

Eco-Theological Curriculum Governance in Islamic Religious Education: A Psycho-Educational Perspective in Madrasah Aliyah

^{1*}Muhammad Isa Ansyori., ¹Ibnu Elmi AS Pelu 

¹UIN Palangka Raya, Central Borneo, Indonesia.

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ABSTRACT

Background: The global ecological crisis has increasingly been recognized not only as an environmental problem but also as a moral, spiritual, and educational challenge. In response, Islamic education, particularly in Madrasah Aliyah, is expected to play a strategic role in fostering environmental religious consciousness through an integrated curriculum approach. This study explores eco-theological curriculum governance in Islamic Religious Education and its contribution to the development of students' environmental religious awareness from a psycho-educational perspective. **Method:** The research is situated within the framework of Islamic Education Management by integrating ecotheology, curriculum governance, and good governance principles. Using a qualitative case study approach, this research examines the implementation of curriculum governance at MAN 1 Kotawaringin Timur, focusing on planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating PAI learning infused with ecological values. **Result and Discussion:** The findings indicate that eco-theological values are not only embedded in curriculum documents but are also actualized in school culture, environmental programs, and students' daily practices. This reflects a shift from a normative-textual orientation toward a transformative-practical paradigm in Islamic education, particularly through the internalization of khalifah fil ardh and ecological amanah. From a psycho-educational perspective, this integration contributes to the formation of environmental religious consciousness by linking cognitive understanding, affective engagement, and behavioral transformation among students. However, the study also identifies challenges, including uneven teacher pedagogical competence in contextualizing Eco theological values and an evaluation system that remains predominantly administrative rather than character based. **Conclusion:** The study concludes that strengthening eco-theological curriculum governance requires enhancing teacher competencies, developing ecological character-based assessment instruments, and reinforcing institutional collaboration. This research offers a theoretical contribution to Islamic education management and a practical model for developing environmentally responsive Islamic education in Madrasah Aliyah.

Keywords: Eco-Theological Curriculum Governance, Islamic Education Management, Environmental Religious Consciousness, Psycho-Educational Perspective, Madrasah Aliyah, Ecotheology, Good Governance.



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Corresponding Author:

Muhammad Isa Ansyori
Islamic Studies

[UIN Palangka Raya](#)

G. Obos Road, Islamic Center Complex Palangka Raya City, Central Kalimantan Province.

Email: faizahdp27@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

The global ecological crisis of the twenty-first century can no longer be understood merely as a technical environmental issue; rather, it has evolved into a moral, ethical, social, and spiritual crisis of modern humanity. Climate change, deforestation, pollution, the exploitation of natural resources, and the increasing frequency of ecological disasters demonstrate an imbalance in the relationship between humans and nature. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPPC, 2023) emphasizes that human activity has become the dominant driver of environmental degradation and a threat to the sustainability of life. From a critical perspective, this crisis is not solely the result of industrialization, but also stems from an anthropocentric paradigm that positions nature as an object of exploitation without ethical consideration for sustainability (Capra, 1997). Therefore, transforming the ecological paradigm through education has become an urgent necessity.

Within the educational sphere, (UNESCO, (2020), through its Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) framework, highlights the strategic role of education in fostering ecological awareness, social responsibility, and sustainability-oriented values among younger generations. Education is no longer viewed merely as the transmission of knowledge, but rather as a transformation of values. Paulo Freire's (1996) concept of critical pedagogy asserts that education should cultivate learners' critical consciousness regarding social and environmental realities. In this context, religious education occupies a unique position because it addresses the moral and spiritual dimensions that shape how humans perceive their relationship with nature.

From an Islamic perspective, the relationship between humans and the environment is grounded in a strong theological foundation. The concept of *khalifah fil ardh* (Qur'an 2:30) and the prohibition against committing *fasad* (destruction) on earth (Qur'an 7:56) affirm ecological responsibility as a divine trust. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, (1996) argues that the modern environmental crisis is essentially a spiritual crisis resulting from humanity's loss of sacred awareness toward nature as *ayat kauniyah* (cosmic signs of God). Consequently, Islamic education bears a strategic responsibility to reconstruct ecological consciousness, grounded in tauhid (Islamic monotheism), by internalizing spiritual values within educational processes.

At the institutional level of the *madrasah*, religious education is not presented as a single subject of Islamic Religious Education in Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic high school), but rather distributed across several disciplines, including Qur'anic Studies and Hadith, Islamic Creed and Ethics (*Akidah Akhlak*), Islamic Jurisprudence (*Fikih*), and the History of Islamic Civilization (*Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam*), which collectively constitute Islamic Religious Learning. This cluster of subjects possesses significant potential as a medium for cultivating *ecological piety*, namely religious piety with ecological dimensions. In line with Al-Attas's (1999) conception of Islamic education as the formation of the *insan adabi* (the civilized human being), integrating ecological values into religious learning is highly relevant to addressing contemporary environmental crises.

Nevertheless, the practice of religious education in *madrasahs* remains predominantly cognitive, ritualistic, and normative in orientation, while ecological dimensions have not yet been systematically integrated into curriculum design and implementation. This gap indicates that the normative Islamic values concerning environmental stewardship have not been fully transformed into educational practice. In other words, the issue lies not in the absence of theological values but in how these values are managed within the *madrasah* curriculum.

Studies on Islamic education curriculum management have grown considerably. Saiful et al. (2025), Faizah, (2023), as well as Mardiana et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of managerial functions in enhancing learning effectiveness. At the same time, the global environmental crisis marked by climate change, deforestation, pollution, and the increasing frequency of natural disasters demands the development of stronger ecological awareness, particularly among younger generations (Salmah., 2025). Rani et al. (2025) further argue that environmental crises, such as forest and land fires (*karhutla*) in Central Kalimantan, pose severe ecological, social, and economic threats, thereby requiring immediate and context-sensitive ethical responses. Terry's (1977) classical management theory planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling remains a dominant reference in this field. However, these studies largely focus on administrative aspects and have not linked curriculum management to an Eco theological paradigm.

Conversely, studies on ecotheology in Islamic education (Febrianingsih et al., 2025; Nurul & Solich, 2026; Rohman et al., 2024; Safitri et al., 2025; Taufikin, 2025) have primarily emphasized pedagogical dimensions, school culture, and value internalization. Although these studies enrich the paradigm of Islamic ecological education, they do not sufficiently explain how Eco theological values are managed systematically within curriculum governance at the institutional level.

At this juncture, the perspective of good governance becomes highly relevant. The concept introduced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1997) emphasizes participation, transparency, accountability, effectiveness, and responsiveness in the management of public institutions. Within the context of Islamic education, these principles align closely with the values of *amanah* (trustworthiness), *musyawarah* (consultative deliberation), and *maslahah* (public benefit) (Jujhi et al., 2020; Miftahussurur & Widad, 2025). Nevertheless, previous studies have not employed good governance as an analytical lens for examining how ecotheology-based religious curricula are managed.

Based on this review, three major research gaps can be identified. First, Islamic education curriculum management remains largely administrative and has not yet been grounded in an Eco theological paradigm. Second, Eco theological studies tend to focus on pedagogical dimensions and have not adequately addressed curriculum governance. Third, the perspective of good governance has not been utilized to analyse the management of religious curricula grounded in ecological values within *madrasahs*.

Departing from these gaps, this study positions itself within the framework of Islamic Education Management, focusing specifically on eco-theological curriculum governance in Islamic religious learning at *madrasahs*. This study argues that the integration of ecological values should not merely exist at the level of curriculum content, but must also be embedded throughout the processes of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling the curriculum through participatory, transparent, and accountable governance principles.

The novelty of this study lies in its integration of three domains that have previously been examined separately: Islamic education management, ecotheology, and curriculum governance. This study introduces the argument that strengthening ecological consciousness in Islamic education requires a shift from a focus on curriculum content toward curriculum governance. Theoretically, this research expands the discourse of Islamic Education Management grounded in ecological values. Practically, it offers an analytical model for developing *madrasah* religious learning curricula that are responsive to the global environmental crisis.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a single-case study design to explore eco-theological curriculum governance in Islamic religious learning from the perspective of Islamic education management. The case study design enabled an in-depth and

contextualized understanding of how curriculum management functions, eco-theological values, and good governance principles interact within the institutional practices of a madrasah (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018)

The research was conducted at a public Madrasah Aliyah in Kotawaringin Timur Regency, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. The site was purposively selected based on the active implementation of Islamic religious learning subjects (Qur'an-Hadith, Aqidah Akhlak, Fiqh, and Islamic Cultural History), the presence of environmental programs aligned with the Adiwiyata framework, and structured institutional governance practices. Participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling to represent policymakers, curriculum implementers, and learning beneficiaries. These participants included the head of the madrasah, the vice principal for curriculum affairs, teachers of Islamic religious subjects, members of the curriculum development team, the madrasah committee, and students.

The primary research instrument was the researcher, supported by semi-structured interview guides, observation protocols, and document analysis sheets. Interviews were designed to explore how curriculum planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation incorporated eco-theological values and good governance principles. Observations focused on classroom practices, environmental activities, and institutional interactions that reflected transparency, accountability, and participation. Document analysis covered curriculum structures, lesson plans, institutional policies, and environmental program reports to examine the alignment between formal curriculum planning and actual practice (Tisdell et al., 2025).

Data collection and analysis were conducted iteratively. All interviews, field notes, and documents were transcribed, organized, and coded into three main analytical domains: curriculum management functions, eco-theological integration, and good governance principles. Data were analysed using the interactive model of, Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) which involves data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Through this process, patterns, relationships, and themes were identified to understand how eco-theological values were structurally embedded within curriculum governance.

The trustworthiness of the findings was ensured through source, method, and theoretical triangulation, as well as member checking, to validate the credibility of the interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). An audit trail documenting field notes, coding processes, and analytical decisions was maintained throughout the study. Ethical considerations were strictly observed through informed consent, participant anonymity, voluntary participation, and adherence to academic integrity during data collection and reporting.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section presents the findings on eco-theological curriculum governance in Islamic religious learning from the perspective of Islamic education management at MAN I Kotawaringin Timur. The results integrate interview data, observations, documents, and the previously provided visual model to show how planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising Islamic religious subjects (Qur'an-Hadith, Aqidah Akhlak, Fiqh, and Islamic Cultural History) are interwoven with eco-theological values and good governance practices.

Curriculum Planning in Islamic Religious Learning

Curriculum planning is conducted at the beginning of the academic year through a formal madrasah work meeting involving the head of the madrasah, the vice principal for curriculum, the curriculum development team, teachers of Islamic Religious Subjects (Qur'an-Hadith, Aqidah-Akhlak, Fiqh, and Islamic Cultural History), and the madrasah committee. This collective forum determines the preparation of ATP, teaching modules, annual programs, and semester programs in alignment with national standards and the Merdeka Curriculum framework.

Interview data confirm that environmental values are intentionally inserted during this planning stage: *"In the annual curriculum meeting, we not only prepare ATP and teaching modules, but we also agree to insert environmental values into Islamic religious subjects as part of the madrasah program."* (Vice Principal for Curriculum)

Document analysis shows that learning outcomes and materials explicitly include themes such as *khalifah fil ardh*, the prohibition of environmental destruction, and human responsibility toward nature. These themes are also linked to environment-based student projects aligned with the *rahmatan lil 'alamin* learner profile. However, observations reveal that the depth of integration varies among teachers. Some contextualize ecological issues meaningfully, while others still present them normatively through scriptural references. *"Some teachers have connected environmental issues with Islamic teachings contextually, but others still only mention the verses without linking them to real environmental problems."* (Head of Madrasah)

This indicates that participatory planning exists at the institutional level, but pedagogical interpretation differs at the classroom level due to variations in teachers' ecological literacy and instructional approaches.

Curriculum Organization

The organizational structure of the madrasah supports eco-theological integration through a clear and functional division of roles among institutional actors. The head of the madrasah serves as the primary policyholder who sets the ecological vision for institutional programs. The vice principal for curriculum coordinates the technical implementation of curriculum policies, while

teachers of Islamic Religious Subjects (Qur'an-Hadith, Aqidah-Akhlāq, Fiqh, and Islamic Cultural History) are responsible for instructional preparation and classroom delivery. Administrative staff ensure that academic documentation reflects environmental integration. An *Adiwiyata* team, composed of teachers and students, coordinates the operational aspects of environmental programs. *"The Adiwiyata team helps us translate environmental programs into learning activities. Teachers and students work together in this."* (Teacher of Islamic Religious Subject)

Additional interviews reinforce this structure: *"Environmental programs are discussed in curriculum meetings so teachers can directly connect them with Islamic religious learning."* (Head of Madrasah).

"In monthly coordination meetings, teachers report how environmental values are integrated into their lessons." (Vice Principal for Curriculum).

"Because this program is structurally supported, we relate topics like amanah and khalifah to real environmental practices in school." (Aqidah-Akhlāq Teacher).

These accounts show that eco-theological integration is institutionally organized through leadership direction, routine coordination, and collegial collaboration.



Figure 1. Implementation of Eco-Theological Curriculum Governance through *Adiwiyata*-Based Environmental Activities

The visual evidence above represents Madrasah Aliyah (senior high school level) students involved in *Adiwiyata*-based environmental activities. These activities, tree planting, waste management, garden care, and Qur'anic environmental messaging in classrooms, demonstrate how organizational coordination translates ecological policy into daily learning practices within Islamic religious subjects.

Curriculum Implementation

Classroom observations show that teachers use discussion, presentation, and project-based learning. Islamic teachings are connected to issues such as pollution, waste management, and environmental ethics. Beyond classroom instruction, students participate in greening programs, school garden management, waste sorting, and plastic reduction campaigns.

"We learn about religion and at the same time practice keeping the school clean and green." (Student). These practices demonstrate that eco-theology is not limited to theoretical instruction but is experienced through real environmental action. Nevertheless, some lessons still rely predominantly on lecture methods without strong ecological contextualization.

Curriculum Supervision

Supervision is conducted through academic monitoring, lesson plan reviews, classroom observation, and evaluation meetings led by the head of the madrasah and the vice principal.

"We supervise lesson plans and classroom teaching, but we have not yet had a specific instrument to measure students' ecological character." (Vice Principal for Curriculum).

Although supervision instruments include elements of character and environmental education, evaluation remains largely administrative. There is currently no specific tool to assess the internalization of eco-theological values in students' behaviour.

Integration of Eco-Theological Values and Governance Practices

Eco-theological values appear across learning materials, school culture, and environmental facilities. Qur'anic verses related to environmental preservation are displayed in classrooms, and green slogans are visible throughout the school. The internalization of eco-theology occurs through both formal learning and lived school culture.

Good governance principles are reflected in transparent program planning, participatory meetings, and collaboration with external partners. Teachers can propose environmental initiatives in curriculum forums, and the madrasah committee supports facilities for greening and cleanliness programs. *"Environmental programs are always discussed openly in meetings, and teachers can propose ideas."* (Madrasah Committee)

The madrasah also collaborates with environmental agencies, the education office, and environmental communities to provide educational sessions, seedling assistance, waste management training, and joint greening activities. Gardens, green areas, productive gardens, and environmental education media further support eco-theological practices.

Discussion

This discussion interprets the findings by connecting empirical evidence with theories of curriculum management, eco-theology, and *good governance* in Islamic education.

The findings show that curriculum planning for Islamic religious learning at MAN I Kotawaringin Timur is carried out collectively by preparing ATP, teaching modules, annual programs, and semester programs. The involvement of institutional stakeholders reflects a participative planning model rather than a centralized administrative approach. From the perspective of management theory, planning that accommodates contextual needs aligns with the view that effective educational management must be strategic and adaptive (Terry, 1977). This finding is consistent with research emphasizing that curriculum effectiveness in Islamic education is closely related to stakeholder engagement in planning processes (Faizah, 2023).

The integration of environmental themes into Islamic religious learning documents indicates a shift from a normative-ritual orientation toward a transformative-ecological orientation. This is consistent with curriculum integration theory, which stresses the connection between knowledge, values, and learners' real-life contexts (Bean, 1997). Such integration reflects the role of education in responding to global ecological crises, as emphasized in Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO, 2017). However, the study also reveals that eco-theological integration depends largely on individual teacher initiative, confirming previous findings that eco-theology in Islamic education often remains normative rather than structurally embedded in curriculum governance (Syafaruddin, 2025).

Organizationally, the division of roles between leadership, teachers, administrative staff, and the Adiwiyata team reflects principles of effective educational organization (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). Viewed through systems theory, the madrasah functions as an open system where curriculum, environmental programs, and school culture interact dynamically (Bertalanffy, 1968). This supports arguments that eco-pedagogical success requires institutional collaboration rather than isolated classroom practice (Febrianingsih et al., 2025). Nevertheless, teacher workload and organizational capacity constraints echo Fullan's (2007) argument that curriculum change often fails due to limited institutional capacity rather than conceptual weaknesses.

In the implementation stage, Islamic religious learning demonstrates experiential engagement through greening activities, waste management, and school garden programs. This reflects experiential learning theory, where knowledge is internalized through action and reflection (Kolb, 1984). In Islamic terms, this aligns with the concept of *amal ṣāliḥ*, integrating faith, knowledge, and action. Studies show that project-based and ecological practices are more effective in shaping environmental character than lecture-based instruction (Lozjanin et al., 2025; Safitri et al., 2025). However, uneven pedagogical capacity among teachers highlights the challenge of translating eco-theological concepts into contextual learning practices (Taufikin, 2025).

Supervision practices at the madrasah indicate structured monitoring consistent with the controlling function of management (Terry, 1977). However, supervision remains compliance-oriented, focusing on administrative completeness rather than measuring ecological character formation. From the CIPP evaluation perspective, effective evaluation should assess not only processes but also behavioural outcomes (Stufflebeam, 2000). The absence of specific instruments to measure eco-theological internalization suggests that transformative educational outcomes are not yet being evaluated optimally.

The integration of eco-theological values across learning materials and school culture reflects an epistemological reconstruction in Islamic education. Concepts such as *khalifah fil ardh*, environmental trust (*amanah*), and prohibition of destruction position ecological responsibility as a spiritual duty. This supports Nasr's (2007) argument that environmental crises are rooted in spiritual disconnection from nature and must be addressed through sacred ecological awareness. Research also shows that ecological values are more effectively internalized through school culture and habituation rather than classroom instruction alone (Amelia et al., 2025; Hamdan, 2026).

From a governance perspective, transparency in planning, participatory meetings, documentation, and collaboration with external institutions reflect the adaptation of good governance principles in Islamic education management (UNDP, 1997). Ethical leadership also plays a critical role, as value-based leadership shapes institutional culture (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Collaboration with

environmental agencies and communities aligns with eco-pedagogy, which emphasizes the interconnectedness between schools and their socio-environmental context (Kahn, 2010).

However, reliance on external partnerships raises sustainability concerns. Without strengthening internal ecological culture and teacher capacity, environmental initiatives risk stagnation if external support diminishes. Therefore, eco-theological curriculum governance must be reinforced through institutional capacity building, teacher professional development, and the development of evaluation tools that measure ecological character outcomes.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that eco-theological values in Islamic religious learning are governed through curriculum management supported by participatory governance, organizational collaboration, and ecological school culture. Strengthening institutional design, pedagogical competence, and evaluative instruments is necessary to ensure that eco-theology becomes a sustained curriculum paradigm rather than an incidental program.

CONCLUSION

This conclusion affirms that the governance of an ecotheology-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum at MAN 1 Kotawaringin Timur has been implemented through a comprehensive managerial cycle participatory planning, collaborative organizing, contextual implementation, and structured supervision aligned with good governance principles of transparency, accountability, and stakeholder participation. The integration of Eco theological values does not remain confined to curriculum documents, but is manifested in the school culture, environmental programs, and students' daily practices. In this way, the PAI curriculum functions as a medium for cultivating both religious consciousness and ecological responsibility.

These findings indicate that integrating the concepts of *khalifah fil ardh* (humans as vicegerents on earth) and ecological *amanah* (trusteeship) into learning has shifted the orientation of PAI from a normative-textual approach to a transformative-practical one. However, the study also identifies implementation limitations, including the uneven pedagogical capacity of teachers in translating Eco theological values into contextual learning strategies, as well as an evaluation system that remains largely administrative and does not yet measure students' ecological character development.

Accordingly, strengthening eco-theological curriculum governance requires intervention in three key areas: improving teachers' pedagogical competence, developing character-based ecological assessment instruments, and reinforcing institutional support as well as cross-sector collaboration. Theoretically, this study contributes to the enrichment of Islamic education management literature through the synthesis of curriculum management, ecotheology, and good governance. Practically, the findings offer a model of PAI curriculum governance that is adaptive to ecological crises and relevant for the development of contemporary Islamic education policy in the madrasah context.

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