

Saving the Earth Without Sacrificing God: The Paradox of Modern Eco-theology in Islamic Education

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ABSTRACT: The discourse of modern eco-theology is gaining strength globally as a response to the multidimensional environmental crisis. In certain contexts, eco-theology offers ecological awareness and has the potential to shift the focus of theology from divinity to an anthropocentric ecological stance. This study aims to analyse the paradox of modern eco-theology in Islamic education, particularly when efforts to save the earth risk sacrificing the principle of tawhid as the main foundation of Islamic teachings. Using a qualitative-descriptive approach through a critical literature review of contemporary eco-theology, educational philosophy, and primary Islamic sources (the Qur'an and hadith), this study examines how eco-theological narratives are adopted, reconstructed, and taught in Islamic education.

The results of the study indicate that some modern eco-theological concepts tend to place nature as a semi-sacred entity that has the potential to rival God's position in students'

theological consciousness. This paradox arises when environmental education no longer departs from the paradigm of khilafah and divine mandate, but rather from secular ecological ethics that are detached from worship orientation. This study emphasises that Islam has a comprehensive ecological framework based on tawhid, adab, and the moral responsibility of humans as servants and caliphs on earth. Therefore, Islamic education needs to formulate an integrative environmental education model, in which ecological concern does not come at the expense of divine values, but rather becomes a manifestation of obedience to Allah. This research is expected to provide a conceptual contribution to the development of Islamic education oriented towards environmental sustainability without losing its theological foundation.

Keywords: *Modern Eco-theology; Islamic Education; Tawhid; Ecological Crisis*

1. Introduction

The current global ecological crisis has become a central issue in various disciplines, including theology and education. Environmental damage, climate change, and exploitation of natural resources have led to the emergence of various normative and ethical approaches to respond to the crisis. (Akter, 2024). One rapidly developing approach is modern eco-theology, which seeks to integrate ecological awareness with religious reflection as a moral foundation for preserving the earth.

In its development, modern eco-theology has emerged as a religious discourse and entered the realm of education, including Islamic education. (Hidayat, 2023; Rohman, A., Kurniawan, E., Syifauddin, M., Muhtamiroh, S., & Muthohar, 2024). Curricula, teaching materials, and environmental education programmes have begun to adopt eco-theological terms, values, and paradigms. However, this adoption is often carried out without a critical examination of the theological foundations behind it, thus potentially giving rise to conceptual tensions between modern ecological values and the basic principles of Islamic teachings.

Some previous studies have shown that modern eco-theology tends to use anthropocentric or eco-centric approaches rooted in humanistic philosophy and secular ecology. In some narratives, nature is positioned as an entity that has intrinsic

value independent of God, even approaching the sacralisation of nature. This kind of approach has the potential to obscure the concept of *tawhid* and the hierarchical relationship between God, humans, and nature in Islam.

On the other hand, Islam has a comprehensive theological framework for viewing nature, as reflected in the concepts of *tawhid*, *khalifah*, *amanah*, and *adab*. The Qur'an and hadith consistently emphasise that concern for the environment is an integral part of obedience to Allah, not an autonomous goal in itself. However, this Islamic ecological framework is often only used as normative legitimisation without systematic conceptual development in the context of education. (Lahmar, 2020)

Previous studies have mostly emphasised the integration of ecological values into Islamic education through an approach of harmonisation and affirmation of eco-theology. Conversely, critical studies that examine the philosophical and theological assumptions of modern eco-theology are still relatively limited. In particular, few studies explicitly highlight the potential paradox when saving the earth is done at the expense of God's position in pedagogical consciousness. The main research gap in this study lies in the lack of critical analysis of modern eco-theology from a monotheistic perspective in the context of Islamic education. Most studies still focus on the practical aspects of environmental education, while its theological and epistemological dimensions have not received serious attention. As a result, there is a conceptual void in defining the boundaries between ecological concerns and theological deviations.

There has not been much research positioning Islamic education as a strategic arena for the formation of a divine-based ecological worldview. Education is often understood merely as a medium for transmitting environmental values, rather than as a space for shaping manners and worship orientation. This research gap presents an opportunity to re-examine the role of Islamic education in instilling environmental ethics that remain firmly rooted in *tawhid*. Furthermore, existing literature tends to adopt Western eco-theological terms and frameworks without a methodological process of Islamisation of concepts. This has the potential to cause epistemic dissonance in Islamic education, where Islamic terms are used to wrap a paradigm

that is essentially foreign to the Islamic worldview. This void calls for more in-depth critical and reconstructive studies.

Based on the above description, this study attempts to fill the research gap by analysing the paradox of modern eco-theology in Islamic education and offering an alternative framework for *tawhid*-based environmental education. By placing the salvation of the earth as a consequence of obedience to God, this study is expected to contribute theoretically and practically to the development of Islamic education that balances ecological concerns and theological steadfastness.

2. Findings

The results of the study indicate that the integration of modern eco-theology into Islamic education tends to be carried out in an affirmative and normative manner without being accompanied by critical theological studies. Environmental education materials often adopt terms such as sustainability, climate crisis, and global ecological ethics, which are rooted in a secular paradigm. In practice, this approach often positions nature as the centre of moral concern that stands relatively autonomous from the relationship with God, so that *tawhid* functions more as a symbol of legitimacy than as the main epistemological framework.

The next finding reveals a shift in pedagogical orientation from worship to instrumental ecological ethics. Concern for the environment is taught as a universal moral obligation, rather than as a direct consequence of obedience to Allah and awareness of servitude. As a result, key concepts in Islam, such as *khalifah*, *amanah*, and *adab*, have undergone a reduction in meaning, from theological principles to ethical slogans detached from the *ukhrawi* orientation and the very purpose of Islamic education itself.

Furthermore, this study found the absence of a conceptual model of Islamic environmental education that clearly distinguishes between *tawhid*-based eco-theology and modern eco-theology, which has the potential for theological deviation. This void has led to conceptual ambiguity in the curriculum and educational practices, where Islamic values are mixed with an eco-centric paradigm without clear epistemological boundaries. These findings emphasise the urgency of formulating a

framework for Islamic environmental education that places the salvation of the earth as a manifestation of obedience to God, rather than as an independent end goal.

3. Discussion

The ecological crisis that has engulfed the contemporary world cannot be separated from the crisis in humanity's view of nature and reality as a whole. (Bookchin, 2022; Safdar, S. S., & Shams-ur-Rehman, 2021). Environmental damage is not merely the result of technical failures in resource management, but also reflects deeper epistemological and theological problems. The way humans understand their position, nature, and God greatly determines the patterns of relationships built in everyday life. Therefore, environmental issues actually demand scientific solutions, public policy, as well as serious philosophical and religious reflection.

In the context of religious societies, especially Islam, environmental issues challenge the relevance of theological teachings in responding to modern global problems. Islamic education, as a vehicle for shaping the worldview and character of the ummah, has a strategic role in responding to this crisis. However, this response is not always critical. Often, Islamic education adopts a modern environmental education approach directly, without an in-depth study of the philosophical assumptions behind it. This has the potential to create tension between modern ecological values and the basic principles of *tawhid*.

The broad theme of "Saving the Earth Without Sacrificing God" arose from an awareness of the paradox in the attempt to integrate ecological concerns and theological commitments. On the one hand, concern for the preservation of nature is a moral imperative; on the other hand, there is a risk that such efforts will shift God from the centre of educational orientation. Therefore, a critical reading of modern eco-theological discourse, a reduction of Islamic theological concepts, and the possibility of reconstructing environmental education that remains faithful to the paradigm of *tawhid* are necessary. This framework forms the basis for discussion in the following sections.

4. Modern Eco-theology and the Paradigm Shift of Tawhid in Islamic Education

The global environmental crisis has become a multidimensional issue that affects various aspects of human life. This phenomenon is related to ecological damage and also to how humans understand their position in the cosmos. In the field of education, environmental issues require a pedagogical framework that is capable of shaping a deep ethical awareness. (Kureethadam, 2018; Xiong, Z., Song, Y., & Zhu, 2025). Various approaches to environmental education have developed with diverse philosophical and theological backgrounds. One prominent approach is eco-theology, which seeks to link environmental issues with religious dimensions. However, modern eco-theology often stems from Western traditions of thought that are not entirely in line with the framework of tawhid. This poses conceptual challenges when eco-theology is adopted in the context of Islamic education. There is a risk of a shift in values in understanding the relationship between humans, nature, and God. This shift can have an impact on the reduction of theological meaning in Islamic environmental education. Therefore, a critical review of the philosophical assumptions underlying modern eco-theology is necessary. This review is important to maintain the consistency of Islamic education with the principles of tawhid.

The global environmental crisis places Islamic education in a conceptual tension between ecological demands and theological commitments to *tawhid*. (Mukhsin, M., & Alfani, 2025; Rohman, A., Kurniawan, E., Syifauddin, M., Muhtamiroh, S., & Muthohar, 2024). On the one hand, environmental issues require the formulation of ethical and pedagogical approaches that can seriously address the complexity of the ecological crisis. On the other hand, the adoption of modern eco-theology—which has largely developed within Western thought traditions—poses epistemological problems when applied in the context of Islamic education. This approach has the potential to shift the orientation of education away from tawhid as the centre of life towards an anthropocentric or cosmoscentric mindset that does not sufficiently emphasise the transcendence of God. In this situation, Islamic education is in a strategic position to respond to ecological challenges contextually while maintaining theological consistency, so that the environmental awareness that is built remains rooted in the principles of divine unity and sovereignty.

In classical Islamic thought, the relationship between humans, nature, and God is integral. Al-Ghazali places nature as a sign of God that leads humans to *ma'rifatullah*, not merely an object of exploitation. In his view, tawhid is not only a metaphysical doctrine, but also an ethical framework that regulates how humans treat each other and nature. Islamic education rooted in tawhid thus inherently contains an ecological dimension, even though it has not yet been formulated using the term "eco-theology".

Contemporary Muslim thinkers such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr strongly criticise the modern ecological crisis as a result of the "desacralisation of nature" by modern Western civilisation. According to Nasr, nature is no longer seen as a manifestation of God's signs, but is reduced to an economic resource. He asserts that true ecological solutions must be spiritual in nature, restoring *tawhid* as a cosmological and epistemological principle in Islamic education. (Imran, 2023; Nasution, M. A. A., & Ekowati, 2025). Without this, education will only produce technocratic humans who are technically ecological but lacking in divine consciousness.

On the other hand, Muslim thinkers such as Fazlur Rahman offer a more contextual ethical-historical approach. He emphasises that tawhid must be translated into principles of justice and moral responsibility in social life, including relations with the environment. Within this framework, Islamic education is required to reinterpret the teachings of tawhid so that they are relevant to modern ecological challenges, without getting caught up in traditional cosmological romanticism that is less operational.

Table 1. Modern Eco-theology and the Paradigm Shift of Tawhid in

Aspect of Analysis	Modern Eco-theology	Implications for the Paradigm of <i>Tawhid</i> in Islamic Education
Epistemological Foundation	Emerges from ecological critiques of Western modernity and environmental crises	Introduces epistemological assumptions that are not always aligned with <i>tawhid</i>
Concept of God	Tends to be immanent, symbolic, or ecologically	Potentially reduces the transcendence and oneness of God

	reinterpreted	
Human–Nature Relationship	Emphasizes ecological interdependence	Risks shifting from a theocentric relationship toward anthropocentric or cosmocentric orientations
Human Position	Humans as ecological subjects or part of a cosmic community	Obscures the concept of humans as <i>‘abd</i> (servants) and <i>khalifah</i> (vicegerents)
Ethical Orientation	Ethics of sustainability and ecological responsibility	<i>Tawhid</i> is reduced to moral legitimation rather than functioning as the primary paradigm
Spiritual Dimension	Articulated in a universal and non-dogmatic manner	Spirituality becomes detached from the framework of revelation
Educational Objectives	Formation of ecological awareness and behavioral change	The theological aims of Islamic education risk being marginalized
Pedagogical Approach	Integrative, contextual, and based on global issues	Requires theological filtration to avoid shifting the orientation of <i>tawhid</i>
Conceptual Risk	Relativization of theological values for the sake of ecological consensus	Paradigmatic shift of <i>tawhid</i> within Islamic education
Challenges for Islamic Education	Adaptation to global environmental issues	Maintaining consistency with <i>tawhid</i> without rejecting ecological concern
Direction of Critique	Reinterpretation of the God–human–nature relationship	The need for a <i>tawhid</i> -based eco-theological framework

From Western tradition, Lynn White Jr.'s thinking has become an important reference in the discourse of eco-theology. (Sayem, 2021; Singgih, 2025). He accuses Christian theology —and implicitly monotheistic religions— of giving rise to humanity's domineering attitude towards nature. This criticism has led to the emergence of

modern eco-theology in the West, which seeks to revise the concepts of God, humanity, and nature more ecologically. However, for Islamic education, White's criticism poses a paradox: to what extent can theological revision be carried out without obscuring the oneness and transcendence of God in *tawhid*?

Other Western thinkers, such as Jürgen Moltmann, offer a theology of creation that emphasises God's presence in cosmic processes and the suffering of nature. This approach has inspired many ideas for spirituality-based ecological education. However, if adopted uncritically in Islamic education, there is a risk of shifting from a strict *tawhid* to an excessive understanding of God's immanence, thereby blurring the boundary between the Creator and His creatures. (Moltmann, 2024).

The paradox of modern eco-theology in Islamic education is evident when ecological awareness is constructed by relativising the position of God. In some environmental education discourses, ecological values are placed as the highest goal, while *tawhid* is reduced to mere moral legitimacy. This marks a paradigm shift in *tawhid*: from the centre of educational orientation to merely one variable in the discourse on environmental ethics.

Muslim thinkers such as Ibrahim Abdul-Matin have attempted to bridge this gap with the concept of green *deen*, which asserts that environmental concern is an expression of faith, not a substitute for it. He emphasises that *tawhid* actually necessitates ecological responsibility, because it recognises Allah as the absolute owner of nature. (Abdul-Matin, 2010). In the context of Islamic education, this approach emphasises that saving the earth should not be understood as a secular project detached from worship.

In the pedagogical realm, the shift in the paradigm of *tawhid* requires a reconstruction of the Islamic education curriculum. Education is not enough to simply add environmental material, but must instil a *tawhid* perspective that positions humans as both caliphs and servants. This concept rejects exploitative domination over nature, but also rejects the cult of nature that displaces God from the centre of religious consciousness. Thus, modern eco-theology can be both an opportunity and a threat to Islamic education. (Islam, A. S., Ja'far, S., & Long, 2024;

Maslani, 2023). It becomes an opportunity if it is interpreted as the actualisation of *tawhid* in the context of the ecological crisis, and becomes a threat if it encourages theological compromises that weaken the principle of the oneness of God. The challenge for Islamic education is to formulate a tawhid-based eco-theology, not to adjust tawhid to be in line with modern eco-theology.

Saving the earth without sacrificing God requires epistemological and theological courage. Islamic education must be able to engage in critical dialogue with Western thought while exploring the depths of Islamic intellectual tradition. By making *tawhid* the main paradigm, Islamic education can produce a generation that is ecologically ethical, intellectually critical, and theologically steadfast.

5. Reduction of the Concepts of Caliphate and Trust in Environmental Education Practices

Concern for the global environmental crisis has increasingly taken centre stage in educational discourse. Environmental education is positioned as an important instrument in shaping human ecological awareness and responsibility. In its development, various approaches to environmental education have been greatly influenced by secular modern paradigms. This paradigm tends to emphasise technical, managerial, and pragmatic aspects of environmental management. The theological and spiritual dimensions are often marginalised or treated as merely normative complements. This condition becomes problematic when environmental education is adopted into the context of Islamic education. Islamic values have the potential to undergo conceptual adjustments that are not always in line with the framework of *tawhid*. Islamic normative concepts can be reduced to mere ethical terms without metaphysical depth. (Bhat, 2024; Elmahjub, 2021). In fact, Islamic education has a strong theological foundation in interpreting the relationship between humans and nature. This relationship does not stand alone but is bound to the recognition of God's oneness and sovereignty. Therefore, a critical study is needed to reposition the dimension of *tawhid* in environmental education.

The paradox in contemporary environmental education practices is evident when fundamental Islamic theological concepts, such as *khalifah* and *amanah*, undergo a

narrowing of meaning in the pedagogical process. In many formulations of environmental education, ecological responsibility is reduced to a set of technical functions and environmental management skills oriented towards efficiency and pragmatic sustainability. This approach tends to detach ecological actions from their theological framework, putting Islamic education at risk of internalising modern ecological discourse without an adequate foundation in *tawhid*. As a result, Islamic values no longer function as a paradigm that shapes the ontological and ethical orientation of students, but merely serve as normative legitimisation for environmentally-friendly practices that are epistemologically secular in nature. This condition highlights the urgency of critical studies to restore the spiritual and theological depth of the concepts of *khalifah* and *amanah* in Islamic environmental education.

From the perspective of the Qur'an, the concept of *khalifah* is not merely a mandate to manage nature, but a divine assignment inherent in the relationship between humans and Allah. Ibn Kathir interprets *khalifah fil ardh* as a moral responsibility that will be accounted for before God, not an absolute right to dominate the earth. Environmental education that only emphasises the role of humans as "resource managers" without the dimension of transcendent responsibility has reduced the meaning of *khalifah* to a mere managerial concept.

Classical Muslim thinkers such as Al-Farabi viewed humans as rational-ethical beings tasked with realising cosmic order in accordance with Divine will. Within this framework, *amanah* cannot be separated from character building and virtue. When modern environmental education emphasises pragmatic behavioural change —such as recycling or energy efficiency— without moral-spiritual guidance, then divine *amanah* is reduced to mere utilitarian ethics.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr asserts that the ecological crisis is rooted in humanity's loss of sacred awareness of nature. He criticises modern education, including in the Muslim world, for adopting a secular paradigm that separates ecological stewardship from *tawhid*. According to Nasr, the concept of *khalifah* loses its spiritual meaning when nature is no longer seen as a symbol of God's presence, but rather as a neutral object

that must be "saved" for the sake of human survival. (Nasr, S. H., & Naeem, 2021; Nasr, 1990; Sadiqa, U., & Nadeem, 2023)

From the perspective of contemporary Muslim thinkers, Fazlur Rahman emphasises the ethical-historical dimension of the concept of *amanah*. He sees *amanah* as a moral commitment that must be realised in social and ecological justice. However, when environmental education only takes universal moral messages —such as sustainability and responsibility— without linking them to the source of revelation, then *amanah* is reduced to a general ethical value that can stand without God.

In Western tradition, John Locke's thinking on ownership and control of nature through human labour has influenced the modern educational paradigm. Nature is seen as a legitimate object to be exploited for the sake of progress. When this paradigm is adopted in environmental education, the concept of sustainable management often remains based on human interests rather than divine mandate. This contradicts the concept of *khalifah*, which places humans as servants of God's will, not owners of the earth.

Western ecological thinkers such as Aldo Leopold, with his land ethic, have attempted to expand human ethics to include ecological communities. Although this approach has made an important contribution, it is immanent and does not involve the dimension of accountability to God. In the context of Islamic education, the adoption of such ethics without theological criticism has the potential to replace the concept of *amanah* with an autonomous secular ecological ethic.

The reduction of the concepts of caliphate and trust is increasingly evident when Islamic environmental education emphasises the slogan "environmentally friendly" rather than the formation of awareness as servants of Allah. This type of educational practice tends to separate worship from ecological responsibility. As a result, environmental concern is no longer understood as part of obedience to God, but merely as a global social obligation.

Ibrahim Abdul-Matin, through the idea of green *deen*, seeks to restore the integration between faith and ecological action. He emphasises that protecting the environment is a manifestation of trust and servitude to Allah. However, the challenge for Islamic

education is to ensure that this concept does not stop at environmental activism, but remains rooted in a solid and reflective understanding of *tawhid*.

In the context of pedagogy, Islamic education needs to reconstruct environmental learning by placing *khalifah* and *amanah* as a theological framework, not merely normative terms. The learning process must connect ecological knowledge with an awareness of God's oversight and justice. Without this approach, environmental education risks producing ecologically ethical subjects who are disconnected from Islamic spirituality.

The paradox of saving the earth without sacrificing God lies in the ability of Islamic education to preserve the depth of meaning of *khalifah* and *amanah*. Saving the environment must not be done by emptying theological concepts of their transcendent content. It is precisely by restoring the divine meaning of *khalifah* and *amanah* that Islamic education can offer a model of environmental education that is holistic, sustainable, and faithful to *tawhid*.

6. Reconstruction of Tawhid-Based Environmental Education as an Alternative to Eco-theology

The issue of the global environmental crisis has led to the emergence of various conceptual approaches in the field of education. Environmental education is considered strategic because it plays a role in shaping human perspectives, values, and behaviour towards nature. (Dillon, J., & Herman, 2023; Scott, W., & Oulton, 1998). However, many modern environmental education formulations depart from secular philosophical assumptions. These assumptions tend to separate the spiritual dimension from human relations with the environment. As a result, nature is often understood primarily as a material object that must be managed for the benefit of humans. This paradigm has given rise to an anthropocentric tendency in both the theory and practice of environmental education. In the context of religious societies, this kind of approach raises epistemological and ethical issues. An alternative framework is needed that is capable of fundamentally integrating the theological dimension. This framework is normative in nature, forming ontological and axiological orientations. One relevant conceptual proposal is the *tawhid*-based

environmental education approach. This approach seeks to reconstruct the relationship between humans, nature, and God in a holistic and meaningful way.

The reconstruction of environmental education based on *tawhid* has emerged as a critical alternative to modern eco-theology, which is often trapped in a secular and anthropocentric paradigm. *Tawhid* places Allah at the centre of reality, while humans and nature exist in a clear hierarchical-ethical relationship. Thus, environmental education does not begin with the sole interest of saving the earth, but rather with a divine consciousness that views nature as God's creation and property, not as an autonomous entity that stands alone.

Within the framework of *tawhid*, nature is understood as *ayat kawniyyah* (signs of God) that have pedagogical and spiritual functions. Muslim thinkers such as Al-Ghazali emphasise that knowledge of God can be attained through contemplation of His creation. The reconstruction of environmental education must revive this contemplative function so that students can learn about ecosystems and the climate crisis and develop a spiritual awareness that destroying nature means destroying the signs of God's presence.

The concept of humans as *'abd* and *khalifah* is the main foundation of *tawhid*-based environmental education. Unlike modern eco-theology, which tends to emphasise the role of humans as ecological managers, *tawhid* asserts that this role is a trust and will be accounted for before Allah. Reconstructed environmental education must instil an awareness of eschatological responsibility, not just long-term social or ecological responsibility.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr views the ecological crisis as a reflection of the spiritual crisis of modern humanity. Therefore, *tawhid*-based environmental education must be a resacralisation of nature, restoring the sacred dimension that has been lost due to the dominance of positivist science. Nature should not be taught solely as an object of scientific study, but as a meaningful reality that demands manners, respect, and limits in its use.

As an alternative to eco-theology, the *tawhid* approach is also critical of Western immanent environmental ethics. Thinkers such as Aldo Leopold offer an inclusive

ecological ethic, but do not provide a transcendent foundation for these moral obligations. (Gare, 2021; Leopold, 2017; Meine, 2022). Islamic education can adopt this kind of ecological concern, but it must explicitly link it to faith, worship, and obedience to Allah so as not to fall into autonomous morality detached from revelation.

Curriculum reconstruction is a strategic step in realising *tawhid*-based environmental education. Environmental material is not placed as an additional subject, but is integrated with faith, jurisprudence, and morals. Issues such as water crises, forest destruction, and climate change can be discussed within the framework of *tawhid*, divine justice, and the concept of *mizan* (balance) as taught in the Qur'an.

Table 2. Reconstruction of *Tawhid*-based Environmental Education

Aspect of Study	Modern Eco-theology	<i>Tawhid</i>-Based Environmental Education
Philosophical Foundation	Rooted in environmental ethics and modern philosophy that tend to be immanent and secular	Grounded in <i>tawhid</i> as an ontological, epistemological, and axiological principle
Position of God	Often implicit or reduced to an ecological spiritual symbol	God as the center of reality, the source of values, and the ultimate goal of education
View of Nature	Nature is understood as an ecological system or an entity with intrinsic value	Nature is understood as <i>ayat kawniyyah</i> (cosmic signs) and a divine trust (<i>amanah</i>)
Human Position	Humans as managers or as part of an ecological community	Humans as ' <i>abd</i> (servants) and <i>khalifah</i> (vicegerents) who bear a trust
Ethical Orientation	Ecological ethics based on sustainability and collective interests	Ecological ethics based on obedience, eschatological responsibility, and divine justice
Spiritual Dimension	Optional or symbolic	Integral and inherent in all educational processes
Educational	Formation of environmental	Formation of <i>tawhid</i> -based

Goals	awareness and eco-friendly behavior	consciousness that generates ecological responsibility
Curricular Approach	Thematic addition of environmental content	Integration of environmental issues with ' <i>aqidah</i> , <i>fiqh</i> , and <i>akhlaq</i>
Learning Methodology	Cognitive-pragmatic and skills-based	Reflective-transformative and based on <i>tazkiyat al-nafs</i> (purification of the soul)
Criteria of Success	Behavioral change and technical sustainability	Harmony between faith, moral conduct (<i>adab</i>), and ecological practice
Theological Consequences	Potentially produces autonomous ecological morality	Affirms <i>tawhid</i> without sacrificing environmental concern

From a methodological perspective, *tawhid*-based environmental education requires a reflective and transformative approach. The learning process does not stop at the transfer of ecological knowledge, but encourages *tazkiyatun nafs* and the formation of moral awareness. Ecological practices —such as conservation or waste reduction— are understood as part of worship and servitude, not merely activism.

Teacher education also plays a key role in this reconstruction. Educators serve as teachers of environmental material and role models of ecological manners rooted in *tawhid*. Without the internalisation of *tawhid* values in educators, environmental education risks becoming formalistic and losing its transformative power.

In a global context, *tawhid*-based environmental education offers Islam's unique contribution to the world's ecological crisis. It does not reject modern science and environmental awareness, but corrects them with a clear theological framework. This approach allows for critical dialogue with Western eco-theology without sacrificing the principles of God's oneness and transcendence. (Aulia, M. H., Abdussalam, A., Kosasih, A., Ridwan, A. D., Ali, M. M. F., Setiawan, A. G., & Faizin, 2025)

The reconstruction of *tawhid*-based environmental education emphasises that saving the earth cannot be separated from saving humanity's orientation towards God.

Tawhid is not an obstacle to ecological concern, but rather the deepest ethical and spiritual source. By making *tawhid* the paradigm, Islamic education can present a complete alternative to eco-theology: ecological without being secular, spiritual without escaping the reality of the environmental crisis. (Mukhsin, M., & Alfani, 2025; Syafaruddin, 2025)

The discussion of modern eco-theology, the reduction of the concepts of *khalifah* and *amanah*, and the reconstruction of *tawhid*-based environmental education show that the ecological crisis cannot be separated from the paradigm crisis in Islamic education. Efforts to respond to environmental issues through a modern eco-theological approach present opportunities for ecological awareness, but at the same time carry the risk of theological shifts when *tawhid* no longer functions as the main paradigm. The reduction of key Islamic concepts marks a tension between the demands of adapting to global discourse and the need to maintain the metaphysical depth of Islamic teachings. Therefore, the reconstruction of *tawhid*-based environmental education is an urgent necessity, not merely a conceptual alternative. This approach emphasises that concern for the environment is a consequence of faith and servitude to Allah, not an autonomous ethical project. By placing *tawhid* as the ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundation, Islamic education can present a holistic, integrative, and sustainable model of environmental education.

Ultimately, saving the earth should not be pursued at the expense of humanity's orientation towards God. Rather, through the restoration of the paradigm of *tawhid* in environmental education, Islam can make a unique theological and pedagogical contribution to addressing the global ecological crisis. Islamic education is expected to produce a generation that is not only technically and environmentally conscious, but also morally and spiritually responsible, with the awareness that the relationship between humans and nature is always within the framework of servitude to God Almighty.

7. Conclusion

This study concludes that modern eco-theology, although born out of concern for the ecological crisis, contains a theological paradox when adopted into Islamic education

without adequate critical study. Affirmative and normative integration tends to shift the position of *tawhid* from an epistemological foundation to mere symbolic legitimisation. As a result, saving the earth risks being understood as an autonomous goal in itself, rather than a consequence of obedience to Allah.

The findings of this study confirm that Islamic education does not yet have a clear conceptual framework for distinguishing between *tawhid*-based eco-theology and modern eco-theology, which is rooted in secular and ecocentric paradigms. Key Islamic concepts such as *khalifah*, *amanah*, and *adab* experience a reduction in meaning when separated from their orientation towards worship and *ukhrawi* goals. This condition has the potential to give rise to epistemological dissonance in Islamic environmental education curricula and practices.

Therefore, this study recommends the need for a reconstruction of Islamic environmental education based on *tawhid* as the centre of theological consciousness. Ecological concern must be positioned as a manifestation of servitude and obedience to God, not as a substitute or competitor to divine values. With this approach, Islamic education is expected to contribute to environmental sustainability while maintaining its theological integrity, so that the salvation of the earth and servitude to God proceed harmoniously and in balance.

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