: God remains transcendent, yet His presence is immanent through the continuous renewal of creation (*tajdīd al-khalq*).

2. Epistemological Dimension: The Integration of Revelation and Reason as the Basis of Ecological Knowledge

Within the framework of Asy'ariyah theology, knowledge does not arise solely from empiricism but is the result of a synthesis between revelation (*naql*) and reason (*'aql*). Together, they form an integrative Islamic epistemological system. Nature is understood as an "open book" that complements the "closed book" (revelation), as articulated by al-Ghazālī⁶⁴ dan Chittick.⁶⁵ Consequently, ecology becomes a religious epistemic domain. Understanding the patterns, laws, and cycles of nature is a form of contemplation of God's will (*ta'ammul fī āyātillāh*). Therefore, environmental science is not value-neutral but possesses a spiritual-epistemological dimension—it reveals God's wisdom in the order of the cosmos.

This paradigm contrasts with Western epistemology (secular and positivistic). In scientific ecology, truth is often measured solely through empirical objectivity; whereas in AETF, ecological truth is the result of a synthesis of the empirical, the ethical, and revelation. This approach aligns with Ian Barbour's ideas on religious epistemology⁶⁶, and Sardar's views on the Islamic epistemology of science⁶⁷, which reject the separation between science and spirituality. Thus, the epistemology of AETF asserts that the ecological crisis is also a crisis of knowledge—namely, humanity's failure to interpret God's cosmic signs in nature.

2. Axiological (Ethical) Dimension: *Ihsān*, *Amānah*, and Ecological Piety

The axiological dimension in AETF is grounded in two principles: *ihsān* and *amānah*.⁶⁸ *Ihsān* means consciously doing good because God observes every action. In an ecological context, *ihsān* demands ecological actions rooted in love and spiritual awareness, not merely legal obligations. As for *amānah*, it affirms humanity's responsibility as *khalīfah* to care for creation, as stated in Q.S. al-

⁶³ Supriyanto, "Periodisation of the Philosophy of Islamic Rationalism in the Perspective of Zaki Naguib Mahmud."

⁶⁴ Al-Ghazali, *الإقتصاد في الاعتقاد*.

⁶⁵ Chittick, *Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul*.

⁶⁶ Barbour, *Nature, Human Nature, and God*.

⁶⁷ Sardar, *Reading the Qur'an*.

⁶⁸ Afif et al., "A Typology of Syekh Yusuf Al-Makassari's Ethical Thought (Perspective of Majid Fakhry's Islamic Ethics Theory)"; Pratisti, "The Ethical Relationships of People And Place: Theoretical Analysis on Muslim Communities Environmental Responsibility," 2024.

Ahzab [33]:72: “We offered the *amānah* to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains, but they refused to bear it... and humanity accepted it.”

From these two concepts emerges the paradigm of eco-‘*ibādah*,⁶⁹—the understanding that all ecological actions are forms of worship. Planting trees, conserving water, or reducing pollution are not merely social actions but concrete expressions of tawhid. The AETF’s axiological dimension also emphasizes a shift from anthropocentrism toward ecological theocentrism. Nature is not valued based on its benefits to humans, but on its sacred value within the order of creation. This aligns with the deep ecology movement,⁷⁰ which rejects the exploitation of nature based on a utilitarian hierarchy of values. These principles can form a stronger ethical foundation for addressing today’s global environmental challenges.

The Three-Dimensional Integration of AETF within the Islamic Eco-Theological Paradigm and Its Implications

The three dimensions of AETF form a spiral relationship, not a linear one. Ontology provides the existential foundation—that nature is a divine creation that is constantly being renewed. Epistemology provides the path of knowledge for understanding God’s laws within ecosystems. Axiology guides human moral actions to preserve the harmony of creation. This spiral relationship creates a structure of “faith–knowledge–ecological action,” in which spiritual awareness guides knowledge, and knowledge guides ethical action.

Thus, Islamic environmental ethics (IEE) is no longer limited to environmental morality but becomes an ecological praxis theology—that is, a system of faith that operates within and for the sustainability of life. At a minimum, there are three implications of AETF for global discourse, including:

1. Deconstruction of Ecological Secularism: which demonstrates that environmental ethics is not theologically neutral; it requires a metaphysical foundation. In this regard, Ash‘ari theology provides the basis that the order of nature is a manifestation of the Divine Will, not an autonomous system.
2. Reconciliation Between Theology and Science: which opens up space for epistemic collaboration between environmental scientists and theologians, by making nature a shared spiritual-empirical space (shared epistemic space).
3. Reformulation of Islamic Ecological Spirituality: which introduces eco-‘*ibādah* as an ethical framework, in which actions to care for the earth are a form of active tawhid—the acknowledgment of God as the sole source of the sustainability of existence.

Overall, the Asy‘arian Eco-Theology Framework situates Islamic environmental ethics (IEE) within a comprehensive philosophical structure—ontological, epistemological, and axiological. This model repositions Islam as a source of theological ecology capable of contributing to global discourses on sustainability, spirituality, and the planetary crisis. By affirming that every ecological action is part of worship, the AETF builds a bridge between faith and environmental action—making Islamic eco-theology not merely a normative narrative, but an ethical-ontological paradigm capable of restructuring the relationship between humanity, God, and nature.

⁶⁹ Pratisti, “The Ethical Relationships of People and Place: Theoretical Analysis on Muslim Communities Environmental Responsibility,” 2024.

⁷⁰ Naess, “The Shallow and the Deep, Long-range Ecology Movement. A Summary*.”

5. Conclusion

This study shows that the literature on Islamic environmental ethics (IEE) is still developing in a fragmented manner, particularly between normative moral approaches, Islamic law, and ecological awareness, which have not yet been fully integrated into a comprehensive theological framework. A bibliometric analysis of 30 Scopus publications identified five main clusters in IEE research; however, the relationship between the dimensions of revelation, Islamic cosmology, and ecological practices still reveals epistemological and methodological gaps. The author proposes the Asy'arian Eco-Theology Framework (AETF) as a conceptual reconstruction that develops IEE through three main dimensions: ontological (*tajdid al-khalq* and *irādah* Allah), which views nature as a manifestation of the sustainability of God's creation; epistemological (*'aql-naql* and *mīzān*), which integrates revelation and reason in understanding ecological reality; and axiological (*amānah* and *ihsān*), which positions ecological responsibility as an expression of faith. Thus, AETF repositions IEE from merely a religious-value-based environmental ethics into an ecological praxis theology that connects God, humanity, and nature from a theological perspective. Future research is expected to test and develop this framework through an empirical approach, particularly by analyzing the application of Asy'ariyah theological concepts in the ecological behavior of Muslim communities, Islamic education, environmental policy, and religious institutions. Furthermore, comparative studies with eco-theological traditions of other religions and interdisciplinary approaches between Islamic theology, environmental science, and the social sciences are necessary to assess the relevance of AETF in addressing the global ecological crisis. With this direction, IEE studies can evolve from normative discourse toward a more applied and transformative Islamic ecological paradigm that contributes to the global sustainability agenda.

References

- Abrahamov, Binyamin. "A Re-Examination of al-Ash'ari's Theory of 'Kasb' According to 'Kitāb al-Luma'." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, no. 2 (1989): 210–21. JSTOR. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25212485>.
- Afif, Muh Bahrul, Abdul Malik, and Abd Rahman. "A Typology of Syekh Yusuf al-Makassari's Ethical Thought (Perspective of Majid Fakhry's Islamic Ethics Theory)." *Journal Analytica Islamica* 13, no. 2 (2024): 200–211. <https://doi.org/10.30829/jai.v13i2.20537>.
- Al-Ghazali, Muhammed Abu Hamid. *al-Iqtisād fī al-Itiqād*. <http://archive.org/details/iqtisad-fi-itiqad-abu-hamid-al-ghazali>.
- Alkemade, Elise, Nils Deeg, Carles Guillén Almiñana, et al. "Global Epistemologies and Philosophies of Science: Global Dialogues and New Directions for Philosophy of Science." *Journal for General Philosophy of Science* 55, no. 3 (2024): 469–78. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10838-023-09660-7>.
- Al-Naki, K. "How Do We Communicate Environmental Ethics? Reflections on Environmental Education from a Kuwaiti Perspective." *International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education* 13, no. 2 (2004): 128–42. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669580408668504>.
- Al-Tamimi, S. M. A., and M. S. Abdellatif. "Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah (the Higher Objectives of Islamic Law) as an Alternative Perspective for Contemporary Environmental Sustainability." *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities* 7, no. 1 (2026). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.58256/fxbcpz88>.

- Amiruddin, M. M., A. Haris, R. M. Pikahulan, et al. "Empowering Indigenous Coastal Conservation: Eco-Muamalat as a Model for Sustainable Marine Practices." *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies* 17, no. 3 (2025): 72–93. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.5130/ccs.v17.i3.9380>.
- Amri, Siti Aini Ameera Muhammad, and Robiatul Adawiyah Mohd@Amat. "A Review on Islamic Environmental Ethics: A Solution to Environmental Issues of Science and Technology." *Jurnal Islam dan Masyarakat Kontemporari* 23, no. 2 (2022): 39–53. <https://doi.org/10.37231/jimk.2022.23.2.635>.
- Anwar, Adnan Nuril. "Humanism in Pesantren: Hermeneutical Analysis of Monotheism in the Book of Umm al-Barā'ihān." *Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 2 (2019): 66–80. <https://doi.org/10.32506/jois.v2i2.536>.
- Barbour, Ian G. *Nature, Human Nature, and God*. Fortress Press, 2002.
- Basri, Syahrul, Yudi Adnan, Lilis Widiastuty, Muhammad Asrul Syamsul, and Indar Indar. "Islamic Environmental Ethics: A Cultural Framework for Sustainable Resource Management and Global Ecological Stewardship." *Diversity: Disease Preventive of Research Integrity*, 2025, 86–93. <https://doi.org/10.24252/diversity.v5i2.52342>.
- Bishop, John Christopher, and Kenneth J. Perszyk. *Religious Naturalism*. Cambridge Elements. Elements in Global Philosophy of Religion. Cambridge University Press, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009469104>.
- Chittick, William C. "Reason, Intellect, and Consciousness in Islamic Thought." In *Reason, Spirit and the Sacral in the New Enlightenment: Islamic Metaphysics Revived and Recent Phenomenology of Life*, edited by A. T. Tymieniecka. Springer Netherlands, 2011. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-9612-8_2.
- Chittick, William C. *Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul: The Pertinence of Islamic Cosmology in the Modern World*. Oneworld, 2007.
- Dallal, Ahmad. *Islam, Science, and the Challenge of History*. Yale University Press, 2010. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1nq893>.
- Donthu, Naveen, Satish Kumar, Debmalya Mukherjee, Nitesh Pandey, and Weng Marc Lim. "How to Conduct a Bibliometric Analysis: An Overview and Guidelines." *Journal of Business Research* 133 (September 2021): 285–96. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.04.070>.
- Foltz, Richard, ed. *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust*. Publications of the Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School. Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School, 2003.
- Frank, Richard M. "The Aš'arite Ontology: I Primary Entities." *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 9, no. 2 (1999): 163–231. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423900001326>.
- Gade, Anna M. "Environment, Sustainability, and the Work of Constructive Muslim Theology." *The Muslim World* 115, no. 1 (2025): 31–36. <https://doi.org/10.1111/muwo.12506>.
- Gade, Anna M. "Muslim Environmentalisms and Environmental Ethics: Theory and Practice for Rights and Justice." *The Muslim World* 113, no. 3 (2023): 242–59. <https://doi.org/10.1111/muwo.12474>.
- Griffel, Frank. *The Formation of Post-Classical Philosophy in Islam*. Oxford University Press, 2021.
- Grim, John. *Ecology and Religion*. With Mary Evelyn Tucker. Foundations of Contemporary Environmental Studies Ser. Island Press, 2014.

- Haider, S., A. Ansar, and S. A. A. Naqvi. "Shī'ī Imāmī Thought on Existence, Life, and Extraterrestrials." *Theology and Science* 21, no. 2 (2023): 261–72. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14746700.2023.2188372>.
- Haider, Syeda Dur e Nayab. "An Analytical Study of Islamic Faith and Ethics in the Context of Environmental Sustainability." *Riphah Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 3, no. 1 (2025): 29–46. <https://doi.org/10.64768/rjitic.v3i1.2465>.
- IPBES. *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*. Zenodo, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6417333>.
- Ismail, M., M. Ali Rusdi, M. Amin, Z. Alwi, and S. A. U. Ali. "Authoritative Ecological Convergence between Hadith and Pasang ri Kajang: Wilāyat al-Amr as Constitutional Legitimacy for Environmental Governance." *Jurnal Al-Dustur* 9, no. 1 (2026): 73–95. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.30863/aldustur.v9i1.11130>.
- Ismail, and Mokhamad Sukron. "Qur'anic Critique of Exploitative Anthropocentrism: Exegesis of Verses on Land and Nature in the Context of Raja Ampat Mining." *International Journal of Social Science and Religion (IJSSR)*, July 31, 2025, 209–20. <https://doi.org/10.53639/ijssr.v6i2.337>.
- Jamal, K., J. Syafitri, A. Akbar, H. Ismail, M. Afrizal, and M. Yasir. "Theology of Marine Ecosystems from the Perspective of the al-Qur'an and Its Relevance to Indonesia for Marine Areas Strengthening Pursuant to Law No. 32 of 2014." *Pharos Journal of Theology* 106, no. 3 (2025): 1–15. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.106.3015>.
- Juwaynī, A. M. A. A. I. H. al-, M. Y. Musa, and A. A. M. A. H. Kabir. *Kitab al-Irshad ila Qawati al-Adillah fi Usul al-I'tiqad*. Maktabat al-Khanji, 2002. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=87uyAQAACAAJ>.
- Khasani, Fahim. "Khilāfah, Taskhīr, and Sustainability: Reconstructing Islamic Eco-Theology through al-Qurṭubī's Tafsir." *ISTIFHAM: Journal of Islamic Studies*, October 17, 2025, 100–111. <https://doi.org/10.71039/istifham.v3i2.111>.
- Malick, Ibrahim Sajid. "Muslim Environmentalisms: Religious and Social Foundations, by Gade, Anna M." *Religion and the Arts* 25, no. 3 (2021): 341–43. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685292-02503007>.
- Mughal, M. J., M. M. Ali, and M. Tahir. "A Critical Study of the Views of Sayyed Hossein Nasr on the Philosophical Foundation of Islamic Science." *Trames* 26, no. 2 (2022): 141–56. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.3176/tr.2022.2.02>.
- Naess, Arne. "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement: A Summary." *Inquiry* 16, nos. 1–4 (1973): 95–100. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00201747308601682>.
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. "Islam and Science." *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science*, April 2008, 179–213. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199543656.003.0006>.
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *Religion & the Order of Nature*. Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. "Religion and Religions." In *Religion & the Order of Nature: The 1994 Cadbury Lectures at the University of Birmingham*, edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr. Oxford University Press, 1996. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195108231.003.0002>.
- Nilda, E., R. Nurdiansyah, D. Witro, M. Hidayaturrehman, R. Setyawan, and R. Alghani. "Ecological Awareness in Buying and Selling: Fiqh al-Bi'ah Analysis on Plastic Bag Use at Tanjung Bajure Market, Indonesia." *Jurnal Ilmiah Mizani* 12, no. 2 (2025): 71–87. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.29300/mzn.v12i2.7822>.

- Nugraha, Aulia Rahman, and Naupal Naupal. "Dialogue between Islam and Environmental Ethics through the Seyyed Hossein Nasr Thought." *International Review of Humanities Studies*, ahead of print, October 31, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.7454/irhs.v0i0.204>.
- Page, Matthew J., Joanne E. McKenzie, Patrick M. Bossuyt, et al. "The PRISMA 2020 Statement: An Updated Guideline for Reporting Systematic Reviews." *Systematic Reviews* 10, no. 1 (2021): 89. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13643-021-01626-4>.
- Pratisti, S. A. "The Ethical Relationships of People and Place: Theoretical Analysis on Muslim Communities Environmental Responsibility." *Miqot: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 48, no. 1 (2024): 39–56. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v48i1.1200>.
- Pratisti, S. A. "The Ethical Relationships of People and Place: Theoretical Analysis on Muslim Communities Environmental Responsibility." *Miqot: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 48, no. 1 (2024): 39–56. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v48i1.1200>.
- Pratisti, S. A. "The Ethical Relationships of People and Place: Theoretical Analysis on Muslim Communities Environmental Responsibility." *Miqot: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 48, no. 1 (2024): 39–56. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v48i1.1200>.
- Programme, United Nations Environment. *Faith for Earth Coalition—Achievement Report 2025*. September 2025. <https://wedocs.unep.org/xmlui/handle/20.500.11822/48519>.
- Rakhmat, Aulia. "Islamic Ecotheology: Understanding the Concept of Khalifah and the Ethical Responsibility of the Environment." *Academic Journal of Islamic Principles and Philosophy* 3, no. 1 (2022): 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.22515/ajipp.v3i1.5104>.
- "Rejecting Geothermal Projects: Muslim Environmentalism in the SAPAR Movement for Ecological Justice and Sustainable Natural Resources." *Studia Islamika* 32, no. 3 (2025): 521–51. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v32i3.46663>.
- Saniotis, A. "Muslims and Ecology: Fostering Islamic Environmental Ethics." *Contemporary Islam* 6, no. 2 (2012): 155–71. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-011-0173-8>.
- Sardar, Ziauddin. *Reading the Qur'an: The Contemporary Relevance of the Sacred Text of Islam*. Paperback edition. Hurst & Company, 2015.
- Shaleh, A., and M. S. Islam. "Averting the Existential Threat of the Planet: Islamic Environmental Ethics to Address the Contemporary Environmental Crisis." *Intellectual Discourse* 32, no. 1 (2024): 239–64. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.31436/id.v32i1.1937>.
- Shaleh, A., and M. S. Islam. "Averting the Existential Threat of the Planet: Islamic Environmental Ethics to Address the Contemporary Environmental Crisis." *Intellectual Discourse* 32, no. 1 (2024): 239–64. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.31436/id.v32i1.1937>.
- Shaleh, A., and M. S. Islam. "Averting the Existential Threat of the Planet: Islamic Environmental Ethics to Address the Contemporary Environmental Crisis." *Intellectual Discourse* 32, no. 1 (2024): 239–64. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.31436/id.v32i1.1937>.
- Snyder, Hannah. "Literature Review as a Research Methodology: An Overview and Guidelines." *Journal of Business Research* 104 (November 2019): 333–39. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039>.
- Stenschke, Christoph W. "The Purpose and Promise of Creation According to the Letter to the Romans: A Contribution to Christian Environmental Ethics." *European Journal of Theology* 35, no. 1 (2026): 5–25. <https://doi.org/10.5117/EJT2026.1.002.STEN>.

- Suarning. "The Concept of al-Kasb Theory in Islamic Theology: A Critical Analysis from Quranic Perspective." *International Journal of Cultural and Religious Studies* 3, no. 1 (2023): 32–36. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijcrs.2023.3.1.4>.
- Sugiant, Reza Nurdiana, and Mohd Solahuddin Shahrudin. "Holy Earth: Harnessing Religious Ethics and Faith-Based Action to Combat Climate Change." *Socio Politica: Jurnal Ilmiah Jurusan Sosiologi*, April 15, 2025. <https://journal.uinsgd.ac.id/index.php/socio-politica/article/view/44852>.
- Supriyanto, S. "Periodisation of the Philosophy of Islamic Rationalism in the Perspective of Zaki Naguib Mahmud." *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 79, no. 1 (2023). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i1.8153>.
- Suryani, Nur Fitriyana, Nugroho, and Zaki Faddad Syarif Zain. "Eco-Theology in the Catholic Perspective (A Study on Environmental Conservation Verses) at Santa Maria Cathedral Church, Palembang." *International Journal of Social Science and Religion (IJSSR)*, March 1, 2026, 39–50. <https://doi.org/10.53639/ijssr.v7i1.390>.
- Susana, L. M., R. I. Tripalupi, S. Kholil, N. Efendi, and G. Sakinah. "Reconstructing Islamic Legal Norms in Environmental Governance: A Maqasid-Based Legal Critique of Indonesia's Resource Policies." *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 10, no. 2 (2025): 650–70. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v10i2.13038>.
- Sya'roni, M., M. Nor Ichwan, M. Y. Pratama, and D. Ming. "Ecotheological Insights from Prophetic Hadiths: Reframing Islamic Environmental Ethics Based on SDGs." *Pharos Journal of Theology* 106, no. 5 (2025): 1–14. Scopus. <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-105027985478&partnerID=40&md5=e772c5df856f093e2a8d42b61a90e474>.
- Syihabuddin, Muhammad, Zulfi Mubaraq, and M. Lutfi Mustofa. "Elucidating Eco-Religious in Islamic Studies and the Future of Environmental Ethics." *Al'Adalah* 26, no. 2 (2023): 189–207. <https://doi.org/10.35719/aladalah.v26i2.370>.
- Tham, Joseph, John Lunstroth, and Sameer Advani. *Multicultural and Religious Perspectives on Protecting the Environment, the Biosphere, and Biodiversity*. 1st ed. Routledge, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003632726>.
- Tranfield, David, David Denyer, and Palminder Smart. "Towards a Methodology for Developing Evidence-Informed Management Knowledge by Means of Systematic Review." *British Journal of Management* 14, no. 3 (2003): 207–22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.00375>.
- Tucker, Mary Evelyn. "World Religions, Ethics, and the Earth Charter for a Sustainable Future." In *Earth Stewardship: Linking Ecology and Ethics in Theory and Practice*, edited by Ricardo Rozzi, F. Stuart Chapin III, J. Baird Callicott, et al. Springer International Publishing, 2015. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-12133-8_26.
- Tutik, T. T., K. Basyir, M. G. B. Simun, J. Alfin, and M. Suyudi. "Reconstructing Eco-Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah for CSR Policy and Radioactive Waste Management: An SDGs-Based Study in Banten and West Java." *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 20, no. 1 (2026): 115–32. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.24090/mnh.v20i1.15916>.
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. The Sustainable Development Goals Report. United Nations, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.18356/9789210024914>.

- Van Eck, Nees Jan, and Ludo Waltman. "Citation-Based Clustering of Publications Using CitNetExplorer and VOSviewer." *Scientometrics* 111, no. 2 (2017): 1053–70. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-017-2300-7>.
- Widiyanto, A. "Knowledge and Cosmic Sustainability in Contemporary Islam: From Environmental Ethics to a Green Knowledge Culture." *Darulfunun Ilahiyat* 36, no. 3 (2025): 699–721. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.26650/di.2025.36.3.1651778>.
- Widiyanto, A. "Knowledge and Cosmic Sustainability in Contemporary Islam: From Environmental Ethics to a Green Knowledge Culture." *Darulfunun Ilahiyat* 36, no. 3 (2025): 699–721. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.26650/di.2025.36.3.1651778>.
- Winter, Tim, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*. Cambridge Companions to Religion. Cambridge University Press, 2008. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521780582>.
- Wu, Yang, Yuxue Pan, Boya Zhang, Fengbin Dai, and Yu Tian. "Regional Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and Policy Experience within the IPBES Framework." *Biodiversity Science* 28, no. 7 (2020): 913. <https://doi.org/10.17520/biods.2019331>.
- Xiao, Yu, and Maria Watson. "Guidance on Conducting a Systematic Literature Review." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 39, no. 1 (2019): 93–112. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X17723971>.
- Yudha, A. T. "Integrating Islam and Local Culture: An Islamic Ethical Framework in the Marsiadapari Toba Tradition." *Pharos Journal of Theology* 107, no. 2 (2026): 1–13. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.107.23>.