

MAPPING IDEA & LITERATURE FORMAT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Ecological Interpretation: Analysis of Qur'anic Verses on the Environment from a Contemporary Interpretation Perspective

Fahima Gani¹, Nila Khoiru Amaliya², Achmad Dardir³

^{1,2} Faculty Ushuluddin, Adab End Da'wah, IAIN Ternate, Ternate, Indonesia. Email: muhammad.wardah@iain-ternate.ac.id¹, jubairsitumorang@iain-ternate.ac.id²

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: March 08, 2025

Revised: April 05, 2025

Accepted: June 30, 2025

DOI

<https://doi.org/10.52970/grmilf.v5i2.1676>

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the verses of the Qur'an related to the environment through the perspective of contemporary interpretation. The study focuses on how the ecological messages in the Qur'an provide an ethical-theological foundation for humans as khalifah to maintain the balance of nature. The research method used is qualitative-descriptive with a library research approach, reviewing classical and contemporary interpretation literature, and the latest scientific articles. The results of the study show that verses such as QS. Al-A'raf (7): 56–57, QS. Ar-Rum (30): 41, and QS. Al-Baqarah (2): 164 provides a comprehensive picture of the importance of maintaining ecosystem sustainability and the impact of environmental damage caused by human actions. The analysis of ecological interpretation confirms that rain, plants, and the balance of nature are manifestations of God's grace and human ethical-spiritual responsibilities. Thus, ecological interpretation can be used as a new paradigm in environmentally aware Islamic education and an Islamic contribution to solving the global ecological crisis.

Keywords: Ecological Interpretation, Environment, Contemporary Interpretation.

I. Introduction

Current environmental crises, such as deforestation, pollution, and climate change, are not merely technical problems but also reflect the fragility of the human-nature relationship. In the Islamic context, concern for environmental sustainability is nothing new; it is enshrined in Quranic principles, which require humans, as caliphs, to maintain harmony between creation and the Creator. Classical interpretations emphasize theological, legal, and moral aspects, while the ecological dimension has not been explored. However, in recent years, an ecological interpretive approach has emerged in national and international studies, offering a new perspective on environmental verses.

Mukhlis (2022), in a study entitled Ecological Paradigm in the Interpretation of the Qur'an: A Thematic-Contextual Study revealed that the Qur'an contains explicit teachings regarding environmental protection, balance (mīzān), and the responsibilities of the caliph, which are relevant to

the contemporary decade and need to be used as a basis for ecological ethics. Syauqiah, Syafril Alfalah, and Nasrulloh (2022) in *The Balance of Nature in the Perspective of the Qur'an: Thematic Interpretation of the Environment and Its Implications in Modern Life* emphasize that environmental imbalance is a violation of divine law, and that the principle of Qur'anic balance is very relevant as a contemporary ecological ethic.

Kartika et al. (2023) in "Environmental Conservation Efforts in Thematic Interpretation Studies" examine verses such as QS. Al-Baqarah (2):164, Ar-Rūm (30):41, and Al-A'raf (7):56, which emphasize the prohibition of *isrāf* (excess), the importance of *mīzān*, and the role of humans as *khalīfah* as sources of Qur'anic ecological teachings that are applicable in the modern era. In a more specific context, Alviansyah and Dahliana (2023) interpret Surah Al-A'raf verse 57 ecologically: rain is a source of life that the sky brings. However, human activity has deteriorated this quality, resulting in acid rain. They emphasize the importance of ethical-theological principles in maintaining rainwater quality.

QS. Al-A'raf (7):57 "It is He who brings the wind as good news that precedes the arrival of His mercy (rain) so that when (the wind) has carried a heavy cloud, We drive it to a dead (barren) land, then We send down rain in that area. Then we grew various kinds of fruit with that rain. That is how we raise the dead so that you will always remember." is a very relevant verse to this topic. This verse can be analyzed as a reminder of rain's blessings and ecological function and a call to human responsibility in protecting it from self-inflicted damage. From an ecological perspective, QS. Al-A'raf verse 57 describes the relationship between God and nature as Creator and creation and contains the principles of *ri'āyah* (care) and *mas'ūliyyah* (responsibility). Rain, which is described as a blessing and a source of life, shows how important water is as a supporter of the sustainability of the ecosystem. Within the framework of *khalīfah*, humans have a mandate not only to utilize water but also to maintain its quality and sustainability so that it remains a blessing for all living creatures. When rain experiences degradation due to human activities, such as turning into acid rain due to industrial pollution and atmospheric damage, this reflects a form of *fasād fi al-ardh* (damage to the earth) which is prohibited by the Qur'an (see also QS. Ar-Rūm: 41). Therefore, this verse can be understood as an ethical and spiritual call for humans to build ecological awareness based on Qur'anic values, namely maintaining balance (*mīzān*), avoiding *isrāf* (excess), and striving for environmental conservation. In contemporary interpretations such as *Tafsir al-Misbah*, Quraish Shihab (2002) emphasizes that this verse presents rain as a universal blessing for humans and all creatures. Therefore, the ecological interpretation of this verse serves as a reminder that ecological sustainability is a spiritual mandate inherent in the task of humankind's caliphate on earth. Furthermore, a contemporary approach through ecological interpretation opens up the potential to ground Quranic values in conservation practices, environmentally conscious Islamic education, and spirituality-based environmental movements. Findings from previous research (such as those by Kartika et al., Alviansyah & Dahliana) serve as a methodological foundation. Thus, this research is expected to contribute theoretically to the tradition of modern Islamic interpretation and become the basis for the formation of ecological ethics rooted in sacred texts, a synergy between faith and action that can respond to contemporary environmental urgency holistically.

II. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a library research approach. Library research was chosen because the study focused on analyzing Quranic verses related to the environment based on contemporary interpretations. Qualitative research is considered appropriate for exploring the

deeper meaning of texts, contexts, and interpretations. According to Creswell (2018), qualitative research serves to understand the meaning constructed from texts or human experiences through in-depth interpretive analysis. The data sources in this study consist of: Primary sources, namely the Qur'an and contemporary interpretation books such as Tafsir al-Misbah by M. Quraish Shihab, contemporary Tafsir Maudhu'i, and scientific articles on ecological interpretation. And secondary sources, namely books, Sinta-accredited national journals, international journals, and scientific works relevant to ecology and contemporary interpretation. According to Zed (2014), library research emphasizes collecting data from literature, whether in books, articles, or official documents, so it is relevant for text-based research.

Data was collected using documentation techniques, namely identifying, classifying, and reviewing relevant literature. Documentation includes: Searching for verses of the Qur'an related to the environment (e.g., QS. Al-A'raf [7]: 56–57, QS. Ar-Rūm [30]: 41, QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 164) and reviewing contemporary tafsir books that provide an ecological perspective—searching for scientific articles in the last five years regarding ecological interpretation and environmental ethics. Data analysis was conducted using content analysis based on thematic interpretation (maudhu'i). The analysis stages include identifying verses related to ecology in the Qur'an, grouping themes according to categories, such as the prohibition of damage (fasād), the principle of balance (mīzān), and the role of the caliph, and contextual analysis by comparing classical and contemporary interpretations. An ecological interpretation is used to find messages in the Quran that are relevant to modern environmental problems. According to Krippendorff (2018), content analysis allows researchers to explore the meaning of the text by paying attention to the historical and social contexts surrounding it. To ensure data validity, this study employed source triangulation techniques, comparing data from the Qur'an, contemporary interpretations, and modern academic articles. Lincoln and Guba (1985) asserted that the validity of qualitative research can be strengthened by credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

III. Results and Discussion

The study results show that the Qur'an has several verses that directly or indirectly discuss the environment, including QS. Al-A'raf (7): 56–57, QS. Ar-Rum (30): 41, QS. Al-Baqarah (2): 164, and QS. Al-An'am (6): 99. These verses not only emphasize the role of humans as khalīfah on earth, but also provide a strong warning not to commit fasād (damage) and emphasize the importance of maintaining mīzān (balance). Placing these verses within the framework of ecological interpretation shows that, since the beginning, Islam has instilled the values of environmental awareness. Hence, preserving nature is integral to spiritual obedience and social ethics.

Contemporary interpretation analysis further demonstrates that the ecological messages in the Qur'an are highly relevant in responding to modern environmental problems, such as water and air pollution, deforestation, and global climate change. This perspective emphasizes that current ecological damage is a consequence of human actions, as mentioned in Surah Ar-Rum (30:41). Thus, ecological interpretation offers a normative understanding and an ethical-theological foundation that can serve as an alternative solution in environmental mitigation and preservation efforts.

Verse 57 of the Quran, Al-A'raf, is crucial because it depicts rain as a blessing from God and a life-sustaining force. Ecological interpretations view this verse not only as a depiction of a natural phenomenon but also as a warning against damaging rain quality through pollution and excessive emissions. This finding aligns with the analysis of Alviansyah and Dahliana (2023), who asserted that

human actions have transformed the blessing of rain into an ecological threat in the form of acid rain. The study found that the principle of balance (*mīzān*) is a primary foundation of Quranic ecological teachings. When this balance is disturbed, nature responds with ecological disaster. This is consistent with Syaughiah, Alfalah, and Nasrulloh's (2022) research, which asserts that maintaining natural balance is part of upholding divine law.

Another verse, QS. Ar-Rum (30):41 mentions damage to land and sea caused by human activity. Research confirms that current environmental degradation, such as marine pollution and forest exploitation, is a real threat against which the Qur'an has warned. Mukhlis (2022) stated that the destruction of ecosystems by humans is a denial of the mandate of the caliphate. The results of contemporary interpretation studies place humans as users of nature, guardians, and caregivers (*ri'āyah*). The concept of the caliph in the Qur'an demands ecological responsibility. In their research, Kartika et al. (2023) stated that the caliph's role must be understood holistically, not limited to social relations, but also ecological relations with all living things.

While classical interpretations emphasize the spiritual and moral dimensions, contemporary interpretations expand them to include ecological awareness. This research suggests that reinterpreting environmental verses from an ecological perspective is more relevant to addressing the challenges of the current climate crisis. This aligns with Quraish Shihab's view in Interpretation of al-Misbah that rain is a universal blessing for all creatures, not just humans. The research results found that Qur'anic ecological ethics include three things: (1) prohibition of excess (*isrāf*), (2) obligation to maintain balance (*mīzān*), and (3) responsibility of the caliph in caring for the earth. These findings support the view of Al-Jayyousi (2016), who stated that Islamic environmental ethics emphasizes moral and spiritual responsibility in maintaining the sustainability of nature.

When analyzed contextually, Quranic verses provide a normative basis for responding to global issues such as climate change, water crises, and pollution. This research is consistent with Adebayo's (2021) study in the Journal of Islamic Environmental Studies, which asserts that Quranic values can potentially provide alternative solutions for global environmental ethics. This research contributes to the development of contemporary interpretation by adding an ecological perspective rarely explored in classical interpretation. This reinforces the idea that interpretation is not only normative but also responsive to the socio-ecological realities of modern society.

Compared to Mukhlis's (2022) study, which focused more on the ecological paradigm, this study emphasizes thematic analysis of key verses and their relevance to the global environmental crisis. While Kartika et al.'s (2023) focus on conservation, this study emphasizes ecological ethics derived from the Quranic text as a guide to life. The practical implications of this research are the need to make the ecological teachings of the Qur'an the basis for an environmentally conscious Islamic education curriculum, a da'wah program responsive to ecological issues, and a social movement based on Qur'anic values. Thus, this research makes an academic and strategic contribution to developing the ecological awareness of the Muslim community. The above research results show that the Quran contains theological, ethical, and ecological foundations that can serve as guidelines for addressing the environmental crisis. Contemporary interpretations allow for reinterpreting Qur'anic verses to better contextualize ecological realities. These findings corroborate previous research and emphasize the importance of integrating Islamic spirituality with environmental conservation movements.

4. Conclusion



This study concludes that the Qur'an has a strong theological and ethical foundation in building human ecological awareness. Verses such as QS. Al-A'raf (7):56–57, QS. Ar-Rum (30):41, and QS. Al-Baqarah (2):164 emphasizes that the universe was created with balance (*mīzān*), that environmental damage (*fasād*) is the result of human actions, and that humans as *khalifah* have the responsibility to protect and care for the earth. Contemporary interpretations of the Quran demonstrate that its messages are not merely normative but also relevant and applicable to addressing modern ecological problems such as climate change, pollution, deforestation, and the water crisis. For example, verse 57 of the Quran, Al-A'raf, presents rain as a symbol of mercy and a reminder of humanity's obligation to protect ecosystem quality from degradation. This research confirms that ecological interpretation can bridge Islamic spirituality and global ecological challenges. Thus, Qur'anic teachings on the environment can serve as a foundation for ecological ethics, environmentally conscious Islamic education, and social movements responsive to the environmental crisis. Integrating these values is expected to strengthen humanity's ecological awareness in maintaining the earth's sustainability as a divine mandate.

References

- Adebayo, RI (2021). Islamic environmental ethics: Qur'anic perspectives on ecological balance. *Journal of Islamic Environmental Studies*, 5(2), 45–62.
- Al-Jayyousi, OR (2016). *Islam and sustainable development: New worldviews*. London: Routledge.
- Alviansyah, Z., & Dahliana, Y. (2023). Analysis of the ecological interpretation of the special qualities of rainwater in QS. Al-A'raf verse 57. *Nuansa: Journal of Islamic and Social Studies*.
- Creswell, J. W. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Kartika, M., Galib, M., & Abubakar, A. (2023). Environmental conservation efforts in thematic interpretation studies. *Alwatzikhoebillah Journal: Islamic Studies, Education, Economics, and Humanities*.
- Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Mukhlis, F. (2022). Ecological paradigm in the interpretation of the Qur'an: Thematic-contextual study. *QOF: Journal of Al-Qur'an Studies and Tafsir*, 6(1), 89–108.
- Syauqiah, Z., Syafril Alfalah, AH, & Nasrulloh. (2022). The balance of nature from the perspective of the Qur'an: A thematic interpretation of the environment and its implications for modern life. *Academic Media Journal*.
- Zed, M. (2014). *Library research methods*. Jakarta: Obor Foundation.