

# Transformation of Islamic Education Curriculum through Eco-Pesantren Approach: Integration of Islamic Values and Sustainability Principles

Ukhtul Iffah Luthfiyyah Mursida\*  
Santi Dianah

<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-1992-002X>  
<https://orcid.org/0009-0007-4588-0709>

*Affiliation (Faculty of Education, Universitas Islam International Indonesia, Indonesia)*

## ABSTRACT

The global environmental crisis demands the world of education, including Islamic education, to take an active role in building awareness and a culture of sustainability. Previous research has largely discussed how Islam teaches us to protect nature, but has not explored how the Islamic education curriculum can be truly transformed in a concrete way to address the environmental crisis. So, this study aims to explore how the transformation of the Islamic education curriculum can be carried out through an eco-pesantren approach by emphasizing the integration of Islamic values and sustainability principles as a contextual and transformative education system. This study uses a narrative literature review approach to explore various relevant literature and previous studies. The results of the study show four main findings, namely the values of sustainability in Islam, the Islamic curriculum needs to be transformed from a normative approach to a contextual one based on environmental issues, the implementation of eco-pesantren shows that Islamic educational institutions are able to form ecological characters holistically and the integration of *maqashid sharia* with SDGs offers a relevant conceptual framework for the development of sustainable Islamic education. These findings contribute to the discourse on Islamic education reform by offering the eco-pesantren model as a transformative framework that integrates faith-based values with sustainable practices.

*Keywords: transformation; eco-pesantren; Islamic education; sustainability; curriculum*

## Introduction

Global environmental crises, such as climate change, land degradation, water and air pollution, and biodiversity loss, have become urgent challenges for humanity (Juliani et al., 2024). Rising global temperatures have led to more frequent and intense natural disasters, such as floods, droughts, and storms. Deforestation and biodiversity loss exacerbate environmental degradation, threaten ecosystem stability, and reduce the earth's capacity to support life for

future generations (Juliani et al., 2024). This condition demands comprehensive and sustainable collective steps in addressing environmental issues.

With increasing awareness of the environmental crisis, the education sector is required to play a strategic role in building a culture of sustainability. In the context of the SDGs, continuing Islamic education plays an important role in achieving several relevant, sustainable development goals (Khoiriyah et al., 2023). Several points discuss the environment in the SDGs, and sustainable Islamic education can contribute to environmental protection by prioritizing justice, togetherness, and sustainability (Rahmat & Yahya, 2021).

Islamic education, as an integral part of the education system in Indonesia, has great potential to contribute to forming a generation that is not only religious but also responsible for nature. In Islam, ecological values have been inherent in fundamental teachings, such as the principle of *khalifah* (the role of humans as guardians of the earth), *tawazun* (balance), *amanah* (responsibility), and *islah* (improvement). These teachings show that the relationship between humans and the environment is part of Islamic spirituality (Dien, 2000; Nasr, 1996).

In addition, Islam places humans as *khalifah fil ardh* (God's representatives on earth) who are responsible for maintaining balance and not damaging nature (QS. Al-A'raf: 56; Ar-Rum: 41). Values such as *tawhid* (oneness of God), *mizan* (balance), *ihsan* (doing good), and *maslahah* (public good) are the basis of environmental ethics in Islam (Anabarja & Mubah, 2021). Therefore, Islamic education is not only tasked with transmitting religious teachings normatively but also transforming students into individuals who are aware of their ecological responsibilities as part of worship.

Transforming the Islamic education curriculum that integrates the principles of sustainability is one strategic approach to addressing these challenges. With the integration of environmental issues into the education curriculum, the younger generation can be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to face environmental challenges in the future. In addition, education also acts as a medium to encourage innovation, collaboration, and active participation of the community in environmental conservation efforts. Other supporting factors, Islamic teachings that emphasize principles such as *tawazun* (balance), *maslahah* (public well-being), and the prohibition of causing damage to the earth, provide an ethical framework to support environmental conservation. In the context of education, these values have a strategic role in shaping the character of the younger generation who are not only religious, but also have concern for global issues such as climate change, environmental pollution, and biodiversity conservation. Through this approach, environmental education becomes not only a tool to increase knowledge but also a means to instill moral and spiritual responsibility in preserving nature.

One concrete form of this approach is the birth of the eco-pesantren concept, namely Islamic boarding schools that not only function as centers of religious teaching but also as laboratories for sustainable practices based on Islamic values (Ahmad, 2020). Through eco-pesantren, Islamic values and sustainability principles are implemented in an integrated manner in the curriculum, institutional culture, and daily lives of students (Rohman et al., 2024). This approach reflects a transformative form of Islamic education because it does not only focus on mastering knowledge but also the formation of character and ecological ethics.

Several 'Eco-Pesantren' in Java are developing their education system to perform sustainable development values within their members of teachers as well as the students. Islamic religious thinkers use Islamic approaches to protect the environment and give examples of how Muslims, particularly in Indonesia, are contributing to this effort through education, legal frameworks, and conservation practices (Anabarja & Mubah, 2021). This integration phenomenon is now starting to develop in various Islamic educational institutions, both through formal curricula that include environmental themes and through daily practices such as waste management, reforestation, and utilization of renewable energy (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021).

From all the explanations above, the curriculum plays a central role as an instrument of value transformation. The curriculum is not just a list of teaching materials but a reflection of the vision, values, and educational goals that an institution wants to achieve. Integration of environmental education into the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum can also be done through creative and interactive learning methods. Islamic Religious Education teachers can develop project-based learning activities, such as tree planting, waste management, or energy-saving campaigns, which actively involve students in real environmental conservation actions. Therefore, the transformation of Islamic education towards sustainability must begin with a shift in the paradigm of the curriculum from a normative-theological one to a more contextual and applicable curriculum, including in responding to environmental issues.

Unfortunately, the development of an environmental-based Islamic education curriculum still does not have a strong and systematic conceptual framework. So far, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in Indonesia tends to focus on theological and ritual aspects, such as learning about the pillars of faith, the pillars of Islam, procedures for worship, and the history of the Prophet and his companions. Contemporary issues, such as environmental conservation, climate change mitigation, and natural resource management, have not been an integral part of the material taught. As a result, the potential of PAI as a means to build a generation that is religious and has a high ecological awareness has not been utilized optimally (Juliani et al., 2024).

In addition, various environmental conservation policies that are structural and originate from above (top-down), although they have good intentions, often encounter challenges in their implementation at the grassroots level. Mangunjaya & McKay's (2012) study shows that the dominant environmental conservation approach taken by the government is often not socially inclusive. These programs tend to position local communities only as objects of policy, not as active subjects involved in planning and decision-making. As a result, these policies risk ignoring the traditional rights of the community, as well as creating resistance to their implementation in the field.

Beyond policy challenges, the development of an environmentally-based Islamic education curriculum still lacks a robust and systematic conceptual framework. Previous research on Islamic education and environmental awareness has primarily focused on moral and theological aspects, with limited exploration of how sustainability principles can be embedded in the curriculum. Despite the emergence of eco-pesantren initiatives, a research gap remains on how Islamic education curricula can be conceptually and practically transformed to systematically integrate sustainability principles. Therefore, this article aims to

explore how the transformation of Islamic education curricula can be achieved through an eco-pesantren approach, emphasizing the integration of Islamic values and sustainability principles. The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to build a conceptual framework for the transformation of Islamic education through an eco-pesantren approach that integrates the maqashid sharia with sustainability principles.

## Method

### *Research Design*

This study uses a narrative literature review (NLR) approach as the main method to deeply examine the literature related to the transformation of the Islamic education curriculum through the eco-pesantren approach. The narrative literature review approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to compile a reflective and interpretive conceptual synthesis of various previous research results without being tied to a rigid quantitative structure (Snyder, 2019). This design is suitable for exploring conceptual linkages between Islamic values, sustainability principles, and curriculum transformation in Islamic education.

### *Data Sources and Data Selection*

The data in this study were obtained from secondary sources, including journal articles, conference papers related to Islamic education, eco-pesantren, and sustainability. The researcher collected relevant publications published between 2010 and 2024 to capture contemporary developments in the field. The literature search was conducted using academic databases such as Eric Journal, Google Scholar, and DOAJ with keywords including "Islamic education curriculum," "eco-pesantren," "sustainability education," and "maqashid sharia." Articles that are non-academic, blogs, or not relevant to the theme of integrating Islamic education and sustainability were eliminated from the study.

### *Data Analysis Procedure*

The collected literature was analyzed through content analysis and thematic synthesis. The analysis was carried out by grouping articles based on major themes, such as the values of sustainability in Islam, the transformation of the Islamic education curriculum, the concept and practice of eco-pesantren, and the integration of *maqashid* sharia values and SDGs in education. The purpose of this analysis is to build a conceptual synthesis that can answer research questions and fill the gaps in studies that have not been widely discussed, especially regarding the environment-based Islamic curriculum. Through this literature review method, it is hoped that research can formulate a conceptual framework for sustainable Islamic education, as well as show the strategic role of eco-pesantren as an integrative and transformative educational model.

## Results

This section presents the key findings derived from the narrative literature review, which explores the integration of Islamic values and sustainability principles within Islamic education through the eco-pesantren approach. The

thematic analysis identifies four major themes namely sustainability values in Islamic education, curriculum transformation in Islamic education, institutional role and implementation of eco-pesantren as a model of sustainable Islamic education and integration of *maqashid syariah* and SDGs principles in the Islamic curriculum.

### ***Sustainability Values in Islamic Education***

Islamic education has a strong theological and ethical foundation in building awareness of sustainability and ecological responsibility. Concepts such as khalifah (God's representative on earth), amanah (trust), tawazun (balance), and maslahah (public benefit) have become basic values in Islamic teachings that underline the importance of protecting the environment as part of worship (Juliani et al., 2024). These values are not only spiritual in nature but also very contextual in facing the current global environmental crisis.

In addition, Islamic teachings also prioritize the principles of zuhud (simple living), israf (moderation), and thrift in the use of resources. These principles are very relevant in responding to the problem of excessive consumption and waste, which are the main causes of the environmental crisis. Through education based on Islamic values, the younger generation can be directed to develop a more sustainable and environmentally responsible lifestyle. This can be realized through learning activities that instill environmental awareness, such as greening programs, waste management, or the application of environmentally friendly technology.

In a more implemented context, Anabarja and Mubah (2021) emphasize that Islamic environmentalism is an inherent part of Islamic values based on *maqashid al-shariah*. Through a case study of eco-pesantren in Java, they show that sustainability values can be contextually integrated into pesantren education, making this institution a driver of Islamic-based environmental ethics. In line with that, Hajar (2024), in his literature review, highlights how Islamic education in Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia, is beginning to show a transformation towards sustainability through an ethical and spiritual approach. The concepts of caliphate and adl (justice) are referred to as foundations that can form ecological awareness in the curriculum and educational practices.

Gitmiwati and Indrayuda (2024) studied the transformation of learning in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah through innovation in environmental character education. They highlighted that environmental education based on Islamic values can form an ecologically aware generation from an early age. The integration of community-based projects, waste management, and interactive teaching has proven effective in instilling an environmentally conscious character in line with Islamic principles of natural balance.

Innovation in teaching methods is crucial for instilling environmental care in students. Traditional education that previously focused on memorization and theoretical aspects now needs to be transformed to meet the demands of a dynamic era, which requires a high level of environmental awareness. This innovation can include the integration of technology into the learning process, the use of project-based methods that focus on environmental issues, and the application of sustainability practices in daily activities at school (Gitmiwati & Indrayuda, 2024).

This curriculum transformation also includes emphasizing character education by including material on the importance of maintaining ecosystem balance, reducing waste, and managing natural resources sustainably. Thus, students not only gain knowledge but are also trained to apply environmental values in their daily lives so that they can become agents of change who are committed to environmental sustainability (Fahrudin et al., 2023). Interactive and contextual teaching methods that actively involve students in decision-making and solving environmental problems can also foster a sense of personal and collective responsibility for nature (Gitmiwati & Indrayuda, 2024).

Collectively, the literature shows that sustainability does not conflict with Islamic teachings but is, in fact, an integral part of Islam's spiritual mission. The integration of sustainability values in Islamic education, both at the madrasah and pesantren levels, opens up space for the development of educational models that are not only normative and ritualistic but also relevant and adaptive to contemporary environmental challenges.

### ***Curriculum Transformation in Islamic Education***

Curriculum transformation is a strategic step in responding to contemporary challenges while optimizing the potential of Islamic education in forming a generation that cares about the environment. The curriculum is not only an administrative document but also an ideological and pedagogical instrument to transform Islamic values into contextual and applicable ecological awareness. In this context, the eco-pesantren approach is present as a transformative paradigm that not only targets the cognitive aspects of students, but also spirituality, ethics, and real actions in preserving nature.

Pujianto, et al (2021), the eco-pesantren program is a form of institutional transformation that aligns Islamic teachings with the principles of nature conservation and sustainable development. This transformation includes institutional policies, the development of an environmentally based curriculum, extracurricular activities based on nature contemplation, waste management, sanitation, and the use of renewable energy.

Lutfauziah et al. (2023) emphasize that the environmental education curriculum in Islamic boarding schools must be developed systematically to suit the characteristics of Islamic boarding schools. They designed a curriculum foundation that includes philosophical, psychological, organizational, socio-cultural, and technological dimensions. Learning is carried out through two main stages, namely theory and practice, with a problem-solving approach based on the daily lives of students.

Rohman et al. (2024) emphasized that the integration of Islamic eco-theology values in the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education (PAI-BP) curriculum is important to strengthen students' affective and spiritual dimensions towards the environment. Unfortunately, the cognitive content in the curriculum is still weak. For this reason, they recommend that the eco-theology approach be explicitly integrated into the curriculum, especially at the Senior High School (SMA) level, in order to strengthen holistic ecological awareness.

Transformation is also taking place at the *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* level, as shown by Gitmiwati and Indrayuda (2024). They highlighted the importance of project-based learning innovation, strengthening environmental character, and community involvement in environmental education. This contextual and

participatory approach has proven to be able to instill ecological responsibility from an early age and is relevant to Islamic values such as caliphate, *mizan*, and *islah*.

In conclusion, the transformation of the Islamic education curriculum through the eco-pesantren approach is not only theologically possible but also pedagogically feasible and institutionally strategic. This approach encourages curriculum reformulation based on *maqashid sharia* and SDGs principles, resulting in Islamic education that is able to balance the values of religiosity and ecological responsibility.

### ***Institutional Role and Implementation of Eco-Pesantren as a Model of Sustainable Islamic Education***

The concept of Eco-Pesantren has developed into a model of Islamic education that emphasizes the ecological awareness as an integral part of faith practice. Islamic boarding schools have a strategic role in forming a generation that is not only spiritually obedient but also cares about environmental sustainability. From the Islamic perspective, humans are positioned as *khalifah fil ardh* who have a moral and religious responsibility to protect the universe (QS. Al-Ruum: 41), and this value is the main basis of the eco-pesantren approach (Fua, 2013).

One example of an Islamic boarding school that has succeeded in integrating environmental education into the curriculum structure and institutional culture is Eco-Pesantren Daarut Tauhiid Bandung. Through programs such as BRTT (Clean, Neat, Orderly, and Regular) and Berhiber (Clean, Green, and Flowering), ecological values are taught not only theoretically but also in students' daily practices. This approach includes cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions so that the formation of environmentally conscious characters can take place holistically (Saprodi et al., 2019).

The spirit of integrating Islamic values and environmental awareness has also begun to be applied in public schools based on religious values. Environmental education is not separated from religious learning but becomes part of the internalization of faith values. Islamic education (PAI), as an integral part of character education in schools, plays a vital role in providing an environmentally friendly education model. It promotes the formation of religious character and environmental consciousness among students (Mande, 2018). For example, in a study at SMAN 2 and SMAN 7 Malang, an integrative strategy was carried out through religious activities such as Qur'an studies, zero waste programs, and the development of environmentally friendly infrastructure such as environmentally friendly mosques and ablution water treatment systems (Amrullah et al., 2025).

In addition, Islamic boarding schools as social institutions have the potential to be agents of change in the surrounding community. Islamic boarding schools are not only centers of education but also centers for counselling and transformation of environmental culture. As emphasized by Fua (2013), Islamic boarding schools can be centers of excellence in developing environmentally friendly behavior through curriculum, teacher role models, and community participation in conservation programs. However, there are still challenges in terms of curriculum depth and the effectiveness of internalizing environmental values. For example, at MTs Al Mansyuriyah Lombok Tengah, environmental

material in *Akidah Akhlak* lessons was still limited to aspects of personal hygiene and had not touched on the realm of global ecological awareness and social transformation (Fahlawi & Pertiwi, 2025).

Overall, the Eco-Pesantren model presents an alternative and relevant approach to responding to global challenges related to the environmental crisis while remaining rooted in Islamic values. With strong institutional support, curriculum integration, and community participation, Islamic education can make a real contribution to realizing sustainable development rooted in spirituality and morality.

### ***Integration of Maqashid Syariah and SDGs Principles in Islamic Curriculum***

Education must transform in a direction that answers not only spiritual but also social and ecological needs. In this context, the integration of *maqashid syariah* and the main objectives of Islamic law with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a strategic approach to building a relevant and transformative Islamic education curriculum. The integration of Islamic values and the principles of global sustainability is not contradictory but rather mutually reinforcing.

The classical concept of *maqashid syariah* by Al-Ghazali includes the protection of religion (*din*), soul (*nafs*), reason (*'aql*), descendants (*nasl*), and property (*mal*). In the context of sustainable development, *maqashid* has strong relevance because it is based on justice, balance (*mizan*), and *rahmah* (compassion) as the basic principles in the SDGs agenda (Moneim, 2018). These two frameworks align with SDGs pillars public welfare, social justice, protection of life, and preservation of natural resources for future generations.

Moneim (2018) emphasized that *maqashid syariah* not only functions as a theological foundation, but also as a philosophical and epistemological framework in formulating curriculum standards that ensure sustainability and justice in the education system. Anabarja and Mubah's study (2021) shows that the integration of SDGs principles in the Islamic education system, especially through the Eco-Pesantren initiative in Indonesia, is a real example that Islamic values are not contradictory, but even in line with sustainable development.

The eco-pesantren concept can also be seen as an implementation practice of the integration of Islamic values and SDGs. Through various programs such as waste management, water conservation, use of renewable energy, and development of Islamic boarding school gardens, this institution has succeeded in implementing the values of *maslahah*, *tawazun*, and *amanah* in real life (Pujianto et al., 2021). As an example of implementation at the elementary level, research by Annur et al. (2022) at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah shows that environmental education instilled from an early age can improve students' environmental ethics while strengthening the achievement of the 2030 SDGs. Activities such as class duty, waste sorting education, and the habit of bringing one's own food container reflect micro steps based on Islamic values in supporting the macro goals of global development.

Ultimately, education based on *maqashid sharia* that integrates the principles of SDGs can equip students with spiritual awareness that is inseparable from social and ecological realities. In addition, this approach provides a strong conceptual framework for a comprehensive Islamic education: uniting faith, morals, and social action in one deep and meaningful learning system.

## Discussion

This study shows that the integration of Islamic values and sustainability principles has a strong theological basis as well as high practical relevance in the context of Islamic education. From the first to fourth themes, it can be concluded that values such as *khalifah*, *tawazun*, *maslahah*, *amanah*, and *mizan* are not only the ethical foundations in Islam but are also in line with the principles of global sustainability as stated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This emphasizes that Islamic education has great potential to become a strategic tool in forming a generation that is both religious and environmentally conscious.

The findings on curriculum transformation of the Islamic education curriculum is an initial step toward overcoming the weaknesses of the normative-theological approach, which has not yet reached contemporary issues such as the environmental crisis. A transformative and contextual curriculum, especially one inspired by eco-pesantren practices, can align religious teachings with concrete actions for environmental preservation. A curriculum like this not only contains religious material in the narrow sense but also conveys moral and spiritual messages about the importance of protecting the earth as a mandate from God.

The discussion of institutional roles highlights that the success of implementing a green curriculum is largely determined by the strength of the institutions and the educational culture that accompanies it. Islamic boarding schools, with their unique social structures, have great potential to implement ecological values in the daily lives of students. Eco-Islamic boarding school programs that have been developed in various regions show that Islamic education can be brought to life through habituation, role models, and environmentally friendly institutional management. This model has proven to be able to internalize sustainability values more deeply than a purely theoretical approach.

The integration of *maqashid sharia* with SDGs in the curriculum, as discussed in the fourth theme, is an important conceptual framework for designing sustainable Islamic education. Protection of life (*nafs*), reason (*aqal*), descendants (*nasl*), and property (*mal*), which are the core of *maqashid sharia*, is in fact in line with the mission of the SDGs in building a just, civilized, and sustainable future. Therefore, building an Islamic education curriculum that integrates the two is not only conceptually possible but also necessary in practice.

However, there are several gaps in the practice and policies of Islamic education related to the integration of environmental values. Religious education materials still tend to be cognitive in nature and have not fully developed the affective and psychomotor dimensions in forming ecological awareness. In addition, there is no systematic national framework for adopting the eco-pesantren model into Islamic education policies broadly. Therefore, strategic steps are needed, such as teacher training, the preparation of contextual modules, and institutional policies that support the integration of Islamic values and sustainability principles.

In summary, this study provides an important conceptual contribution that eco-pesantren can be used as a comprehensive model of sustainable Islamic education. Not only does it integrate religious and environmental values, but this model also strengthens the relationship between spirituality, character education, and social responsibility. This synthesis is expected to be the basis for the

development of a curriculum framework and Islamic education policy that is more adaptive to the challenges of the times and the global environmental crisis.

## Conclusion

This study confirms that the transformation of the Islamic education curriculum through the eco-pesantren approach is an important strategy in responding to the challenges of global sustainability. Islamic values such as *khalifah*, *amanah*, *mizan*, *maslahah*, and *tawazun* have strong relevance to the principles of sustainability and, when integrated into education, are able to form a generation that is religious and cares about the environment.

Through the narrative literature review approach, this study found that eco-pesantren is not only a local practice but can also be used as a model for sustainable Islamic education that is transformative. This model has proven effective because it combines aspects of the curriculum, institutions, pesantren culture, and integration between *maqashid sharia* and SDGs goals. This approach encourages the emergence of educational practices that are not only oriented toward cognitive mastery but also towards the formation of character and comprehensive ecological awareness.

Theoretically, this study broadens the understanding of the potential of Islamic education in the context of sustainability. Practically, this study provides direction for the development of a more contextual PAI curriculum, teacher training that is sensitive to environmental issues, and the formulation of policies that support the birth of environmentally friendly Islamic educational institutions. With systemic support from the government, society, and educational institutions, this approach has the potential to become part of a national strategy for building sustainable education based on Islamic values.

In the future, further studies are needed to develop a systematic eco-pesantren-based curriculum model that can be adapted by various levels of Islamic education, both formal and non-formal. Empirical studies are also needed to measure the impact of implementing the curriculum on changes in student behavior and character. Thus, Islamic education not only plays a role in strengthening spirituality but also as a motor of change in maintaining the sustainability of life and the preservation of the earth.

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