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FROM FAITH TO SUSTAINABILITY: AN INTEGRATIVE ECOTHEOLOGICAL CURRICULUM MODEL FOR ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: This study aims to develop an eco-theology-based curriculum model for Islamic higher education that integrates Islamic theological principles with environmental sustainability. The study employed a qualitative approach using Straussian Grounded Theory. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and documentation involving academic leaders, curriculum administrators, policy experts, Islamic education experts, curriculum experts, and students. Data were analyzed through open, axial, selective, and theoretical coding to identify conceptual relationships and develop an integrative curriculum model. The findings indicate that an eco-theology-based curriculum requires the systematic integration of *tawhid, khalifah, amanah, mizan*, and the prohibition of *fasad fi al-ardh* into learning outcomes, course content, teaching strategies, authentic assessment, and institutional support. These elements form an integrative framework connecting faith, knowledge, ecological awareness, environmental responsibility, and sustainable campus culture. The study further demonstrates that environmental sustainability in Islamic higher education should not be treated merely as an additional topic but as an integral dimension of Islamic educational practice. The study implies that eco-theology can serve as a contextual and practical foundation for curriculum development, strengthening students' ecological awareness, ethical responsibility, and commitment to sustainable environmental action within Islamic higher education.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic higher education curricula play a strategic role in shaping graduates who possess not only academic and professional competencies but also theological, ethical, and ecological awareness (Chen & Hyun Tai, 2025; Peng-Keller et al., 2025). This role has become increasingly important amid the

contemporary ecological crisis, which is not merely caused by technical failures in natural resource management but also by anthropocentric perspectives that position nature as an object of exploitation (Ali et al., 2024; T. U. Rahman et al., 2025; Vehbi et al., 2025). Reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the United Nations Environment Programme indicate that anthropogenic activities, particularly fossil fuel combustion, land-use change, and unsustainable production and consumption, are major drivers of climate change, land degradation, greenhouse gas emissions, and declining environmental carrying capacity (Kravchenko et al., 2025; Raza et al., 2025). Therefore, the development of environmentally oriented curricula has become an essential dimension of Islamic higher education (Bukhori Muslim et al., 2024; Ibrahim et al., 2024; Sudirman et al., 2025).

However, curriculum development at many Islamic higher education institutions still focuses primarily on academic achievement and preparing graduates to enter the job market. Environmental issues are generally presented only as supplementary topics, rather than being systematically integrated into the curriculum structure, learning outcomes, course materials, teaching strategies, and assessment systems. As a result, students may acquire knowledge about environmental issues without developing adequate theological awareness, ethical responsibility, and practical commitment to environmental sustainability. This situation highlights a gap between the ecological role expected of Islamic higher education and current curriculum practices. The issue is not the absence of environmental content, but rather that its treatment remains partial, theoretical, and has not been systematically integrated into the curriculum. This situation stems from a weak connection between Islamic values and ecological issues, the lack of operational curriculum guidelines, and instruction that remains focused on knowledge-based learning. As a result, students understand environmental issues cognitively but do not yet fully possess theological awareness, ethical responsibility, and a genuine commitment to sustainable behavior. This indicates a gap between the ecological role expected of Islamic universities and current curriculum practices.

An eco-theological approach is proposed as a solution to address the lack of integration between theological values and ecological responsibility in Islamic higher education curricula. This solution is realized through the development of an eco-theology-based curriculum model that positions the relationship between God, humanity, and nature as the philosophical, pedagogical, and operational foundation for the delivery of education (Fannani et al., 2025; Peters et al., 2024; Phan et al., 2025). From this perspective, nature is not viewed merely as an economic resource but as God's creation possessing intrinsic and sacred value, and thus its sustainability must be safeguarded (Diana et al., 2025; Fadli et al., 2025; Frantz et al., 2025; Santono et al., 2026). The value of tawhid forms the basis for the unity of the relationship between God, humanity, and nature, while the value of khalifah affirms humanity's responsibility as stewards of the earth who are obligated to maintain ecological

balance (Bonang et al., 2026; M.Makhrus et al., 2025). These values are then systematically integrated into graduate learning outcomes, course materials, learning strategies, authentic assessments, as well as institutional policies and support (Chaeriansyah et al., 2026).

Previous studies have shown that integrating religious values into education can strengthen ecological awareness and encourage environmentally responsible behavior (Portus et al., 2024; Rekan & Mokhtar, 2025). Other studies have highlighted the relevance of ecological theology in developing an Islamic educational paradigm that is more responsive to environmental challenges (A. Rahman & Bahtiar, 2026; Sya & Ming, 2025). Research on higher education curricula also indicates that integrating environmental and sustainability perspectives can enhance students' critical awareness of ecological issues (Djirong et al., 2024; Filho et al., 2025; Kopnina et al., 2025). Studies on curriculum integration in Islamic higher education demonstrate that embedding environmental ethics into core courses deepens students' sense of ecological stewardship. Further research underscores that ecotheological approaches within religious pedagogy effectively bridge faith-based convictions with practical sustainability initiatives (Damoah et al., 2024; Högström et al., 2025; Ragadhita et al., 2026).

The limited availability of a systematic and implementable eco-theology-based curriculum model demonstrates the urgency of this study. Unlike previous research that primarily discusses ecological values at the conceptual or instructional level, this study positions eco-theology as an integrative foundation for the entire curriculum system. Its novelty lies in connecting Islamic theological values with learning outcomes, course content, teaching strategies, authentic assessment, and institutional support. Accordingly, the proposed model is expected to provide a contextual, transformative, and measurable framework for developing environmentally sustainable Islamic higher education. Existing studies largely examine ecological concepts in isolation or at a superficial instructional level, leaving a critical gap in operationalizing faith-based environmental values into a comprehensive academic framework. This study addresses that limitation by offering an integrative, end-to-end curriculum model that systematically aligns Islamic theological principles with learning outcomes, pedagogy, authentic assessment, and institutional governance.

Based on this background, this study aims to develop an eco-theology-based curriculum model for Islamic higher education. It focuses on analyzing the existing conditions and curriculum-development needs, formulating a curriculum model that corresponds to the characteristics of Islamic higher education, and examining the validity and feasibility of the proposed model. to This study aims to contribute to the development of Islamic educational science, eco-theological studies, and curriculum innovations that are more contextual, transformative, and oriented toward environmental sustainability. Ultimately, this framework is intended to serve as a strategic reference for

academic leaders and curriculum planners in institutionalizing environmental stewardship across higher education practices

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using the Straussian Grounded Theory design developed by Strauss and Corbin to construct an eco-theology-based curriculum model grounded in empirical data (Fishler & Nikkola, 2025). The research was conducted at the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Parepare from April to July 2026 because the institution has the potential to develop a curriculum integrating Islamic, ecological, and sustainability values. Data were obtained from eight participants: one academic leader, one curriculum administrator, one education policy expert, one Islamic education expert, one curriculum expert, and Three students. They were selected through purposive sampling based on their knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in curriculum development, Islamic education, institutional policy, learning, or environmental issues; snowball sampling was used to identify relevant participants recommended by key informants (Yani & Syafi, 2026). Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. Interviews explored curriculum conditions and the need for eco-theological integration, observations examined learning practices and academic culture, while document analysis covered curriculum documents, semester learning plans, study-program profiles, and academic policies (Mukhibat et al., 2024; Ramli et al., 2025).

Data analysis was conducted concurrently with data collection through open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Open coding identified and labelled concepts emerging from interviews, observations, and documents; axial coding grouped these concepts into related categories and established relationships among them; and selective coding integrated the main categories into a core category that formed the conceptual model of an eco-theology-based curriculum (Fubo Wu & Yang Liu, 2026). Data validity was ensured through source and method triangulation, member checking, audit trails, and expert discussions. Triangulation compared information across participants and data-collection techniques, while member checking confirmed interview summaries and initial interpretations with the participants. The audit trail systematically documented interview transcripts, observation notes, curriculum documents, analytical memos, and coding results, whereas expert discussions were used to examine the relevance and consistency of the resulting model (Jomegi et al., 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Open Coding: Initial Categories of Eco-Theological Curriculum Development

Open coding was conducted by repeatedly examining the interview transcripts, observation notes, and curriculum documents to identify

statements related to ecological learning, Islamic values, curriculum structures, academic discipline relevance, and institutional support. Each meaningful segment was assigned an initial code and grouped into a preliminary category. This process generated seven preliminary categories: partial ecological learning, unsystematic curriculum integration, academic discipline suitability, curriculum operationalization, the gap between values and practice, Islamic ecological foundations, and institutional enabling conditions. Interview findings indicated that environmental issues were discussed only briefly and generally in classroom learning, with limited connection to practical activities. Students explained that environmental content had been introduced, but it had not yet developed into substantial and action-oriented learning experiences (IP3/IL2). This condition shows that ecological learning remains partial and predominantly theoretical.

Curriculum administrators and experts also reported that eco-theology had not been formally incorporated into curriculum guidelines, graduate learning outcomes (CPL), course learning outcomes (CPMK), semester learning plans (RPS), or assessment systems (IP2/IL3). They further emphasized that its integration should be adapted to the scientific cluster, graduate profile, and characteristics of each study program. Therefore, eco-theological integration requires a common theological foundation while allowing discipline-specific forms of implementation. This statement emphasizes that eco-theological integration cannot be applied uniformly because each study program has different disciplinary characteristics.

Table 1. Open Coding Results

No.	Data Sources	Condensed Empirical Statement	Initial Code	Preliminary Category
1	IP3, IL2	Environmental issues are discussed briefly, generally, and are rarely connected with practical activities.	Environmental learning remains limited and superficial.	Partial Ecological Learning
2	IP2, IL1, IL3	Eco-theology has not been formally included in curriculum guidelines, learning outcomes, course plans, or assessment systems.	Eco-theology is not systematically integrated into the curriculum.	Unsystematic Curriculum Integration
3	IP2, IL3	The applicability of eco-theology varies according to the academic discipline, study-program cluster, and characteristics of the course.	Integration must correspond to disciplinary relevance.	Academic Discipline Suitability
4	IP2, IL1, IL3	Eco-theological values need to be translated into graduate profiles, CPL, CPMK, RPS, teaching materials, learning activities, and assessment.	Eco-theology requires operational curriculum instruments.	Curriculum Operationalization
5	IL1, IP4, IL2	Islamic understanding has not consistently shaped	Religious values have not been translated into	Gap Between Values and

		ecological behavior, cleanliness, waste management, or environmental responsibility.	ecological practice.	Practice
6	IP1, IP3, IL2, IP4, IL3	*Tawhid*, *khalifah*, *amanah*, *mizan*, and the prohibition of *fasad fi al-ardh* were identified as foundations of ecological responsibility.	Islamic teachings provide a theological foundation for ecological awareness.	Islamic Ecological Foundations
7	IP2, IL1, IL3	Curriculum integration requires policies, monitoring, evaluation, lecturer involvement, and institutional commitment.	Eco-theological integration depends on institutional support.	Institutional Enabling Conditions

Table 1 shows that the problem is not the total absence of environmental or Islamic values in higher education. Environmental issues and theological values are already present, but they remain fragmented, implicit, and unevenly implemented. The most frequently recurring concerns relate to the theological foundations of ecological responsibility, curriculum operationalization, the gap between Islamic understanding and ecological practice, and the absence of systematic curriculum integration. The findings also reveal that the suitability of eco-theology differs across academic clusters. Consequently, the curriculum model should not impose identical content on every study program but should provide a common theological foundation with discipline-specific forms of implementation.

Axial Coding: Paradigmatic Relationships Among the Categories

Axial coding was conducted by directly condensing and relating the preliminary categories produced during open coding. The categories were organized according to the Straussian paradigm of causal conditions, central phenomenon, context, intervening conditions, action–interaction strategies, and consequences. No category from open coding was omitted. In particular, academic discipline suitability was retained as the contextual condition that determines how eco-theology should be implemented in different study-program clusters.

Table 2. Axial Coding Based on the Straussian Paradigm

Straussian Paradigm Axis	Direct Source from Open Coding	Axial Category	Empirical Interpretation
Causal conditions	Partial Ecological Learning; Unsystematic Curriculum Integration	Fragmented ecological curriculum provision	Environmental topics are present but remain supplementary, superficial, and disconnected from formal curriculum structures.
Central phenomenon	Synthesis of Unsystematic Curriculum Integration,	Eco-theology has not been operationalized as an integrated	Islamic ecological values have not consistently shaped learning outcomes, learning processes, assessment, or

	Curriculum Operationalization, and Gap Between Values and Practice	curriculum framework	student behavior.
Context	Academic Discipline Suitability	Relevance of scientific and study-program clusters	The form and depth of eco-theological integration depend on the epistemological characteristics, graduate profile, and course relevance of each study program.
Intervening conditions	Islamic Ecological Foundations; Institutional Enabling Conditions	Theological resources and institutional capacity	Islamic values provide a strong normative foundation, but implementation is influenced by policies, leadership commitment, lecturer competence, and institutional systems.
Action–interaction strategies	Curriculum Operationalization	Systematic and contextual curriculum integration	Values are translated into CPL, CPMK, RPS, course content, applied learning, authentic assessment, and campus activities according to disciplinary relevance.
Consequences	Gap Between Values and Practice	Weak transformation from knowledge to ecological behavior	Without systematic integration, religious and environmental knowledge does not consistently produce ecological habits, concrete action, or sustainable campus culture.

The axial coding demonstrates a clear relationship among the findings. Fragmented ecological learning and unsystematic curriculum integration function as causal conditions. These conditions produce the central phenomenon: eco-theology remains a normative discourse rather than an operational curriculum framework. However, the implementation of eco-theology takes place within a specific context, namely the relevance of each academic discipline and study-program cluster. For example, the form of integration in science, education, Islamic studies, economics, and law cannot be identical because each field has different learning outcomes, objects of study, and professional orientations. The findings also show that Islamic ecological values and institutional support operate as intervening conditions. The values of *tawhid*, *khalifah*, *amanah*, *mizan*, and the prohibition of *fasad fi al-ardh* provide the theological resources for curriculum development. Nevertheless, these values will not become operational without academic policies, curriculum guidelines, lecturer capacity, monitoring, and evaluation. Therefore, the proposed strategy is to integrate eco-theological values into formal curriculum components and adapt their implementation to the relevance of each study-program cluster. This strategy is expected to reduce the gap between religious understanding and ecological practice.

Selective Coding: Formulation of the Core Category

Selective coding integrated the axial categories into a central storyline. The analysis produced the core category of an integrative and discipline-responsive eco-theological curriculum model for Islamic higher education. This core category was selected because it connects the curriculum problems, Islamic theological foundations, disciplinary context, operational strategies, institutional requirements, and expected ecological outcomes.

Table 3. Results of Selective Coding

No.	Category of *Axial Coding* Results	Relationship with the Core Category	Core Model Formulation
1.	Curriculum integration is not yet systematic	Indicates the need for an ecotheological foundation to be incorporated into the curriculum structure	The model needs to include eco-theology indicators in CPL, CPMK, RPS, and course materials
2.	Ecological learning remains fragmented	This highlights the need for learning that is not merely theoretical but based on real-world experience	The model needs to incorporate projects, case studies, fieldwork, and ecological reflection
3.	Islamic ecological values have not yet been put into practice	This highlights the need to incorporate the values of tawhid, khalifah, amanah, mizan, and the prohibition against fasad into the curriculum	The model needs to make Islamic values the foundation for objectives, content, activities, and assessment
4.	There is a gap between values and practice	This highlights the need for ecological habits in academic life and campus culture	The model needs to connect learning with exemplary behavior, habit formation, and a green campus culture
5.	Institutional support is not yet integrated	This highlights the need for academic policies and evaluation systems that support the implementation of the model	The model needs to be supported by monitoring, evaluation, PPEPP, and the involvement of the academic community
6.	The need for an eco-theology-based curriculum model	Serves as a convergence point for all previous categories	The model needs to be formulated in an integrative, contextual, practical, and measurable manner

Source: Compiled by the researcher based on the results of selective coding of interview data.

Based on Table 3, the core category emerging from the *selective coding* process is the need to formulate an integrative eco-theological curriculum model for Islamic higher education. This category was selected because all findings point to the need to design a curriculum model that not only incorporates environmental issues into learning but also unifies Islamic values, ecological awareness, curriculum structure, learning strategies, assessment,

and institutional support into a single, cohesive framework. Thus, the formulated model is not merely normative but is intended to be a model that can be applied in the context of Islamic higher education. These core categories indicate that the formulation of an eco-theology-based curriculum model must be developed through four main orientations. First, an integrative orientation, which involves linking Islamic values and ecological issues to CPL, CPMK, RPS, course materials, and teaching resources. Second, a contextual orientation, which involves connecting learning to real-world environmental issues that are relevant to the lives of students and the community. Third, the applied orientation, which positions students as active participants who experience, analyze, and take ecological actions through projects, case studies, fieldwork, and reflection. Fourth, the measurable orientation, which ensures that learning success is assessed not only based on cognitive understanding but also on attitudes, actions, products, portfolios, and the cultivation of environmentally conscious behaviors.

The *selective coding* stage yielded the main proposition that an eco-theology-based curriculum model in Islamic higher education needs to be formulated as an integrative eco-theological model that unites Islamic values, ecological awareness, curricular frameworks, applied learning, authentic assessment, and institutional support. In the *theoretical coding* stage, all categories identified in the previous stage were integrated into a coherent theoretical framework. This stage no longer merely presented data categories but formulated the relationships among them into a substantive theory. Based on the results of *selective coding*, the core category identified is an integrative eco-theological curriculum model for Islamic higher education. This core category explains that the development of an eco-theology-based curriculum must integrate ecological Islamic values, curriculum structure, applied learning, authentic assessment, and institutional support.

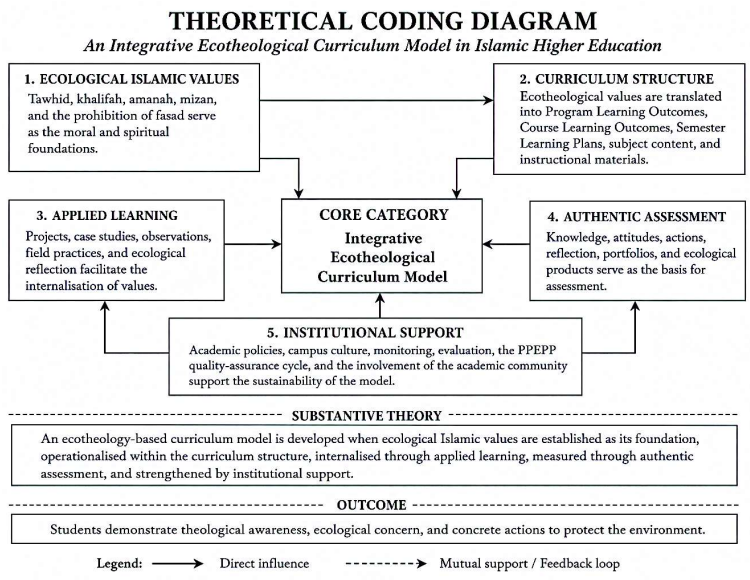

Figure 1. EIntegrative Ecotheological Curriculum Model

Based on Figure 1, *theoretical coding* yielded a substantive theory that the ecotheology-based curriculum model in Islamic higher education must be constructed as an integrative ecotheological model. This model explains that ecological Islamic values serve as the foundation, the curriculum structure serves as the space for operationalization, applied learning serves as the process of internalization, authentic assessment serves as a measurement tool, and institutional support serves as a system ensuring sustainability. Under this framework, ecotheology is not positioned as supplementary material but as a framework that connects faith, knowledge, ecological action, and academic culture. The relationships among these categories indicate that Islamic ecological values will not shape behavior unless they are incorporated into the curriculum and learning process.

The curriculum structure alone is also insufficient if it remains merely a document without applied learning practices. Applied learning must be reinforced with authentic assessment so that changes in students' knowledge, attitudes, and actions can be observed. Furthermore, the entire process requires institutional support so that the model does not remain merely an academic design but can become an environmentally conscious campus culture. Ultimately, the resulting substantive theory is an integrative eco-theological curriculum model for Islamic higher education, formed when ecological Islamic values are established as a foundation, operationalized within the curriculum structure, internalized through applied learning, measured through authentic assessment, and reinforced by institutional support.

Discussion

This study yielded six interrelated findings, namely: the integration of eco-theology into the curriculum is not yet systematic; ecological learning remains fragmented; Islamic ecological values have not been consistently put into practice; there is a gap between ecological values and practices; institutional support remains weak; and there is a need for an integrative eco-theological curriculum model that is responsive to academic disciplines. This finding aligns with holistic curriculum development theory, which emphasizes that internalizing new values requires a systemic design across all academic components. Previous research by Manshur et al. (2024) and Rahmat et al. (2023) demonstrates that integrating environmental values in higher education often falls into an ad hoc approach without a binding institutional framework. When Islamic ecotheological values are merely inserted randomly into a few courses, this content fails to form a structured ecological awareness within students. This confirms the argument by Fokina-Mezentseva (2023); Hamadi & El-Den (2024) and Hill et al. (2023) that transforming a curriculum based on religious values requires an integrated paradigm so as not to remain mere documentation padding. Without a cohesive design spanning from learning outcomes to evaluation, the message of environmental sustainability loses its transformative power within the campus environment.

This lack of systematic integration occurs because standard operating procedures and a clear roadmap for ecotheology curriculum development are not yet available at the faculty or departmental levels. Course instructors tend to act independently without cross-disciplinary coordination, making the delivery of ecological material highly dependent on the personal concern of individual lecturers. Limited training in ecotheological pedagogy also makes it difficult for teaching staff to translate abstract theological concepts into measurable learning indicators. Furthermore, there is no periodic evaluation mechanism to monitor whether environmental content is consistently delivered in the classroom. This combination of absent written regulations and minimal lecturer preparation directly locks ecotheology integration into a partial and superficial state.

The finding that ecological learning remains fragmented strengthens the view of Saini et al. (2023) and Strielkowski et al. (2025) regarding disciplinary silos that frequently hinder interdisciplinary learning in Islamic higher education. Integrated knowledge theory underscores the importance of interconnecting religious studies (*tsaqafah islamiyah*) and environmental science to address ecological crises comprehensively. However, field practices indicate that environmental issues are still discussed in isolation limited to Islamic environmental jurisprudence (*fiqh al-bi'ah*) in religious studies programs or technical-scientific analysis in science programs. As a result of this division, students do not gain a holistic understanding of how faith values integrate meaningfully with scientific solutions to environmental challenges. This compartmentalized teaching pattern ultimately perpetuates the dichotomy between religious teachings and modern scientific knowledge regarding nature conservation.

This fragmented state is driven by institutional structures that strictly separate religious and science departments in terms of both governance and curriculum. The absence of joint academic forums or cross-disciplinary team-teaching opportunities leads lecturers to teach in isolation within their respective qualification boundaries. These administrative barriers are further compounded by faculty workload systems that fail to adequately recognize interdisciplinary research and teaching. Consequently, lecturers hesitate to step outside their comfort zones and collaborate on designing syllabi that bridge Islamic perspectives with environmental science. As a result, the active curriculum maintains a traditional structure that prevents deep interdisciplinary dialogue from occurring.

The gap between possessing values and practicing them consistently is highly relevant to the Value-Action Gap theory in environmental psychology, which posits that knowledge and moral norms do not automatically transform into actual behavior. Research by Castaño et al. (2025) and Kazanskaia (2025) also emphasizes that theological understanding of the *khalifah fil ardh* (stewards of the Earth) doctrine often stops as cognitive spiritual discourse inside the classroom. Without planned and systematic habituation, religious ethical doctrines fail to establish new social norms that regulate daily behavior in the

campus environment. This demonstrates that mastering Islamic ecological theories has not yet deeply penetrated students' affective and psychomotor domains. Consequently, high ecological awareness at the conceptual level is not reflected in pro-environmental actions in real life.

This inconsistency is influenced by the lack of habituation systems and an enabling campus environment to guide the daily behavior of the academic community. Although classroom instruction consistently emphasizes cleanliness and conservation as part of faith, physical campus infrastructure such as waste separation facilities, energy management systems, and single-use plastic restrictions is frequently inadequate. A lack of role models among campus leaders and the absence of clear incentives or sanctions make environmental ethics violations seem normalized. Students and academic staff thus lose the external drivers needed to translate theological knowledge into consistent living habits. Ultimately, the ideal values learned in class erode when confronted with an unsupportive campus environment.

This finding reinforces the theoretical framework of cognitive dissonance, wherein an institution maintains a certain ethical rhetoric while its daily operational actions directly contradict it. In higher education sustainability literature, Castaño et al. (2025) and Pandita & Kiran (2023) found that educational institutions frequently adopt green campus jargon or environmental awareness narratively merely for accreditation and public relations purposes. This gap indicates that an institution's ecological commitment has not reached its operational philosophical foundation, remaining instead at a symbolic or administrative level. When an Islamic university praises environmentally friendly values yet ignores resource waste on campus, a clear value contradiction occurs. This disconnect damages the educational institution's credibility in instilling environment-based ethical character in its students.

This gap arises because campus policy orientation prioritizes short-term administrative performance targets over long-term environmental culture transformation. Decision-makers in higher education have not yet integrated environmental sustainability indicators into the institution's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Consequently, budget allocations for green infrastructure and practical ecological action programs remain a low priority compared to conventional physical building development. Daily operational decision-making also fails to rigorously consider environmental impacts due to a lack of binding internal regulations. Without integrating sustainability values into operational regulations, campus policies will continue to generate a gap between discourse and reality on the ground.

Weak institutional support confirms transformational leadership theory in educational management, which stated that curriculum innovation cannot run effectively without strong institutional commitment. Research by Figueiredo et al. (2023) and Lestari et al. (2024) showed that the successful integration of sustainability values in higher education heavily depends on clear written regulations, delegation of authority, and resource allocation.

Without official policies and facilitation from university leadership, ecotheology initiatives remain marginal movements driven only by a few passionate individual academics. Institutional support serves as the backbone that ensures every change initiative possesses legal authority and long-term sustainability. When this backbone is weak, the entire ecotheology curriculum innovation program easily falters and stalls midway.

This institutional weakness stems from the failure to position environmental issues and ecotheology as strategic priorities within the vision and budget design of the institution. There is no dedicated operational unit, research center, or specialized body at the university level mandated to oversee and evaluate ecotheology integration. Furthermore, the absence of Rector Decrees or binding regulations mandating an ecotheology-based curriculum makes environment-related programs purely voluntary. The lack of specific budget allocations within institutional work plans and budgets further narrows the scope for executing ecological programs. Consequently, every proposed ecotheology activity faces administrative licensing hurdles and extremely limited funding availability.

The final finding regarding the need for a curriculum model that is responsive to various academic disciplines aligns with contextual curriculum design theory and the study by Trevisan et al. (2024) and Yuan & Yu (2024). This literature emphasizes that for Islamic ecotheological values to be accepted and applied effectively, the proposed curriculum model must not be rigid or enforce a one-size-fits-all approach. Instead, the model must be flexible, adaptive, and capable of being contextually articulated into the unique characteristics of each discipline, including religious, social, and scientific-technological studies. A responsive curriculum enables every study program to absorb ecotheological values without sacrificing the core depth of its primary discipline. The presence of this contextual framework serves as a vital bridge toward achieving an Islamic education transformation that remains relevant to contemporary challenges.

This urgent need arises from the realization among academic stakeholders, lecturers, curriculum developers, and department heads regarding the limitations of conventional learning methods in addressing current ecological crises. High student interest in contemporary environmental issues that are not structurally accommodated in the old curriculum drives the demand for a new framework. Educators require clear practical guidelines, ranging from formulating learning outcomes and selecting content to designing transformative learning strategies and authentic assessments. Additionally, strong pressure from external stakeholders for environmentally conscious graduates accelerates this necessity. Therefore, developing an integrative and operational ecotheology curriculum model is a strategic step that can no longer be delayed.

Theoretically and practically, the findings of this study make a significant contribution to the development of Islamic educational science, ecotheological studies, and curriculum transformation in higher education. The

results enrich Islamic pedagogical literature by providing a conceptual framework that bridges environmental theological doctrines (*khalifah fil ardh*) with scientific solutions to global ecological crises. For policymakers and institutional leaders, this study offers a strategic reference in formulating operational guidelines and sustainability-based governance to bridge the gap between ethical rhetoric and campus practices. Furthermore, these findings lay the foundation for developing a responsive, flexible, and integrated curriculum model that can be effectively adapted across various academic disciplines. Ultimately, this contribution fosters an Islamic higher education ecosystem that not only produces graduates with strong religious grounding, but also equips them with transformative ecological character and leadership.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that an eco-theology-based curriculum in Islamic higher education becomes effective when Islamic ecological values serve as the foundation, are translated into curriculum structures, internalized through applied learning, measured through authentic assessment, and sustained through institutional support. The most important insight is that ecological awareness cannot be developed through theological discourse or environmental content alone; it requires a connected curriculum mechanism that links faith, knowledge, behavior, and campus culture. The strength of the study lies in its grounded-theory process, which systematically connects empirical categories into an operational model; however, its findings are limited to one institutional context and have not yet been tested across different study programs or Islamic universities. Therefore, further research should validate the model through multi-institutional studies, develop and test implementation instruments, and examine its effectiveness in improving students' ecological knowledge, attitudes, behavior, and sustainable campus practices.

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From a scientific perspective, this study presents an integrative eco-theological curriculum model that is responsive to various academic disciplines. In practical terms, this study provides a framework for integrating the principles of tawhid, khalifah, amanah, mizan, and the prohibition of fasad fi al-ardh into graduate learning outcomes (CPL), course learning outcomes (CPMK), semester learning plans (RPS), learning activities, assessment practices, and the PPEPP quality assurance cycle.

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