



## Research Article

# Pesantren and Ecotheology: Mainstreaming Ecological Consciousness in Pesantren Langitan, East Java, Indonesia

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### Abstract

This participatory research aimed to enhance the ecological consciousness of the Santri (students) of Pesantren Langitan, a traditional Islamic boarding school in Tuban, East Java, Indonesia. This pesantren was chosen as the subject based on its geographical location along the Solo River. From an ecological perspective, this location has facilitated the implementation of various environmental initiatives, including promoting green consciousness among the local community, encouraging reforestation along the riverbanks, discouraging waste disposal into the river, and other similar actions aimed at preserving the river ecosystem. Another factor that contributed to the selection of Pesantren Langitan as the subject was its traditional Islamic boarding school nature, focusing on studying classical Islamic texts (kitab kuning). Therefore, the research will likely contribute to promoting Islamic ecotheology. The research employed a participatory action approach, wherein Kyai, Ustaz, and santri were actively engaged in the program's planning, implementation, and evaluation. The theme-based program yielded successful outcomes in four key areas: (1) enhancing green consciousness among the santri, (2) formulating a green fiqh concept, (3) promoting green da'wa on social media, and (4) implementing green activities within the pesantren environment.

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## INTRODUCTION

Özdemir posits that environmental degradation indicators manifest in various forms, including (a) climate change, with global climate change increasingly worsening; (b) depletion of the ozone layer, with the ozone layer thinning due to the greenhouse effect; (c) depletion of natural resources, with natural resources diminishing as a result of uncontrolled exploitation; (d) large-scale clearing of tropical rainforests; and (e) loss of biodiversity, with biodiversity declining and a significant number of species becoming extinct. Additionally, irresponsible deforestation has decimated tropical rainforests, contributing to biodiversity loss. This fact is evidenced by the decline in biodiversity and the extinction of numerous species. Furthermore, the diversity of pollution is increasing significantly, with elevated levels and forms of pollution (Özdemir 1998). Seyyed Hossein Nasr posits that the contemporary global environmental crisis is a consequence of humanity's historical missteps in formulating an ecological paradigm concerning the relationship between humans and the universe. The reality of the Earth's crisis illustrates how the natural world is headed towards a more significant crisis due to humanity's flawed paradigm in understanding the relationships between entities in the universe, including the self, the cosmos, and God (Nasr 1996).

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One strategy for responding to ongoing and past environmental degradation is through movements based on communal and collective consciousness within society. Recent research on strategies for addressing global ecological threats indicates that returning to religious belief systems or local traditions may serve as an alternative strategy for mitigating environmental damage (Varanda 2024; Luetz 2024; Maksun 2023; Afandi 2022). Matthew (2014) posits that a crucial step in preventing environmental degradation is to raise public consciousness about the importance of fostering a harmonious relationship between humanity and nature. This approach is grounded in the long-established wisdom within religious communities. This perspective has gained prominence under eco-theology, which aims to foster green consciousness. By reinvigorating deeply rooted religious values within individual religious consciousness, eco-theology emerges as a potential solution to save the universe from further environmental destruction.

The concept of eco-theology is particularly pertinent in the Indonesian context, where the nation's foundation is based on the principle of religious belief, as enshrined in the first principle of Pancasila. Several studies (Maksun 2023; Afandi 2022; Setiawan 2022) have demonstrated that the religious character of Indonesian society is well-suited to the concept of ecotheology. For example, Monika Arnez observes that most ecological movements in Indonesia are driven by theological values (*aqidah*), which shape cognitive and practical consciousness in addressing environmental degradation and promoting civil-based environmental conservation. Among the key mobilizers are pesantren. As institutions dedicated to cultivating and strengthening religiosity, pesantren possess a robust foundation for advocating consciousness of the harmonious relationship between nature and humanity. They utilize their profound expertise in the Qur'an, Hadith, and Islamic traditions (*al-turâth al-islâmiyyah*) (Arnez 2014) to this end. Furthermore, Fachruddin Mangunjaya posits that pesantren communities can be a cornerstone for developing and advancing religion-based ecological movements. The intellectual capital, availability of human resources (such as *Kyai*, *Ustaz*, and *santri*), and social authority within pesantren make them well-positioned to formulate and implement ecological initiatives (Mangunjaya 2005).

The robust subsystems within pesantren institutions render them a dependable focus for addressing the ecological crisis in Indonesia. It is, therefore, essential to enhance pesantren's consciousness, role, and involvement in conservation efforts, which should be anchored in the religious values that form the foundation of pesantren education. One potential avenue for achieving this objective is the establishment of an Islamic ecotheology paradigm. In terms of quantity, the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Pesantren Database reports that as of April 2022, there were 26,975 pesantren in Indonesia, with 2.65 million *santri* distributed across various regions, including Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Papua ([www.dataindonesia.id](http://www.dataindonesia.id)). From an institutional perspective, pesantren have been demonstrated to be well-established religious educational institutions. These two aspects underscore the strategic position of pesantren as a pivotal center for the study and implementation of eco-theology in Indonesia. Pesantren has the potential to become a driving force in the formulation of Islamic ecological ethics and a center for transforming society towards "green consciousness" by fostering a harmonious relationship with the ecosystems they inhabit.

Several pesantren have already established themselves as centers for formulating religion-based ecological ethics and as hubs for societal transformation in ecology. Notable examples include Pesantren Pabelan, Pesantren Annuqayah, Pesantren Maslakul Huda, Pesantren Darunnaja, and others. The formulation of Islamic ecological ethics in these pesantren is derived from their engagement with the Qur'anic and Hadith doctrines on humanity's responsibility to uphold the divine trust of preserving the universe. The concept of *khalîfah Allâh fî al-'ard*, or "vicegerent of Allah on Earth," is a fundamental tenet of Islamic theology (QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 30). It has given rise to the proposal of ecological consciousness as a potential solution to the environmental crisis currently facing the Earth (Khitam 2011; Islam 2012). Additionally, efforts are underway to establish an "environmentally responsive pesantren," which would catalyze and mobilize green consciousness within society. However, academic studies on the involvement of pesantren in ecological movements, such as those by Maghfur (2010), Khitam (2016), and Aulia (2017), have yet to employ a participatory action approach aimed at empowering pesantren through the model of deep ecology.

As previously stated, this research aims to disseminate Islamic ecotheology at Pesantren Langitan. Its location along the Solo River and the Islamic educational system provide opportunities to employ eco-theology. Pesantren Langitan presents an opportunity to implement various initiatives to raise green consciousness among communities living along the river. These initiatives include promoting environmental stewardship and preserving the river's ecosystem, facilitating reforestation along the riverbanks, and

preventing waste disposal into the river. Another factor to consider is the traditional character of Pesantren Langitan, which focuses on the study of *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts). This context makes producing intellectual outputs supporting Islamic ecotheology's mainstreaming highly feasible. These could include texts on theology, jurisprudence, ethics related to environmental conservation, sermons promoting green consciousness, and more. Furthermore, the researcher considers the existence of digital media, specifically a website and social media accounts, as an additional important aspect of Pesantren Langitan. These digital platforms can serve as effective channels for promoting green consciousness to a broader audience.

To this day, Pesantren Langitan has retained its educational curriculum based on the *Madrasah Diniyyah* (Islamic education) system. The pesantren was established in 1852 and has since preserved its classical system, which encompasses the study of *kitab kuning* across a range of Islamic disciplines, including theology (*aqîdah*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*), ethics (*akhlâq*), history (*târîkh*), and the Arabic language. In response to the changing times, particularly in the field of digital technology, Pesantren Langitan has also adapted by developing media platforms that support its religious outreach and the dissemination of knowledge. Currently, Pesantren Langitan is engaged in digital da'wa through its website ([langitan.net](http://langitan.net)), YouTube channel (Langitan TV), and Instagram account (@menaralangitan). Additionally, the institution has initiated an anti-smoking campaign, which is prominently featured on its official website. This initiative, entitled "Langitan Without Cigarettes," was introduced by KH. Abdullah Faqih ([langitan.net](http://langitan.net)).

Given the subject's potential, this research endeavors to cultivate green consciousness based on Islamic values among the *Santri*, the Pesantren community, and the broader society. Pesantren Langitan as the subject is intended to facilitate the development of an environmentally conscious pesantren that serves as a model for educating the surrounding community on the importance of collective action in caring for, protecting, and preserving the ecosystem, with a particular focus on the Solo River, which forms the ecological foundation of the region. The strategy and approach employed in this research will be participatory, wherein stakeholders (including *Kyai*, *Ustaz*, and *Santri*) and the surrounding community are actively involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the programs in an intensive manner. This research aims to ensure the sustainability of the planned, executed, and evaluated programs through this participatory process.

## METHOD

This research employed the method and approach of participatory action research (PAR) throughout the process. As Lewin (1990) defined, participatory action research entails the research, development, and implementation of programs characterized by the target group's participation and involvement in the planned activities (Affandi 2013). In this context, the community that is the focus of this research includes *Kyai*, *Ustaz*, and *Santri* of Pesantren Langitan, with the main driving force being the *Komunitas Santri Penggerak Islam Hijau* (Santri Community for Green Islam).

Implementing this participatory action research represents an effort to establish an internal consciousness and environmental movement based on the deep ecology model grounded in permanent values. According to this model, several strategies are required to achieve the targeted outcomes, following a planning scheme that aligns with action research. These strategies include the following, as outlined by O'Brien (2001):

The identification stage is the initial phase of the research process, during which the subjects are identified and selected for participation in the study. This study was conducted through in-depth interviews, focusing on the extent of environmental consciousness among the subjects, the potential within the pesantren that supports this consciousness, and the challenges encountered. This initial stage of the research served to identify issues and solutions, which were then translated into participatory program planning.

In the planning stage, the researchers, guided by the deep ecology model based on pesantren values, designed a program schema to be implemented during the research process using a participatory action approach. This approach involved stakeholders (including *Kyai*, *Ustaz*, and *Santri*) of Pesantren Langitan. The plan included the formulation of policies, the conduct of outreach, the implementation of actions, and the evaluation of outcomes.

The action stage saw the researchers execute the planned program in collaboration with the *Komunitas Santri Penggerak Islam Hijau* (KSPIH). This action entailed conducting brainstorming sessions with stakeholders, forming target groups and defining individual roles, providing education and training, and offering ongoing support until the end of the program. The final evaluation stage was conducted with researchers, stakeholders, and program implementers through a forum group discussion (FGD). This stage

also included disseminating the activities to relevant parties involved in the efforts to establish a "pesantren responsive to environmental issues."

In more detail, the approach and outcomes of this research are outlined in the following table:

No	Action Plan	Target and Approach	Outcome
1	The Formulation of Ecotheology Mainstreaming Policy at Pesantren Langitan Tuban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stakeholders (Kyai, Ustadz, and Santri)</li> <li>● FGD</li> </ul>	Policy Outcomes
2	The Dissemination of Ecotheology Mainstreaming Policy at Pesantren Langitan Tuban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stakeholders (Kyai, Ustadz, and Santri)</li> <li>● Publication and FGD</li> </ul>	Pamphlets, academic products (articles and posters)
3	The Implementation of the Ecotheology Mainstreaming Policy at Pesantren Langitan Tuban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stakeholders (Kyai, Ustadz, and Santri)</li> <li>● Education and Social Media Campaigns</li> <li>● Actions</li> </ul>	Volunteers/activists drive the promotion of eco-theology and conduct environmental actions (green force).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Profile of Pesantren Langitan

Pesantren Langitan is one of the most ancient Islamic educational institutions in East Java, Indonesia, with a history spanning one and a half centuries. The institution was established in 1852 by Kiai Muhammad Nur in Dusun Mandungan, Widang, Tuban Regency, East Java. It commenced operations as a modest prayer house for learning on farmland north of the Solo River. In 1904, the pesantren was relocated to its current site, situated north of river embankments, due to the frequent flooding of the Solo River at that time. The pesantren is situated in a location that is both strategically accessible and conducive to its operations. It is approximately thirty kilometers from the Tuban Regency capital and adjacent to Babat District, Lamongan. The property covers an area of about seven hectares and is located at an elevation of seven meters above sea level (Hasyim 2008; Rosidah 2016).

The name "Langitan" has its origins in the combination of two Javanese words: The name "Langitan" is derived from two Javanese words, "plang" (nameplate) and "wetan" (east). At that time, there were two nameplates in the area of Widang, one located to the west and the other to the east. The pesantren was established close to the eastern nameplate. Over time, visitors to Langitan became accustomed to referring to the eastern nameplate as a landmark, and thus, the pesantren came to be known as "Plangitan." The name has since evolved to the more commonly used "Langitan," with the initial "p" dropped. Additionally, there is evidence to suggest that the use of "Plangitan" is also supported by handwritten texts in Malay and Arabic from the book *Fatḥ al-Muʿin* by Kiai Ahmad Sholeh, the second-period leader of the Pesantren Langitan (Tim BPS 2015).

Kiai Nur Muhammad, the founder of Pesantren Langitan, was originally a scholar who conducted *tabligh* (Islamic preaching) from house to house in the Widang area. Additionally, he established a modest *Surau* (prayer hall) where Islamic teachings were conducted following the afternoon and evening prayers. In this *Surau*, Kiai Nur instructed approximately twenty-five individuals, including his grandchildren and residents, in fundamental Islamic knowledge, including reading the Qur'an, *fiqh*, and *tawḥid*. As time passed, and as a result of Kiai Nur's endeavors to disseminate Islamic teachings from house to house, many parents expressed interest in enrolling their children in a *Surau* under his guidance. Kiai Nur subsequently constructed a *Surau* and a modest boarding house facing his residence in response to this growing interest. This infrastructure was erected yet functionally, with assistance from family and residents (Hasyim 2008).

Kiai Nur Muhammad was the administrator of Pesantren Langitan for approximately eighteen years, from 1852 until his demise in 1870. This period of leadership is referred to by Hasyim (2008) as the pioneering phase. Subsequently, Kiai Ahmad Sholeh, the second son of Kiai Nur among nine siblings, assumed leadership. Kiai Ahmad Sholeh received his Islamic education directly from his father. However,

upon reaching adulthood, he pursued further studies at Pesantren al-Najiyah Sidosermo in Surabaya for four years. During this time, he intensively studied *fiqh*, *tamhîd*, and other Islamic sciences under the guidance of Kiai Hasbullah. Upon completing his studies, he returned to his father's pesantren to assist in instructing fundamental Islamic knowledge to the *Santri*. During Kiai Ahmad Sholeh's tenure, the number of *Santri* at Pesantren Langitan increased significantly, with new *Santri* arriving from various regions. In response to this growth, Kiai Ahmad Sholeh constructed additional facilities to accommodate the expanding *Santri* and enhanced the curriculum through qualitatively expanding and refining its content. After three decades of leadership, Kiai Ahmad Sholeh passed away in 1902 (Hasyim 2008).

Following the demise of Kiai Ahmad Sholeh, the management of Pesantren Langitan was assumed by his son-in-law, Kiai Muhammad Khozin. He had previously studied at Pesantren Kademangan in Bangkalan, Madura, before pursuing further studies at Pesantren Langitan. During his six years of study, Kiai Muhammad Khozin also assisted in teaching other *Santri*. His erudition attracted the attention of Kiai Ahmad Sholeh, who selected him as a son-in-law as a result. During Kiai Muhammad Khozin's tenure, Pesantren Langitan experienced significant growth in terms of its geographical reach and the expansion of its library collection. During Kiai Khozin's tenure in 1904, the location of the pesantren was relocated to a more northern position due to frequent flooding at the previous site. Kiai Khozin served as the leader of Pesantren Langitan for two decades until he died in 1921. This period is regarded as the developmental era of Pesantren Langitan (Hasyim 2008).

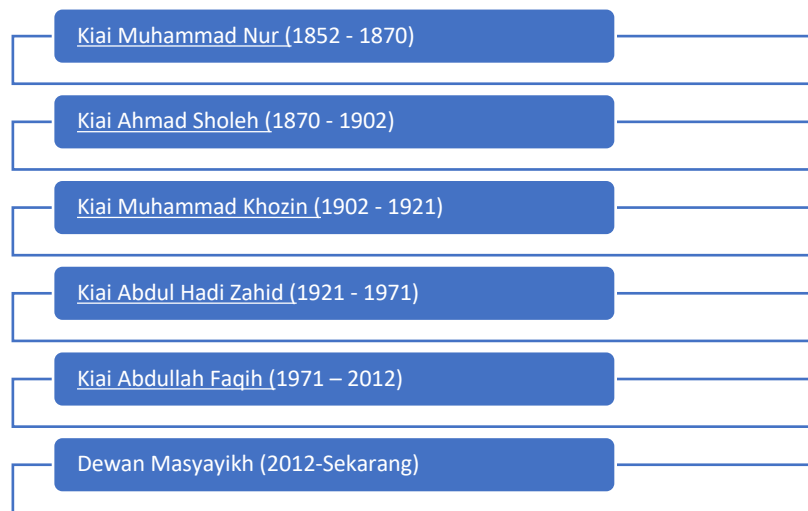
After Kiai Khozin's guidance, Kiai Abdul Hadi Zahid assumed the administrator role at Pesantren Langitan. From an early age, he pursued his studies at Pesantren Langitan. At the age of nineteen, Kiai Abdul Hadi proceeded to undertake further studies at Pesantren Kademangan in Bangkalan, Madura, at the recommendation of Kiai Khozin. He assumed considerable responsibility for managing Pesantren Langitan at the young age of thirty. Despite his relative youth, Kiai Abdul Hadi was able to effect substantial improvements during his tenure. He implemented reforms to the educational system, pioneering the introduction and development of the *Madrasa* system at Pesantren Langitan while concurrently maintaining the traditional *Sorogan* and *Weton* learning systems (Tim BPS 2015). The classical madrasa system was introduced at the *Ibtidaiyah* (beginner) level, designated as the Madrasah Falahiyah Langitan. During the transition from Dutch colonial rule to Japanese occupation, Pesantren Langitan ceased operations. This condition was because many *santri* returned home, and Japanese troops occupied the pesantren. It was not until 1949 that Pesantren Langitan resumed its activities. In 1969, the institution established madrasas at the sanawiah level. The pesantren facilities were also renovated and significantly expanded. Concerning literature, there was an increase in Arabic, Indonesian, and English books. The period of Kiai Abdul Hadi Zahid's leadership is called the era of reform, which lasted for five decades until he died in 1970 (Hasyim 2008).

Following the demise of Kiai Abdul Zahid, the administration of Pesantren Langitan was assumed by two individuals who proceeded to implement reforms within the pesantren system. Kiai Ahmad Marzuki Zahid, a native of Lamongan, had been a student at Pesantren Langitan for over two decades. Kiai Abdullah Faqih, one of the sons of the pesantren's founder, Kiai Rafi'i, was also Kiai Abdul Zahid's sibling. During their tenure, the number of *Santri* increased exponentially, with *Santri* hailing from diverse geographical regions and even from outside Java. In terms of infrastructure, notable enhancements were made to accommodate the growing student population (Hasyim 2008). The number of *Santri* continued to rise annually, with the most recent data for 2022 indicating an accumulation of approximately 7,200 *Santri* (Muwafiq 2022).

In 1975, Pesantren Langitan established a madrasa at the '*Āliyah* (higher) level, and in 1980, it launched higher education under the name Madrasah Darut Tauhid, which was a branch of the madrasa in Makkah led by Muhammad b. 'Alawi. In the same year, 1980, Pesantren Langitan also inaugurated Madrasah al-Huffaz, a vocational-level madrasa designed exclusively for female *Santri* (Hasyim 2008). The leadership of the two kiai resulted in notable advancement at Pesantren Langitan, as evidenced by the establishment of the *Badan Usaha Milik Pesantren* (Pesantren-Owned Enterprise), a computer training center, and other initiatives. In addition to being one of the largest pesantren in East Java Province, Pesantren Langitan has also gained recognition as an internationally esteemed Islamic educational institution (Afwin 2016). Following the passing of Kiai Ahmad Marzuki in 2000, the leadership of the pesantren was assumed by Kiai Abdullah Faqih alone until 2004, when Kiai Abdullah Munif joined him as a co-leader (Rohmad 2005). Following the death of Kiai Abdullah Faqih in 2012, the Langitan family appointed Kiai Ubaidillah Faqih, the son of Kiai Abdullah

Faqih, as his successor, with the responsibility of leading the pesantren ([www.nu.or.id](http://www.nu.or.id)). Subsequently, Pesantren Langitan has been managed collectively by the *Majelis Mashayikh* (Kiai's Assembly), which includes Kiai Abdullah Munif Marzuki, Kiai Ubaidillah Faqih, Kiai Muhammad Ali Marzuki, among others. Guided by the principle of *al-muhâfazah 'alâ al-qadîm al-şâliḥ wa al-akhdh bi al-jadîd al-‘aşlah* (the preservation of the good of the old while the adoption of the better of the new), Pesantren Langitan persists in embracing reforms and adapting to the advancements of the modern era in both management and education. However, it maintains strict boundaries concerning its ideals and orientation, ensuring that it remains steadfast and not easily swayed by the pressures of globalization (Khanifah 2018; Rohmad 2005).

Diagram 1. Chronology of Leadership at Pesantren Langitan



### Programs Toward Making Pesantren Langitan a Green Consciousness Leader

In their initial observations, the researchers noted that the subjects at Pesantren Langitan in Tuban, East Java, Indonesia have not yet fully recognized the urgency of Pesantren's involvement in promoting Islamic eco-theology to the broader community. During the initial visit to Pesantren Langitan, the researchers interviewed one of the caretakers to assess the extent to which environmental consciousness is taught and practiced among the *Santri*. The caretaker's explanation indicated that, thus far, there has been no particular focus on cultivating environmental awareness among the *Santri*. Nevertheless, the caretaker recognized that every Muslim, particularly *Santri*, bears a theological responsibility as Allah's representative on Earth, with a duty to safeguard and conserve nature and its resources. Consequently, during the inaugural Forum Group Discussion with the Management and Media Dakwah of Pesantren Langitan, the researchers devised a series of programs, including:

#### Fostering Green Consciousness Among Santri

- Date: June 26, 2022
- Model: Forum Group Discussion
- Theme: Developing Ecological Consciousness Among *Santri*
- Description: The initial program's objective is to impart foundational knowledge of Islamic principles that can serve as a foundation for fostering ecological consciousness among the pesantren community. By providing a foundation of basic knowledge, the program underscores the responsibility of Muslims and *Santri*, or residents of pesantren, to fulfill the trust bestowed by Allah on humanity to play an active role in protecting and preserving the environment on Earth. This responsibility can be demonstrated through practical actions such as maintaining a clean environment within the pesantren and conserving water.
- Target: *Santri*, administrators, *Ustaz*
- Outcome: Reflective articles on efforts to foster a consciousness of maintaining a clean and hygienic pesantren environment, subsequently published on the official Menara Langitan website:
  1. Air, Islam dan Pesantren (Water, Islam, and *Pesantren*)  
<https://menaralangitan.com/air-islam-dan-pesantren/>

2. Pesan Ekologi Rasulullah (The Ecological Message of the Prophet Muhammad)  
<https://menaralangitan.com/project/pesan-ekologi-rasulullah-saw/>
3. Santri dan Isu Lingkungan Hidup (Students and Environmental Issues)  
<https://menaralangitan.com/santri-dan-isu-lingkungan-hidup/>
4. Ekologi dalam Gagasan Islam Rahmatan lil Alamin (Ecology in the Concept of Islam as a Mercy to All Creation)  
<https://menaralangitan.com/ekologi-dalam-gagasan-islam-rahmatan-lil-alamin/>
5. Pesantren, Tempat Penanaman Ekologi Sejak Dini (*Pesantren: A Place for Early Ecological Education*)  
<https://menaralangitan.com/pesantren-tempat-penanaman-nilai-ekologi-sejak-dini/>

#### Development of the Green Fiqh Concept

- Date: July 11, 2022
- Model: Forum Group Discussion
- Theme: The Formulation of the Green Fiqh Concept
- Description: The second scheduled program establishes a knowledge and behavioral foundation to guide the pesantren community in aligning their activities with ecological principles. One potential avenue for exploration is the formulation of green *fiqh* principles. Green *fiqh* (*Fiqh al-Bi'ah*) is not a novel discourse that has emerged from the Islamic scholarly tradition. Historically, principles related to environmental issues can be found within *fiqh* studies. These include the concept of *ihyâ' al-mawât* (reclaiming uncultivated land), *al-muzâra'ah* (utilizing others' land), agricultural and horticultural laws, and the rights of living beings, among others.
- Target: *Santri*, administrators, *Ustaz*
- Outcome: Articles related to the concept of environmental *fiqh* published on the Menara Langitan website:  
<https://menaralangitan.com/konstruksi-fikih-pesantren-dalam-upaya-kampanye-lingkungan-hidup/>

#### Green Da'wa on Social Media

- Date: July 25, 2022
- Model: Forum Group Discussion
- Theme: The Involvement of Pesantren Langitan *Santri* in Green Da'wa on Social Media
- Description: The objective of the subsequent program is to motivate research participants to engage actively in disseminating ecological awareness within the community. This program will be achieved by providing them with educational resources and conveying Islamic messages about ecological wisdom. Nasr (1968) posits that the Qur'an establishes an indivisible connection between humans and nature and between natural science and religion. Accordingly, the Qur'an is a source of religious and macrocosmic revelation, representing the natural world. It is replete with fundamental ideas and patterns of all things. This green *da'wa* program is realized by creating posters and sermon texts, which are then disseminated on social media accounts and the website menaralangitan.com.
- Target: *Santri* and the Public Community
- Outcome: This *da'wa* was delivered in the form of posters distributed through social media accounts on Menara Langitan and sermon texts:
1. Umat yang Agamis Berjiwa Ekologis (A Religious Community with Ecological Consciousness)  
<https://langitan.net/umat-yang-agamis-berjiwa-ekologis/>
  2. Upaya Memakmurkan Bumi Allah (Efforts to Prosper Allah's Earth)  
<https://menaralangitan.com/khutbah-jumat-upaya-memakmurkan-bumi-allah/>
  3. Hijrah Ekologis (Ecological Migration)  
<https://menaralangitan.com/khutbah-jumat-hijrah-ekologis/>

## Green Actions in the Pesantren Environment

- Date: August 15 to September 25, 2022
- Model: Actions
- Theme: Creating a Green Environment at Pesantren Langitan
- Description: This program represents the practical implementation of the ecological consciousness instilled in students, administrators, and teachers through the preceding Focus Group Discussion (FGD). These actions reflect the responsibility of Pesantren Langitan students as Muslims, who are duty-bound as representatives of Allah on Earth. As Chishti (2003) notes, the Qur'an guides the relationship between humans and non-humans, emphasizing the concept of interdependence within a unified community of life. As stated in the Qur'an, it is humanity's responsibility to manage this unified community on Earth. "It is He who has appointed you as stewards of the Earth..." (Qur'an 6:165). The moral and spiritual burden of being a Khalifah on Earth inherently necessitates the imperative for environmental ethics in Islam. As representatives of the *khalifah* on Earth, everyone is responsible for preserving and caring for the community of life, including humans, plants, animals, and non-living entities. This responsibility entails the avoidance of exploitation and destruction. In this context, Chishti asserts that every entity within the community of life, irrespective of its utility to humans, is imbued with intrinsic value. Consequently, as Khalifah, humans are responsible for balancing their needs with those of the community and other species under their stewardship and care.
- Target: *Santri*, administrators, *Ustaz*
- Outcome: All activities and actions are reported on <http://langitan.net> with the following link:
1. Roan Sebagai Pembekalan Santri (Roan as Training for Students) <https://langitan.net/roan-sebagai-pembekalan-santri/>
  2. Taman yang Asri Wujud Penghijauan Alami (A Lush Garden as a Form of Natural Greening) <https://langitan.net/taman-yang-asri-wujud-penghijauan-alami/>
  3. Menilik Proses Pengelolaan Sampah di Langitan (Examining the Waste Management Process in Langitan) <https://langitan.net/menilik-proses-pengelolaan-sampah-di-pondok-pesantren-langitan/>
  4. Tim Selokan, Wujud Langitan Mendukung Gerakan Lingkungan Asri (The Drainage Team: Langitan's Efforts to Support a Clean Environment Movement) <https://langitan.net/tim-selokan-wujud-langitan-mendukung-gerakan-lingkungan-asri/>
  5. Jumat Bersih Pesantren Langitan (Clean Friday of Pesantren Langitan) <https://langitan.net/jumat-bersih-pondok-pesantren-langitan/>

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Secular environmental activists frequently assert that religious belief, particularly within Abrahamic traditions (including Islam), is a contributory factor in the global ecological crisis. This fact is because, from a doctrinal perspective, Abrahamic religions appear to espouse a worldview (*weltanschauung*) that posits that all creation on Earth is intended for the benefit of humanity. This is based on the premise that humans are the image of God (*imago Dei*) and representatives of Allah on Earth (*khalifat Allāh fi al-ard*). As a result, a superficial and careless understanding has emerged that humans may exploit all natural entities on Earth at will. This paradigm has led to the notion that religion is a significant causal factor in the ecological crisis. Fortunately, this criticism has been met with vigorous and thorough responses from religious scholars who are deeply committed to the environment and their faith. They have reformulated the arguments and doctrines supporting anti-ecological anthropocentrism in such a way that religion neither condones nor advocates for environmental exploitation. In this context, the concept of *Khalifah* in Islam underscores a clear emphasis on Muslims' moral and spiritual responsibility before Allah to care for and preserve the surrounding environment and the natural world. Thus, "Islamic eco-theology" is a conceptual framework that guides Muslims in understanding and taking concrete actions regarding their relationship with God and the natural world.



In Islamic eco-theology, pesantren in Indonesia serve as a tangible platform due to their comprehensive modalities encompass scholarly and communal practices. By integrating ecological perspectives into theological discourse, the intrinsic religious values held by Muslims, particularly students, can be mobilized to address the pressing issue of ecological disasters and their impact on the planet's sustainability. As of April 2022, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kementerian Agama) reports 26,975 pesantren across Indonesia ([www.dataindonesia.id](http://www.dataindonesia.id)). In this context, it is evident that the number of pesantren in Indonesia provides a substantial opportunity for advancing Islamic eco-theology. However, it is notable that not all pesantren explicitly implement eco-theology, whether at the level of ideas and consciousness or regarding actions and practices. Nevertheless, some pesantren have made notable contributions to Islamic ecotheology.

The religious values espoused within the pesantren tradition are directly derived from the Qur'an, Hadith, and Islamic heritage (*al-turâth al-islâmiyyah*). These values can serve as a solid foundation for developing an Islamic eco-theology paradigm and fostering communal consciousness within the pesantren environment. In light of the pressing global issues, particularly concerning the environment, pesantren are compelled to expand their scope and undertake social and ecological transformations grounded in Islamic teachings. This participatory research encourages Pesantren Langitan, which has an ecological basis with its river, to contribute to mainstreaming green consciousness among the community. Given its strong foundation in Islamic knowledge and openness to technological advancements (through its website and other social media platforms), the subjects at Pesantren Langitan are initially expected to address ecological challenges, thereby developing environmental consciousness and active involvement.

The Pesantren Langitan has already established several environmentally-focused traditions, including *ro'an* (service), *israf* (waste minimization), and environmental greening. These practices can now be further integrated with Quranic and Hadith teachings. As previously noted, based on data obtained through interviews, the students at Pesantren Langitan initially demonstrated a lack of environmental consciousness, exhibiting a lack of vigilance and intentionality towards the environment. While there is a practical involvement in maintaining cleanliness within the pesantren and its surroundings, Pesantren Langitan had not specifically or integrally grounded these practices in the ecological doctrines holistically taught by Islam. This finding indicates that Pesantren Langitan had not previously engaged "consciously" in responding theoretically and practically to the global ecological crisis affecting humanity.

This participatory research project, which aims to integrate Islamic eco-theology into mainstream discourse, has prompted Pesantren Langitan to recognize the necessity of responding to the ongoing ecological crisis. The initial findings from the FGDs revealed that the *Kyai*, *Santri*, and *Ustaz* at Pesantren Langitan have become aware of the reality of the global ecological crisis and the necessity for intervention. Additionally, they have recognized the pivotal role that the pesantren can play in addressing this crisis. Before this, Pesantren Langitan had not acknowledged the ecological crisis nor its central role as an institution that could theoretically and practically engage students and the broader Muslim community to address it.

In the second FGD, all participants collectively developed a conceptual framework for green *fiqh*, which subsequently served as the basis for their engagement with the ecological movement. This action was only feasible after the subjects at Pesantren Langitan were aware of the ecological crisis. Without this crisis awareness, formulating concepts derived from *al-turâth al-islâmiyyah* would have been a significant challenge. Therefore, this participatory research's primary objective has been to engage the subjects at Pesantren Langitan in recognizing their essential role as a pesantren and understanding Islam as an environmentally friendly religion in addressing the ongoing ecological crisis affecting nature and humanity. The formulation of the green *fiqh* concept has enabled Pesantren Langitan to recognize that Islam is replete with ecological initiatives, including the prohibition of environmental pollution and littering, particularly in rivers, which serve as a primary ecological basis at Pesantren Langitan.

The integration of Islamic eco-theology at Pesantren Langitan can be considered a complete success based on the indicators achieved both internally and externally (such as through social media outreach). From a conceptual standpoint, *santri* have come to recognize their role as stewards of the Earth, bearing responsibility for environmental stewardship. In practice, students have engaged in various ecological activities, including environmental clean-ups, waste management, and reforestation. This action has led to the development of a green consciousness, whereby the natural environment is viewed as a creation of Allah that requires preservation and protection rather than neglect or harm.

Meanwhile, the endeavor to integrate Islamic eco-theology into the mainstream has yet to gain significant traction. Initially, there was an effort to delve more deeply into this integration using the model of deep ecology. This approach is grounded in the understanding that the fundamental principle of biocentric egalitarianism is that all living organisms possess equal intrinsic value (Næss, 1973). However, this integration has not yet gained the momentum that was initially anticipated. Given that the students at Pesantren Langitan previously exhibited a lack of comprehensive ecological awareness, it is unlikely that the introduction of deep ecology will result in the conceptual shift from anthropocentric to biocentric or even ecocentric Islamic eco-theology initially intended.

Arne Næss, a seminal figure in the development of the term "deep ecology," juxtaposed his novel, "deep" or "radical" ecological worldview, with the prevailing paradigm at the time, which he designated as "shallow ecology." Næss posits that the worldview of shallow ecology represents an extension of the anthropocentric paradigm. In other words, deep ecology challenges the fundamental assumptions of anthropocentrism by delving deeper into the ontological level (Keller 2009). Næss's critique of the dominant ecological paradigm is rooted in its anthropocentric foundation, which inherently entails a hierarchical valuation of entities within the ecosystem. In Islam, this anthropocentric principle is evident in the concept or role of the *Khalifah* (steward). In this regard, in the face of the ecological crisis, Islamic theology, which was previously understood as strictly anthropocentric or anti-ecological, can be revisited and reinterpreted, revealing itself as an essential manual for instilling ecological consciousness among Muslims.

Some commentators have suggested that this anthropocentric perspective may prove counterproductive or detrimental to implementing effective environmental conservation strategies. In Islamic ecological discourse, the term "anthropocentrism" is frequently equated with the term "khalifah," which has resulted in the ambiguity of the "khalifah" concept within the ecological domain. On the one hand, "anthropocentrism" denotes a singular subject with the privilege of exploiting nature at will. On the other hand, it implies the sole responsibility for the damage inflicted upon the environment. A specific inquiry can be formulated to circumvent this ambiguity: "Does the concept of *Khalifah* inevitably entail anthropocentrism, with all its adverse implications for environmental conservation?" If the answer is negative, then Islamic eco-theology can more realistically capture the Islamic cosmological view, which spans a spectrum where non-human entities hold a different significance level than humans. Despite the theoretical debate surrounding this issue, it is crucial to note that the concept of *Khalifah*, as discussed in previous chapters and the FGDs, is understood as a subject entrusted by Allah to protect and preserve the environment on Earth.

In his work on deep ecology, Arne Naess posits that all entities within the ecosystem possess an intrinsic value. As Næss himself stated (1973), "The equal right to live and to flourish is an intuitively clear and obvious value axiom." In essence, all organisms and entities within the ecosystem, as part of an interconnected web, possess an intrinsic value that is ontologically equal. In the context of Islamic eco-theology, the intrinsic value of nature and non-human entities can be derived from the concept of two distinct types of Qur'an: *al-Qur'an al-tadwîni* (the codified holy book) and *al-Qur'an al-takwîni* (the cosmic holy book). The latter term elucidates that all entities within the cosmos are also the manifestations of Allah (*vestigia Dei*). In other words, everything in nature is a sign of Allah, which possesses intrinsic value. As *Khalifah* on Earth, it is incumbent upon humans to preserve, protect, and refrain from destroying it. In conclusion, humans, such as *Khalifah*, are responsible for balancing their needs with those of the living communities or other species under their stewardship. In this context, although still in its early stages, Pesantren Langitan has begun to engage and play an active role, grounded in knowledge derived from *al-turâth al-islâmiyyah* and supported by its communal base. The pesantren is an Islamic educational institution that can directly connect with grassroots communities.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings of this participatory research underscore the substantial potential of Islamic boarding schools, particularly Pesantren Langitan, in contributing to the faith-based ecological movement. The research indicates that pesantren are well-positioned to function as producers of religious discourse, promoting environmental consciousness among the Muslim community through various media. In the case of Pesantren Langitan, while ecological concerns were not initially a focal point, the involvement of researchers served as a catalyst, activating Pesantren's latent potential to address ecological advocacy.

Several initiatives (such as implementing environmental education programs, formulating green fiqh concepts, social media advocacy, and promoting practical green actions) have enabled Pesantren Langitan to make notable progress in fostering environmental consciousness among its students. The outcomes of this effort include an enhanced awareness of the ecological crisis, a more profound understanding of their role as *Khalifah* (stewards) of the Earth, and the production of eco-friendly Islamic works, including articles and green sermons disseminated via the pesantren's website and social media platforms.

Nevertheless, while these endeavors indicate a promising beginning, an analysis through the lens of deep ecology suggests that the ecological consciousness at Pesantren Langitan remains in its nascent stages. While the current initiatives are commendable, they have not yet matured into a more profound or widespread movement with a more considerable societal impact. Further deepening the ecological values and practices within Pesantren Langitan could foster a more sustainable and impactful environmental advocacy rooted in Islamic eco-theology.

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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