

Communicating Eco-Islam: From Religious Values to Environmental Practices in a Disaster-Affected Community

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Received: 31/07/2026

Revised: 29/08/2026

Accepted: 01/09/2026

Abstract

The growing frequency of environmental disasters and ecological degradation highlights the need for environmental approaches that integrate ecological responsibility with religious and ethical values. Previous studies have extensively examined *tauhid* (divine oneness), *khalifah* (stewardship), and *mizan* (balance) as normative foundations of Islamic environmental ethics. However, limited empirical research has examined how these established ecological values are communicated, interpreted, and connected to environmental practices within disaster-affected communities. Addressing this gap, this study examines how Islamic communication mediates the connection between Islamic ecological values and community environmental practices in Aceh Tamiang, Aceh. Using a qualitative field research design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentation involving two purposively selected informants: Nasrullah Abdul Rahim, a humanitarian and environmental activist, and Naad Darul, a community member affected by floods and landslides. Data were analyzed thematically and validated through source and technique triangulation. The findings indicate that Islamic communication functions as a meaning-making mechanism through which *tauhid*, *khalifah*, and *mizan* are connected to community experiences of environmental disasters and ecological responsibility. Communication principles of *tabligh* (conveying the message), *hikmah* (wisdom), and *uswah hasanah* (exemplary conduct) facilitate this process through humanitarian activities, environmental initiatives, education, and community engagement. However, the findings also reveal that increased ecological awareness does not automatically translate into sustained environmental practices, as behavioral responses remain influenced by social conditions, economic circumstances, available facilities, and community support. This study contributes empirically to Islamic and environmental communication scholarship by demonstrating how religious ecological values are communicated and interpreted within a disaster-affected community, positioning Islamic communication as a bridge between religious meaning, ecological awareness, and environmental engagement rather than as a direct determinant of behavioral change.

Keywords

Environmental Conservation; Islamic Communication; Islamic Ecology; Environmental Communication.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The environmental crisis has become one of the most significant challenges affecting human sustainability in the contemporary era. Climate change, ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss, pollution, and increasing ecological disasters demonstrate that environmental problems are no longer limited to natural processes but are closely connected with human activities, patterns of resource utilization, and social responsibility toward nature. The complexity of environmental challenges indicates that conservation efforts cannot rely solely on technological interventions and government regulations; they also require approaches that strengthen ethical awareness, social values, and community participation in environmental stewardship. (Al-jayyousi et al., 2023; Nasution & Triadi, 2025). Environmental degradation is fundamentally related to the relationship between humans and the natural world. Unsustainable exploitation of natural resources, land-use changes, and weak ecological awareness contribute to increasing environmental vulnerability. Therefore, environmental preservation requires not only ecological management but also communication processes capable of shaping how communities understand, interpret, and respond to environmental issues. Environmental problems are social and cultural phenomena because public perceptions, values, and collective behaviors influence how environmental challenges are addressed. (Dong & Huang, 2023; Jönsson et al., 2024; Soga & Gaston, 2020).

Within Muslim societies, environmental responsibility has a strong theological foundation derived from Islamic teachings. Islam views nature as a creation of Allah that must be maintained, while humans are positioned as *khalifah* (stewards) who carry responsibility for preserving balance on earth. The concepts of *tauhid* (divine oneness), *khalifah* (stewardship), and *mizan* (balance) represent fundamental principles in Islamic ecological thought, emphasizing that humans are not absolute owners of nature but trustees who are responsible for maintaining ecological harmony. (Al-jayyousi et al., 2023; Mukhlis et al., 2022). Islamic ecological perspectives emphasize that environmental preservation is not merely a practical concern but also a moral and spiritual responsibility. The concept of *khalifah* highlights human accountability for managing natural resources responsibly, while *mizan* emphasizes the importance of maintaining ecological equilibrium. Similarly, the principle of *amanah* positions environmental care as a trust that must be fulfilled by humans as part of their relationship with God and creation. (Al-Haddad, 2026; Widiawaty et al., 2026).

Previous studies have extensively examined Islamic environmental ethics through theological, philosophical, and normative perspectives. Research by Nasr (1969), Khalid, (2017), demonstrates that Islamic teachings contain important ecological principles that support environmental responsibility and sustainable development. These studies provide significant contributions by explaining the theological foundations of Islamic environmental ethics. However, most existing studies primarily focus on explaining why environmental preservation is important within Islamic thought, while less attention has been given to how these ecological values are communicated, interpreted, and transformed into concrete environmental practices within communities. (Al-Jayyousi et al., 2023; Haider, 2025; Hayat et al., 2023; Wani & Azhar, 2024). This limitation highlights the importance of examining environmental preservation through the perspective of Islamic communication. Islamic communication is not merely understood as a process of transferring information but as a communication practice rooted in ethical, spiritual, and social values. Hefni explains that Islamic communication emphasizes truthfulness, responsibility, and moral orientation based on Islamic teachings. Similarly, Mowlana argues that Islamic communication integrates spiritual dimensions with social interaction, making communication a medium for shaping individual attitudes and collective behavior.

In environmental contexts, Islamic communication functions as a bridge that connects theological values with ecological practices. Through principles such as *tabligh* (conveying the message), *hikmah* (wisdom), and *uswah hasanah* (exemplary conduct), environmental messages can be communicated through religious lectures, *dakwah*, educational activities, community engagement, and social initiatives. These communication processes enable abstract concepts such as *tauhid*, *khalifah*, and *mizan* to become meaningful social values that influence how communities understand and respond to environmental challenges. (Ringer & Bloomfield, 2025).

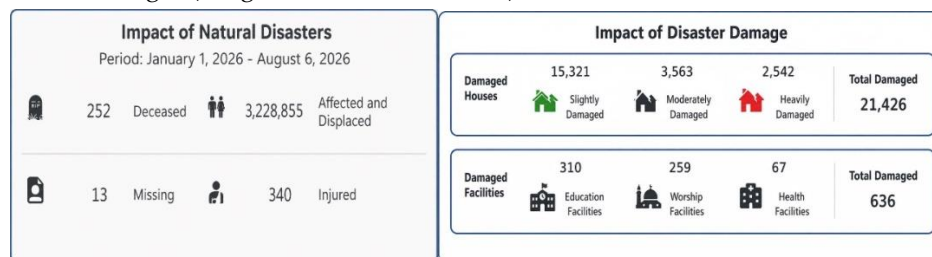


Figure 1. Disaster Data for Indonesia

Source: National Agency for Disaster Countermeasure (BNPB, 2026)

Data from the National Agency for Disaster Countermeasure (BNPB) up to August 6, 2026, indicates that Indonesia experienced 1,422 disaster events, predominantly floods (539 incidents), forest and land fires (367 incidents), extreme weather (314 incidents), and landslides (103 incidents). These disasters resulted in 252 fatalities, 13 missing persons, and 340 injuries, while over 3.2 million people were affected and displaced. Additionally, more than 21,000 houses sustained damage, and hundreds of public facilities were impacted. This data demonstrates that environmental issues in Indonesia not only cause ecosystem damage but also lead to serious social and humanitarian consequences; thus, an approach capable of fostering public awareness—including through Islamic communication—is required.

The phenomenon of environmental degradation in Indonesia reveals a gap between the ecological values taught in Islam and actual environmental management practices within the community. A clear example is the destruction of mangrove ecosystems in coastal areas, such as in Riau Province—specifically the coastal region of Dumai City. Land-use conversion, the exploitation of coastal resources, and low public awareness regarding the ecological importance of mangroves have driven the degradation of coastal zones. Yet, mangrove ecosystems play a vital role in maintaining natural balance, mitigating the impacts of climate change, protecting coastal areas from abrasion, and serving as a source of livelihood for local communities. This situation indicates that religious values concerning the human mandate as “*khalifah*” (steward of the earth) have not yet been fully internalized into the community's ecological behavior. (Miller & Tonoto, 2023; Pramesthy et al., 2026)

Similar issues are evident in the phenomena of waste management and environmental pollution across Indonesia's urban areas. Rising volumes of household waste, low awareness regarding waste sorting, and consumerist behavior indicate that environmental problems stem not only from infrastructure limitations but also from aspects of communication, culture, and social awareness. This reality presents a challenge for the Muslim community in implementing Islamic ecological values, given that Islamic teachings regard cleanliness as an integral part of faith, prohibit behavior that causes environmental degradation (“*fasad fil-ardh*”), and mandate the preservation of the natural balance (“*mizan*”). The gap between normative religious values and daily practices highlights the need for a

communication approach capable of translating Islamic teachings into ecological messages that are easily understood and applied by the public.

Efforts to preserve the environment based on Islamic values have already begun through various initiatives, such as environmental “dakwah” (religious outreach), “green mosque” programs, ecological education in “pesantren” (Islamic boarding schools), environmentally conscious communities, and faith-based digital campaigns. However, implementation faces obstacles such as limited religious-based environmental literacy, a lack of systematic communication strategies, and suboptimal collaboration among religious leaders, the government, academics, and community groups. These phenomena demonstrate that the core challenge of environmental preservation lies not merely in safeguarding natural resources but also in establishing communication that can transform public perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors toward the environment. Consequently, the Islamic communication perspective warrants examination as an approach capable of bridging spiritual values, ecological awareness, and sustainable practices within society. (Ali & Agushi, 2024).

Islamic communication theory emphasizes the principles of “tauhid” (divine oneness), “tabligh” (conveying the truth), “amanah” (responsibility/trustworthiness), and “amar ma’ruf nahi munkar” (enjoining good and forbidding evil). Hefni (Hefni, 2017) asserts that Islamic communication is rooted in the Qur’an and Hadith, oriented towards honesty, ethics, and the integration of spiritual values into every act of communication. Mowlana (Mowlana, 2019) developed a five-dimensional model of Islamic communication that positions ethical and spiritual aspects as the primary foundation for building social and environmental relationships. Environmental Communication Theory, as proposed by Pezullo & Cox (2021), defines environmental communication as the study and practice of how individuals and institutions shape, convey, and interpret messages regarding nature and ecological issues within specific social contexts. Environmental communication serves not merely as a means of disseminating information but also as a tool for advocacy, public opinion formation, and driving behavioral change. Kasmani et al. (2017) add that the Islamic communication paradigm can enrich environmental communication strategies by integrating religious values and prophetic ethics into every message conveyed.

The Islamic eco-theological perspective examined by Jalamneh et al. (2024) emphasizes the importance of integrating Islamic ethical values into environmental policy to achieve the sustainability of life. Concepts such as “khalifah” (stewardship), “mizan” (balance), and “maslahah” (public interest/well-being) serve as the theological foundation affirming humanity’s responsibility as guardians of the earth. Maulana Bagus Rahmat et al. (2025) and Nur et al. (2025) have developed a Quranic eco-theology framework that highlights balance, justice, and the common good as core principles for sustainable environmental management. Previous studies have significantly contributed to understanding the relationship between Islam and environmental sustainability through theological, philosophical, and ethical perspectives. Nasr emphasizes that the environmental crisis is closely related to the spiritual separation between humans and nature, arguing that ecological balance requires a restoration of spiritual awareness. Similarly, Khalid highlights that Islamic teachings provide an ethical foundation for environmental responsibility through concepts such as *khalifah* (stewardship), *amanah* (trust), and human accountability toward creation. Meanwhile, Al-jayyousi et al. (2023) demonstrate that Islamic values can contribute to sustainable development discourse by connecting Islamic ecological principles with contemporary environmental challenges.

Although these studies provide important foundations for understanding Islamic environmental ethics, their primary emphasis remains on explaining the normative significance of

ecological responsibility within Islamic thought. In other words, they mainly address the question of why environmental preservation is considered a religious obligation in Islam. However, less attention has been given to examining how these ecological values are communicated, interpreted, and transformed into environmental practices within communities. The limitation does not indicate the absence of Islamic ecological discussions but rather reflects the limited empirical exploration of the communication processes that connect religious values with community-based environmental action.

More recent studies have attempted to bridge Islamic values with communication and environmental issues. Fahmi (2019) highlights the importance of integrating Islamic values into environmental communication strategies, demonstrating that religious perspectives can strengthen ecological messages. However, his discussion remains primarily conceptual and does not examine how such communication operates within specific community contexts. Similarly, Sari (2024) discusses environmental ethics from an Islamic perspective by highlighting the ecological values contained within Islamic teachings and traditions. However, the discussion primarily emphasizes ethical and normative foundations and provides limited empirical attention to how Islamic ecological values are communicated, interpreted, and translated into concrete environmental practices within communities experiencing environmental challenges.

This gap is also evident in environmental communication studies. Cox and Pezzullo explain that environmental communication is not limited to information dissemination but also involves the processes through which societies construct meanings, negotiate environmental issues, and develop collective responses. However, conventional environmental communication approaches often emphasize scientific, political, and institutional perspectives, while the role of religious values as a cultural framework shaping ecological understanding remains relatively underexplored. Therefore, the contribution of this study does not lie in introducing new theological concepts, since concepts such as *tauhid*, *khalifah*, and *mizan* have already been extensively discussed in Islamic environmental literature. Instead, this study contributes by examining the communicative mechanism through which these established Islamic ecological values are conveyed, interpreted, and transformed into environmental awareness and practices at the community level. Through an empirical study involving an environmental activist and disaster-affected community members in Aceh Tamiang, this research examines how Islamic communication functions as a bridge between theological values, social interaction, and environmental action.

Based on this perspective, this study proposes an Islamic Ecological Communication Framework that integrates three interconnected dimensions: (1) Islamic ecological values (*tauhid*, *khalifah*, and *mizan*) as the theological foundation; (2) Islamic communication principles (*tabligh*, *hikmah*, and *uswah hasanah*) as the mechanism of value transmission; and (3) community environmental practices as the practical manifestation of ecological responsibility. Unlike previous studies that mainly position Islamic ecological values as normative ethical principles, this framework emphasizes the process through which religious meanings are communicated, socially constructed, and transformed into environmental practices.

The conceptual relationship of this study can be illustrated as follows:

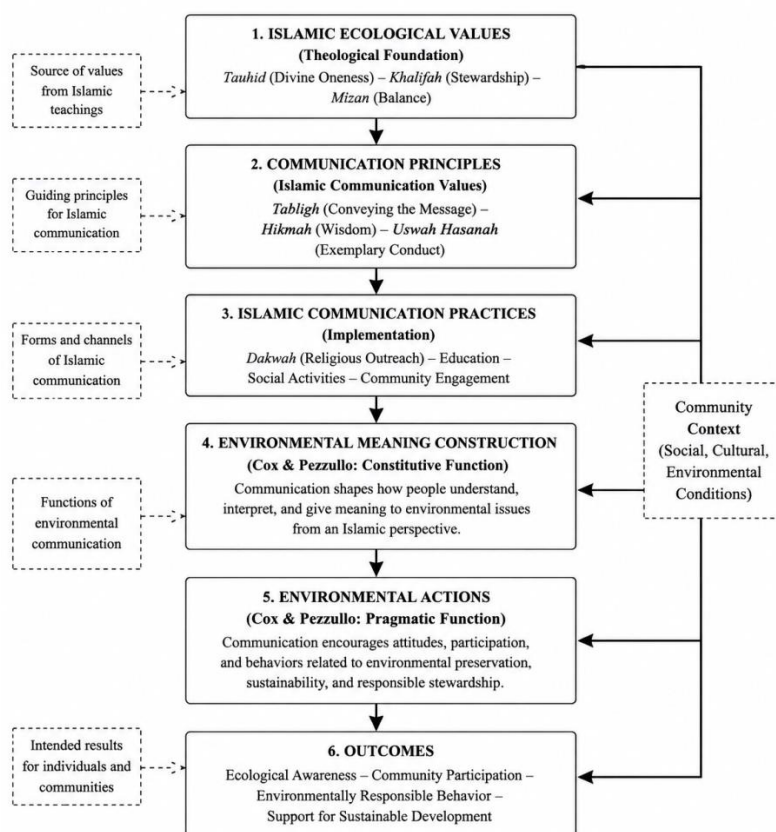


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework of Islamic Ecological Communication

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative field research approach to examine environmental preservation and sustainability from the perspective of Islamic communication. A qualitative approach was selected because this research seeks to understand how Islamic ecological values are communicated, interpreted, and transformed into environmental practices within communities experiencing ecological challenges. Rather than measuring behavioral changes statistically, this study focuses on exploring meanings, experiences, and communication processes that connect religious values with environmental actions. The research was conducted within the ecological disaster context of Sumatra, Indonesia, with a specific empirical focus on Aceh Tamiang, Aceh Province, as the primary research location. Aceh Tamiang was selected because the area represents communities that have experienced significant ecological impacts, particularly floods and environmental degradation affecting social and community life. The broader regional context of Sumatra, including Aceh, North Sumatra, and West Sumatra, provides a relevant background for understanding environmental vulnerability; however, the primary field investigation was conducted in Aceh Tamiang. This location provides an important setting for examining how environmental responsibility is understood through religious, social, and humanitarian perspectives among communities affected by ecological disasters.

Data collection was conducted from May to June 2026. Semi-structured interviews were conducted during the second week of June 2026. Observations were carried out over a one-month period to obtain contextual understanding of environmental conditions, community responses, and environmental practices within the research setting. Documentation was collected throughout the research process and adjusted according to the availability and relevance of supporting materials,

including records of humanitarian activities, environmental initiatives, communication materials, and other relevant documents. This timeframe allowed the researcher to compare information obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation during the field research process. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentation. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, based on their relevance, experience, and knowledge regarding Islamic communication, humanitarian activities, and environmental preservation. This study involved two informants representing complementary perspectives related to the research objectives. The first informant was H. Nasrullah Abdul Rahim, Lc., a humanitarian and environmental activist from Gerakan Relawan Peduli Umat (GARPU). He was selected because of his involvement in humanitarian responses, environmental initiatives, and his experience in communicating ecological messages through religious, social, and community-based approaches. The second informant was Naad Darul, a community member affected by floods and landslides in Aceh Tamiang, Aceh, who was selected to provide insight into how Islamic environmental messages are understood, experienced, and connected with community responses to ecological disasters.

Although this study involved only two informants, this selection was considered appropriate within the framework of qualitative field research, which prioritizes depth, relevance, and contextual understanding rather than the number of participants. The two informants were selected because they represent two different but interconnected positions in the environmental communication process: the communicator/initiator perspective represented by the humanitarian and environmental activist, and the community reception perspective represented by an individual directly affected by ecological disasters. Data adequacy was assessed through the richness and consistency of information obtained during interviews, supported by observation and documentation. Data collection was considered sufficient when additional information no longer generated substantially different themes related to Islamic ecological values, communication practices, humanitarian engagement, and community environmental responses.

Regarding the absence of religious leaders as direct informants, this study recognizes that religious figures have an important role in communicating ecological messages within Muslim communities. However, religious leaders were not included as primary informants due to practical limitations related to accessibility and the scope of the field research. This study does not primarily examine the communication strategies of religious authorities but focuses on how Islamic ecological values are communicated, received, and manifested through humanitarian and community environmental practices. Therefore, the role of Islamic communication is analyzed through the experiences of actors involved in environmental engagement and community members affected by ecological challenges. The absence of religious leaders is acknowledged as a limitation and provides an opportunity for future studies to explore the perspectives of Islamic institutions and religious authorities directly.

Data collection was conducted through interviews, observations, and documentation. The interviews explored participants' understanding of Islamic ecological values, forms of Islamic communication related to environmental preservation, strategies for delivering environmental messages, humanitarian and environmental activities, community responses, and experiences related to ecological disasters. Observation was conducted to obtain contextual understanding of environmental conditions and community responses, while documentation was used as supplementary evidence, including records of humanitarian activities, environmental initiatives, communication

materials, and relevant supporting documents. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis through several stages, including data reduction, thematic categorization, data presentation, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis focused on three main themes: (1) Islamic ecological values underlying environmental responsibility, particularly *tauhid* (divine oneness), *khalifah* (stewardship), and *mizan* (balance); (2) Islamic communication principles used to convey environmental messages, including *tabligh* (conveying the message), *hikmah* (wisdom), and *uswah hasanah* (exemplary conduct); and (3) the relationship between Islamic communication, humanitarian engagement, and community environmental practices.

The credibility of the findings was strengthened through source and technique triangulation by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the research process. Before data collection, informants were informed about the research objectives, the use of collected information, and their voluntary participation. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, and the disclosure of informant identities was conducted based on their approval. The novelty of this research lies in its empirical examination of how Islamic communication functions as a mechanism for translating Islamic ecological values into environmental understanding and practices within disaster-affected communities. Unlike previous studies that mainly examine *tauhid*, *khalifah*, and *mizan* as normative foundations of Islamic environmental ethics, this study explores how these values are communicated, interpreted, and connected with community experiences of environmental disasters. Through the perspectives of a humanitarian and environmental activist and a disaster-affected community member, this research contributes to understanding Islamic communication as a bridge between religious values, humanitarian engagement, ecological awareness, and sustainable environmental practices.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1 The Concept of Environmental Preservation from the Perspective of Islamic Communication: Human Stewardship as a Divine Trust (*Amanah Kekhalifahan*)

Environmental preservation in Islamic communication is fundamentally rooted in the understanding that humans are not owners of the earth but trustees (*khalifah*) entrusted by Allah to maintain, protect, and develop the natural world. The concept of *khalifah fil ardh* emphasizes that human authority over nature is not absolute domination but a moral responsibility derived from divine trust (*amanah*). Therefore, environmental preservation is not merely a technical or ecological responsibility but also a spiritual obligation that reflects human accountability before the Creator. This understanding is closely related to the Qur'anic warning in Surah Ar-Rum verse 41, which explains that corruption and damage on earth occur because of human actions. From an Islamic ecological perspective, this verse provides an ethical foundation that encourages humans to prevent environmental destruction and restore ecological balance. Thus, the responsibility of humans as *khalifah* involves maintaining harmony between human needs, natural resources, and the sustainability of life.

From the perspective of Islamic communication, the concept of human stewardship is not only understood as a theological principle but also as a value that needs to be communicated and internalized within society. Islamic communication becomes a mechanism for translating ecological responsibility into social awareness through various forms, including *dakwah bil lisan* (verbal communication), *dakwah bil hal* (communication through action), and *dakwah bil kitabah* (communication through written ideas and intellectual contributions). Through these approaches, environmental responsibility can be conveyed as part of religious commitment rather than merely a social campaign. The understanding of

humans as *khalifah* (stewards) provides a fundamental ethical basis in Islamic environmental thought, emphasizing that humans are not absolute owners of nature but trustees responsible for maintaining ecological balance. Islamic environmental scholars commonly relate this responsibility to interconnected concepts such as *tauhid* (the unity of God), *mizan* (balance), and *amanah* (trust), which position environmental preservation as part of human moral accountability toward creation. Previous studies have shown that Islamic ecological ethics does not merely address environmental protection as a practical issue but frames it as a spiritual responsibility arising from the relationship between humans, God, and nature. (Al-jayyousi et al., 2023). In this perspective, environmental degradation represents not only ecological damage but also a failure to fulfill the ethical responsibility entrusted to humanity. Therefore, communicating ecological values through Islamic perspectives becomes important because it provides communities with moral and religious meanings that can strengthen environmental awareness.

The findings of this study indicate that environmental messages communicated through Islamic values emphasize the relationship between faith, human responsibility, and ecological preservation. H. Nasrullah Abdul Rahim, Lc., a humanitarian and environmental activist from Gerakan Relawan Peduli Umat (GARPU), explained that environmental preservation should begin with the awareness that humans are entrusted with the responsibility of caring for the earth.

"Humans must first understand that being a khalifah on earth does not mean that we own nature or the earth. We are only given authority and trust as representatives of the Creator to protect, preserve, and develop the earth. The earth belongs to the Creator, and humans are responsible for maintaining this trust." (H. Nasrullah Abdul Rahim, Lc., Humanitarian and Environmental Activist, GARPU)

This statement illustrates how environmental responsibility is framed through Islamic theological meanings, particularly the concept of *khalifah* as stewardship rather than ownership. However, the interpretation of this finding should also consider the positionality of the informant. As an environmental and humanitarian activist directly involved in ecological initiatives, H. Nasrullah Abdul Rahim primarily represents the perspective of a communicator or message producer who develops and delivers environmental narratives. Therefore, his explanation provides important insight into how Islamic ecological values are conceptualized and communicated by practitioners, but it does not independently measure the extent to which these messages produce behavioral transformation among broader communities.

The findings suggest that Islamic communication functions as a bridge between theological understanding and environmental awareness by providing moral and spiritual meanings to ecological issues. Nevertheless, the transformation of ecological values into consistent environmental practices should not be understood as an automatic consequence of communication alone. Instead, it occurs through interaction between religious understanding, personal experiences, social conditions, community engagement, and continuous environmental education. This finding contributes to previous studies on Islamic environmental ethics, which have largely emphasized *tauhid*, *khalifah*, and *mizan* as normative foundations of ecological responsibility. While previous studies explain why environmental preservation is important within Islamic thought, this research highlights how these values are communicated within humanitarian and community contexts. The contribution of this study therefore does not lie in introducing new theological concepts, but in illustrating the communication process through which established Islamic ecological values are interpreted and connected with environmental experiences.

Through this perspective, Islamic communication provides a framework for understanding environmental preservation as both an ecological necessity and a spiritual responsibility. However, based on the empirical evidence of this study, Islamic communication should be viewed as one important factor that contributes to ecological awareness formation rather than as the sole determinant of environmental behavioral change.



Figure 3. Humanitarian Aid Distribution by Gerakan Relawan Peduli Umat (GARPU) in Disaster - Affected Communities

2 Implementation of Islamic Communication Values in Environmental Preservation and Sustainability

The implementation of Islamic communication values in environmental preservation involves more than the transmission of ecological information. It represents a process through which environmental responsibility is framed, interpreted, and connected with the religious and social values of the community. In the Islamic communication perspective, environmental messages become meaningful when they are delivered through ethical communication principles, particularly *tabligh* (conveying the message), *hikmah* (wisdom), and *uswah hasanah* (exemplary conduct). These principles determine not only what messages are communicated but also how they are delivered and practiced within social contexts. The findings of this study indicate that environmental communication carried out by humanitarian and environmental activists is closely connected with Islamic values, particularly by presenting environmental preservation as part of human responsibility as *khalifah* on earth. Through this approach, environmental issues are not presented merely as technical problems related to waste, pollution, or ecological degradation, but as moral responsibilities that reflect the relationship between humans, nature, and God.

H. Nasrullah Abdul Rahim, Lc., a humanitarian and environmental activist from Gerakan Relawan Peduli Umat (GARPU), explained that environmental messages need to be communicated in a manner that is accessible and relevant to community values.

"We strive to communicate the importance of environmental preservation in a manner that is polite and accessible to the community. When organizing tree-planting or neighborhood cleanup activities, we always link them to Islamic teachings regarding the trust (amanah) of caring for the Earth. This approach is more readily accepted because people perceive environmental stewardship as an integral part of practicing their faith."

(H. Nasrullah Abdul Rahim, Lc., Humanitarian and Environmental Activist, GARPU)

This statement illustrates the application of *tabligh* in Islamic environmental communication, where ecological messages are conveyed by connecting environmental responsibility with religious meaning. However, the effectiveness of this communication should be understood within the broader process of social interaction. The statement represents the perspective of a practitioner who designs and delivers environmental messages; therefore, it primarily demonstrates the intended communication strategy rather than directly proving universal acceptance among all community members.

The approach described by the informant also reflects the principle of *hikmah* (wisdom), which emphasizes the importance of adapting communication methods according to the social, cultural, and educational background of the audience. Environmental messages are more likely to be understood when they are connected with familiar religious concepts and community experiences. Rather than presenting environmental preservation as an external agenda, Islamic communication frames it as a continuation of religious responsibility and moral behavior. This finding supports the argument that communication effectiveness depends not only on the content of the message but also on the cultural and spiritual relevance of the message for the audience. Environmental communication becomes stronger when communities can relate ecological responsibility to their existing belief systems and everyday experiences. In this context, Islamic communication functions as a process of meaning construction, where environmental preservation is interpreted as an act of worship and social responsibility.

The perspective of the community member affected by ecological disasters provides an additional understanding of how environmental messages are received and interpreted. Naad Darul, a resident affected by floods and landslides in Aceh Tamiang, explained that environmental awareness increased after experiencing the direct consequences of ecological problems.

"Yes, there has been a change. Previously, I paid less attention to waste disposal. After experiencing flooding, I became more aware of keeping the environment clean and reminding my family not to throw waste into drains or rivers because we have experienced the consequences ourselves."

(Naad Darul, Resident Affected by Floods and Landslides, Aceh Tamiang)

This testimony indicates that community understanding of environmental responsibility is shaped by a combination of factors. While Islamic messages and social communication may provide moral interpretations of environmental responsibility, direct experiences of ecological disasters also play an important role in shaping awareness. Therefore, the findings do not suggest that Islamic communication alone produces behavioral change; rather, it indicates that religious communication can strengthen and provide meaning to environmental awareness that emerges through lived experiences.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that environmental awareness does not always immediately result in consistent behavioral transformation. Although disaster experiences and religiously framed messages may encourage communities to pay greater attention to environmental issues, maintaining long-term practices such as waste management, conservation, and ecological responsibility remains challenging. Factors such as social habits, economic conditions, available infrastructure, and continuous community support influence whether environmental awareness develops into sustainable practices. The findings also reveal a divergence between environmental awareness and sustained environmental practice. Although Islamic ecological messages and disaster experiences may strengthen awareness and moral concern, this does not necessarily result in immediate or consistent behavioral change. The perspective of the environmental activist emphasizes the potential of religiously framed communication and direct humanitarian engagement to encourage ecological responsibility. In contrast, the community perspective indicates that environmental awareness is experienced within practical social conditions, where everyday habits, economic circumstances, available facilities, and the continuity of community support may limit the translation of awareness into sustained action. This difference should not be interpreted as a contradiction that weakens the role of Islamic communication. Rather, it demonstrates that the communication process operates differently at the level of message delivery and community reception. While religious communication may provide moral motivation and interpretive meaning, its

practical influence remains mediated by the social and material conditions experienced by community members.

This divergent evidence is important for interpreting the findings of this study. The results do not support a linear assumption that stronger religious ecological messages automatically produce stronger environmental practices. Instead, the relationship between Islamic communication and environmental action appears to be conditional and gradual. Community members may understand and accept environmental responsibility as a religious value while still encountering difficulties in maintaining environmentally sustainable practices. Therefore, the findings suggest that Islamic communication is more accurately understood as a contributing mechanism for ecological meaning-making and motivation rather than a sufficient determinant of behavioral transformation. This interpretation also provides a more cautious empirical understanding of the pragmatic dimension of environmental communication, in which participation and behavioral change depend on the interaction between communication, lived experience, social conditions, and practical resources.

This finding is important because it highlights that Islamic environmental communication should not be understood as a one-way process where messages automatically produce behavioral outcomes. Instead, it operates through negotiation between communicators, communities, and social environments. Some community members may accept environmental messages because they align with religious values, while others may require additional motivation, education, or structural support before changing their practices. From the perspective of Environmental Communication Theory developed by Cox and Pezzullo, these findings demonstrate both the constitutive and pragmatic dimensions of communication. The constitutive function appears in the way Islamic communication shapes public understanding by constructing environmental preservation as a moral and spiritual responsibility rather than merely a technical concern. Meanwhile, the pragmatic function is reflected in the encouragement of community participation in environmental activities. However, the empirical findings of this study suggest that pragmatic outcomes should be viewed as gradual processes rather than immediate consequences of communication.

The role of *uswah hasanah* (exemplary conduct) is also evident in community-based environmental activities. Environmental messages become more meaningful when accompanied by visible actions, such as community clean-ups, humanitarian assistance, and environmental initiatives. Demonstrating environmental responsibility provides communities with practical examples that reinforce the connection between religious teachings and everyday behavior. These findings extend previous studies on Islamic environmental communication by emphasizing the importance of examining not only the content of ecological messages but also the process through which these messages are communicated and experienced. While previous research has established the theological importance of concepts such as *tauhid*, *khalifah*, and *mizan*, this study highlights the role of communication practices in connecting these values with humanitarian experiences and community environmental awareness.

Therefore, the implementation of Islamic communication values in environmental preservation should be understood as a continuous process involving message construction, community interpretation, and social participation. Islamic communication contributes to environmental sustainability by providing ethical and spiritual meanings that encourage ecological awareness, while the realization of environmental practices depends on broader social, cultural, and institutional factors.

3 Implications of Islamic Communication for Environmental Conservation Efforts and Sustainable Development

Islamic communication has important implications for environmental conservation efforts because it provides a framework for connecting ecological responsibility with religious values, social awareness, and community participation. The findings of this study indicate that environmental preservation is understood not only as a response to ecological problems but also as a moral responsibility rooted in Islamic teachings. Through the integration of values such as *tauhid* (divine oneness), *khalifah* (stewardship), and *mizan* (balance), environmental issues are interpreted as part of the relationship between humans, God, and creation. The implications of Islamic communication in this study can be understood through two dimensions of Environmental Communication Theory proposed by Cox and Pezzullo: the constitutive function and the pragmatic function. The constitutive function explains how communication shapes meanings, perceptions, and social understanding regarding environmental issues. In this study, Islamic communication contributes to constructing the understanding that environmental preservation is not merely a scientific or governmental concern but also a religious and ethical responsibility.

The findings demonstrate that Islamic ecological values provide communities with a moral framework for interpreting environmental challenges. Experiences of floods and environmental degradation are not viewed solely as physical events but are also understood through religious perspectives regarding human responsibility toward nature. Through Islamic communication, ecological problems are connected with concepts of *amanah* (trust), responsibility, and accountability before God. However, the constitutive function identified in this study should be understood as a process of meaning formation rather than a direct cause of behavioral change. The available empirical data demonstrate that Islamic communication contributes to shaping environmental awareness and providing religious interpretations of ecological issues, but the extent to which these meanings develop into long-term practices depends on various social and contextual factors.

The pragmatic function of environmental communication relates to its ability to encourage action and participation. In this study, Islamic communication contributes to motivating community involvement through humanitarian activities, environmental initiatives, and collective actions such as neighborhood clean-ups and environmental care activities. The findings indicate that when environmental messages are connected with religious values, communities may perceive environmental protection as a shared moral responsibility rather than merely an external instruction. Nevertheless, the findings also reveal that community participation is a gradual and complex process. Increased awareness after experiencing ecological disasters does not automatically guarantee sustained environmental behavior. Some community members may recognize the importance of environmental preservation but still face practical challenges related to habits, economic conditions, limited facilities, or insufficient institutional support. This finding demonstrates that Islamic communication functions as an important motivational factor but operates within broader social realities.

The role of humanitarian and environmental organizations is also significant in translating religious values into practical environmental engagement. Through activities conducted by organizations such as Gerakan Relawan Peduli Umat (GARPU), Islamic ecological values are communicated through direct social involvement. This reflects the principle of *uswah hasanah* (exemplary conduct), where environmental responsibility is demonstrated through concrete actions rather than only through verbal messages. The findings also contribute to discussions on faith-based

environmental communication. Previous studies have mainly emphasized Islamic ecological ethics as a normative foundation explaining the relationship between humans and nature. Other studies have explored the potential relationship between Islamic communication and environmental conservation from a conceptual perspective. This study extends these discussions by empirically examining how ecological meanings are communicated and experienced within a disaster-affected community context.

The contribution of this study lies not in claiming that Islamic communication alone transforms environmental behavior, but in demonstrating how Islamic communication operates as a bridge between religious values, ecological awareness, and community experiences. The study shows that environmental messages become more meaningful when they are connected with local realities, humanitarian experiences, and moral frameworks that are familiar to the community. From a sustainable development perspective, Islamic communication provides a culturally relevant approach for strengthening public engagement with environmental issues. Sustainable development requires not only technological solutions and policy interventions but also changes in values, perceptions, and collective responsibility. In communities where religious values play an important role in social life, Islamic communication can contribute by providing ethical motivation and encouraging participation in environmental conservation.

However, the findings also highlight the importance of collaboration between religious institutions, environmental organizations, government agencies, and communities. Religious messages alone may not be sufficient to address complex environmental challenges. Effective sustainability efforts require integration between moral awareness, environmental education, institutional support, and practical resources. Therefore, the implications of Islamic communication for environmental conservation can be understood as a process of ecological meaning-making and social engagement. Islamic communication contributes by transforming environmental preservation into a moral and spiritual responsibility while encouraging communities to participate in conservation efforts. Future research should further examine this process by involving broader community participants, religious leaders, and Islamic institutions to understand more comprehensively how ecological messages are produced, received, negotiated, and transformed into sustainable environmental practices.

The findings of this study demonstrate that Islamic environmental preservation is not only constructed through theological understanding but also through communication processes that enable ecological values to be interpreted and practiced within society. Concepts such as *tauhid* (divine unity), *khalifah* (stewardship), and *mizan* (balance) provide the ethical foundation for understanding human responsibility toward nature. Previous studies have emphasized that Islamic ecological thought positions humans as trustees who are responsible for maintaining environmental balance rather than exploiting natural resources without limits. (Husnah et al., 2026; Khasani, 2025; Zahra, 2025). This perspective highlights that environmental preservation in Islam is closely related to moral accountability and spiritual responsibility. The findings further support previous studies arguing that Islamic ecological values require communication mechanisms to become socially meaningful. Islamic communication does not merely involve the transfer of messages but also includes ethical, cultural, and spiritual dimensions that influence how communities understand social and environmental issues. (Triyono et al., 2020; Wibowo, 2021).. Therefore, the communication of ecological values through *tabligh*, *hikmah*, and *uswah hasanah* becomes an important process for connecting religious teachings with environmental practices.

Several studies have demonstrated that Islamic values have significant relevance for contemporary environmental challenges. Al-Jayyousi et al. (2023) explain that Islamic principles can

contribute to sustainable development by integrating spiritual responsibility with ecological awareness. Similarly, Ali and Agushi (2024) emphasize that Eco-Islam provides an ethical framework for incorporating Islamic values into environmental policies and sustainable living practices. Recent discussions by Husnah et al. (2026), Khasani (2025), and Zahra (2025) further indicate that Islamic environmental perspectives continue to develop as approaches for strengthening ecological responsibility through religious values and community engagement. (Rahman & Bahtiar, 2026). However, the findings of this study extend previous discussions by focusing on the communicative process through which ecological values are delivered, interpreted, and connected with community experiences. Previous research has largely examined Islamic environmental ethics from theological and conceptual perspectives, whereas this study illustrates how Islamic ecological meanings are negotiated within humanitarian and disaster-related contexts. In this sense, communication becomes the mechanism that connects abstract theological concepts with concrete environmental experiences.

This process can be understood through Environmental Communication Theory developed by Pezullo & Cox (2021), particularly its constitutive and pragmatic functions. The constitutive function explains how communication shapes public understanding and constructs meanings regarding environmental issues. In this study, Islamic communication contributes to constructing the understanding that environmental preservation is not merely an ecological necessity but also a religious responsibility. Meanwhile, the pragmatic function relates to the ability of communication to encourage participation and environmental action. Nevertheless, the findings also indicate that communication should not be interpreted as the only factor determining environmental behavioral change. Community responses are influenced by various factors, including personal experiences, social conditions, environmental disasters, economic circumstances, and institutional support. Studies on environmental communication emphasize that sustainable behavioral change is a complex process involving interaction between messages, social meanings, and contextual realities. (Jönsson et al., 2024) Therefore, Islamic communication functions as a contributing mechanism that strengthens ecological awareness rather than as a single determinant of environmental transformation.

The empirical contribution of this study lies in demonstrating how Islamic ecological values are connected with humanitarian engagement and community experiences in disaster-affected areas. Previous studies have discussed the importance of Islamic environmental ethics and sustainability frameworks, but this study provides insight into how such values are communicated and interpreted within a specific social context. The findings show that environmental messages become more meaningful when they are connected with community experiences, religious understanding, and practical engagement. Furthermore, the findings reinforce the argument that sustainable development requires not only technological and institutional solutions but also value-based communication approaches. Religious communication can contribute to sustainability efforts by strengthening moral motivation, encouraging collective responsibility, and creating participatory spaces for environmental engagement. (Ringer & Bloomfield, 2025). However, continuous education, institutional collaboration, and community involvement remain necessary to ensure that ecological awareness develops into sustainable environmental practices.

Therefore, Islamic communication should be understood as a bridge connecting theological values, ecological awareness, and community practices. Rather than claiming that religious communication automatically transforms environmental behavior, this study demonstrates that Islamic

communication contributes to the process of meaning formation, social engagement, and the development of environmental responsibility within communities.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the contribution of Islamic communication to environmental preservation lies not only in the transmission of religious teachings but also in its ability to connect theological values with environmental realities experienced by communities. The findings indicate that the values of *tauhid* (divine oneness), *khalifah* (stewardship), and *mizan* (balance) provide an ethical foundation for understanding human responsibility toward nature, while communication principles such as *tabligh* (conveying the message), *hikmah* (wisdom), and *uswah hasanah* (exemplary conduct) represent approaches through which these values are conveyed within environmental and humanitarian contexts. Empirically, this study shows that Islamic ecological messages communicated by environmental practitioners gain stronger relevance when they are connected with community experiences, religious meanings, and practical environmental activities, such as communal clean-ups, environmental education, and humanitarian responses to ecological disasters. The findings suggest that Islamic communication functions as a bridge between religious understanding and ecological awareness by providing moral interpretations of environmental responsibility. However, the study does not claim that Islamic communication alone determines behavioral transformation; rather, it demonstrates its contribution as one factor that may strengthen ecological awareness and encourage community engagement within specific social contexts.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the fields of Islamic communication and environmental communication by highlighting the communicative process through which Islamic ecological values are conveyed and connected with environmental experiences. Through the perspective of Environmental Communication Theory, the findings illustrate that Islamic communication may operate through both constitutive and pragmatic dimensions. It contributes to the construction of environmental meanings by framing ecological preservation as a moral and spiritual responsibility, while also encouraging participation in environmental activities. Unlike previous studies that mainly discuss *tauhid*, *khalifah*, and *mizan* as normative foundations of Islamic environmental ethics, this study provides an empirical illustration of how these values are communicated within a disaster-affected community context. From a practical perspective, the findings indicate the potential relevance of connecting ecological messages with local experiences, religious values, and opportunities for direct participation in environmental and humanitarian activities. Based on the empirical perspectives examined in this study, such an approach may be particularly relevant for humanitarian organizations, environmental practitioners, and community groups involved in communicating environmental responsibility. Beyond the immediate empirical scope of this study, the findings may also have broader implications for religious institutions and government agencies seeking to support environmental communication initiatives. However, these broader implications should be interpreted cautiously, as religious institutions and government agencies were not included as direct informants in this research. The findings therefore suggest the potential value of educational programs, institutional collaboration, and supportive environmental policies rather than providing direct empirical recommendations regarding how these institutions should operate.

This study has several limitations. First, the empirical evidence is based on a limited number of informants, consisting primarily of an environmental and humanitarian activist and one community member affected by ecological disasters. Consequently, the findings provide stronger insight into the

perspective of environmental message production and community experience rather than a comprehensive representation of how Islamic ecological messages are interpreted and negotiated across diverse audiences. Second, the study does not include religious leaders or formal Islamic institutions as informants, although their roles may be significant in shaping the authority and acceptance of religious environmental messages. Third, as a qualitative and context-specific study conducted in Aceh Tamiang within the broader ecological context of Sumatra, the findings cannot be generalized directly to all Muslim communities or environmental settings. Future research should expand the range of participants by including religious leaders, mosque administrators, Islamic organizations, environmental institutions, government representatives, educators, youth groups, and broader community members. Further studies should also examine how different social, cultural, and ecological contexts influence the communication and reception of Islamic environmental messages. Longitudinal and mixed-method research may provide deeper understanding regarding how ecological awareness develops over time and how religious-based environmental communication contributes to sustained environmental practices. Such studies may support the future development and empirical testing of a more comprehensive Islamic ecological communication framework.

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