

THE QUR'ANIC LEARNING BASED ON ISLAMIC ECO-THEOLOGY AT PESANTREN

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ABSTRACT

The research investigates the intersection of Qur'anic learning, eco-theology, and environmental transformation at the Biharul Ulum Agroecology pesantren (BUAP) in Bogor. Recognizing that environmental issues stem largely from human behavior, the study explores how perspectives derived from the holy book influence individuals. Employing moral theory and liberation theology, the research adopts a qualitative and ethnographic approach to reveal the impact of theology-based Al-Quran learning on environmental practices at pesantren. The findings illustrate that eco-theology-based learning has sparked a notable environmental transformation, shielding the community from ecological crises. This transformation unfolds through a multifaceted process: communal dialogues addressing local challenges, rigorous study of the Quran under the guidance of kyai (Islamic scholars), and subsequent environmental conservation initiatives spearheaded by pesantren. The amalgamation of religious teachings with practical actions has not only mitigated environmental crises but has also alleviated social challenges. BUAP serves as a catalyst for positive change and demonstrates the potential of Qur'anic learning to inspire environmentally conscious behavior. This research contributes to understanding the role of Islamic education in fostering eco-conscious attitudes and offers insights into the synergy between religious teachings and environmental stewardship for the betterment of society.

Keywords: Eco-Theology, Environmental Transformation Liberation Theology, Eco-Pesantren

ABSTRAK

Masalah lingkungan bukan semata persoalan teknis, melainkan sebagian besar bersumber pada perilaku manusia. Perilaku manusia, di antaranya dipengaruhi oleh cara pandang terhadap kitab sucinya. Kitab suci yang dipelajari dapat mempengaruhi sikap pembacanya. Penelitian bertujuan menjelaskan pembelajaran Al-Qur'an berbasis eco-theology dan transformasi lingkungan di Pesantren Agroekologi Biharul Ulum, Bogory. Teori moral dan teologi pembebasan digunakan untuk mendekati transformasi lingkungan di wilayah tersebut. Berdasarkan pendekatan kualitatif dan etnografi, penelitian ini menunjukkan pembelajaran Al-Qur'an berbasis teologi di Pesantren Agroekologi Biharul Ulum, Bogory, telah menghasilkan transformasi lingkungan yang dapat memelihara lingkungan dari krisis lingkungan. Transformasi pembelajaran berbasis eco-theology telah membebaskan masyarakat dari krisis lingkungan dan krisis sosial. Transformasi lingkungan tersebut dimulai dari dialog masyarakat tentang problem kehidupan di lingkungan mereka, kajian intensif teks kitab suci (Al-Qur'an) di pesantren melalui bimbingan kyai hingga aksi konservasi lingkungan yang dimotori oleh pesantren untuk kepentingan masyarakat.

Kata Kunci: Eco-Teologi, Teologi Pembebasan Transformasi Lingkungan, Eco-Pesantren

INTRODUCTION

The global concern over environmental damage and its severe consequences has prompted a call for religious communities to address the crisis guided by their teachings. Islam, notably expressed in the Quran, has demonstrated a commitment to environmental stewardship (Bsoul et al., 2022). This awareness is gaining traction not only in Muslim-majority countries but also in some Western nations like America and England, signifying a growing acknowledgment of solutions to the worldwide environmental crisis (Saniotis, 2012; Buitendag, 2022; Cornelissen, et al., 2008). A distinct theological approach, known as environmental theology or eco-theology, has emerged to grapple with humanitarian and social challenges (Van Dyk, 2009; Nurkamilah, 2012; Najma, 2013; Werff, et al., 2014). Eco-theology contemplates environmental crises and their resolution through a transformative lens rooted in religious teachings. Islamic eco-theology, firmly grounded in the Quran, has articulated these principles in discourse. Muslim scholars have developed the concept of eco-theology, drawing inspiration from Quranic teachings and applying them to social life (Sayyem, 2017; 2021a; 2021b). Prominent Muslim thinkers like Nasr argue that the environmental crisis stems from an anthropocentric theological perspective, placing humans in an exploitative role over the environment. Islamic eco-theology, in contrast, positions humans as servants and empowerers of the earth, emphasizing the divine mandate to preserve it (Suwito, 2017; Bisri, 2011). This transformative perspective reflects a synthesis of religious teachings and ecological responsibility, illustrating the potential of Islamic thought to contribute meaningfully to global environmental challenges).

In Indonesia, the curriculum of pesantren incorporates eco-theology, creating a need for these schools to actively contribute to addressing the environmental crisis. Beyond the traditional focus on Quranic recitation, memorization, and chanting (Murniyanto & Siswato, 2022; Astuti & Kusakabe, 2016; Nuha, 2017; Subair, 2012), contemporary pesantren are called upon to undergo a transformation in tackling humanitarian issues. Recent studies by Arifin (2022) and Isbah (2020) attest to the social transformation capabilities of pesantren. The Qur'an, serving as a theological-philosophical cornerstone for human life, must be imparted with an emphasis on addressing the challenges faced by humanity. Kyai has a role (who supervise and leads pesantren), to extend beyond conventional teaching methods. They are tasked with identifying and applying relevant Quranic teaching models to effectively address the environmental crisis within the context of conservation. This aligns with experts' perspectives on the objectives of pesantren recognizing that expedited social change leading to enhanced social welfare, poverty reduction, sustainability, and the cultivation of a promising future can be achieved through quality education (Michelle et al., 2017).

Pesantren are often established in rural areas and these institutions serve as educational hubs offering substantial learning opportunities. Recognizing the potential for social change in rural areas through education and collective actions (Rosset & Martinez Torres, n.d.), Pesantren, in practice, play a crucial role as educational establishments committed to providing quality education. Numerous studies have delved into the realm of environmental conservation within pesantren (Fawaid, 2016; Mukholisah et al., 2018; Mahrus & Lukman, 2022; Herdiansyah, 2018; Nisa et al., 2017; Siswanto, 2008; Jumardin, 2013; Nursi, 1998; Fata, 2014; Kblack, 2016; Ridwanuddin, 2017). However, these investigations typically concentrate on the specific environmental conservation practices implemented at each research site. The characteristics of pesantren are elucidated through diverse types of environmental conservation efforts. For instance, some pesantren institutions focus on cultivating various plants, while others emphasize the upkeep of plants and fisheries. There are even those that engage in livestock raising and the meticulous management of fertilizers.

Diverging from prior studies, the research conducted at Biharul Ulum Agroecology pesantren (BUAP), took a distinctive approach by commencing with an in-depth examination of the Quran and its interpretation through the lens of the Environmental Fiqh book. The interpretations of Qur'anic teachings were then transmuted into transformative environmental conservation initiatives, fostering an environment conducive to empowering local communities environmentally. Moreover, the establishment of BUAP is rooted in historical context, representing a responsive measure to the multifaceted environmental crisis triggered by gold mining activities in the region. In light of this context, the primary objective of this research is to elucidate the eco-theology-based Al-Qur'an learning paradigm at BUAP, and its far-reaching transformation across various facets of community life.

METHOD

The investigation into eco-theology-based the Quran learning at BUAP Bogor adopts a qualitative approach. The selection of this methodology is grounded in a naturalistic (Marvasti, 2004; Strauss & Anselm, 2003) and interpretative (Anselm, 2003) research paradigm, encompassing the collection and utilization of diverse empirical materials (Denzin, 2005) and approaches (Silverman, 2005). The qualitative approach serves to enable researchers to comprehend the social milieu in which individuals exist, encompassing both the objective nature of behavior and its subjective meaning, including attitudes and motivations (Bacerley et al., 2009; Creswell, 2009; Brown, 2010; Goodwin & Hoeowitz, 2002; Mohajan, 2018). The primary goal of qualitative research is to delineate the attitudes, behavior, and motivations of students engaged in learning the AL-Qur'an based on eco-theology. Additionally, it seeks to systematically interpret problems or phenomena from the perspective of individuals within that particular location, with the potential to generate new concepts or theories.

The qualitative research component, specifically ethnography, was selected to elucidate the theo-ecology-based learning of the Al-Qur'an at BUAP. Marvasti (2004) underscores three key dimensions of ethnography: active involvement and participation in the subject under study, careful consideration of the social context during data collection, and sensitivity to how the research subject is portrayed in the research text. Realist ethnography was chosen, as the researcher assumes the role of a descriptor, refraining from becoming an advocate to voice societal aspirations and issues, as is characteristic of critical ethnography.

The research participants included key informants from the BUAP, including researchers who played a dual role as both observers and subjects. Within this context, researchers engaged in in-depth observations, interviews, and documentation of the phenomenon of Al-Qur'an learning based on eco-theology at BUAP. Additionally, Islamic boarding school leaders and other administrators were included as research subjects due to their direct involvement and comprehensive knowledge of activities at pesantren (Spradley, 2016). The researchers sought to gather insights into the inner world of students as research subjects, aiming to understand their perceptions, assessments, views, and attitudes toward Quranic learning from their perspective, rather than the researcher's standpoint. In line with ethnographic principles, the emphasis was on emic data, focusing on the subjects' internal perspectives, rather than adhering strictly to ethical considerations (Rahardjo, n.t.).

Data collection methods encompassed observation, interviews, and documentation. The observational approach was unique, incorporating participatory researchers in eco-theology-based the Quran learning activities at BUAP, Agroecology, fostering a collaborative understanding (Somantri & Merlina, 2014). In-depth interviews were undertaken with students and leaders of pesantren actively engaged in the Quran learning guided by eco-theology principles. Documentation involved tracing various documents related to the eco-theology-

based the Quran learning activities, including pesantren's agenda, educational materials, activity locations, and visual records capturing the essence of these activities.

The chosen data analysis method employed ethnographic thematic analysis to meticulously depict the cultural characteristics influencing individual social behavior at BUAP Bogor. Additionally, an interactive analysis model consisting of three stages—data reduction, data presentation, and inference/conclusion drawing—was utilized. This approach ensures a thorough examination of the cultural nuances shaping social dynamics within pesantren. To enhance data validity, a data triangulation validity test was implemented. By incorporating these analytical steps, the research aimed to yield a comprehensive, in-depth, and detailed description of the studied problem, facilitating the derivation of inductive conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Context of the Establishment of BUAP

The pesantren operates in Cisarua Village, Nanggung District, Bogor Regency. This location is in the Halimun-Salak National Park area which is upstream from the Cisadane river basin. The Halimun-Salak National Park area, seen from its topography, is dominated by forests, fields, plantations, residential areas and empty land. This zone and area is geographically representative of the lowland rainforest, submontane forest and Montana forest ecosystem types on the island of Java. Cisarua Village in the mountainous area of North Halimun is bound by administrative and legal arrangements under the management of the Forestry Department UPT Mount Halimun Salak National Park, State-Owned Enterprise PT. Perhutani, operates in the forestry sector with pine as its superior commodity, PT. Aneka Tambang (Antam), Tbk., operates in the gold mining sector, and PT. Havea Indonesia, Havindo, operates in the rubber plantation sector, and PT. Nirmala, operates in the tea plantation sector. Management of this area is carried out sectorally. These companies position the Halimun area as an industrial product that must meet market standards. The existence of these companies often triggers various conflicts, especially in the struggle for land, including conflicts with village residents (Hendarti, 2004; Galudra, 2003). This area also has a wealth of mineral resources with high economic value, such as gold, bentonite, etc. Apart from that, this area is full of cultural richness, in this area there are 35 Kasepuhan community groups known as the Kasepuhan Banten Kidul Community (Hndarti, 2004).

Within the Kasepuhan indigenous community, there exists a well-defined system for the conservation and management of forest resources. They categorize forest management and conservation based on established customs into three types: *leuweung tutupan* (forests protected from community disturbance), *leuweung titipan* (forests managed when necessary), and *leuweung garapan* (forests utilized for community benefit). The concept of *leuweung garapan* (designates forests open) for exploitation as rice fields, gardens, or farmland (Samsi, personal communication, May 8, 2022).

Given the geographical conditions, the majority of individuals in this community traditionally work as farmers cultivating paddy fields, gardens, and farms. However, due to limited land availability, absence of land ownership, and modest yields, many transitioned to gold mining for its promising income. This shift in profession has persisted for over three decades, resulting in a generation of farmers lost to gold mining activities. Gold mining, both legal and illegal, is prevalent across the surrounding Cisarua Village area. Legitimate gold mining operations are managed by PT. Antam, Tbk., a mining concession holder, within the broader Pongkor gold mining business unit. In contrast, illegal gold mining is conducted by unlicensed local residents known as *gurandil* or PETI, representing gold miners without government permits.

The prolonged gold mining activities in the region have led to a community crisis, marked by two distinct facets: an ecological crisis and a social crisis. The ecological crisis manifests in forests suffering from erosion, landslides, and floods. Additionally, the Cisadane river basin has been contaminated by gold mining waste, containing toxic heavy metals like mercury (Hg), cyanide (CN), cadmium (Cd), and arsenic (As) with perilous implications. The enduring exposure to these toxic heavy metals has been linked to genetic disorders, hormonal imbalances, reproductive dysfunction, and premature births.

Conversely, the social crisis is intertwined with the avaricious and hedonistic mindset prevalent among miners. Their lifestyle often mirrors characters from television soap operas (Badrudin, personal communication, September 20, 2022). Gold miners have altered community values, eroding the traditional "*guyub*" spirit inherent in village traditions and replacing it with individualistic attitudes, leading to frequent social conflicts. Moreover, mining activities have diminished concern for children's education, as parents perceive elementary schooling as sufficient, prioritizing gold mining as a means to fulfill their immediate financial needs (Atim, *Kiai* Pesantren, personal communication, November 20, 2021).

The backdrop of villages grappling with both ecological and social crises set the stage for the establishment of BUAP Bogor, in 2014. Led by *Kiai* Atim Haetami, who emerged from the educational milieu of pesantren in the Bogor region, BUAP is renowned for environmental stewardship due to *Kiai* Atim's activism. Edy Samsi, with a background in agriculture, collaborates with *Kiai* Atim in leading PBUA. The primary goal of this institution is to serve as a platform for public education on agrarian and ecological reform, fostering societal sovereignty and empowerment.

BUAP underscores the importance of developing and imparting local wealth, wisdom, and traditions to the younger generation, emphasizing aspects like spatial planning to regulate designated areas for ecological balance and sustainable natural resource use. Positioned as an agroecological-based pesantren, BUAP excels in synergizing agricultural activities while preserving ecosystem sustainability. Despite falling under the category of an agricultural pesantren, BUAP differentiates itself with a unique emphasis that diverges from conventional agricultural messages..

Kiai Atim underscored that the inception of BUAP reflects the acknowledgment that environmental crises and related challenges are shared responsibilities for all humanity, including BUAP. The environmental degradation and crisis in the Halimun Salak area have escalated to a critical point, necessitating the active role of the community in safeguarding and preserving it. BUAP views education as an alternative means to instill moral values in students, fostering a life philosophy that emphasizes respect for the environment, noble character, the ability to build meaningful relationships with others, and a harmonious connection with all of God's creation.

Within the Islamic education system, BUAP strives to uphold, teach, and protect its students, referred to as *santri*, ensuring a deep understanding and practical application of Islamic teachings that permeate their way of life. Moreover, BUAP aims to preserve the values of local wisdom and traditions within the broader community, aligning with its commitment to fostering an environmentally conscious and morally grounded society (Atim, *Kiai* Pesantren, personal communication, November 20, 2021).

Possessing expansive agricultural land, BUAP incorporates agricultural education as an additional skill to foster students' independence. Rooted in the vision of cultivating environmentally conscious future generations through Islamic education, BUAP has established a distinct identity in the contemporary era. This vision is articulated in pesantren's mission, dedicated to advancing Islamic education to preserve ancestral local wisdom (Atim, *Kiai* Pesantren, personal communication, November 20, 2021).

This visionary identity, manifested in the vision, has positioned BUAP as a catalyst for social-ecological transformation within the neighboring community. Aligned with this vision, BUAP mission includes: (1) providing students with holistic Islamic education encompassing both classical and contemporary literature, (2) fostering independent thinking and knowledge application while preserving local wisdom, and (3) establishing community-based educational institutions with a collaborative and mutual learning ethos.

BUAP overarching goal is to collaborate with the community in resolving local issues, fostering a cooperative spirit, and nurturing generations that are deeply connected to their homeland. Emphasizing its rural orientation, this pesantren is committed to serving the people and contributing to the well-being of the community, nation, and state. Reflecting its historical roots, the message of BUAP originated in the villages.

The Quran learning at BUAP

BUAP, akin to traditional pesantren, has incorporated the Quran as a compulsory subject, and the learning process is organized into distinct stages. The Al-Qur'an curriculum at BUAP comprises three levels. Firstly, the foundational stage, where Al-Qur'an learning is tailored for elementary-level students, particularly those unfamiliar with Tajwîd. At this stage, students familiarize themselves with *hijaiyyah* letters, learning to read them while focusing on *makhârîj al-ḥurûf* and its *ṣifât*.

Moving on to the second stage, *sorogance*, the Quran learning is designed for students who have attained proficiency at the foundational level. Students not only recite the Quran verses (*tasmî*) but also delve into the meanings of each verse they recite. The third stage, *ḥaflah*, involves an in-depth study of the Quran to comprehend the content of its verses. The Quran learning at this advanced level encompasses Quranic interpretation.

At the *ḥaflah* level, students are introduced to verses addressing the environment, forming the basis for environmental theology. These environmentally relevant verses are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Verses of the Quran addressing the Environment

NO	Themes	Surah and Verses	Description
1.	Creation of the Universe	Qs. asy-Syu'arâ/26:23-24; al-Anbiyâ'/21:56; aṣ-Ṣaffât/37:4; az-Zumar/39:38; al-Baqarah/2:117; ar-Rûm/30:25; Fâtîr/40-41; an-Nâzi'ât/79:27-28; az-Zukhrûf/44:7; an-Naba'/76:37.	These verses explain that the universe - heaven, earth and everything in it - was created by Allah for humans.
2.	The Purpose of the Creation of the Universe	Qs. al-Anbiyâ'/21:16; al-'Ankabût/29:44; al-Aḥqâf/46:3; Âli 'Imrân/3:90; ar-Rûm/30:22; Yûnus/10:6; an-Naḥl/16:65; ar-Ra'd/13:3; al-Baqarah/2:29; al-Jâsiyah/45:13; Luqmân/31:20; Hûd/11:7; al-Mulk/67:2.	The purpose of creating the universe, apart from showing God's power, is also the obligation of humans to worship Him.
3.	The Purpose of Human Creation	Qs. al-Mu'min/23:115; al-Aḥzâb/33:72; az-Zâriyât/51:56; al-Baqarah/2:30; al-An'âm/6:165; Âli 'Imrân/3:110; ar-Raḥmân/55:31; al-Qiyâmah/75:36; Ṣâd/38:26; Hûd/11:61.	The purpose of human creation is to worship God properly.
4.	Man as Caliph	Qs. Ḥal-ajj/22:41; an-Nûr/24:55; al-An'âm/6:163-165; Âli 'Imrân/3:159; asy-Syûrâ/42:38; an-Nisâ'/4:59.	Humans as caliphs are required to care for and preserve nature.

NO	Themes	Surah and Verses	Description
5.	Natural Damage and Conservation Strategies	Qs. al-A'râf/7:56 dan 74; al-Baqarah/2:60; Hûd/11:85; asy-Syûrâ/42:181-183; Isrâ'/17:25-26; al-An'âm/6:143; A'râf/7:31; ar-Rahmân/55:7-9; Furqân/25:67; an-Nisâ'/ 4:118-119; Muḥammad/47:22; al-An'âm/6:123; Isrâ'/17: 15-16.	Natural damage is caused by unjust, exploitative and transgressive human behavior. The conservation strategy is to maintain plants, animals and the entire ecosystem well. A well-maintained ecosystem is free from pollution

The Qur'anic verses addressing the environment stand as guiding principles in realizing PBUA's vision, mission, and objectives. The *Kiai* offers insights and interpretations of Qur'anic verses pertaining to the environment. The Quran serves as a scripture that individuals seeking to enrich their lives will earnestly engage with. This narrative underscores the notion that for the people of Cisarua Village to thrive, they must utilize the Quran as a life guide (Atim, *Kiai* Pesantren, personal communication, November 20, 2021). The Quran is a comprehensive guide for human life, encompassing worldly aspects such as economics, politics, health, education, and the environment, as well as matters related to the afterlife. The act of reading Quran signifies an endeavor to discern a way of life that ensures provisions for the hereafter. *Kiai* cites the words of Allah in Qs. Fâṭir/29-30, emphasizing the phrase "*tijârah lan tabûran*," which *Kiai* elucidates as conveying the notion that the activity of reading and learning the Quran multiplies the reward for each letter. This verse serves as a motivational force, encouraging all individuals to engage with the Quran in a broader sense (Atim, *Kiai* Pesantren, personal communication, November 20, 2021).

It is noteworthy that students not only read but also commit to memorize verses from the Qur'an related to the environment. The memorization of these verses is seamlessly integrated into their daily routines, occurring either in the morning or at night. According to the *Kiai*, this memorization serves as a means for students to uphold environmental conservation in their respective living environments. The source of these verses can be traced back to a compilation resulting from the pesantren scholarship convened in Lido, Sukabumi, in 2003 (Atim, *Kiai* Pesantren, personal communication, November 20, 2021).

In addition, it is important to note that the verses addressing environmental concerns are not explicitly taught in isolation. Rather, they are indirectly referenced and expounded upon when the curriculum delves into the environmental theme, as exemplified in the book on Environmental Jurisprudence. The teaching approach involves alluding to and interpreting these verses specifically within the context of environmental relevance. When engaging with the Qur'anic text, comprehensive discussions on environmental themes take place, particularly at the *ḥafḥ* level, as elucidated by Edy Samsi in a personal communication on November 27, 2022.

***Kiai* and Eco-Theological Struggle at BUAP**

In pesantren, the *Kiai* serves as a cornerstone of knowledge, acting as a vital reference point for both students and the wider community. When delving into discussions about the environment, the insights garnered through dialogues with the *Kiai* emerge as the primary source shaping perspectives on environmental matters. Given the current global crisis, the resolution of which hinges on human perspectives, Muslims, in particular, turn to their reference points. The Quran assumes a pivotal role in guiding Muslims through their daily lives, offering insights for problem-solving. According to the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the Quran serves as an intercessor and a supportive guide

for humans in both the present world and the hereafter. When approached with correct reading, understanding, and implementation, the Quran has the capacity to intercede positively in human life (Atim, personal communication, May 20, 2022).

Religion teaches that the environment is a living space that includes all planets. The Qur'an informs us that it aims to encourage people to read the Qur'an as a reference for life. Based on this principle, the presence of BUAP wants to bridge people's perspective on the Qur'an for the welfare of their lives. Cisarua Village is a village located in a forest area. The welfare of the village community depends on the stability of forest and plantation products. *Kiai* admits that pesantren can be agents of transformation for the development of environmentally conscious culture and other positive cultures based on the teachings of the Islamic religion (Atim, personal communication, 20 May 2022).

Similar sentiments were expressed by other leaders within BUAP. The Quran, functioning as a life guide, is considered non-negotiable. Muslims are obligated to adhere to the Quranic teachings, emphasizing the importance of steadfastness (*istiqamah*) and the practical application of these principles in their daily lives. Reading the Quran is crucial as it serves as the gateway to understanding its profound meanings. Knowledge gains significance when it is firmly rooted in the realities of everyday life, underscoring the need for meaningful integration (Edy Samsi, personal communication, May 20, 2022).

According to *Kiai's* perspective, the environment encompasses everything existing beyond an organism, comprising both the biotic and abiotic components. The biotic facet involves living entities like plants, animals, and humans, while the abiotic aspect includes non-living factors such as temperature, light, chemistry, gravity, and the atmosphere. It is incumbent upon humanity to nurture, uphold, and conserve the environment. The sacred scriptures advocate for a willingness to contribute to planting, aiming to sustain life for future generations. This objective is attainable through cultivating a transcendental bond between humans, the Creator, and nature.

The Quran, particularly in Surah *az-Zâriyât*/51:56, underscores humanity's fundamental duty to solely serve God. Additionally, Surah *al-Baqarah*/2:30 emphasizes that humans are entrusted as caretakers of the earth. A pesantren leader elaborated that environmental conditions, as outlined in Islamic teachings, mirror an individual's faith. Thus, practices of environmental stewardship serve as a reflection of one's faith and character. Individuals who genuinely and faithfully engage with the Quran are unlikely to exploit the environment, recognizing the potential harm to the ecosystem, including human survival (Edy Samsi, personal communication, May 20, 2022).

The environmental degradation witnessed in contemporary times stems from the avaricious exploitation endeavors of humans driven by unchecked desires for control over natural resources. The knowledge they have generated has been misapplied to fulfill their insatiable thirst for exploitative dominance. Unfortunately, the repercussions on survival are often disregarded. Drawing on Nasr's perspective, the *Kiai* expounded that modern humans aspire not merely to coexist with nature but to assert dominance over it. Nature is perceived as a resource to be harnessed for personal gain. The advancements in genetic modification and geoengineering technologies exemplify the extent to which humans seek to manipulate nature.

The trajectory of modern technology reflects a profound yearning within humanity to redefine the boundaries of reliance on nature. Nature is frequently viewed as an "other" to be subdued, serving as a means to uphold human autonomy, dignity, and well-being. However, the paradigm of dominating nature has proven to be problematic and perilous. Embracing a secular perspective of nature in the modern era fosters a mindset where humans aim to master and liberate themselves from perceived limitations, thereby promoting autonomy of thought (Edy Samsi, personal communication, May 20, 2022).

The modern era, which exalts reason and dismisses myths, compels individuals to venerate the multifaceted nature of rationality. Adopting Weber's terminology, *Kiai* observe that modernity favors a specific form of rationality, namely goal-oriented rationality. The exaltation of rationality strips the world of its enchanting essence. The professionalization of society widens the gateway for the exploitation of nature. In contemporary times, humans no longer perceive nature as possessing mystical attributes; rather, it is viewed merely as raw materials and resources subject to human reason and control. The forest transforms from a mysterious realm into a reservoir of wood for the furniture industry (Edy Samsi, personal communication, May 20, 2022).

The environmental degradation in the Cisarua Village serves as a tangible illustration of contemporary human ambitions to dominate nature, evident in both legal and illegal gold mining activities. The soil, originally conducive to cultivated forests, faces erosion with each rainfall. The rivers, integral to the community, are now contaminated. Previously flourishing rice fields, known for producing high-quality agricultural products using inorganic fertilizers, have vanished. Presently, the land's diminished soil quality contributes to meager crop yields and reduced agricultural output.

Islam, as conveyed through the Quran, imparts the principle of monotheism towards Allah and underscores its manifestation in the conservation and empowerment of the environment, as evident in verses such as Qs. al-Muddašir/74:1-2 and ar-Rum/30:41. These verses highlight Islam as "*rahmat li al-'alamîn*," emphasizing that God has intricately designed nature beyond human comprehension. Additionally, Qs. ar-Raḥmân/95:10 guides humanity not to harm or exploit the natural world. God's directive is for humans to actively nurture, utilize, and safeguard nature for their own well-being. In fulfilling this responsibility, humans are reminded that they lack the authority to destroy nature; rather, they are stewards entrusted by God. Nature and the environment, according to Islamic teachings, are not owned by humans but by God (Samsi, personal communication, May 20, 2022)..

The *Kiai* underscored the significance of reflecting on the words in Qs. al-Muddattsir/74:1-2, urging individuals to engage in critical contemplation regarding all aspects of their lives, be it in their residences, workplaces, business endeavors, or recreational spaces. For the gold miners in Cisarua Village, this verse serves as a directive not to solely rely on the inherently high-risk gold mining business for their livelihoods. Instead, the interpretation encourages them, especially those with agricultural skills, to consider returning to more stable and environmentally-friendly farming practices, as elucidated in Qs. az-Zumar/39:38 (Atim, personal communication, May 20, 2022).

The *Kiai* further emphasized that God is the true creator of the environment intended for humans. Humans are mere "enjoyers" of the environment, lacking the authority to claim ownership and cautioned against arbitrary and exploitative use. This concept finds affirmation in God's Word in Qs. al-Aḥqâf/46:3. The creation of the universe, including the environment, is inherently intended for perpetual human benefit, rendering any form of damage unjustifiable (Atim, personal communication, May 20, 2022).

In conclusion, *Kiai* stressed the importance of an Islamic theology that not only delves into the nature of God but also addresses the practical challenges faced by humanity. Islamic eco-theology highlights the profound responsibility of humans to enhance the Earth through activities such as planting, construction, repair, and sustainable living, while actively avoiding exploitative practices. Mismanagement in human interactions with the natural components and resources within an ecosystem can lead to pollution, environmental crises, degradation of environmental quality, and even natural disasters (Samsi, personal communication, September 20, 2022).

In this context, leaders pesantren emphasize that environmental destruction signifies a decline with detrimental effects on one's quality of life. Individuals who exploit nature recklessly and destructively are perceived as attempting to undermine the existence and vitality of the universe, encroaching upon God's rights and power. As believers, humans are urged to engage in reflective thought and embrace environmental theology as part of the journey toward the salvation of all of God's creation (Atim, personal communication, May 20, 2022).

The contemporary understanding of eco-theology in Islam requires clarification, as there are suspicions that the development of eco-theology within Muslim communities may be dominated by a perspective known as Anthropocentrism. This suspicion arises from the prevalent worldview in modern times, strongly influenced by science and technology, which tends to be anthropocentric. Anthropocentrism is characterized by an increasing belief in human self-confidence in managing natural resources and the environment, fueled by the perception that humans are special creatures endowed with rational abilities. The prevalent notion is that natural resources and the environment exist for human benefit, justifying their conquest and exploitation for human prosperity.

Experts argue that anthropocentric tendencies in Islamic eco-theology are rooted in Islamic beliefs regarding the unique nature of humans as exceptional beings, possessing superior qualities. This includes the concept of human dominance over nature and the notion of the caliphate. According to experts, these three elements form the foundational principles of an anthropocentric Islamic theology (Samsi, personal communication, September 20, 2022).

The notion of humans as special beings, *akram*, hinges on the belief that humans are the most superior creatures, capable of achieving excellence. This distinction arises from the human capacity for reason, enabling dynamic development unlike other static creations of God. With their intellect, humans can advance in science and technology. They exercise control over natural resources and the environment, and even venture into outer space. This belief is supported by Quranic verses highlighting the privileges bestowed upon humans (Qs. Al-Isrâ'/17:5, 82:68, 64:3, 40:64), acknowledging humans as rational beings (Qs. Al-Baqarah/2:75, 76, 170,171, al-Mâidah/5:103, Yûnus/10:100), and asserting human dominion over natural resources and the environment through the concept of "*sukbriya*" (Qs. Al-Baqarah/2: 22 and 29, 53:10, 45:13, 31:20) (Edy Samsi, personal communication, September 20, 2022).

Additionally, the concept of the caliphate is commonly interpreted as the belief in the delegation of God's power to humans. Humans are chosen by God as His representative rulers over natural resources and the environment (QS. Al-Baqarah/2:30). These core beliefs are central to Anthropocentric theology, evident in the surface-level behaviors of Islamic societies that often neglect ecological considerations related to energy wastage, environmental pollution, and the exploitation of natural resources. This anthropocentric perspective poses a theological impediment to the development of a conscientious and civilized society (Samsi, personal communication, September 20, 2022).

Transformation of Eco-Theology into the Practical Area at BUAP

The eco-theology principles espoused by *Kiai* pesantren find tangible expression in practical initiatives at BUAP. This transformation is deemed crucial as theology extends beyond the contemplation of celestial matters to encompass the study of earthly concerns. It is imperative to translate the awareness of environmental damage resulting from exploitation into actionable domains within community life. From the observations conducted, two pivotal terms emerge as reference points in delineating the eco-theological transformation at BUAP. Firstly, there are endeavors aimed at addressing the ecological crisis. Pesantren's program in response to the ecological crisis encompasses strategic measures.:

1. Identify social strategic issues in the northern area of Halimun, the Mount Salak area, including:
 - a. Shifting the mindset of individuals from agriculture to engaging in gold mining work is a significant undertaking in Cisarua Village, where a long-standing tradition of gold mining exists. Proposing and effecting this change is a complex task, requiring a substantial amount of time for realization. Gold mining activities in the Pongkor area, Nanggung, come with inherent high risks, ranging from injuries and minor illnesses to potential fatalities. The financial returns from these activities are relatively modest, primarily sufficient to meet daily essential needs. The *Kiai* suggests that community members reconsider their involvement in the perilous and economically unrewarding gold mining industry (Samsi, personal communication, September 20, 2022). A resident of the village echoed similar sentiments, highlighting that the earnings from mining work are meager, barely enough to fulfill immediate kitchen requirements. Compounded by the numerous needs of their families, some community members are compelled to incur debts (Iing, personal communication, September 17, 2022).).
 - b. The community faces significant challenges in farming and gardening due to their limited control over land. Most of the land designated for gardening and farming is under the ownership of companies, and there is an ongoing struggle to transfer ownership to the residents. Despite these obstacles, the community's interest in agriculture remains robust, underscoring the need for accessible land that can fulfill their livelihood requirements. A community leader clarified that the land in Cisarua Village, including that used by BUAP, is not owned by the community or pesantren but is restricted to cultivation rights. The community utilizes government-owned land managed by state-owned companies and the private sector, designated for plantations, national parks, and mining areas. Currently unused, the community aspires for the land to be released and granted ownership. BUAP is actively engaged in ongoing efforts to secure land resolution with the Bogor Regency Forestry Service (Samsi, personal communication, September 20, 2022).).
 - c. The community's agricultural knowledge has predominantly been passed down through generations, rooted in the experiences of their ancestors and lacking adaptation to modern agricultural practices. Furthermore, there is a notable disinterest among young people, particularly high school graduates, in engaging in agricultural management, resulting in a lack of innovation. Successful farming in the contemporary era necessitates comprehensive understanding, spanning the selection of plant seeds and livestock, adoption of effective planting methods, eco-friendly fertilization practices, and proper waste management for both crops and livestock. A pesantren leader highlighted the community's limited grasp of modern farming techniques, often adhering to outdated traditions inherited from their parents. The current challenge with chemical fertilizers, negatively impacting soil quality, underscores the urgency of seeking environmentally friendly alternatives that do not disrupt soil health for subsequent production. It is imperative for individuals to prioritize the acquisition of high-quality seeds, ensuring the maintenance of both quality and quantity as plants mature, a principle that extends to the selection of livestock breeds as well (Samsi, personal communication, September 20, 2022).
 - d. The plight of the residents in Cisarua Village, once prosperous farmers, has now worsened due to their shift to gold mining. Engaging in illegal gold mining with limited resources proves insufficient to meet their livelihood needs compared to contemporary mining methods and tools. The profitability of gold mining for the community is hindered by the small size of the land they possess and the lack of

substantial capital. Consequently, they find themselves perpetually indebted to larger investors. In this context, individuals are compelled to become miners as a last resort, driven by a lack of alternatives and the pressing need for income, albeit modest (Samsi, personal communication, September 20, 2022).

2. Identify ecological crisis issues and initiatives for empowerment. The community surrounding BUAP in Cisarua Village has raised concerns about environmental crises, including the adverse impact of gold mining in the North Halimun area. This has led to natural and environmental degradation, with gold mining waste polluting rivers, rice fields, and water sources used by residents, exacerbating the clean water crisis. In addressing these challenges, the people of Cisarua Village emphasize a religiously grounded commitment to problem-solving. Recognizing that God has endowed humans with reasoning abilities, a passive approach is discouraged, and the BUAP *Kiai* consistently encourages proactive engagement in resolving issues through learning and empowerment..

After identifying social strategic issues, ecological crisis issues, BUAP carried out an environmental conservation movement that transformatively provided solutions to conditions of environmental damage.

- a. Human development through a critical understanding of society is a fundamental aspect of Islamic education, including Quranic interpretation at BUAP. It is imperative for BUAP to establish a structured approach to learning the Quran critically, encouraging students to apply it to the realities of their lives. This capacity to interpret reality is aimed at uncovering problematic relationships related to the socio-ecological crisis and the lasting impact of sustainability issues on the livelihood chain. The objective of this critical learning is to enable students to analyze and approach themselves and their surroundings in a thoughtful and practical manner. Upon grasping social issues, students are expected to engage in reflection, progressing from problem mapping and identification to comprehensive problem analysis. Additionally, pesantren offer solutions to address these problems. In this context, pesantren encourages community members to cultivate a humanistic approach and advocate for environmental preservation as an integral aspect of their living space. This form of critical societal awareness is fostered through "citizenship" activities. From the observed practices, BUAP underscores two key elements in developing critical societal awareness: revisiting Quranic verses on human identity and addressing the issues of ignorance and poverty that arise from the neglect of children's education. Furthermore, it recognizes the potential correlation between these factors and environmental degradation, driven by both internal and external influences..
- b. Transform into a central group of guardians for nature and mountain communities. The environmental conservation initiative at BUAP is manifested through the establishment of a core cadre of nature guardians within villages, aimed at fostering environmental preservation. These cadres are selected from individuals who were formerly engaged in illegal mining but have transitioned into becoming students at BUAP. Typically young high school graduates, they undergo a gradual mentoring process to actively contribute to pesantren programs that assist the community. In addition, those interested in pursuing further education at the university level are offered scholarships, with the condition that they return to serve at BUAP. Students engaged in university activities concurrently continue their involvement in pesantren, managing secondary crops organically and tending to livestock.
- c. Students who exhibit proficiency in the knowledge imparted by the pesantren are subsequently guided to actively participate in and support the execution of planned

programs. These initiatives were applied by establishing backyard farms, rearing livestock, facilitating public recitations with a focus on worship themes, and addressing of socio-ecological issues. The objective of this cadre formation endeavor is to furnish BUAP with individuals who are conscious of their identity as *caliph fi al-ard*. The *Kiai* emphasized that assuming the role of a cadre engaged in utilizing nature and the environment is a manifestation of obedience to God's commands. Nature serves as a reflective mirror of God, making the act of caring for and preserving the environment synonymous with caring for God (Atim, personal communication, September 20, 2022).

- d. Collaborative Creation of *Ulu-ulu* (Clean Water Sanitation) with the Community. BUAP students actively engaged in the construction of '*Ulu-ulu*,' a clean water sanitation project undertaken alongside the Cisarua Village community. This initiative was conceived in response to the pressing need for clean water, aiming to foster communication and reconnect relationships within the community. The longstanding tradition of camaraderie had waned due to the pervasive engagement in gold mining activities. Since the inception of the '*Ulu-ulu*' project, the community has experienced a resurgence in cooperative efforts and improved coordination across all societal components, including pesantren, to address ecological challenges. Kang Pepen, the administrator of the pesantren, elucidated, "The establishment of clean water facilities not only serves as a means to reunite residents but also underscores the earnest commitment of students and the community in addressing social-ecological issues." Another administrator from BUAP highlighted the social values embedded in the movement to create clean water, particularly in reviving a sense of unity among the community, which had dwindled during the prolonged period of intense gold mining activities (Sumantri, personal communication, September 20, 2022). Based on observations, the '*Ulu-ulu*' constructed collaboratively by the community and BUAP is currently providing essential services for drinking, bathing, cooking, and laundering clothes and other household items..
- e. Imparting Knowledge on Organic Farming. The education on organic farming at BUAP serves as a means to equip students with valuable skills and resources for their future. According to BUAP leaders, the advocacy for organic farming is a proactive response by both BUAP and the Cisarua Village community to the prevailing social and ecological challenges they face. Organic farming is endorsed as a method that yields agricultural produce of superior quality compared to conventional chemical-based practices. The fertility of the soil is enhanced, and the organic approach contributes to the sustainability of the food chain. Examining the cultural history of the Mount Halimun area, particularly in Cisarua Village, organic farming was once an integral part of the Halimun people's agricultural heritage. Unfortunately, this cultural practice was forsaken in favor of mining activities. BUAP has revived this tradition, employing organic compost in their farming practices. Notably, the Halimun area, including Cisarua Village, harbors heritage seeds with enduring economic value, encompassing crops such as black rice, vegetables, tomatoes, chilies, cassava, and tubers.
- f. In Nanggung District, a student-farmer has achieved success in creating compost, playing a role in advancing agricultural practices that are both health-conscious and environmentally friendly. The adoption of organic compost in this context is consistent with the wider effort to encourage sustainable agriculture in the region (Maulana, personal communication, October 2, 2022).

- g. Collaborative Agricultural Endeavors within the Community. Recognizing that individuals engaged in gold mining often lack access to fertile soil for farming, BUAP has chosen to address this issue by allocating land to community members. This involves the utilization of land owned by Perhutani, previously contracted to a private company, PT. Hapindo, whose business rights have now expired. Field observations indicate that the community has repurposed the land formerly under PT. Perhutani's contract, transforming it into rice fields and plantations. Furthermore, the community has implemented an agroforestry-based agricultural system known as Agroforestry, which involves cultivating a variety of garden plants using intercropping systems within the forests surrounding BUAP. This inclusive approach allows for the cultivation of tubers, nuts, and a diverse range of vegetables to meet the community's livelihood needs..
- h. Establish Collaborative Connections with Other Groups/Institutions alongside BUAP and the Community. BUAP extends an open invitation to interested parties to join in the mission of reclaiming the lost generation and revitalizing sustainability in the Halimun area. The pesantren has forged partnerships with various relevant institutions, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Previously, consultations took place with entities such as ITB (Bandung Institute of Technology) and the Mining and Science Advocacy Network NGO, as well as the Sayogo Institute Bogor. Notably, in 2020, IPB (Bogor Agricultural Institute) engaged in collaborative efforts by providing assistance in seed selection, tree planting, and training initiatives.

Pesantren originally established as Indonesian educational institutions, have evolved beyond traditional roles centered on Quranic recitation. Recent developments highlight their emergence as platforms for fostering student entrepreneurship within the framework of Islamic education. Research conducted on pesantren in North Sumatra reveals that students are gaining practical experience and engaging in social, economic, and community studies (Astuti & Kusakabe, 2016). From a broader perspective, these institutions play a crucial role in cultivating robust human resources within rural communities. Aligned with the insights of Brown et al., pesantren contribute to expediting social change towards community prosperity, poverty reduction, sustainability, and the establishment of a promising future through quality education (Michelle et al., 2017). The transformation of rural areas can be achieved through education, learning, and social movements (Rosset & Martinez Torres, n.d.). In practice, pesantren in rural settings function as educational hubs providing high-quality education. BUAP, situated in a rural area, exemplifies this by emphasizing the development of life skills. This transformation reflects a shift in pesantren, moving beyond doctrinal struggles to embrace practical, progressive endeavors.

BUAP has effectively equipped its students with diverse life skills, encompassing abilities across various dimensions. These acquired skills and capabilities serve as valuable assets for students upon mastering specific foundational competencies or competency standards within society. Life skills in this context involve activities and learning experiences essential for students to attain particular competency standards. A recent study reveals that life skills at BUAP cover proficiency in reading and comprehending the Quran, language skills demonstrated through public speaking, and environmental management skills (Mahrus & Lukman, 2022).

While Quranic learning at BUAP shares similarities with other pesantren institutions, a noteworthy distinction lies in connecting Quranic study at the *ḥaflah* level with the life skill of environmental empowerment. According to *Kiai* BUAP, Quranic education at the institution is intertwined with extracurricular activities focused on environmental empowerment. This approach, combining Quranic learning with environmental empowerment, distinguishes

BUAP from other pesantren, such as the Ath-Thariq pesantren in Garut and the Daarul Fallah pesantren in Bogor. Notably, these institutions do not integrate environmental empowerment studies as an integral part of Quranic learning (Mukholisah et al., 2018).

BUAP has systematically fostered environmental conservation within its pesantren premises, establishing itself as an eco-pesantren (Herdiansyah, 2018; Nisa et al., 2017; Siswanto, 2008; Jumardin, 2013). The central tenet for these eco-pesantren is sustainability, reflecting BUAP's aspiration to preserve and maintain the surrounding nature. This commitment is demonstrated through diverse initiatives aimed at ensuring sustainable agriculture and forestry practices.

BUAP has actualized the concept of eco-theology by first identifying key social and strategic issues in the northern Halimun area and Mount Salak region, including addressing concerns related to ecological crises and their empowerment. The implementation of this concept involves a spectrum of activities, ranging from the selection of tree seeds, the creation of organic fertilizers, and the planting of productive trees near residences to afforestation efforts in forests. Additional endeavors include enhancing sanitation and empowering clean water facilities. Some students engage in animal husbandry, raising productive animals not only for household consumption but also for marketing purposes at local animal markets.

The environmental stewardship practiced at BUAP aligns with the ethos of various Islamic boarding schools that share a commitment to environmental preservation. An exemplar is the an-Nuqyah pesantren in Madura, which focuses on harnessing plastic waste as a medium for environmental education (Fawaid, 2016; Zulmuqim et al., 2020; Tholchah, 2016; Latief, 2013; Khitam, 2016). Meanwhile, the Daarul Falah pesantren in Bogor prioritizes environmental conservation to foster food self-sufficiency (Mukholisah et al., 2018). Many other pesantren institutions similarly cultivate life skills in environmental empowerment.

Eco-Theology and Eco-pesantren represent religious perspectives on environmental stewardship, implemented and cultivated within the context of pesantren for the purpose of environmental preservation. The central figure in the implementation of the Eco-Theology concept at BUAP is the *Kiai*. The fundamental concept is straightforward: humans bear the responsibility of preserving the environment. In addition to serving God (*Abdullah*), humans are entrusted with caring for the environment as an embodiment of their caliphate duties. The environment and nature serve as mirrors reflecting God, and humans are obligated to protect and preserve this divine manifestation. This perspective aligns with the Islamic concept that has evolved within the Sufi tradition, describing the ontological relationship between God and His creation. Nature, as the manifestation (*tajalli*) of God, stands as the most compelling evidence for God's existence in its relationship with humanity. Nature is regarded as a magnificent piece of art imbued with profound meaning. It serves as a reflection of the beauty of God's name, rendering it sacred and in need of protection, safeguarded from harm (Nursi, 1998; Fata, 2014; Kblack, 2016; Kholis, Quddus, 2012; Ridwanuddin, 2017; Khitam, 2016).

In harmony with the Sufistic viewpoint regarding nature, God, and humanity, the *Kiai* of pesantren at BUAP adopt a forward-thinking eco-theological concept, even within their rural communities. This outlook aligns with Quranic teachings, as evident in Qs. ar-Rahmân/97:10: "The environment was created to be utilized by all species," and al-Baqarah/2:29: "It is He who appropriates natural resources and the environment to be utilized by all of you. Then He created outer space and outer space." The *Kiai* underscore that humans lack the authority to exploit nature arbitrarily, as they are not the true owners of the environment; rather, God holds that distinction. The perspectives of pesantren *Kiai* at BUAP can be seen as surpassing the eco-theology concept put forth by Western experts.

CONCLUSION

Based on the outlined description, it can be deduced that the Al-Qur'an learning at BUAP in Bogor is grounded in ecotheology and follows various learning models. These models include the *balagan* model, emphasizing *tahsîn*, *tajwîd*, and *tarfîl*; the sorogan model, involving learning under expert guidance; and the tasm' model, featuring Qur'an learning celebrated among the audience under expert guidance. The study of the Al-Qur'an, referencing the Environmental *Fiqh* book, encompasses verses about the creation and purpose of the universe, the role of humans as caliphs, and strategies for preserving nature. These Qur'anic verses serve as the foundation for developing environmental theology under the guidance of the *Kiai*. In this theological framework, the Qur'an instructs environmental conservation as an expression of human faith within the responsibilities of the caliphate. The duty of humans, as caliphs, is to uphold and protect nature, manifesting in various activities. At the Agro-ecology pesantren BUAP, environmental theology based on the Qur'an revolves around two key themes: addressing environmental crises by identifying social strategic issues and empowering the community. Strategic shifts in the community's mindset, transitioning from farming to gold mining, regaining control over agricultural land, and fostering farming knowledge are dimensions aimed at resolving strategic issues. The empowerment dimension involves human development through critical community awareness, community members becoming environmental conservation cadres, establishing clean water channels, providing organic farming training, and leveraging existing agricultural land.

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