



TRANSFORMATION OF ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN PRESERVING MULTICULTURAL ECOLOGY: AN EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

Ida Zahara Adibah¹, Ayep Rosidi², Rina Priarni³

^{1,2,3} Darul Ulum Islamic Centre Sudirman University, Ungaran, Indonesia.

Email: idazahara@undaris.ac.id

Abstract

The increasingly complex environmental crisis, accompanied by growing challenges of social and cultural diversity, requires educational institutions to transform their educational functions. Islamic educational institutions have a strategic position in developing ecological awareness based on Islamic values while simultaneously promoting respect for societal diversity. This article aims to analyze the transformation of Islamic educational institutions in preserving multicultural ecology through the perspective of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). This study employs a qualitative approach using a library research method. Data were obtained from books, scientific articles, policy documents, and relevant research findings related to Islamic educational management, environmental education, multicultural education, and sustainable development. Data analysis was conducted using content analysis by integrating Islamic perspectives and sustainable education theories. The findings indicate that the transformation of Islamic educational institutions requires changes in governance, curriculum development, organizational culture, educator competencies, and partnerships with communities. Islamic values such as *khalifah fi al-ardh* (human stewardship of the earth), *amanah* (responsibility), *mizan* (balance), and *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (mercy for all creation) serve as normative foundations for developing inclusive ecological awareness. Education for Sustainable Development provides a framework for integrating environmental, social, economic, and cultural dimensions, enabling students not only to develop environmental awareness but also to live harmoniously within multicultural societies. Therefore, the transformation of Islamic educational institutions contributes to fostering generations with strong character, ecological consciousness, and social responsibility toward sustainable development.

Keywords: Islamic Educational Management, Transformation, Ecology, Education for Sustainable Development

INTRODUCTION

Climate change, environmental degradation, pollution, biodiversity loss, and increasing social conflicts resulting from natural resource exploitation represent increasingly complex global challenges. These issues are no longer understood merely as ecological problems but are closely interconnected with social, economic, cultural, political, and ethical dimensions. The report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2023) emphasizes that the climate crisis is shaped by interactions between human activities, social systems, and development governance, requiring multidisciplinary approaches. In line with this perspective, UNESCO (2020) highlights that education plays a strategic role in developing societal capacities to address sustainability challenges by strengthening knowledge, values, attitudes, and responsible actions.



From an educational perspective, the concept of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) has emerged as a paradigm that integrates environmental, social, economic, and cultural dimensions throughout the educational process. Sterling (2001) argues that sustainable education is not merely the addition of environmental topics into curricula but rather a transformation of educational paradigms toward changes in ways of thinking (transformative learning) that encourage learners to become agents of change. Furthermore, Wals (2015) emphasizes that the success of ESD is highly dependent on the ability of educational institutions to establish organizational cultures that promote collaboration, critical reflection, and the participation of all members of the educational community in achieving sustainability.

In the Indonesian context, as a country characterized by high levels of diversity, environmental conservation efforts cannot be separated from strengthening multicultural perspectives. Ethnic, religious, cultural, and local knowledge diversity has generated various ecological practices that contribute to environmental sustainability. Banks (2016) explains that multicultural education aims to promote social justice, appreciation of diversity, and the ability to cooperate within pluralistic societies. Meanwhile, Taylor (2017) emphasizes that recognition of cultural identity serves as an important foundation for strengthening community participation in sustainable development. Therefore, integrating multicultural perspectives into environmental education has become essential for creating contextual and inclusive conservation strategies.

Islamic educational institutions have a strategic position in responding to these challenges. Beyond functioning as centers of knowledge development, Islamic educational institutions carry the mandate of developing students' character based on the values of the Qur'an and Sunnah. From an Islamic perspective, humans are positioned as *khalifah fi al-ardh* (stewards of the earth) who are responsible for maintaining ecological balance, as emphasized in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:30 and QS. Ar-Rum [30]:41. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1996) explains that the modern environmental crisis is rooted in the loss of humanity's spiritual relationship with nature; therefore, addressing this crisis requires the revitalization of religious ethics. Similarly, Fazlun Khalid (2019) argues that Islamic values such as *amanah* (responsibility), *mizan* (balance), *ihsan* (excellence and ethical conduct), and *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (mercy for all creation) provide normative foundations for sustainable and ecologically just development.

Nevertheless, the implementation of environmental education in Islamic educational institutions continues to face various challenges. Environmental learning remains largely partial and cognitively oriented, while the integration of ecological values into institutional governance, organizational culture, and leadership practices has not yet been systematically developed. Tilbury (2011) emphasizes that transformation toward sustainable education requires a comprehensive change through a whole institution approach, encompassing curriculum, management, leadership, partnerships, and organizational culture. This condition indicates that many environmental conservation programs in educational institutions are still dominated by incidental activities, such as tree planting and community clean-up programs, without being accompanied by sustainable institutional transformation.

Furthermore, multicultural approaches within Islamic educational management remain relatively underdeveloped. In fact, successful environmental conservation is strongly influenced by the ability of educational institutions to accommodate diverse values, cultural perspectives, and local ecological knowledge possessed by communities. Orr (2004) argues that the ecological crisis is fundamentally an educational crisis because existing education systems have not fully succeeded in developing ecological awareness and social responsibility among learners. Therefore, Islamic education requires an approach that not only integrates Islamic values with sustainability principles but also promotes intercultural dialogue as an essential component of ecological character formation.



Previous studies have examined environmental education, Islamic education, and the implementation of Education for Sustainable Development. However, research specifically integrating Islamic institutional transformation, multicultural ecological preservation, and sustainable education perspectives remains relatively limited. Most existing studies focus primarily on curriculum implementation or environmental character development, while institutional transformation, leadership, organizational governance, and the integration of Islamic values with multiculturalism have received limited comprehensive attention. This research gap highlights the need to develop a conceptual framework that connects religious, ecological, and multicultural dimensions within an integrated educational paradigm.

The transformation of Islamic educational institutions has become increasingly urgent in addressing twenty-first-century challenges. Such transformation extends beyond curriculum reform and technological advancement; it also involves changes in leadership paradigms, institutional governance, organizational culture, community participation, and learning systems that support multicultural ecological preservation. Fullan (2007) emphasizes that sustainable educational change can only be achieved through organizational transformation involving all stakeholders collaboratively. Therefore, Islamic educational institutions have significant potential to become agents of change in supporting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in relation to quality education, climate action, and partnerships for sustainable development.

Based on the aforementioned discussion, this article aims to analyze how the transformation of Islamic educational institutions can contribute to multicultural ecological preservation through the perspective of Education for Sustainable Development. This study is expected to provide conceptual contributions to the development of sustainability-oriented Islamic educational management while enriching academic discourse on the integration of Islamic values, multicultural education, and sustainable development as foundations for formulating educational policies responsive to global challenges.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach using a library research method aimed at critically analyzing the transformation of Islamic educational institutions in supporting multicultural ecological preservation through the perspective of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). This approach was selected because the study focuses on examining, synthesizing, and constructing a conceptual framework based on relevant scientific sources to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between Islamic education, sustainability, and environmental preservation within multicultural societies.

The research data consist of primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained from scientific articles published in reputable international journals indexed by Scopus, particularly studies addressing sustainable education, Islamic education, multicultural education, educational leadership, and environmental preservation. Secondary data include academic books, reports from international organizations such as UNESCO and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), policy documents, and other scholarly references relevant to the research focus. The literature was primarily selected from publications between 2015 and 2025, while classical works that serve as theoretical foundations were also incorporated to strengthen the conceptual framework.

The data collection process was conducted through systematic searches of academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, and Google Scholar. The literature search utilized combinations of keywords such as Islamic education, Education for Sustainable Development, environmental education, multicultural education, ecological



sustainability, green school, and educational transformation. The collected literature was then screened based on topic relevance, publication quality, publication year, and contribution to the research objectives. Studies that lacked direct relevance to the research focus or did not meet academic quality standards were excluded from the analysis.

Data analysis was conducted using qualitative content analysis techniques, involving stages of data reduction, coding, categorization, interpretation, and thematic conclusion development. Each selected reference was analyzed to identify key concepts, patterns of relationships among concepts, and research gaps related to the transformation of Islamic educational institutions in supporting multicultural ecological preservation. Subsequently, the synthesized findings were interpreted through the ESD perspective to develop a conceptual model explaining the integration of Islamic values, sustainability principles, and multicultural perspectives within educational institutional governance.

To ensure the credibility of the research findings, source triangulation was conducted by comparing various references from international journals, academic books, and global policy documents. Furthermore, the analytical process was carried out systematically and transparently by examining the consistency of arguments across different sources. This process ensured that the findings were academically reliable, theoretically grounded, and capable of providing conceptual contributions to the development of sustainability-based management practices in Islamic educational institutions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Transformation of the Paradigm of Islamic Educational Institutions from the Perspective of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

The development of sustainability issues has transformed the educational paradigm from an approach oriented toward knowledge transmission into a learning process that emphasizes the transformation of values, behaviors, and social responsibility. This shift aligns with the concept of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) promoted by UNESCO, in which education is regarded as a strategic instrument for developing societies capable of responding to environmental, social, economic, and cultural challenges in a sustainable manner (UNESCO, 2020). From this perspective, the success of educational institutions is no longer measured solely by academic achievement but also by their ability to develop students' sustainability competencies, including systems thinking, anticipatory thinking, normative competence, collaboration, and the ability to address complex problems.

This paradigm has strong relevance to Islamic education. From its early development, Islamic education has not only focused on the acquisition of knowledge but also on the formation of individuals who achieve a balance between spiritual, intellectual, social, and moral dimensions. The concept of *khalifah fi al-ardh* positions human beings as stewards of the earth who are responsible for maintaining ecological balance, while the principle of *mizan* emphasizes harmony between humans, nature, and the Creator. Therefore, the fundamental values of ESD share common ground with the objectives of Islamic education, namely the development of human beings who are capable of creating benefits and welfare for all creation (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*).

However, the review of various studies indicates that the implementation of sustainability principles in Islamic educational institutions remains relatively fragmented. Environmental education is generally implemented through activities such as tree planting, waste management, or community clean-up programs conducted periodically without becoming an integral part of institutional culture. This condition demonstrates that ecological awareness has not yet been fully integrated into institutional management systems, curricula, and educational leadership practices. Sterling (2001) argues that sustainable education is not merely about incorporating environmental



topics into learning materials but requires a comprehensive transformation in the ways educational institutions think, make decisions, and develop organizational cultures.

This perspective is further supported by Wals (2015), who argues that transformation toward sustainability can only be achieved when all components of educational institutions adopt a whole institution approach. This approach integrates curriculum development, governance, leadership, organizational culture, community partnerships, and sustainable resource management. In other words, sustainability should not be positioned as an additional program (add-on program), but rather as an institutional identity that influences the entire educational process.

Within Islamic educational institutions, this approach can be implemented by integrating ecological values into institutional vision and mission statements, developing sustainability-oriented curricula, fostering environmentally friendly school cultures, and strengthening leadership practices based on environmental ethics. Such transformation should also be supported by institutional policies that encourage energy efficiency, waste management, water conservation, and the utilization of green spaces as contextual learning environments. Through these practices, students do not merely acquire environmental knowledge but also experience practical learning processes that shape sustainable behaviors in their daily lives.

Furthermore, the transformation of Islamic education paradigms needs to consider the multicultural characteristics of Indonesian society. Cultural diversity has generated various forms of local ecological knowledge that have long contributed to maintaining environmental balance. When such knowledge is integrated into educational processes, students will understand that environmental preservation is not only part of religious teachings but also a cultural heritage that must be collectively protected. This integration simultaneously strengthens students' ability to appreciate diversity and develop cross-cultural collaboration in achieving sustainability goals.

The synthesis of the literature demonstrates that transforming the paradigm of Islamic educational institutions cannot be achieved solely through curriculum reform. Transformation requires institutional-level changes involving visionary leadership, organizational culture, participatory governance, and community engagement as educational partners. This perspective highlights the significant potential of Islamic educational institutions to become agents of change in supporting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in the areas of quality education, climate action, and inclusive community development.

Therefore, the ESD paradigm can serve as a conceptual framework for strengthening the identity of Islamic education as an educational system that not only produces academically competent graduates but also develops individuals with balanced ecological, social, and spiritual responsibilities. Through this transformation, Islamic educational institutions can contribute significantly to building sustainable societies that integrate religious values, environmental awareness, and multicultural understanding.

2. Integration of Islamic Values and Multicultural Ecology in Educational Institutional Governance

The transformation of Islamic educational institutions toward sustainable education does not only depend on curriculum reform but also on the institution's ability to integrate Islamic values with the principles of multicultural ecology across all aspects of governance. The synthesis of various studies indicates that the successful implementation of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is strongly influenced by organizational culture, leadership, the participation of school community members, and the relationship between educational institutions and society. Therefore, strengthening institutional governance becomes a fundamental foundation for developing Islamic educational institutions that are adaptive to sustainability challenges.



Table 1. Integration of Islamic Values, Multicultural Ecology

Dimension	Key Concepts	Implementation in Islamic Educational Institutions	Expected Outcomes
Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)	Sustainability competencies, transformative learning, environmental responsibility	Integrating environmental, social, economic, and cultural dimensions into educational processes	Students develop sustainability awareness and responsible behaviors
Islamic Values	Khalifah fi al-Ardh (stewardship of the earth), Amanah (responsibility), Mizan (balance), Maslahah (public benefit), Rahmatan lil 'Alamin (mercy for all creation)	Incorporating Islamic ethical principles into curriculum, institutional policies, leadership, and daily practices	Formation of ecological awareness based on religious and moral responsibility
Multicultural Ecology	Cultural diversity, local ecological knowledge, inclusion, community-based conservation	Integrating local wisdom, cultural practices, and diverse community perspectives into environmental education	Strengthening appreciation of diversity and collaborative environmental conservation
Sustainable Governance	Green policy, sustainable leadership, organizational culture, resource management	Developing environmentally friendly institutional policies, waste management systems, energy efficiency, and green school culture	Creation of sustainable, adaptive, and environmentally responsible institutions
Community Partnership	Collaboration among schools, communities, government, religious leaders, and environmental organizations	Building networks and partnerships to support ecological programs and sustainability initiatives	Increased social participation and collective responsibility for environmental preservation
Institutional Transformation	Whole institution approach, organizational change, participatory management	Transforming curriculum, leadership, governance, facilities, and institutional culture toward sustainability	Islamic educational institutions become inclusive, sustainable, and globally competitive

Source: Developed from a synthesis of literature by UNESCO (2020), Sterling (2001), Wals (2015), Tilbury (2011), Banks (2016), and Fullan (2007).

From an Islamic perspective, the management of educational institutions cannot be separated from the values of amanah (trust and responsibility), 'adl (justice), shura (consultation), ihsan (ethical excellence), and maslahah (public benefit). These values serve as ethical principles in decision-making processes while fostering an organizational culture that demonstrates responsibility toward both human beings and the environment. According to Beekun (1997), Islamic leadership is not solely oriented toward achieving organizational goals but also emphasizes moral responsibility to realize collective welfare. This perspective aligns with the concept of sustainable governance, which positions sustainability as an integral component of strategic decision-making processes rather than merely an administrative target.



On the other hand, Indonesian society is characterized by multicultural diversity reflected in various ethnicities, religions, languages, and local knowledge systems. Such diversity has generated numerous conservation practices that have developed across generations, including indigenous forest management, community-based irrigation systems, traditions of protecting water sources, and local wisdom in agricultural land management. Various studies indicate that these practices contribute to environmental preservation because they are built upon values of solidarity, balance, and respect for nature. Therefore, Islamic education has the opportunity to utilize local knowledge as a learning resource that enriches environmental education while strengthening students' cultural identities.

This perspective is consistent with Banks' (2016) theory of multicultural education, which emphasizes that education should accommodate diverse social and cultural experiences to enable learners to develop competencies for living in pluralistic societies. Multicultural education does not merely teach tolerance but also develops the ability to understand diverse perspectives in addressing shared challenges. In the context of environmental preservation, this approach is essential because environmental degradation represents a collective problem that cannot be solved by a single social or cultural group. Therefore, integrating environmental education with multicultural education can produce learning experiences that are more contextual, inclusive, and relevant to societal realities.

The literature review also reveals that many Islamic educational institutions still perceive environmental education as an extracurricular activity or an incidental program. This condition results in ecological values not yet becoming an integral part of institutional culture. However, Tilbury (2011) explains that effective ESD implementation requires a comprehensive institutional approach (whole institution approach), involving the integration of policies, curriculum, facility management, leadership, and community partnerships. Through this approach, all institutional activities become learning environments that cultivate sustainable behaviors.

In practice, multicultural ecological governance can be realized through several strategies. First, institutions need to develop visions, missions, and policies that explicitly incorporate sustainability values as part of their institutional identity. Second, curricula should be developed by integrating Islamic teachings, scientific knowledge, and local wisdom into environmental learning. Third, organizational cultures should be established to encourage energy efficiency, waste reduction, environmental greening, and responsible resource utilization. Fourth, partnerships should be strengthened with religious leaders, indigenous communities, local governments, environmental organizations, and the private sector to create an educational ecosystem that supports sustainability.

Leadership also represents a determining factor in the success of this transformation. Fullan (2007) argues that sustainable educational organizational change can only occur when leaders are able to develop a shared vision, foster collaborative cultures, and encourage innovation throughout the organization. Within Islamic educational institutions, principals, madrasah leaders, pesantren administrators, and school managers play strategic roles as agents of change who bridge Islamic values with the demands of sustainable development. Visionary leadership encourages policies that consider not only organizational effectiveness but also the social and ecological impacts of educational activities.

Based on the synthesis of various studies, the integration of Islamic values and multicultural ecology within educational governance produces three major implications. First, it establishes an organizational culture that positions environmental preservation as part of religious responsibility. Second, it increases the participation of all members of educational institutions and communities in collaborative environmental management. Third, it develops students' competencies not only in ecological awareness but also in the ability to collaborate within diverse societies. Therefore,



multicultural ecological governance becomes an essential pillar in transforming Islamic educational institutions into sustainable, inclusive, and globally competitive institutions.

3. Sustainability-Based Transformation Model for the Management of Islamic Educational Institutions

The synthesis of the literature indicates that transforming Islamic educational institutions into sustainable organizations requires comprehensive and systemic change. Such transformation cannot be achieved merely through curriculum revision or the introduction of environmental awareness programs; rather, it must encompass fundamental changes in management paradigms, leadership practices, organizational culture, resource governance, and patterns of community partnership. This perspective is consistent with the organizational change theory proposed by Fullan (2007), which argues that sustainable educational change can only be realized when all components of an organization work collaboratively toward a shared vision. Accordingly, the management of Islamic educational institutions should be directed toward developing an institutional system that integrates Islamic values, sustainability, and multiculturalism into a unified and coherent framework.

Figure 1.
Sustainability-Based Transformation Model of Islamic Educational Institution Management



Based on the literature analysis, the transformation model proposed in this study comprises five major components: transformative leadership, a sustainability-based curriculum, a green organizational culture, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and continuous evaluation. These five components are interconnected and collectively form an integrated system that enables Islamic educational institutions to adapt sustainably to social change and ecological challenges.



The first component is transformative leadership grounded in Islamic values. Numerous studies have identified leadership as a critical determinant of the successful implementation of educational innovation. Leaders are responsible not only for administrative management but also for articulating a shared vision, mobilizing institutional resources, and cultivating an organizational culture that supports change. Within the context of Islamic education, transformative leadership should be founded upon the principles of *amanah* (trustworthiness), *shura* (consultation), justice (*adl*), and *ihsan* (excellence). These values ensure that institutional policies consider not only organizational effectiveness but also environmental sustainability and the public good (*maslahah*). Such a leadership model encourages participatory decision-making, organizational adaptability, and a long-term strategic orientation.

The second component is a sustainability-based curriculum. UNESCO (2020) emphasizes that Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) should be integrated across all subject areas rather than treated as an additional or isolated topic. In Islamic educational institutions, this integration can be achieved by connecting *Qur'anic kauniyah* (cosmic) verses with contemporary scientific knowledge, strengthening environmental project-based learning, and implementing pedagogical approaches that encourage students to solve real-world environmental problems within their communities. This approach makes learning more contextual, enabling students not only to understand ecological concepts theoretically but also to gain practical experience in environmental stewardship and sustainable living.

The third component is the development of a green organizational culture. Research indicates that behavioral change among members of educational institutions is more effectively sustained through a consistent organizational culture than through classroom instruction alone. A green organizational culture is reflected in institutional policies promoting energy conservation, reducing single-use plastics, implementing waste management based on the principles of Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle (3R), conserving water resources, greening school environments, and utilizing environmentally friendly technologies. These practices create an authentic learning environment in which students experience ecological responsibility firsthand. Consequently, sustainability values extend beyond cognitive understanding to become habitual practices that shape students' character and environmental ethics.

The fourth component is the strengthening of multi-stakeholder partnerships. Studies on ESD consistently demonstrate that educational institutions cannot achieve sustainable development independently. Collaboration with governments, higher education institutions, civil society organizations, the private sector, indigenous communities, and religious leaders plays a vital role in expanding learning resources and enhancing the effectiveness of sustainability initiatives. Within Indonesia's multicultural context, such partnerships also facilitate the integration of local ecological knowledge into educational processes. This provides students with opportunities to learn from community-based conservation practices, making education more contextual while fostering appreciation for cultural diversity and indigenous environmental wisdom.

The fifth component is continuous evaluation. One of the most frequently reported weaknesses in environmental programs within educational institutions is the absence of comprehensive evaluation systems capable of measuring behavioral change, organizational culture, and institutional impact. Therefore, evaluation should employ an integrated framework combining academic, social, and ecological indicators. Assessment should extend beyond students' cognitive achievement to include changes in attitudes, participation in environmental activities, institutional governance effectiveness, and contributions to surrounding communities. Such a comprehensive evaluation framework provides a stronger foundation for evidence-based decision-making and continuous institutional improvement.



The transformation model developed in this study demonstrates that the success of Islamic educational institutions in promoting multicultural ecological sustainability depends on the integration of all organizational components. Leadership provides strategic direction, the curriculum develops sustainability competencies, organizational culture fosters environmentally responsible behavior, partnerships strengthen external support, and continuous evaluation ensures the sustainability of institutional transformation. Together, these five components reinforce one another, creating an educational system that is not only responsive to environmental challenges but also strengthens Islamic values while embracing cultural diversity.

This study also highlights its novelty in comparison with previous research. Most earlier studies have examined environmental education, Islamic education, or multicultural education as separate fields of inquiry. In contrast, this research proposes a conceptual model that integrates these three perspectives within an institutional management framework based on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Accordingly, the transformation of Islamic educational institutions is understood not merely as an administrative reform but as a strategic process that connects organizational governance, Islamic values, environmental sustainability, and respect for cultural diversity within a coherent and mutually reinforcing system.

4. Theoretical and Practical Implications of the Transformation of Islamic Educational Institutions for Multicultural Ecological Sustainability

The findings indicate that the transformation of Islamic educational institutions based on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) extends far beyond changes in teaching and learning practices. Such transformation contributes to the development of an educational system that comprehensively integrates spiritual, ecological, social, and cultural dimensions. These findings reinforce the view that sustainable education should not be understood merely as a strategy for improving environmental literacy but as an institutional transformation process capable of reshaping behavior, organizational culture, and educational governance as a whole. Consequently, sustainability becomes an integral part of the identity of Islamic educational institutions rather than an incidental or supplementary program.

From a theoretical perspective, this study demonstrates the convergence of the concepts of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), multicultural education theory, and the paradigm of Islamic education. Traditionally, these three concepts have been examined independently, resulting in the absence of a comprehensive conceptual framework. ESD has largely been developed within the context of general education, multicultural education has focused primarily on managing social and cultural diversity, while Islamic education has emphasized the cultivation of religious character. The findings of this study reveal that all three share a common objective: developing individuals who are responsible toward fellow human beings, the environment, and society as a whole. Therefore, integrating these perspectives provides a robust conceptual foundation for developing an Islamic educational management model that is more adaptive to contemporary global challenges.

This integration also broadens the understanding of the concept of *khalifah fi al-ardh* (vicegerency on Earth) within the context of modern education. The concept of *khalifah* should not be interpreted solely as a theological mandate to protect nature but also as a guiding principle for managing educational organizations in which sustainability becomes the foundation of institutional decision-making. Islamic values such as *amanah* (trustworthiness), *mizan* (balance), *ihsan* (excellence), *shura* (consultation), and *maslahah* (public welfare) can be translated into governance principles that promote transparency, participation, justice, efficient resource management, and environmental responsibility. In this way, Islamic teachings function not merely



as normative values but also as an operational framework for establishing sustainable educational institutions.

This study further highlights the importance of a multicultural perspective in environmental conservation. Numerous studies have shown that local communities possess valuable ecological knowledge developed through historical experience and cultural traditions. Such knowledge represents significant social capital that can strengthen environmental education when incorporated into educational practices. In Indonesia's multicultural context, diverse traditions of environmental stewardship demonstrate that sustainability is shaped not only by modern scientific approaches but also by cultural values transmitted across generations. Accordingly, Islamic educational institutions should develop learning approaches that integrate Islamic teachings, contemporary scientific knowledge, and local wisdom, enabling students to understand sustainability from multiple and complementary perspectives.

From a practical perspective, the findings offer several implications for educational leaders and policymakers. First, institutional transformation should begin with the formulation of vision statements, missions, and strategic plans that explicitly incorporate sustainability principles as a central direction for institutional development. These policies should be supported by adequate resource allocation, professional capacity development for educators, and evaluation systems capable of periodically assessing sustainability performance. In this manner, ESD implementation becomes embedded in everyday institutional practices rather than remaining merely a policy document.

Second, strengthening educators' competencies is essential for successful transformation. Teachers and lecturers should function not only as knowledge transmitters but also as facilitators capable of integrating environmental issues, cultural diversity, and Islamic values throughout the learning process. This requires continuous professional development in ESD pedagogy, project-based learning, collaborative learning approaches, and the utilization of local environmental issues as authentic learning resources. Enhancing educators' competencies will improve the quality of instruction while fostering students' character development, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities.

Third, Islamic educational institutions should expand partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders, including local governments, higher education institutions, community organizations, non-governmental organizations, indigenous communities, and the private sector. Such collaborations not only strengthen the implementation of environmental programs but also create opportunities for joint research, community engagement, and innovation in sustainable resource management. Cross-sector collaboration is particularly important because environmental challenges are inherently complex and cannot be effectively addressed by individual institutions acting independently.

Fourth, the transformation of Islamic educational institutions has strong relevance to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Integrating Islamic values with sustainability principles contributes to the development of an educational system that not only enhances human capital but also strengthens social responsibility and ecological stewardship. In this regard, Islamic educational institutions can serve as centers of social innovation capable of encouraging behavioral change toward more sustainable lifestyles within society.

Overall, this study proposes a holistic conceptual model that positions the transformation of Islamic educational institutions as a comprehensive process involving changes in leadership, governance, curriculum, organizational culture, and institutional partnerships. The principal novelty of this research lies in its integration of three major perspectives—Islamic education,



multicultural ecology, and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)—within a unified institutional management framework. This model advances previous scholarship, which has generally examined these dimensions separately. Consequently, the study contributes not only to the theoretical development of Islamic educational management but also provides a practical conceptual framework that can guide policymakers and educational practitioners in designing transformation strategies that are responsive to environmental challenges, cultural diversity, and the global sustainable development agenda.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the transformation of Islamic educational institutions is an essential prerequisite for supporting multicultural ecological preservation through the perspective of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Such transformation does not only involve curriculum development but also encompasses changes in leadership paradigms, institutional governance, organizational culture, resource management, and the strengthening of partnerships with various stakeholders. The integration of Islamic values, including *khalifah fi al-ardh*, *amanah*, *mizan*, *ihsan*, and *maslahah*, with sustainability principles and multicultural education provides a conceptual foundation that enables Islamic educational institutions to become adaptive to environmental challenges while remaining responsive to social and cultural diversity.

The findings further emphasize that environmental preservation can be more effectively achieved when integrated with respect for cultural diversity and local knowledge systems. Therefore, the implementation of ESD in Islamic educational institutions requires a whole institution approach that connects curriculum, leadership, organizational culture, learning processes, and community participation within an integrated and supportive system. This approach enables the development of learners who possess not only academic competencies but also ecological awareness, social responsibility, and the ability to collaborate within multicultural societies.

The main contribution of this study is the development of a conceptual framework that integrates Islamic education, multicultural ecology, and Education for Sustainable Development from an institutional management perspective. This framework expands existing studies that have often examined these three dimensions separately and provides a conceptual foundation for developing sustainability-based policies and transformation practices in Islamic educational institutions.

This study has limitations because it employs a library research approach, resulting in findings that are primarily conceptual in nature. Therefore, future research is recommended to conduct empirical studies in madrasahs, Islamic schools, and pesantren across different regions to examine the implementation of the proposed transformation model, identify factors influencing its success, and evaluate its impact on strengthening sustainability culture, environmental preservation, and the improvement of Islamic education quality.

REFERENCES

- [1] Anwar, K., & Masuwd, M. A. (2026). Artificial Intelligence, Social Media, and Post-Truth: An Islamic Education Perspective. *Al-Mudarris (Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Islam)*, 9(2), 245-264.
- [2] Banks, J. A. (2016). *Cultural diversity and education: Foundations, curriculum, and teaching* (6th ed.). Routledge.
- [3] Barth, M., Michelsen, G., Rieckmann, M., & Thomas, I. (Eds.). (2016). *Routledge handbook of higher education for sustainable development*. Routledge.



- [4] Bascopé, M., Perasso, P., & Reiss, K. (2019). Systematic review of Education for Sustainable Development at universities. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 20(6), 1018–1038.
- [5] Beekun, R. I. (1997). *Islamic business ethics*. International Institute of Islamic Thought.
- [6] Erawati, D. (2026). Ethnopedagogy in Social and Cultural Sciences: A Bridge between Cultural Identity, Local Values, and Contextual Learning. *Maneser: Journal of Religion, Spirituality, and Culture*, 1(1), 37-48.
- [7] Filho, W. L., Azul, A. M., Brandli, L., Özuyar, P. G., & Wall, T. (Eds.). (2020). *Quality education*. Springer.
- [8] Fullan, M. (2007). *The new meaning of educational change* (4th ed.). Teachers College Press.
- [9] Hedayati-Marzbali, M., Abdullah, A., Razak, N. A., & Tilaki, M. J. M. (2022). Sustainability education and pro-environmental behaviour: A systematic review. *Sustainability*, 14(15), 9337.
- [10] IPCC. (2023). *Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report*. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.
- [11] Khalid, F. (2019). *Signs on the Earth: Islam, modernity and the climate crisis*. Kube Publishing.
- [12] Kopnina, H., & Meijers, F. (2014). Education for sustainable development (ESD): Exploring theoretical and practical challenges. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 15(2), 188–207.
- [13] Latifah, L., Ngalimun, N., Setiawan, M. A., & Harun, M. H. (2020). Behavioral Proficiency In The PAI Learning Process Through Interpersonal Communication. *Bitnet: Jurnal Pendidikan Teknologi Informasi*, 5(2), 36-42.
- [14] Latifah, Z., & RV, S. EA, & Ngalimun. (2023). *Basic Concepts Of Child And Youth Creativity Development And Its Measurement In Developmental Psychology*. *Educurio: Education Curiosity*, 1 (2), 426–439.
- [15] Latifah, L., & Ngalimun, N. (2023). Post-pandemic education recovery through digital transformation with an Islamic education management approach in the Society 5.0 era. *Floating Journal: Social Sciences*, 5(1), 41–50.
- [16] Leal Filho, W., Shiel, C., & Paço, A. (2016). Implementing and operationalising integrative approaches to sustainability in higher education. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 133, 126–135.
- [17] Leicht, A., Heiss, J., & Byun, W. J. (Eds.). (2018). *Issues and trends in Education for Sustainable Development*. UNESCO Publishing.
- [18] Lozano, R., Ceulemans, K., Alonso-Almeida, M., Huisinigh, D., Lozano, F. J., Waas, T., Lambrechts, W., Lukman, R., & Hugé, J. (2015). A review of commitment and implementation of sustainable development in higher education. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 108, 1–18.
- [19] Nasr, S. H. (1996). *Religion and the order of nature*. Oxford University Press.
- [20] Ngalimun, N., Matin, A., & Munadi, M. (2022). Building democratic values in independent policy learning through multicultural learning communication. *Jurnal Transformatif (Islamic Studies)*, 6(1), 33–48.
- [21] Ngalimun, N., Mujahid, I., & Makruf, I. (2022). Quality of work-life balance in quality of work life on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and work motivation at the Muhammadiyah University of Banjarmasin. *Al-Kalam: Journal of Communication, Business and Management*, 9(2), 60–74.
- [22] Orr, D. W. (2004). *Earth in mind: On education, environment, and the human prospect* (10th anniversary ed.). Island Press.



- [23] Rieckmann, M. (2018). Learning to transform the world: Key competencies in Education for Sustainable Development. In A. Leicht, J. Heiss, & W. J. Byun (Eds.), *Issues and Trends in Education for Sustainable Development* (pp. 39–59). UNESCO.
- [24] Riinawati, N. (2022). Implementation of character education in Islamic perspective at school. *Journal of Positive Psychology and Wellbeing*, 6(1), 561–566.
- [25] Sachs, J. D. (2015). *The age of sustainable development*. Columbia University Press.
- [26] Sterling, S. (2001). *Sustainable education: Re-visioning learning and change*. Green Books.
- [27] Suprapti, S., Ilmiyah, N., Latifah, L., & Handayani, N. F. (2022). Islamic Aqidah learning management to explore the potential of Madrasah students. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal (BIRCI-Journal)*, 5(1), 4664–4673.
- [28] Taylor, C. (2017). *Multiculturalism: Examining the politics of recognition*. Princeton University Press.
- [29] Tilbury, D. (2011). *Education for Sustainable Development: An expert review of processes and learning*. UNESCO.
- [30] UNESCO. (2020). *Education for Sustainable Development: A Roadmap*. UNESCO Publishing.
- [31] UNESCO. (2021). *Learn for our planet: A global review of how environmental issues are integrated in education*. UNESCO Publishing.
- [32] United Nations. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. United Nations.
- [33] Wals, A. E. J. (2015). *Beyond unreasonable doubt: Education and learning for socio-ecological sustainability in the Anthropocene*. Wageningen University.
- [34] Wals, A. E. J., & Benavot, A. (2017). Can we meet the sustainability challenges? The role of education and lifelong learning. *European Journal of Education*, 52(4), 404–413.