



Greening Islamic Education: A Conceptual Framework for Integrating Ecotheology into Organizational Dynamics

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Abstract :

This study develops an ecotheology-based transformation framework explaining how Islamic educational institutions translate ecological values into sustainable organizational systems. Environmental challenges require these institutions to move beyond fragmented programs toward systemic organizational transformation. Although Islamic ecotheology provides strong foundations for ecological responsibility, limited research explains how religious values operate as mechanisms for sustainability transformation. A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) following PRISMA 2020 examined literature on Islamic education, sustainability, ecotheology, and organizational transformation. Thematic synthesis examined 32 studies to identify transformation mechanisms, enabling factors, and barriers. The findings show that Islamic ecotheology serves as a foundational value that shapes ecological identity and institutional commitment. Prophetic-transformational leadership translates these values into strategic action and collective commitment. Organizational structures, governance systems, and sustainability policies institutionalize ecological values in practices. Sustainability-oriented organizational culture strengthens ecological responsibility and continuity. Participation and collective learning reinforce sustainability initiatives through distributed responsibility. However, limited resources, fragmented governance, and insufficient institutional capacity constrain ecological transformation. The findings imply that transformation requires alignment among values, leadership, governance, culture, and participation rather than isolated programs. Theoretical implications include integrating religious value systems into sustainability transformation theory. Practical implications include embedding ecotheological principles in strategic planning, leadership development, governance, organizational culture, and practices.

INTRODUCTION

The accelerating ecological crisis has become one of the most critical challenges confronting contemporary societies, affecting not only environmental systems but also social institutions, economic structures, and human relationships with nature. Climate change, biodiversity degradation, pollution, and resource depletion demonstrate that environmental problems cannot be addressed solely through technological solutions because they are also rooted in ethical, cultural, and institutional failures. Educational institutions play a strategic role in addressing this challenge because they are spaces

where knowledge, values, and collective behaviors are produced and reproduced across generations. UNESCO (2020) emphasizes that education for sustainable development is essential for developing competencies, institutional commitments, and transformative capacities required to respond to global sustainability challenges. Furthermore, sustainability-oriented governance in educational institutions requires organizational restructuring, leadership commitment, and cultural transformation, not merely the implementation of environmental programs (Leal Filho et al., 2022; Cuzco et al., 2026). Therefore, transforming educational organizations into environmentally responsible institutions is an important societal agenda that requires deeper theoretical and managerial investigation.

Within Islamic societies, environmental sustainability has increasingly been approached through Islamic ecotheology, which emphasizes the interconnected relationship between God, humans, and nature. Islamic perspectives position humans as *khalifah* (stewards) who possess ethical responsibilities to maintain ecological balance and protect creation. Consequently, environmental preservation is understood not only as a technical requirement but also as a moral and spiritual responsibility embedded within religious consciousness. Recent studies indicate that integrating Islamic values with environmental ethics can strengthen ecological awareness by linking sustainability practices to religious meanings and ethical commitments in educational settings (Syukri et al., 2024; Mustofa et al., 2025; Roni et al., 2026). Similarly, Azhari et al. (2025) show that green Islamic education helps develop eco-theological consciousness among Muslim students by linking environmental responsibility to the Islamic worldview. However, translating theological principles into institutional transformation remains challenging because educational organizations require systematic alignment among leadership practices, governance structures, organizational culture, and everyday institutional behaviors.

Despite the growing adoption of sustainability initiatives, many educational institutions still struggle to translate environmental commitments into sustainable organizational practices. Programs such as *eco-pesantren*, *Madrasah Adiwiyata*, and green campus initiatives indicate growing institutional awareness regarding ecological responsibility. However, evidence suggests that many sustainability programs remain fragmented, project-dependent, or heavily influenced by individual leadership commitment rather than institutionalized as long-term organizational systems (Anthony, 2021; Rohmah, 2024; Suciati et al., 2026). Research on Islamic educational institutions shows that environmental programs often focus on visible practices such as waste management, conservation activities, and ecological education, while paying less attention to the organizational mechanisms that sustain these initiatives (Farabi & Fatharini, 2025; Albar et al., 2024). Thus, the fundamental challenge is not merely the absence of environmental programs but institutions' limited capacity to integrate ecological values into organizational structures, leadership processes, institutional policies, and collective participation.

Previous studies have offered important insights into environmental education in Islamic contexts, particularly regarding ecological awareness, curriculum integration, student behavior, and institutional initiatives. Research on *eco-pesantren* demonstrates that Islamic boarding schools can incorporate environmental values through religious education, ecological practices, and community-based environmental activities (Syukri et al., 2024; Risana, 2024; Supriatna et al., 2026). Similarly, studies on Islamic educational

curriculum development reveal that ecotheological values can enhance students' environmental consciousness by integrating ecological principles into Islamic learning processes (Mustofa et al., 2025; Albar et al., 2024). These contributions have expanded understanding regarding the relationship between Islamic values and sustainability practices. Nevertheless, previous research has largely examined environmental initiatives from educational, behavioral, or programmatic perspectives, offering limited explanation of how Islamic educational organizations translate ecological values into institutional systems that sustain long-term organizational change.

From an organizational management perspective, sustainability transformation requires more than adopting environmental initiatives. It requires coherence among organizational values, leadership orientation, institutional structures, governance mechanisms, and cultural practices. Recent studies on sustainability transformation emphasize that institutional perspectives, organizational culture, and internal change processes shape organizational change toward sustainability (Nguyen & Watanabe, 2022; Assoratgoon & Kantabutra, 2023; Holst et al., 2025). However, most sustainability transformation frameworks have been developed within secular organizational contexts and provide limited attention to religious values as sources of organizational meaning and legitimacy. Conversely, Islamic environmental studies have emphasized theological and ethical dimensions but have rarely analyzed how religious principles function as organizational mechanisms influencing leadership, institutional design, and cultural transformation. This theoretical separation represents a significant research gap because Islamic educational institutions operate in distinctive organizational environments where spiritual values and managerial systems interact to shape sustainability transformation.

Addressing this research gap is increasingly important because Islamic educational institutions represent significant social infrastructures for sustainability transformation, particularly in countries with large Muslim populations such as Indonesia. Existing studies on green campus governance show that leadership commitment, policy frameworks, institutional coordination, and a participatory culture strongly influence sustainability performance in higher education institutions (Fatriansyah et al., 2021; Syaputri et al., 2023). Likewise, Anthony (2021) highlights that effective green campus management requires integrating sustainability objectives with institutional governance systems. Nevertheless, these studies have not yet developed an integrated framework explaining how ecotheological values are translated into organizational transformation processes. Therefore, further investigation is needed to understand how Islamic ecotheology can move beyond normative religious discourse and serve as an organizational foundation that shapes leadership behavior, institutional structures, cultural practices, and sustainability outcomes.

This study introduces a novel perspective by conceptualizing Islamic ecotheology as an organizational transformation framework rather than merely a religious or ethical foundation. Through a systematic synthesis of previous research, this study develops a conceptual model explaining how ecotheological values interact with leadership, organizational structures, institutional culture, and sustainability practices within Islamic educational institutions. Unlike previous studies that primarily examine individual environmental behaviors or specific sustainability programs, this research focuses on the organizational dynamics underlying ecological transformation. This study's novelty lies in positioning Islamic ecotheology as an analytical framework for understanding sustainable organizational change, thereby extending discussions in educational management,

sustainability governance, and organizational transformation studies. By integrating religious value systems with organizational change perspectives, this study provides a more context-sensitive understanding of how Islamic educational institutions can develop sustainable institutional identities.

Based on the theoretical and empirical gaps identified above, this study addresses the following research problem: how do Islamic educational institutions transform ecotheological values into organizational systems that support ecological sustainability? This study argues that successful ecological transformation requires a dynamic interaction among five fundamental dimensions: Islamic ecotheological values, prophetic-transformational leadership, organizational structures and policies, participatory organizational culture, and sustainability practices. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach following the PRISMA 2020 framework, this research identifies organizational mechanisms, enabling factors, and barriers influencing environmentally oriented Islamic educational institutions. The study contributes theoretically by expanding sustainable educational management literature through an ecotheology-based organizational transformation perspective. Practically, it provides a conceptual framework that can support *pesantren*, madrasahs, and Islamic universities in designing more coherent and sustainable ecological transformation strategies.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to critically synthesize existing knowledge regarding organizational dynamics in environmentally oriented Islamic educational institutions. The SLR method was selected because it provides a structured, transparent, and replicable procedure for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing fragmented evidence from diverse research contexts (Page et al., 2021; Azarian et al., 2023). Unlike conventional literature reviews, SLR enables researchers to establish explicit selection procedures and analytical pathways, thereby improving the reliability of conceptual development. Beyond reviewing empirical findings, this study used an integrative synthesis approach to develop a conceptual understanding of how Islamic ecotheological values interact with organizational structures, leadership practices, institutional culture, and sustainability initiatives. The review was guided by four research questions focusing on ecological value internalization, organizational transformation mechanisms, institutional drivers and barriers, and the development of an ecotheology-based organizational dynamics model.

The literature search was conducted systematically across major academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis, SAGE Journals, DOAJ, SINTA, GARUDA, and Moraref, with Google Scholar used as a supplementary source. Selecting multiple databases aimed to minimize database bias and broaden the evidence base, which is particularly important in interdisciplinary studies combining educational management, sustainability, and religious studies (Snyder, 2019; Donthu et al., 2021). The search strategy combined English and Indonesian keywords, including “eco-*pesantren*,” “green *pesantren*,” “*Madrasah Adiwiyata*,” “Islamic environmental education,” “Islamic ecotheology,” “green campus,” “Islamic university,” and “organizational dynamics,” using Boolean operators to improve retrieval relevance. The study included publications from 2010 to 2025, with particular attention to studies from 2020 to 2025 to capture recent developments in sustainability-oriented Islamic education.

The study selection process followed the PRISMA 2020 framework, consisting of identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion stages. The initial search identified 432 records from academic databases and 38 additional records through manual searches, for a total of 470 studies. After removing 60 duplicate records, 410 studies underwent title and abstract screening, resulting in 98 studies for full-text assessment. Subsequently, 66 studies were excluded because they did not focus specifically on Islamic educational institutions, lacked organizational dimensions, or provided insufficient methodological and empirical information for thematic synthesis. Ultimately, 32 studies met the eligibility criteria and were included in the final review corpus. Predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria ensured methodological consistency and reduced potential selection bias during the review process (Shaheen et al., 2023; Donthu et al., 2021). The included studies examined various Islamic educational contexts, including *pesantren*, madrasahs, Islamic schools, and Islamic higher education institutions, with emphasis on sustainability practices, ecotheology, leadership, organizational structures, institutional policies, and environmental governance.

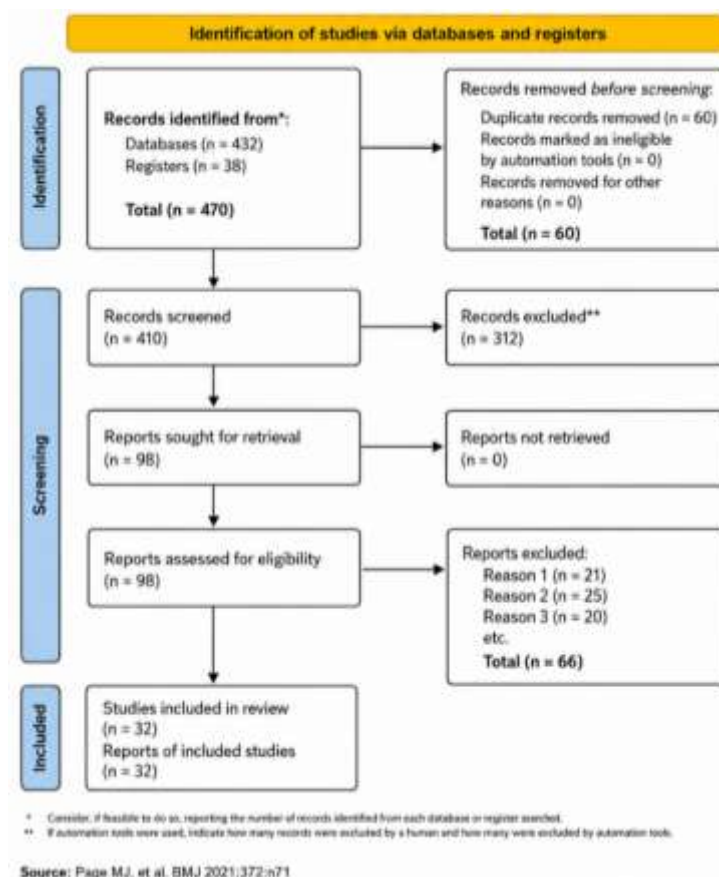


Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram of literature selection process

Data analysis used descriptive mapping and thematic synthesis. Descriptive analysis identified publication patterns, institutional contexts, geographical distribution, and methodological characteristics of the reviewed studies. Thematic analysis then identified recurring concepts, relationships, and transformation mechanisms across the selected literature. Following established qualitative synthesis procedures, the analytical process involved coding, categorization, and interpretation stages to generate meaningful patterns from textual evidence (Fendt, 2025; Braun & Clarke, 2021). Open

coding identified significant concepts emerging from the literature, followed by axial coding to establish relationships among categories and selective coding to integrate the emerging themes into a conceptual model of organizational dynamics. This analytical strategy enabled the study to move beyond descriptive summarization toward theory-building by explaining how ecological values become institutionalized through organizational mechanisms.

The review's validity was strengthened through methodological transparency, explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria, use of multiple academic databases, adherence to PRISMA 2020 reporting standards, and theoretical triangulation. Integrating multiple theoretical perspectives matters in interdisciplinary reviews because it lets researchers interpret complex phenomena from different analytical dimensions (Snyder, 2019; Dalton et al., 2022; Lestari & Priantara, 2026). Furthermore, the review process considered contextual differences among institutions to avoid oversimplifying sustainability transformation processes. Nevertheless, this study acknowledges limitations associated with reliance on secondary sources, including the inability to capture real-time organizational dynamics and the possibility that some relevant local studies were unavailable due to limited digital indexing. Therefore, interpret the findings as a conceptual synthesis that offers theoretical directions rather than a comprehensive representation of all Islamic educational institutions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Overview of the Literature

The systematic review identified 32 studies that fulfilled the inclusion criteria and were synthesized to examine organizational dynamics in environmentally oriented Islamic educational institutions. The reviewed studies indicate a substantial increase in academic attention to *eco-pesantren*, *Madrasah Adiwiyata*, green campus initiatives, and Islamic environmental education, particularly from 2020 to 2025. This development reflects a growing recognition that Islamic educational institutions are not only spaces for religious and intellectual development but also strategic actors in promoting ecological sustainability.

The reviewed literature demonstrates that research on Islamic environmental sustainability remains geographically concentrated in Indonesia, with several studies emerging from Malaysia and other Southeast Asian contexts. In terms of institutional settings, *pesantren* and madrasahs represent the most frequently examined contexts, particularly concerning ecological education, environmental character formation, and community-based sustainability practices. Meanwhile, studies on Islamic higher education institutions primarily focus on green campus governance, sustainability policies, and institutional management.

However, the synthesis shows that previous studies have largely examined sustainability initiatives through program implementation, educational practices, or individual behavioral perspectives. Limited attention has focused on the organizational mechanisms through which Islamic educational organizations institutionalize ecological values. This finding highlights the need to understand ecological transformation not merely as implementing environmental programs but as a broader organizational change process involving values, leadership, structures, culture, and institutional practices.

Table 1. Reviewed Studies in Ecotheology and Organizational Dynamics

Author(s)	Institutional Context	Research Focus	Main Findings / Contribution to Current Study
Syukri et al. (2024)	<i>Pesantren</i> (Darularafah Raya <i>Pesantren</i>)	Integration of Islamic values and environmental ethics in <i>pesantren</i> education	Demonstrates that Islamic values can function as an ethical foundation for developing ecological awareness and environmental responsibility among institutional members.
Albar et al. (2024)	Islamic educational institutions	Ecological <i>pesantren</i> as curriculum innovation in Islamic religious education	Shows that ecological values can be institutionalized through curriculum design and learning processes, strengthening the internalization of environmental responsibility.
Subaidi et al. (2023)	Eco- <i>pesantren</i>	Islamic education and environmental conservation practices	Reveals that eco- <i>pesantren</i> integrates religious values, conservation practices, and institutional activities, demonstrating the relationship between Islamic identity and ecological sustainability.
Rohmah (2024)	<i>Pesantren</i> system	Integration of ecological principles into <i>pesantren</i> management	Highlights that sustainability requires institutional mechanisms that connect ecological principles with organizational practices and daily operations.
Mustofa et al. (2025)	Islamic secondary schools	Integration of ecotheological values into Islamic religious education curriculum	Demonstrates that ecotheological perspectives strengthen environmental consciousness by connecting Islamic teachings with ecological responsibility.
Azhari et al. (2025)	Islamic education institutions	Green Islamic education and eco-theological consciousness	Indicates that Islamic environmental education helps develop ecological awareness by linking sustainability practices to the Islamic worldview.
Fatriansyah et al. (2021)	Indonesian universities	Sustainability assessment through the UI GreenMetric framework	Shows that sustainability performance requires institutional indicators, evaluation mechanisms, and strategic commitment within higher education governance.
Lozano et al. (2021)	Higher education institutions	Organizational change management for sustainability	Demonstrates that sustainability transformation requires systemic organizational change involving vision, strategy, leadership, stakeholder participation, and institutional structures.

Table 1 shows that researchers have approached ecological transformation in Islamic educational institutions from several complementary perspectives, including value internalization, curriculum development, environmental practices, and institutional sustainability governance. However, the literature remains fragmented because previous studies tend to examine specific initiatives or institutional programs rather than explaining the organizational mechanisms that connect ecological values, leadership, structures, culture, and sustainability outcomes. Therefore, the following thematic findings synthesize these fragmented perspectives into an integrated understanding of ecotheology-based organizational dynamics.

Islamic Ecotheology as the Foundational Organizational Value

The first major finding shows that Islamic ecotheology serves as the foundational value underpinning ecological transformation within Islamic educational institutions. The

reviewed studies indicate that concepts such as *tawhid*, *khalifah*, *amanah*, and ecological responsibility provide normative frameworks that shape institutional understanding of the human-nature relationship. Rather than perceiving environmental sustainability solely as a technical management issue, Islamic educational institutions increasingly interpret ecological responsibility as an extension of religious commitment.

The synthesis shows that ecotheological values influence organizational transformation when embedded in institutional vision, educational objectives, curriculum development, and daily practices. Studies on Islamic environmental education reveal that integrating ecological principles into Islamic learning strengthens environmental consciousness by connecting sustainability practices with religious meaning. Similarly, research on *eco-pesantren* demonstrates that environmental programs become more sustainable when ecological responsibility is framed as part of Islamic moral identity rather than merely as institutional compliance.

Nevertheless, the findings also reveal a critical tension between normative commitment and organizational implementation. In several cases, Islamic ecotheology remains symbolic discourse, without being translated into institutional systems and measurable practices. Therefore, Islamic ecotheology's transformative potential depends on institutions' capacity to translate religious values into organizational mechanisms that shape decision-making, leadership behavior, and collective practices.

Prophetic-Transformational Leadership

The second finding identifies leadership as a central mechanism connecting Islamic ecotheological values with organizational transformation. The reviewed studies indicate that leaders who translate religious values into strategic direction, institutional policies, and collective commitment strongly influence ecological transformation within Islamic educational institutions.

In *pesantren* contexts, leadership roles, particularly those represented by *kiai* and institutional authorities, significantly influence the development of ecological practices because leadership legitimacy is closely associated with moral authority and exemplary behavior. The reviewed studies show that environmental initiatives become more deeply institutionalized when leaders demonstrate personal commitment through participation in sustainability activities and consistently communicate ecological responsibility as part of institutional identity.

At the higher education level, sustainability-oriented leadership helps integrate environmental objectives into strategic planning, governance systems, and institutional performance mechanisms. However, the synthesis also identifies differences between administrative leadership and transformational leadership. Institutions where environmental initiatives rely solely on formal instructions or short-term projects tend to achieve weaker sustainability outcomes than institutions where leaders actively cultivate shared ecological values among organizational members. Therefore, the findings suggest that leadership functions not only as a managerial instrument but also as a cultural and symbolic mechanism that transforms ecological values into collective organizational commitment.

Organizational Structure and Policy as Mechanisms of Institutionalization

The third finding highlights that organizational structures and policy frameworks determine whether ecological commitments can move beyond individual initiatives toward institutionalized practices. The reviewed literature indicates that sustainability

transformation requires formal mechanisms that translate environmental values into organizational procedures, responsibilities, and evaluation systems.

Programs such as *eco-pesantren*, *Madrasah Adiwiyata*, and green campus initiatives demonstrate that institutional structures provide important platforms for organizing sustainability efforts. In madrasahs, environmental policies support integrating ecological issues into the curriculum, student activities, and facility management. In *pesantren* environments, flexible organizational structures create opportunities for innovation through initiatives such as waste management, environmental conservation, and sustainable resource utilization.

However, the findings reveal that institutionalization remains uneven. Some sustainability initiatives remain highly dependent on individual leaders because formal policies, organizational units, and monitoring mechanisms have not been sufficiently developed. This creates vulnerability because environmental programs may decline when leadership changes occur. Thus, organizational structures and policies bridge ecological values and sustainable institutional practices. Without formal organizational arrangements, sustainability efforts risk remaining temporary programs rather than becoming embedded elements of institutional governance.

Organizational Culture and Institutional Participation

The fourth finding demonstrates that organizational culture and participation represent essential mechanisms for sustaining ecological transformation. The reviewed studies indicate that environmental sustainability becomes stronger when ecological values are incorporated into everyday organizational habits and collective identities.

Across *pesantren*, madrasahs, and Islamic universities, sustainable practices such as waste reduction, resource conservation, environmental campaigns, and green learning activities are more likely to persist when they become part of institutional culture. The synthesis indicates that ecological behavior is shaped not only by regulations but also by ongoing socialization, shared experiences, and participation among institutional members.

Student and community participation emerges as an important factor because sustainability initiatives become more resilient when institutional members act as active participants rather than passive recipients of environmental policies. This finding supports the view that organizational transformation requires collective learning processes in which values are continuously reproduced through daily interactions. Organizational culture serves as the mechanism through which formal sustainability policies become lived institutional practices. A strong ecological culture reduces dependence on individual actors and increases the long-term sustainability of environmental initiatives.

Structural and Cultural Barriers to Ecological Transformation

The fifth finding identifies several barriers that constrain ecological transformation within Islamic educational institutions. The synthesis shows that sustainability challenges are multidimensional and cannot be addressed through environmental programs or policy interventions alone. The first barrier relates to limited financial resources and infrastructure capacity. Many institutions, particularly *pesantren* and smaller educational organizations, struggle to allocate resources for sustainability initiatives because environmental investments often compete with immediate institutional priorities. The second barrier concerns organizational coordination. In some

higher education institutions, fragmented structures and limited collaboration between academic and administrative units reduce the effectiveness of sustainability programs.

The third barrier involves cultural resistance and established behavioral patterns. Environmental transformation requires changes in everyday practices, which may meet resistance when institutional members have not fully internalized sustainability values. The fourth barrier is limited educator competence in integrating ecological perspectives into Islamic education. These findings indicate that ecological transformation requires simultaneous changes across multiple organizational dimensions. Environmental sustainability cannot be achieved through technical programs alone; it requires alignment among values, leadership, organizational structures, cultural practices, and human capacity development.

The synthesis of the five findings indicates that ecological transformation in Islamic educational institutions occurs through a sequential and interconnected organizational process. Islamic ecotheological values provide the normative foundation, while prophetic-transformational leadership catalyzes the translation of values into institutional direction. Organizational structures and policies provide formal mechanisms for implementation, while organizational culture and participation ensure sustainability practices become embedded in institutional identity.

The findings suggest that successful ecological transformation requires coherence among these dimensions. Weakness in one dimension may reduce the effectiveness of the entire transformation process. For example, strong ecological values without supportive leadership and institutional structures may remain symbolic, while formal policies without cultural internalization may fail to produce sustainable behavioral change.

Therefore, this study proposes that Islamic educational institutions should be understood as value-driven organizations in which ecological transformation emerges from the interaction between religious meaning systems and organizational change mechanisms. This synthesis provides the foundation for the ecotheology-based organizational dynamics model discussed in the next section.

Table 2. Ecotheology-Based Organizational Dynamics in Islamic Education

Main Theme	Supporting Literature	Analytical Interpretation
Islamic Ecotheological Values as Organizational Foundation	Syukri et al. (2024); Azhari et al. (2025); Mustofa et al. (2025); Albar et al. (2024)	Islamic ecological concepts such as <i>tawhid</i> , <i>khalifah</i> , and environmental responsibility provide normative foundations that shape institutional identity and sustainability orientation.
Prophetic-Transformational Leadership as Change Driver	Syukri et al. (2024); Lozano et al. (2021)	Leadership functions as a mechanism that translates ecological values into institutional vision, strategic priorities, and collective commitment toward sustainability transformation.
Organizational Structure and Policy Institutionalization	Lozano et al. (2021); Fatriansyah et al. (2021); Rohmah (2024)	Formal structures, policies, and governance mechanisms enable environmental values to move from symbolic commitments into institutionalized organizational practices.
Organizational Culture and Participation	Subaidi et al. (2023); Albar et al. (2024); Azhari et al. (2025)	Sustainability becomes embedded when ecological values are reproduced through collective practices, educational processes, and participation by institutional members.
Structural and Cultural Barriers to Transformation	Lozano et al. (2021); Rohmah (2024)	Ecological transformation is constrained by limited institutional capacity, fragmented

Table 2 indicates that ecological transformation within Islamic educational institutions is not a single-dimensional process but an interconnected organizational phenomenon. Islamic ecotheological values provide the normative foundation, leadership translates values into strategic action, institutional structures support implementation, and organizational culture ensures long-term sustainability. These findings suggest that environmentally oriented Islamic education requires an integrated transformation framework rather than isolated environmental programs. The following section discusses the conceptual implications of these relationships.

Discussion

This study's findings contribute to the growing discourse on sustainability transformation by showing that ecological change within Islamic educational institutions is a multidimensional organizational process, not merely an environmental initiative. Previous studies have emphasized that sustainability transformation requires systemic organizational change involving institutional vision, governance mechanisms, leadership commitment, and stakeholder participation (Lozano et al., 2021; Rieg et al., 2021). Consistent with these perspectives, this study confirms that ecological transformation requires alignment between institutional values, leadership practices, structural arrangements, and collective participation. However, this research extends previous sustainability management literature by introducing Islamic ecotheology as a distinctive value-based mechanism that shapes organizational transformation. While existing studies primarily examine sustainability through organizational capabilities, institutional governance, and managerial approaches (Guarini et al., 2022; Leal Filho et al., 2023), this study shows that religious meaning systems can function as organizational resources that influence ecological commitment. Theoretically, this finding expands sustainability transformation theory by incorporating spiritual and cultural dimensions into organizational change frameworks. Practically, this perspective suggests that Islamic educational institutions should integrate ecological responsibility into institutional identity, strategic planning, and educational missions rather than treating sustainability as an additional environmental program.

The first contribution of this study concerns the role of Islamic ecotheology as a foundational organizational value. Previous research has shown that sustainability transformation becomes more effective when organizations develop shared meanings, collective values, and learning processes that support ecological responsibility (Fischer et al., 2022; Wamsler, 2022). The present findings support this argument but reveal a distinctive mechanism within Islamic educational institutions, where ecological responsibility is constructed through theological concepts related to stewardship, moral accountability, and the relationship between humans and nature. This differs from conventional sustainability approaches that often emphasize regulatory compliance, institutional performance, or operational efficiency. This study's novelty lies in positioning Islamic ecotheology not merely as an ethical framework but as an organizational logic that can shape institutional priorities, decision-making processes, and sustainability orientations. This finding extends previous sustainability education research by demonstrating that organizational values may originate from religious and cultural foundations. Therefore, Islamic educational institutions can use theological narratives as

strategic resources to strengthen ecological commitment and deepen sustainability awareness among institutional members.

The second contribution concerns leadership as a transformational mechanism that connects ecological values with organizational practices. Previous studies have identified sustainability leadership as an important factor influencing institutional transformation because leaders shape strategic direction, organizational commitment, resource allocation, and stakeholder involvement (Alemu, 2025; Sánchez-Carrillo et al., 2021). This study's findings align with these arguments but extend them by highlighting the importance of prophetic-transformational leadership in Islamic educational contexts. Unlike conventional sustainability leadership models that primarily emphasize managerial competencies, this leadership perspective integrates ethical legitimacy, moral example, and value-based guidance. Leaders in Islamic educational organizations therefore function not only as administrators but also as interpreters of religious values, transforming ecological principles into collective institutional action. Theoretically, this finding contributes to leadership studies by showing how spiritual authority can drive organizational change. Practically, sustainability strategies within Islamic educational institutions should strengthen leadership development programs that combine strategic management skills with ecological awareness and ethical responsibility.

The third contribution concerns institutionalizing sustainability through organizational structures, policies, and governance mechanisms. Previous studies indicate that sustainability initiatives often fail when they rely on temporary projects or individual actors rather than embedding them in organizational systems (Andersson & Buser, 2022; Coenen et al., 2023; Matimolane & Mathivha, 2025). The findings confirm this challenge and show that Islamic educational institutions need formal mechanisms to translate ecological values into sustainable routines. These mechanisms include environmental policies, curriculum integration, organizational responsibilities, monitoring systems, and institutional evaluation processes. This finding aligns with research emphasizing that sustainability governance requires structural alignment between organizational objectives, decision-making systems, and institutional capabilities (Bauer et al., 2021; Andrades et al., 2021; Giesenbauer & Müller-Christ, 2020). The theoretical implication is that institutionalization connects value systems to sustainability outcomes. Therefore, this study contributes to organizational transformation literature by explaining how religious values can achieve organizational durability through formal governance arrangements. Practically, Islamic educational institutions should develop sustainability governance frameworks that integrate ecological objectives into strategic planning and institutional performance systems.

The fourth contribution highlights the importance of organizational culture and participation in sustaining ecological transformation. Previous studies emphasize that sustainability cannot be achieved through policies and regulations alone; it requires cultural transformation, collective learning, and active participation among organizational members (Delbridge et al., 2024; Hariram et al., 2023). This study supports this perspective and shows that Islamic educational institutions have distinctive cultural resources rooted in religious traditions, communal practices, and value-based education. The findings indicate that sustainability becomes more resilient when ecological responsibility shifts from formal institutional policy to collective organizational behavior. This extends the sustainability culture literature by showing that religious educational environments can provide cultural mechanisms to strengthen ecological identity. Practically, institutions should move beyond environmental awareness campaigns and develop participatory strategies involving students, educators, administrators, and

surrounding communities. Such approaches can strengthen collective ownership of sustainability initiatives and reduce dependence on individual leaders, thereby increasing the long-term resilience of ecological transformation.

This study contributes by identifying structural and cultural barriers that limit ecological transformation within Islamic educational institutions. Previous research shows that sustainability implementation is often constrained by limited resources, fragmented governance, insufficient organizational capabilities, and resistance to institutional change (Leal Filho et al., 2023; Umasugi et al., 2026). The findings support these observations while adding context by revealing the tension between strong theological commitment and limited organizational capacity. This indicates that ecological transformation requires not only value alignment but also institutional readiness, governance capacity, and continuous organizational learning. The main novelty of this research is developing an ecotheology-based organizational transformation perspective that integrates values, leadership, structures, culture, and barriers into a unified analytical framework. This framework advances educational management and sustainability research by demonstrating how religious value systems can contribute to organizational change processes. Practically, it guides Islamic educational institutions in designing sustainability strategies that are culturally grounded, institutionally embedded, and capable of generating long-term ecological impacts.

CONCLUSION

The most important finding of this study is that ecotheology-based organizational transformation in Islamic educational institutions is not achieved through isolated environmental programs but through the systematic alignment of religious values, leadership, governance, organizational culture, and participation; the central lesson is that Islamic ecotheology can provide a meaningful normative foundation for ecological identity and institutional commitment when translated into organizational systems and collective practices. The strength of this study lies in developing a framework that connects Islamic ecotheological values with organizational transformation mechanisms, thereby contributing to sustainability transformation scholarship by positioning religious values as an organizational foundation of institutional change. At the same time, its practical implications suggest integrating ecotheological principles into strategic planning, leadership development, governance, organizational culture, and participatory sustainability practices. However, the study is limited by its reliance on a literature-based synthesis of 32 studies and therefore cannot establish empirical causal relationships or determine how the identified mechanisms operate across different institutional contexts; future research should empirically test the framework through comparative case studies, surveys, longitudinal designs, or mixed-method approaches to examine interactions among ecotheological values, leadership, governance, culture, participation, resources, institutional capacity, and measurable sustainability outcomes.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGY

We used OpenAI's ChatGPT solely as an AI-assisted tool for language refinement, grammar checking, and improving the manuscript's clarity and readability. We independently reviewed and verified all AI-assisted revisions and remain fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, analysis, interpretation, and conclusions presented in this article.

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