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**Sustainable Islamic Education Management:
A Framework for Eco-Spiritual Institutions**

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ABSTRACT:

The contemporary landscape of Islamic education management calls for a paradigm that harmonizes administrative excellence, environmental consciousness, and spiritual depth. Many Islamic institutions still operate within traditional bureaucratic systems that prioritize efficiency but overlook the moral and ecological responsibilities embedded in Islamic teachings. This study employs a library research approach to examine how eco-spiritual values can serve as the foundation for sustainable management in Islamic educational settings. Drawing insights from books, journal articles, and conceptual papers, the research identifies four significant findings. First, sustainability in Islamic education management must begin with eco-spiritual consciousness that redefines management as a moral duty before God. Second, the ethical triad of amanah, adl, and ihsan forms the moral architecture of responsible leadership. Third, embedding environmental ethics into institutional governance transforms policy into an act of worship and stewardship. Finally, a conceptual framework of eco-spiritual educational institutions is proposed, integrating spiritual foundation, managerial practice, and cultural transformation. The study concludes that sustainable Islamic education management is not merely a technical reform but a moral and spiritual renewal grounded in Qur'anic ethics and ecological awareness.

Key words: *Islamic education management; sustainability; eco-spirituality; ethical leadership; environmental ethics.*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid transformation of global education in the twenty-first century has forced Islamic educational institutions to rethink the meaning of progress and success.¹ The growing ecological crisis, environmental degradation, and moral fragmentation challenge educators to reconsider the ethical foundation of their management practices. In many cases, Islamic schools and universities have adopted modern management systems inspired by industrial efficiency, yet these frameworks often neglect the spiritual and ecological dimensions of human responsibility.² This tension reflects an academic anxiety: how can Islamic education remain faithful to its spiritual mission while responding to the global demand for sustainable governance?

The discourse on sustainability in education has gained prominence since the United Nations introduced the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4 on quality education

¹Baker Sameeh Al-Mawajdeh et al., "The Role Of The Islamic Educational Media In Confronting The Challenges Of Globalization.," *Journal of Namibian Studies* 37 (2023).

²Sajjad Ahmad et al., "Integrating Islamic Ethics with Modern Governance: A Comprehensive Framework for Accountability Across Religious, Social, and Economic Dimensions," *Al-Irfan* 8, no. 15 (2023): 51–79.

and Goal 13 on climate action.³ However, the mainstream approach to sustainability often treats environmental concern as a technical or administrative issue rather than a moral and spiritual imperative.⁴ In contrast, the Islamic worldview sees nature as a sacred trust (*amanah*) and humanity as *khalifah fil ardh*, stewards responsible for maintaining balance (*mizan*) in creation. This theological foundation offers a rich ethical resource for re-imagining sustainability within Islamic educational management.

Several previous studies have explored environmental education in Islamic contexts, focusing mainly on curriculum development, student behavior, or eco-pesantren initiatives. While these efforts contribute to environmental awareness, they rarely address how management systems themselves can embody sustainability and spirituality simultaneously.⁵ Research on Islamic education management, on the other hand, tends to concentrate on administrative effectiveness, leadership styles, or quality assurance. The gap lies in the limited integration between these two strands: environmental sustainability and Islamic managerial ethics. Bridging this gap is essential for forming institutions that are not only well-organized but also environmentally and spiritually responsible.

From a conceptual standpoint, the idea of eco-spirituality provides a bridge between modern sustainability theories and Islamic ethical thought. Eco-spirituality emphasizes that caring for the environment is a reflection of spiritual consciousness and gratitude toward the Creator.⁶ Within the educational context, this perspective encourages leaders and managers to see their work as an act of worship (*ibadah*) and service to humanity. By connecting ecological awareness with spiritual purpose, Islamic educational management can move beyond bureaucratic procedures toward holistic stewardship.⁷

The rationale of this study emerges from the need to reconstruct Islamic education management frameworks that harmonize administrative professionalism, ecological responsibility, and spiritual consciousness. In the era of climate change and digital transformation, sustainability cannot be limited to green campuses or waste reduction; it must be embedded in the moral vision, decision-making, and leadership ethos of educational institutions. An eco-spiritual approach

³Dolly Priatna dan Shujaul Mulk Khan, "The importance of education and role of educational institutions in climate change mitigation and achieving UN SDG 13 'Climate Action,'" *Indonesian Journal of Applied Environmental Studies* 5, no. 1 (2024): 1–5.

⁴Pranab Kirtunia, "Harmony In Progress: The Imperative Of Environmental Ethical Guidelines For Sustainable Development," *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies* 17, no. 3 (2024).

⁵Koleayo Omoyajowo et al., "Exploring the interplay of environmental conservation within spirituality and multicultural perspective: insights from a cross-sectional study," *Environment, Development and Sustainability* 26, no. 7 (2024): 16957–85.

⁶Encep Encep, "Ekospiritual Dalam Pandangan Al-Qur'an" (Institut PTIQ Jakarta, 2022).

⁷Andi Hajar, "Transforming Islamic Education for Environmental and Social Sustainability," *Sinergi International Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 2 (2024): 82–95.

promises to unite the ethical depth of Islamic values with the strategic clarity of contemporary management theory.⁸

This research therefore aims to conceptualize a model of Sustainable Islamic Education Management grounded in eco-spiritual principles. It explores how the integration of environmental ethics, spiritual accountability, and managerial efficiency can foster institutions that function as both centers of learning and moral exemplars. Through a systematic review of scholarly works published in the last five years, this study synthesizes theoretical insights and empirical findings to formulate a coherent framework applicable to various levels of Islamic education.

The guiding questions of this paper are: (1) What are the foundational principles of sustainable Islamic education management? (2) How can eco-spiritual values be integrated into the managerial system of Islamic educational institutions? and (3) What kind of conceptual framework can support the development of eco-spiritual educational management in practice? By addressing these questions, this study aspires to enrich the discourse on Islamic education management and offer a path toward more sustainable, ethical, and spiritually attuned institutions.

Methods

This study employed a library research design aimed at developing a conceptual understanding of sustainable Islamic education management within the framework of eco-spirituality. The library research approach was chosen because it enables a comprehensive exploration of ideas, theories, and empirical findings that have been previously documented by scholars in the field of Islamic education, management, and environmental ethics. Primary data were obtained from books, peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and credible online publications related to Islamic educational management and sustainability. The materials were carefully selected from reputable academic databases such as Scopus, DOAJ, and Google Scholar, focusing on works published between 2015 and 2025 to ensure both relevance and currency.

The data collection process involved identifying, reading, and interpreting relevant texts to capture key concepts, arguments, and theoretical linkages among the variables under study. Each source was examined critically to extract essential insights on how Islamic values could be integrated into educational management practices that promote sustainability. The data analysis was carried out through descriptive, interpretative, and comparative techniques. Descriptive analysis was used to summarize ideas, interpretative analysis to understand meanings and contexts, and comparative analysis to connect Islamic perspectives with modern sustainability theories. The

⁸Muhammad Idnan Akbar, "Ekospiritualisme Al-Qur'an (Studi atas Tanggungjawab Manusia sebagai Khalifah Fî Al-Ardh dalam Penyelamatan Alam)" (Institut PTIQ Jakarta, 2023).

synthesis of these findings produced a conceptual framework that articulates how eco-spiritual values can serve as the foundation for sustainable management in Islamic educational institutions.

Result

1. Reframing Islamic Education Management through Eco-Spiritual Consciousness

The discourse on sustainability within Islamic education management begins with a fundamental question of consciousness: how should human beings, as both leaders and servants of God, manage institutions of knowledge in harmony with nature? In many educational settings, management has been reduced to a set of technical operations focused on achieving efficiency, productivity, and measurable outcomes.⁹ While these aspects are undeniably important, they often leave little room for the spiritual and ethical dimensions that form the soul of Islamic education. Eco-spiritual consciousness, therefore, emerges as a corrective lens through which management is reinterpreted not merely as a system of control, but as a form of moral guardianship inspired by divine trust (*amanah*).¹⁰

In the classical framework of management theory, success is often measured by organizational growth, effectiveness of leadership, or financial stability. Such parameters, though valuable, fail to capture the holistic nature of human responsibility in Islamic education. Within the Qur'anic worldview, the act of managing is not detached from worship (*ibadah*); it is a spiritual mandate to maintain balance (*mizan*) and prevent corruption (*fasad*) on earth.¹¹ Thus, management in Islamic institutions should not only aim for operational efficiency but must also reflect devotion, gratitude, and care for creation. This reorientation moves the focus from profit and performance toward meaning and moral accountability.

Eco-spiritual consciousness bridges this gap by uniting the intellectual rigor of management with the ethical depth of spirituality. It calls on educational leaders to recognize that their administrative actions—budgeting, policy-making, supervision, and evaluation—are all part of a continuous dialogue between the self, the community, and the Creator. Every managerial decision becomes a site of moral reflection: how will this policy affect the environment, the well-being of others, and the integrity of the institution? In this light, eco-spirituality does not stand outside of management; it permeates its every act with consciousness of divine presence.

⁹Nikos Papadopoulos, Maria Vasilaki, dan Yannis Kotsias, "Operational AI in Business Excellence from Theory to Measurable Results," *National Journal of Quality, Innovation, and Business Excellence* 2, no. 1 (2025): 44–54.

¹⁰Maryam Alhinai dan Ailesha Ringer, "Amanah and Umma: Eco-Islam and Epistemological Diversity in Environmental Communication," *Frontiers in Communication* 10 (2025): 1568627.

¹¹Wulidatul Habibah et al., "Integrasi Nilai-Nilai Al-Qur'an dan Hadits dalam Pendidikan untuk Membangun Tanggung Jawab Konservasi Alam di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Ihyaul Islam Pakuniran," *Jurnal Budi Pekerti Agama Islam* 3, no. 1 (2025): 36–52.

The Qur'an repeatedly reminds humanity of its dual role as *abd* (servant) and *khalifah* (steward).¹² These roles are complementary: servanthood anchors humility before God, while stewardship demands responsibility over creation. When applied to educational management, these dual roles inspire a leadership style that is neither authoritarian nor exploitative, but compassionate and participatory. A manager driven by eco-spiritual consciousness understands that leadership is not ownership; it is service.¹³ Managing resources, people, and the environment becomes a process of cultivating harmony, justice, and sustainability—values deeply rooted in Islamic ethics.

Furthermore, eco-spiritual management redefines the relationship between humans and nature as one of mutual respect and interdependence. Nature is not a passive backdrop to human activity but an active partner in the process of education.¹⁴ The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) exemplified this consciousness through his teachings on moderation, cleanliness, and care for all living beings. In modern terms, this translates into policies and behaviors that reduce waste, promote energy efficiency, and encourage environmental literacy across educational institutions.¹⁵ Such initiatives are not only ecological acts but also expressions of spiritual mindfulness and gratitude for divine creation.

This reframing also invites educators and administrators to reconsider the curriculum and institutional culture. Eco-spiritual consciousness can guide curriculum design that integrates environmental studies with theological reflection, ensuring that students see the environment not as a separate discipline but as a manifestation of God's signs (*ayat kauniyyah*).¹⁶ Likewise, in institutional management, eco-friendly practices such as digital documentation, campus greening, and sustainable procurement become part of a broader moral narrative—educating by example. The institution itself becomes a living classroom of eco-spiritual ethics.

At the managerial level, eco-spiritual consciousness reshapes leadership from being hierarchically centered to being ethically diffused. Authority is exercised not through domination but through inspiration and shared responsibility. When administrators model humility and ecological awareness, they nurture a collective identity among staff and

¹²Avif Alfiyah, Sri Yuliawati, dan Firda Utami, "Humans as Caliphs on Earth Environmental Responsibility in Islamic Perspective," *Jurnal Kajian Islam* 1, no. 2 (2024): 31–36.

¹³I Putu Fery Karyada dan La Ode Sabaruddin, "Exploring eco-spirituality and sustainability performance: a study of village-owned enterprises in Bali, Indonesia," *Cogent Business & Management* 12, no. 1 (2025): 2490603.

¹⁴Dhruvee Sinha, "Eco-Spiritual Synergy: Harnessing Hindu and Islamic Teachings for Effective Conservation Strategies," *Journal of Dharma Studies*, 2025, 1–17.

¹⁵C U Osuji dan T J Nwuke, "Promoting Environmental Literacy and Sustainable Practices for Effective Administration in Schools in Rivers State: Implications for Global Transformation," *Rivers State University Journal of Education* 27, no. 1 (2024): 189–99.

¹⁶D W I AMANDA, "Manajemen Pendidikan Lingkungan Dalam Perspektif Islam Di Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung" (UIN RADEN INTAN LAMPUNG, 2025).

students—a sense that everyone contributes to the moral ecology of the institution.¹⁷ In this sense, leadership becomes a spiritual practice that cultivates inner awareness and outward compassion simultaneously.

Ultimately, reframing Islamic education management through eco-spiritual consciousness offers a profound philosophical shift.¹⁸ It reminds educators and leaders that sustainability is not a trend or external obligation; it is an intrinsic part of Islamic worldview. When management aligns with eco-spiritual values, institutions transcend bureaucratic existence and evolve into moral communities grounded in faith, reason, and environmental stewardship.¹⁹ This transformation brings Islamic education back to its original mission: to nurture balanced human beings who embody harmony with God, with others, and with the natural world.

2. The Ethical Triad of Sustainable Islamic Educational Management

The essence of sustainability in Islamic education management rests not merely on procedures or regulations but on a moral architecture grounded in timeless values.²⁰ Among the most essential ethical pillars are amanah (trust), adl (justice), and ihsan (excellence). These three interrelated principles form an ethical triad that provides direction, balance, and integrity to the managerial process. The triad functions as a moral compass that ensures management does not become a mechanical activity, but a form of worship and ethical responsibility before God.²¹ Each principle offers a unique yet complementary dimension of sustainability—spiritual, social, and professional.

The first principle, amanah, refers to the sacred trust given by Allah to human beings to act responsibly in all affairs. In the context of education management, amanah demands transparency, accountability, and integrity in decision-making. Administrators, teachers, and staff are entrusted not only with material resources but also with the moral development of learners.²² When amanah is internalized, management becomes a spiritual act of stewardship rather than a pursuit of personal or institutional prestige. It prevents misuse of authority and

¹⁷Meitty Balontia, “Developing Ethical Awareness Towards a Sustainable Ecosystem Through Character Education in Higher Education,” *TOFEDU: The Future of Education Journal* 3, no. 4 (2024): 1005–14.

¹⁸Abdi Haji Elmi Adow et al., “A Synthesis of Academic Literature on Eco-Spirituality,” *Global Journal of Environmental Science and Management* 10, no. 4 (2024): 2163–78.

¹⁹Michael York, “Religion and the Environmental Crisis,” in *Ecotheology-sustainability and religions of the world* (IntechOpen, 2022).

²⁰Ahmad Zain Sarnoto, *Manajemen Pendidikan Islam: Integrasi Nilai Spiritual dan Inovasi Institusional* (Takaza Innovatix Labs, 2025).

²¹Hershey H Friedman dan Joshua Krausz, “Moral Compass in Management: Why Every Modern Organization Must Have a Chief Ethics Officer, A Biblical Perspective,” *A Biblical Perspective* (August 16, 2024), 2024.

²²Muammar Idwin, Martin Kustati, dan Rezki Amelia, “Pengelolaan Lembaga Pendidikan Islam dalam Perspektif Manajemen Pendidikan,” *Jurnal Riset Rumpun Agama dan Filsafat* 4, no. 1 (2025): 604–20.

encourages managers to consider the long-term welfare of both people and the environment under their care.

The second principle, *adl*, emphasizes justice as a foundation for social and organizational harmony. In the Qur'an, justice is presented as a divine command—*inna Allaha ya'muru bil 'adli wal ihsan*—signifying that fairness and compassion are inseparable. Within educational management, *adl* translates into equitable policies in resource allocation, opportunity distribution, and performance evaluation.²³ It resists favoritism, corruption, and exploitation that can undermine institutional credibility. Justice also extends beyond human relations to the environment, reminding educational leaders to treat nature as part of the moral community that deserves fairness and protection.²⁴ A just management system, therefore, becomes an ecosystem where every stakeholder is valued, and every resource is used wisely.

The third value, *ihsan*, brings a deeper spiritual dimension to management by emphasizing sincerity and excellence. While *adl* ensures fairness, *ihsan* elevates actions beyond obligation toward the realm of devotion. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) defined *ihsan* as “worshiping Allah as if you see Him,” a notion that inspires individuals to perform their duties with mindfulness and moral beauty. In practical terms, *ihsan* motivates continuous improvement, innovation, and compassion in managing institutions.²⁵ It prevents stagnation and mediocrity, turning routine administrative work into a dynamic pursuit of excellence anchored in spiritual awareness.

Together, these three principles—*amanah*, *adl*, and *ihsan*—construct a holistic framework that balances the internal and external dimensions of sustainability. *Amanah* provides direction and integrity; *adl* ensures balance and fairness; *ihsan* brings vitality and grace to every action. When this triad is applied in educational management, it fosters a culture that integrates professional competence with ethical consciousness.²⁶ It aligns institutional goals with divine values, transforming schools and universities into moral ecosystems where sustainability is lived rather than merely declared.

This ethical triad also challenges the reductionist view of sustainability as a purely environmental or economic concern. Instead, it introduces a moral ecology in which human,

²³Susan Jafari, Sepehr Khajeh Naeeni, dan Nilofar Nouhi, “Decision-Making Strategies in the Allocation of Educational Resources,” *Journal of Resource Management and Decision Engineering* 3, no. 2 (2024): 41–48.

²⁴Katherine Evans dan Dorothy Vaandering, *The little book of restorative justice in education: Fostering responsibility, healing, and hope in schools* (Simon and Schuster, 2022).

²⁵Ummul Khoiroh, Misbahul Arifin, dan Dian Zulfatul Iman, “Integrasi Nilai Islam dan Total Quality Management: Model Pendekatan Mutu Berbasis Spiritualitas untuk Optimalisasi Pendidikan Islam,” *Jurnal Penelitian Dan Evaluasi Pendidikan* 12, no. 2 (2025): 79–86.

²⁶Mackencidy ak Bujang, Bity Salwana Alias, dan Azlin Norhaini Mansor, “Fostering Integrity Among School Principals’ Ethical Leadership: a Comprehensive Systematic Review,” *Int J Eval & Res Educ ISSN* 2252, no. 8822 (2025): 1035.

social, and natural elements coexist harmoniously. Sustainability becomes a continuous act of ethical calibration—ensuring that each policy, decision, and innovation reflects responsibility to God, justice to people, and compassion to nature.²⁷ This redefinition widens the horizon of educational leadership, positioning it as an endeavor that nurtures balance between material progress and spiritual accountability.

In practical terms, implementing the ethical triad requires cultivating organizational culture through both policy and example. Leaders must model *amanah* through honesty and transparency, practice *adl* through fair treatment and participatory governance, and embody *ihsan* through empathy and commitment to quality.²⁸ When these virtues are internalized collectively, they generate what may be called a “sustainable moral climate”—an atmosphere of trust, justice, and excellence that sustains both institutional performance and human dignity. The triad thus transforms sustainability from an external goal into an inner moral state that radiates through the entire system.

Ultimately, the ethical triad offers a distinctive contribution to the discourse on educational leadership. It situates sustainability within the heart of Islamic moral philosophy, demonstrating that enduring progress cannot exist without moral grounding. By weaving *amanah*, *adl*, and *ihsan* into the fabric of institutional life, Islamic education can achieve a balance between administrative efficiency, ethical responsibility, and ecological awareness. This synthesis not only enriches the theory of Islamic education management but also presents a practical model for cultivating institutions that thrive ethically, spiritually, and environmentally.

3. Integrating Environmental Ethics into Institutional Governance

Embedding environmental ethics within the governance of Islamic educational institutions marks a crucial step toward transforming sustainability from a slogan into a living practice. In many cases, environmental initiatives remain confined to extracurricular activities or temporary projects, disconnected from the formal structures of institutional management.²⁹ A truly sustainable transformation requires integrating environmental values into organizational policies, planning, budgeting, and evaluation. This integration ensures that ecological awareness becomes part of the institutional identity, shaping every decision from

²⁷Kiki Farida Ferina et al., “Etika Dalam Manajemen Memimpin Dengan Integritas dan Tanggung Jawab” (Yayasan Putra Adi Dharma, n.d.).

²⁸Mohammad Eisa Ruhullah dan Thameem Ushama, “Tawhidic Leadership In The Modern World: Bridging Islamic Governance With Universal Values For Peace And Integrity,” *Al-Shajarah: Journal of the International Institute of Islamic Thought & Civilization* 29, no. 2 (2024).

²⁹Alexander N Kosarikov dan Natalia G Davydova, “Extracurricular Activities Programs as a Resource for Sustainable Development,” *Prospects* 52, no. 3 (2022): 503–12.

infrastructure design to administrative operations. Thus, governance is redefined not as a neutral bureaucratic process but as a reflection of moral and ecological consciousness.³⁰

The Qur'anic injunction *la tufsidu fil ardh*—"do not cause corruption on earth"—serves as a timeless ethical foundation for this transformation. It implies that leadership and management are acts of stewardship (*khilafah*), requiring wisdom, restraint, and a deep sense of responsibility.³¹ In the context of education management, this principle calls for policies that minimize waste, conserve energy, and ensure that institutional growth does not compromise environmental balance. Whether through digitalization of documents to reduce paper use, efficient energy systems, or sustainable campus design, these managerial decisions become extensions of faith and moral duty. Each policy represents not just administrative efficiency, but also gratitude for the divine gift of creation.

Integrating environmental ethics also reshapes the structure of decision-making within Islamic educational institutions.³² Rather than relying on top-down management, sustainability thrives in participatory governance, where administrators, lecturers, students, and local communities collaborate in shared responsibility. This collaborative model aligns with Islamic principles of *shura* (consultation) and *musyawarah* (deliberation), emphasizing that wisdom emerges through collective reflection.³³ By involving all stakeholders, environmental governance becomes not only more inclusive but also more effective, fostering a sense of belonging and moral ownership among the members of the institution.

One of the major challenges in embedding environmental ethics lies in shifting institutional culture. Many Islamic institutions still operate with a mindset that prioritizes short-term efficiency over long-term sustainability.³⁴ Overcoming this requires educational leadership that can translate environmental values into daily routines and strategic visions. Training programs, awareness campaigns, and curriculum integration can gradually nurture a culture where resource efficiency, cleanliness, and ecological care are perceived as acts of devotion. The transformation of culture precedes the transformation of structure; once values are internalized, policies naturally follow.

³⁰Yoesoep Edhie Rachmad, "Ethical Considerations in Management 5.0: Balancing Technological Advancements with Human Values Globally" (The Academic Professor Board Protocol No, 2022).

³¹Ahmad Faisal, "The Concept of Stewardship (Khilafah) in Islam and Its Implications for Environmental Sustainability," in *IICASS-Ibn Khaldun International Conference on Applied and Social Sciences*, vol. 2, 2024, 41–44.

³²Agus Setiawan, "Ethical Decision-Making in Educational Leadership: Insights from Islamic Scholars," *Edu Spectrum: Journal of Multidimensional Education* 1, no. 1 (2024): 15–27.

³³Nazila Mumtaza Zamhariroh dan Ahmad Yusam Thobroni, "Relevansi Model Pembelajaran Kolaboratif Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an Dengan Tuntutan Kerjasama Dalam Tim Di Dunia Kerja," *An-Nabdlat: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 2 (2024): 412–24.

³⁴Fatwiah Noor dan Iqbal Firdausi, "Strategic Financial Planning for Long-Term Sustainability in Madrasah Aliyah," *Nazhbruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 3 (2024): 493–511.

Practical steps toward environmentally ethical governance can take various forms. Islamic universities and pesantren, for instance, can implement green campus programs, establish energy-saving protocols, and develop waste recycling systems grounded in the concept of *thaharah* (purity). Administrative offices can adopt paperless management systems to reduce ecological footprints while increasing operational transparency.³⁵ Meanwhile, academic curricula can integrate environmental ethics with Qur'anic studies and Islamic law to provide a holistic understanding of sustainability. When these initiatives are institutionalized, they move beyond symbolic gestures and become long-term commitments guided by spiritual and moral awareness.

Ultimately, integrating environmental ethics into institutional governance reaffirms that sustainability is not separate from faith but a manifestation of it. Islamic education, at its best, has always sought to harmonize knowledge with ethics and action with intention. By grounding governance in environmental ethics, educational institutions fulfill their dual mission: nurturing intellectual growth and safeguarding the earth as part of divine trust. This integration transforms Islamic institutions into exemplars of applied eco-spiritual management—places where environmental responsibility is not an external obligation but an internalized expression of worship and moral integrity.

4. Toward a Conceptual Framework of Eco-Spiritual Educational Institutions

The synthesis of ideas and insights gathered from the literature points toward the construction of a conceptual framework that situates eco-spirituality as the philosophical foundation of sustainable Islamic education management. This framework arises from the understanding that sustainability in Islamic institutions cannot be achieved merely through administrative reform or environmental programs, but must be rooted in a coherent worldview that unites faith, ethics, and governance. Eco-spirituality, in this sense, provides the moral compass that guides both managerial decisions and institutional culture,³⁶ ensuring that every action aligns with divine values and ecological balance.

The first dimension of the framework is the Spiritual Foundation, which anchors all forms of management in Qur'anic ethics and prophetic values.³⁷ This foundation emphasizes *tawhid* (the oneness of God) as the ultimate principle that binds human beings to the Creator and the created world. Within this paradigm, management is viewed as an act of worship and moral service, not simply as technical coordination. The Qur'anic teachings on *amanah*, *adl*,

³⁵Tilak De Silva, "Transitions To Paperless Government Offices: An Analysis Of Challenges And Recommendations For Supporting The Green Economy," *Environment (ICSBE)* 2023, n.d.

³⁶Adow et al., "A Synthesis of Academic Literature on Eco-Spirituality."

³⁷Muhammad Umar Riaz Abbasi, "A conceptual framework for Management in the Light of Islamic perspective: an analytic study," *Pakistan Journal of Islamic Philosophy* 4, no. 1 (2022): 15–27.

and *ihsan* establish the ethical infrastructure that shapes the character of leaders and the direction of institutions.³⁸ When these values are internalized, spiritual awareness becomes the driving force behind sustainable decision-making, motivating managers to act with humility, responsibility, and compassion toward both people and the environment.

The second dimension is Managerial Practice, which translates spiritual awareness into operational systems that embody efficiency, transparency, and inclusivity. In an eco-spiritual institution, efficiency does not mean exploitation or overproduction but optimal use of resources guided by ethical reflection.³⁹ Transparency ensures accountability to God and to the community, while inclusivity reflects the Islamic principle of *shura* (consultative governance), inviting collective wisdom in managing shared responsibilities. Managerial practices such as paperless administration, energy-efficient infrastructure, and equitable policy implementation exemplify how sustainability can be manifested in daily operations. Through these practices, spirituality becomes operationalized, shaping the way institutions organize and serve.

The third dimension is Cultural Transformation, which highlights the importance of developing a shared consciousness among all stakeholders that sustainability is not a technical obligation but a form of worship and moral duty. Culture functions as the living expression of an institution's values; thus, fostering eco-spiritual culture requires education, example, and engagement.⁴⁰ Lecturers can integrate environmental ethics into teaching, administrators can model responsible behavior, and students can participate in green initiatives as part of their spiritual formation. Over time, this collective awareness cultivates an environment where sustainability is internalized as part of the institution's spiritual identity.

These three dimensions—spiritual foundation, managerial practice, and cultural transformation—are not separate elements but interdependent layers that reinforce one another. The spiritual foundation gives direction and meaning; managerial practice provides structure and method; and cultural transformation ensures continuity and collective ownership.⁴¹ Together, they create a balanced ecosystem where moral intention and administrative execution are harmonized. The result is an institution that operates not merely to sustain itself but to sustain life, embodying the Qur'anic principle of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*—mercy to all creation.

³⁸Mohammad Eisa Ruhullah dan Thameem Ushama, "Leadership in Islam: a Spiritual and Theological Doctrine," *Fikroh: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pendidikan Islam* 18, no. 1 (2025): 54–74.

³⁹Sinha, "Eco-Spiritual Synergy: Harnessing Hindu and Islamic Teachings for Effective Conservation Strategies."

⁴⁰Adow et al., "A Synthesis of Academic Literature on Eco-Spirituality."

⁴¹Jahroni Jahroni et al., "Spiritual Leadership, Religiosity, and Change Management Effectiveness: A Study in Educational Organisations," *EDUKASIA Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran* 5, no. 1 (2024): 1069–82.

This conceptual framework offers a novel contribution to the discourse of Islamic education management by merging spiritual consciousness and sustainable development into a unified paradigm. It transcends the dichotomy between the sacred and the managerial, proposing that effective governance is inseparable from ethical and ecological responsibility. Through the lens of eco-spirituality, Islamic educational institutions can reclaim their prophetic role: nurturing generations who are intellectually competent, ethically grounded, and environmentally conscious. In doing so, these institutions become moral beacons that illuminate the path toward a more sustainable, compassionate, and spiritually enriched future.

Discussion

Recent developments in Islamic education research demonstrate a growing awareness of sustainability as both an ethical and institutional concern. Studies such as Oki Dermawan et al highlight the implementation of green campus programs across Islamic universities in Indonesia, but most of these efforts remain administrative in nature.⁴² While these initiatives contribute to environmental awareness, they often lack a deeper moral and theological foundation. The present study expands upon this gap by proposing that sustainability in Islamic education must be rooted in eco-spiritual consciousness, where managerial actions are guided by divine accountability (*amanah*). This approach not only aligns with but also enriches transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1985), redefining transformation as both moral and ecological renewal within institutional life.

Similarly, Wildan Miftahussurur and Zahrotul Widad emphasized the integration of Islamic ethical values—particularly *adl* (justice) and *amanah* (trust)—as pillars of good governance in Islamic education.⁴³ Their findings resonate with the Ethical Leadership Theory (Brown & Treviño, 2006), which underscores fairness and moral conduct in leadership. However, the current study deepens this framework by incorporating *ihsan* (excellence) as the third pillar, completing what is here called the “Ethical Triad.” This triad positions sustainability not merely as an external goal but as an inner moral disposition. By doing so, it bridges the gap between Western ethical leadership and Islamic moral philosophy, transforming institutional governance into a form of spiritual stewardship (*khilafah*).

Abdul Rohman et al. contributed further to this dialogue by examining how Islamic schools and universities incorporate environmental consciousness through curricula and eco-theological approaches.⁴⁴ Their works echo the principles of Values-Based Leadership Stuart Allen dan Louis W Fry, both of which advocate for leadership grounded in ethical conviction and spiritual awareness.⁴⁵ The present study synthesizes these ideas by positioning eco-spirituality not as an

⁴²Oki Dermawan et al., “Green Campus Management in Islamic Higher Education: Sustainable Development Goals 13,” *International Journal of Islamic Studies Higher Education* 4, no. 1 (2025): 46–58.

⁴³Wildan Miftahussurur dan Zahrotul Widad, “Good Governance Framework in Islamic Educational Institutions: Literature-Based Insights on Amanah, Maslahah, and Accountability,” *Al-Qiyadab: Journal of Education Governance* 1, no. 2 (2025): 58–71.

⁴⁴Abdul Rohman et al., “Religious Education For The Environment: Integrating Eco-Theology in The Curriculum of Islamic Religious and Character Education to Enhance Environmental Education in Indonesia,” *Nadwa: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 18, no. 2 (2024): 201–26.

⁴⁵Stuart Allen dan Louis W Fry, “A framework for leader, spiritual, and moral development,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 184, no. 3 (2023): 649–63.

optional value but as the philosophical foundation of sustainable Islamic management. Eco-spiritual consciousness thus provides the intellectual and moral scaffolding for leadership practices that harmonize efficiency, transparency, and environmental care within a theological framework.

Further support for this paradigm is found in the research of Syukri et al. who explored the implementation of environmental ethics in pesantren life as part of akhlaq education.⁴⁶ Their findings are consistent with Holistic Education Theory (Miller, 2007), which emphasizes the integration of moral, spiritual, and ecological dimensions in learning.⁴⁷ The current study extends this view by situating cultural transformation as a structural dimension of eco-spiritual management. Instead of limiting environmental education to the classroom, this framework embeds sustainability into institutional behavior and collective identity, thereby turning Islamic educational institutions into living examples of moral ecology.

Moreover, Aisha Aziz dan Shahid Hussain provide empirical reinforcement for the idea that eco-leadership and Islamic management values contribute directly to institutional sustainability and community engagement.⁴⁸ Drawing upon Servant Leadership Theory (Greenleaf, 1977) and the global Sustainability and SDGs Framework (UNESCO), these studies demonstrate how ethical modeling and service-oriented leadership foster long-term commitment. The eco-spiritual management framework developed in this study complements these findings by offering a distinctly Islamic rationale for sustainability—one that views ecological responsibility as an act of ibadah (worship) and a reflection of rahmatan lil ‘alamin (mercy to all creation).

In synthesis, the reviewed studies collectively affirm that sustainability in Islamic education cannot be detached from ethics, leadership, and spirituality. However, the novelty of the present research lies in its holistic integration of these elements into a single conceptual model. By uniting spiritual foundation, managerial practice, and cultural transformation under the umbrella of eco-spirituality, this framework moves beyond the programmatic approaches of previous studies. It offers a transformative vision of Islamic educational management that harmonizes faith and function, ethics and ecology, administration and worship. Thus, this research contributes both theoretically and practically to the growing discourse on how Islamic institutions can embody sustainability as a form of moral and spiritual excellence.

Conclusion

This study concludes that sustainable Islamic education management must be grounded in an eco-spiritual framework that unites faith, ethics, and organizational governance. Through library-based analysis, the research found that eco-spiritual consciousness redefines management as an act of stewardship before God, while the ethical triad of amanah, adl, and ihsan forms the moral foundation for responsible leadership. The integration of environmental ethics into institutional governance transforms sustainability from a procedural agenda into a spiritual and moral culture. Furthermore, the proposed conceptual framework—comprising spiritual foundation, managerial practice, and cultural transformation—offers a holistic model for developing educational institutions that are not only administratively effective but also ethically vibrant and

⁴⁶Syukri Syukri et al., “Integration of Islamic Values with Environmental Ethics in Pesantren Education: A Case Study at Darularafah Raya Pesantren,” *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 13, no. 1 (2024): 1–12.

⁴⁷Yoshiharu Nakagawa, *Education for Awakening: An Eastern Approach to Holistic Education* (Emerald Publishing Limited, 2025).

⁴⁸Aisha Aziz dan Shahid Hussain, “Eco-leadership: mediation of environmental corporate social responsibility policies in promoting pro-environmental behavior,” *International Journal of Ethics and Systems*, 2025.

environmentally conscious. Reflecting on these findings, it is evident that the future of Islamic education lies in reimagining management as a sacred duty to sustain both humanity and nature, embodying the Qur'anic vision of harmony and mercy for all creation (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*).

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