

The Transformation of Religious Rituals towards Environmental Awareness

Hafizh Idri Purbajati^{1*}, Indah Rahayu², Indra Tjahyadi³, Sri Wahyuni⁴, Bernardus Agus Rukiyanto⁵

¹ Institut Agama Islam Miftahul Ulum, Lumajang, Indonesia

² Universitas Sulawesi Barat, Majene, Indonesia

³ Universitas Panca Marga, Probolinggo, Indonesia

⁴ Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt

⁵ Universitas Sanata Dharma, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

*Corresponding email: hafiz.idri@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Environmental awareness is not merely an adaptation of religious practices in response to the ecological crisis, but rather an epistemological and ethical struggle that challenges the anthropocentric dominance within Muslim religiosity. This study aims to analyse how Islamic religious ritual practices can serve as a medium for the internalisation and realisation of environmental awareness. This study employs a qualitative approach using an interpretative case study design, chosen for its ability to explore in depth the process of transforming the meaning and practice of Islamic religious rituals within the context of environmental awareness, which is both contextual and complex. The findings challenge the established assumption that Islamic religious rituals are neither static nor immune to change. Rather, it possesses transformative potential to reconstruct the relationship between humanity and nature, grounded in theological values oriented towards sustainability. Within this framework, the ecological crisis is understood not merely as an external issue, but also as a reflection of the failure to actualise religious ethics in the lives of the faithful. Consequently, ritual transformation becomes vital for integrating spiritual piety with ecological responsibility, whilst positioning Islam as a force capable of offering an alternative paradigm, grounded in the sacredness of nature, in response to global environmental challenges.

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of religious practices in Islam towards environmental awareness is attracting increasing attention in contemporary academic discourse, in line with the growing urgency of the global ecological crisis, characterised by climate change, environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, and the increasing frequency of natural disasters (Al-Jayyousi et al., 2023). In this context, religion is no longer merely a belief system governing the relationship between humans and God, but also a source of ethics and values that can shape human behaviour towards the environment. Islam, as one of the world's major religions, possesses a rich body of teachings that include ecological principles, such as *khalifah* (God's vicegerent on earth), *amānah* (stewardship), and *mīzān* (balance) (Kamla et al., 2006). However, the implementation of these values in daily religious rituals often remains focused on the individual spiritual dimension without explicitly integrating the broader ecological dimension.

This phenomenon is becoming increasingly relevant in the context of Muslim communities across various countries, including Indonesia, which face complex environmental challenges, ranging from deforestation, water and air pollution, to unsustainable waste management. In Islamic religious rituals, such as *wudu*, the Hajj, the sacrifice (*kurban*), and other collective religious activities, there is significant potential for ecological impact. For instance, the use of water in *wudu* often disregards principles of efficiency, whilst the performance of the sacrifice ritual can lead to issues with organic waste if not managed properly (Wajid & Eid Alluqmani, 2025). On the other hand, these rituals also hold great potential as a medium for education and value transformation, provided they are interpreted and practised contextually, whilst taking environmental issues into account.

Several previous studies have examined the relationship between religion and the environment from various perspectives. A study by Khasani (2025) emphasises that Islamic tradition possesses a strong theological foundation to support environmental ethics, particularly through the reinterpretation of sacred texts. Meanwhile, a study by Darraz (2025) highlights the importance of *tawhid* as the basis for the unity of the cosmos, which demands that humans maintain the balance of nature. Khoirurrijal et al. (2025) demonstrate that integrating environmental values into Islamic education can enhance students' ecological awareness. In Indonesia, a study by Anshori and Pohl (2022) identifies that Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) have the potential to act as agents of change in fostering an environmentally friendly culture through the internalisation of Islamic values. Nevertheless, the majority of these studies still focus on normative and conceptual aspects, namely, how Islamic teachings, in a textual sense, support environmental conservation.

Studies that specifically examine the transformation of religious ritual practices into spaces for the actualisation of environmental awareness remain relatively limited (Purba et al., 2025). Existing studies tend to separate the ritual dimension from the ecological dimension, thus failing to provide a comprehensive picture of how religious rituals can be reinterpreted and transformed into practices oriented towards environmental sustainability. Furthermore, the approaches used in these studies are generally descriptive and therefore fail to explain in depth the mechanisms by which value transformation from the theological realm enters into social practice.

Research into the relationship between religion and the environment has developed into an important interdisciplinary field of study over the past few decades, in line with growing global concern over the ecological crisis characterised by climate change, environmental degradation, pollution and the decline in ecosystem quality. In this context, religion is no

longer understood merely as a system of beliefs governing the relationship between humans and God, but also as a source of values, ethics and social practices that can shape human behaviour towards the environment. Various studies indicate that religious traditions can foster ecological awareness through moral teachings, religious symbols and the ritual practices of their adherents.

Research conducted by Jenkins and Chapple (2011) indicates that the transformation of religious practices in response to ecological issues does not occur automatically but rather through a process of symbolic reinterpretation involving social actors, religious institutions, and the cultural dynamics that evolve within society. These findings make an important contribution to explaining how environmental values can be integrated into religious practice. However, the focus of this research has largely been on religious traditions in Western countries. Consequently, it has not yet provided an adequate explanation of how similar processes unfold within Muslim societies, which possess distinct theological, social and cultural characteristics.

In the Islamic context, Herdiansyah et al. (2018) study on 'eco-pesantren' makes an important initial contribution by demonstrating that religious educational institutions can act as agents of change in instilling environmental conservation values. The study shows that ecological principles can be integrated into the educational system, institutional governance, and the daily activities of the pesantren. However, the study focused primarily on institutional dimensions and environmental education. It thus did not delve into how religious ritual practices internalise ecological awareness. Consequently, the relationship between religious rituals and the shaping of the community's environmental behaviour has not yet received adequate attention.

Recent developments indicate a growing number of environment-based Islamic movements, such as the 'green mosque' movement, campaigns to reduce waste in religious activities, environmentally friendly energy management within mosque compounds, and various ecological education programmes based on religious communities. Atef and Bremananth (2026) study indicates that these initiatives have the potential to raise environmental awareness amongst Muslim communities and strengthen public participation in environmental conservation efforts. Nevertheless, most studies on these movements still focus on programme aspects, policies, and institutional implementation. These studies generally have not explained in detail how changes in symbolism and religious ritual practices are implemented in this literature. Several research gaps remain that require further attention. Firstly, previous studies tend to examine the relationship between religion and the environment in a fragmented manner, whether from theological, institutional, educational or environmental policy perspectives, meaning few integrated the theological, ritual and ecological dimensions within a single comprehensive analytical framework. Yet these three dimensions are interrelated in shaping society's outlook and behaviour towards the environment.

Secondly, although various studies have demonstrated the presence of ecological values within Islamic teachings, there remains a limited understanding of how these values are translated into daily ritual practice. Existing studies generally stop at identifying normative teachings regarding humanity's responsibility as stewards of the earth, without empirically explaining the mechanisms that enable these values to be internalised through the ritual activities routinely carried out by Muslim communities. Consequently, the relationship between Islamic ecological teachings and concrete religious practices has yet to be fully elucidated.

Thirdly, previous studies have not extensively explained the process by which visuals, as a medium, are transformed to shape environmental awareness. Questions regarding how religious rituals can serve as a means of internalising ecological values, what factors drive or hinder this transformation, and how changes in rituals influence the community's environmental behaviour are still relatively rarely discussed in depth. These limitations indicate that the processual dimensions and mechanisms of social change in the relationship between religious rituals and environmental awareness still require further investigation.

Fourthly, the role of local actors in driving the transformation of religious rituals towards more sustainability-oriented practices has also not been a major focus of research. Most studies emphasise institutional or policy aspects without giving sufficient attention to the contributions of religious scholars, mosque administrators, community leaders and religious communities in shaping religious understandings and practices that are responsive to environmental issues. Yet these actors occupy strategic positions in the processes of producing, reproducing and legitimising religious meanings at the community level. This limitation means that our understanding of the dynamics of ritual transformation remains incomplete.

Most previous studies have adopted a descriptive approach focused on ideas and policies and, therefore, have not produced empirical findings on how ritual transformation occurs within social and cultural contexts. This situation highlights the need for research capable of capturing the experiences, practices and social dynamics that accompany religious rituals within Muslim communities. In light of this gap, this study aims to analyse the transformation of Islamic religious rituals in relation to the development of environmental awareness in a more integrative and contextual manner. This study not only examines the normative aspects contained within Islamic teachings on the environment, but also seeks to understand how these values are internalised, interpreted and manifested in everyday ritual practices.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using an interpretative case study design, chosen for its ability to explore in depth the process of transformation in the meaning and practice of Islamic religious rituals within the context of environmental awareness, which is both contextual and complex. The focus of the study encompasses the transformation of ritual practices (defined as changes in the form, meaning, and performance of religious rituals towards an ecological orientation) as well as environmental awareness (understood as the internalisation of values, attitudes, and behaviours that reflect concern for environmental sustainability),

The study subjects comprise key actors, including religious scholars, mosque administrators, Muslim communities, and congregants, selected through purposive and snowball sampling for their active involvement in ritual practices and environmental initiatives. The research instruments comprise in-depth interview guidelines, participatory observation, and documentation, developed iteratively through literature review and pilot testing. Data validity is ensured through triangulation of sources, techniques, and time, as well as member checks and audit trails, to ensure credibility and reliability (Almusaed et al., 2025). The data collection procedure was carried out in stages through an initial exploration phase, intensive field data collection, and verification of findings. Meanwhile, data analysis utilised thematic analysis techniques, employing an interactive approach that encompassed data reduction, data presentation, and the reflective, iterative drawing of conclusions, deemed most

appropriate for uncovering the patterns, meanings, and dynamics of ritual transformation in shaping holistic environmental awareness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Rituals as a Source of Crisis or an Ecological Solution

Religious rituals in Islam inherently contain symbolic, normative and practical dimensions that make them a vital arena in shaping humanity's relationship with nature. However, in contemporary developments, these rituals exhibit a significant ambivalence, serving both as a source of ecological crisis and as a potential solution for environmental sustainability (Insani & Karimullah, 2023). This ambivalence cannot be separated from the social, economic, and cultural changes that influence the way Muslims understand and practise religious teachings in daily life, where rituals that were originally simple, moderate, and oriented towards values of balance have instead transformed into practices that are consumptive, excessively symbolic, and in some cases hurt the environment. In this context, rituals are no longer understood merely as acts of worship that connect humans with God, but also as social practices with tangible ecological implications, thereby requiring a critical and contextual reinterpretation (Bergmann, 2009).

From an Islamic theological perspective, nature is an integral part of the cosmic system created by God, grounded in the principles of balance (*mīzān*) and order (*tawāzun*), and it demands that humans, as God's vicegerents, safeguard and preserve it (Rifa'i et al., 2025). However, in ritual practice, these theological values are not always optimally internalised, resulting in a gap between normative teachings and practical reality. For instance, in the ritual of wudu, which theologically teaches purity and simplicity, the practice of using water often fails to adhere to the principles of efficiency and conservation, despite a hadith that explicitly advocates economical use of water even at a plentiful water source. This indicates that the primary issue does not lie in the ritual teachings themselves, but rather in the manner of their interpretation and implementation, which fails to adequately consider ecological dimensions.

A similar phenomenon can also be observed in the performance of the Qurbani ritual, which annually involves the slaughter of millions of animals across various parts of the Muslim world. Normatively, the sacrifice embodies the values of self-sacrifice, social solidarity, and the distribution of welfare; however, in practice, it often leads to environmental issues such as organic waste, water pollution, and inefficient meat distribution (Karimullah, 2024). In some cases, the use of plastic in packaging sacrificial meat further adds to the burden of non-biodegradable waste. This situation demonstrates how a ritual of high social value can contribute to environmental degradation if not managed wisely and sustainably.

Islamic religious rituals also hold great potential as ecological solutions when interpreted and practised contextually, integrating sustainability values. The concept of the sacredness of nature in Islam, which views nature as signs of God's greatness (*āyāt kawniyyah*), provides a strong theological foundation for developing religion-based environmental ethics (Rosyid et al., 2025). Rituals can serve as a medium for the internalisation of these values through repeated and collective spiritual experiences. For instance, the Hajj pilgrimage, which draws millions of Muslims from around the world, carries a universal message of simplicity, equality, and humanity's interconnectedness with nature (Karimullah, 2023). However, in its modern practice, it faces significant challenges related to carbon footprints, energy consumption, and waste management. Efforts to develop the concept of a 'green Hajj' demonstrate that rituals can be reformed without losing their spiritual essence, but rather by strengthening their relevance in addressing global issues.

An anthropological approach to religion holds that rituals are not static entities but practices that continually negotiate meaning within specific social contexts. Therefore, the transformation of rituals towards more environmentally friendly practices should not be understood as a form of deconstruction or rejection of tradition, but rather as a process of reinterpretation that preserves core religious values whilst remaining responsive to the challenges of the times. Within this framework, ritual reform does not mean altering the substance of religious teachings, but rather adjusting their form and practice to align with principles of sustainability (Öhlmann & Swart, 2022). For instance, the use of eco-friendly containers in the distribution of sacrificial meat, community-based waste management, and education on the efficient use of water during wudu are forms of transformation that do not diminish the value of worship but rather expand its meaning (Elboughdiri et al., 2025).

The Islamic eco-theological perspective emphasises that the environmental crisis is fundamentally a moral and spiritual crisis rooted in humanity's perspective on nature (Özdemir, 2026). In this regard, rituals play a strategic role in fostering collective consciousness capable of sustainably transforming human behaviour. Through rituals, values such as simplicity (*zuhd*), responsibility (*amānah*), and balance (*mīzān*) can be internalised more effectively than through a purely cognitive approach. This aligns with social praxis theory, which states that behavioural change is influenced not only by knowledge but also by habits, social norms, and symbolic experiences internalised in daily practice. However, efforts to transform rituals are not without various challenges, including cultural resistance, limitations in knowledge, and a lack of institutional support.

In many cases, rituals are viewed as an integral part of identity and must not be altered, so reform efforts are often perceived as a form of deviation (Kallio & Törnberg, 2025). Consequently, an approach sensitive to the social and cultural context is required, one that involves key actors such as religious scholars, community leaders, and religious institutions in the transformation process. The role of religious scholars is crucial in providing theological legitimacy for new, more environmentally friendly practices, ensuring they are widely accepted by society. Furthermore, an interdisciplinary approach combining religious studies, environmental science, and social science is vital in formulating effective strategies for ritual transformation. This integration enables a more comprehensive analysis of the ecological impacts of rituals and potential solutions, whilst opening up space for dialogue between tradition and modernity. In this context, religious education also plays a strategic role in shaping a generation with ecological awareness grounded in Islamic values, ensuring that ritual transformation is not merely sporadic but becomes part of systemic change.

The Sacredness of Nature versus Anthropocentrism in Religious Practice

In Islamic religious discourse, nature does not appear as a neutral, profane entity, but rather as part of the order of creation, imbued with theological, moral, and cosmological significance (Khan, 2025). Various recent studies on Islamic environmental ethics affirm that the Qur'an and Sunnah provide a strong normative foundation for respect for nature through the concepts of tawhid, *khalīfah*, *amānah*, *mīzān*, and the prohibition of *fasād fī al-arḍ*, so that environmental protection is not merely an additional ethical choice, but is linked to the fundamental structure of the Islamic worldview (A et al., 2025). The Cambridge Literature on Islam and Environmental Ethics, for example, emphasises that the Islamic intellectual tradition contains principles of eco-ethics that position the conservation and protection of nature as a moral obligation rather than merely a social preference (Sutisna et al., 2025). At the same time, recent studies indicate that these normative sources are often not fully realised in daily religious

practice, as the dominant interpretation tends to centre humanity as the authority over nature and to reduce nature to an instrument for the fulfilment of human interests.

The contradiction between the sacredness of nature and anthropocentrism becomes apparent when Islamic ritual practices are understood primarily as a means of fulfilling human spiritual needs, whilst the materiality of nature that sustains these rituals is treated as a tool to be used, taken, and discarded. In the context of wudu, for example, water is theologically an element of life and a sign of God's greatness. Still, in practice, it is often reduced to a ritual commodity whose use is not always bound by conservation ethics. In the performance of the *qurbān*, animals are honoured in Islamic law as sentient beings possessing moral standing; yet in modern distribution practices, issues of waste, plastic, sanitation, and logistics frequently reveal that animals, land, and water are treated more as objects within a religious system oriented towards the successful execution of human worship.

It is at this point that the debate between classical anthropocentric interpretations and the push towards biosentrisme or ecosentrisme becomes relevant. The anthropocentric camp proceeds from an interpretation of the concept of *khalīfah* as a divine mandate placing humanity in a privileged position to manage the earth, such that human dominion is deemed legitimate so long as it does not exceed legal boundaries (Rakhmat, 2022). This framework often maintains a sharp distinction between the moral subject, namely humanity, and the object of management, namely nature. Conversely, the more ecological camp rejects a dominative interpretation of the *khalīfah*. It emphasises that this mandate must be read in conjunction with *amānah* and *mīzān*, so that human power over nature is not absolute but limited by an ethical responsibility to maintain balance, sustainability, and the integrity of creation. Some recent works even suggest that Islamic environmental ethics do not fully fit into either the anthropocentric or bioscentric categories in the Western sense, as Islam offers a relational orientation that positions humans as dignified beings yet still bound to a broader cosmic order.

Academically, the erosion of nature's sacredness in religious practice can be explained through several lenses. From a hermeneutical perspective, sacred texts never operate automatically, but are always mediated by interpretive traditions, social interests, structures of authority, and the interpreter's historical horizon. From a religious-anthropological perspective, rituals are not merely the application of doctrine but lived practices shaped by the material economy, consumer culture, status symbols, and collective customs. From the perspective of praxis theory, ritual behaviour persists not merely because it is believed to be true, but because it is repeated, normalised, and institutionalised. Consequently, when contemporary religious culture absorbs the logic of consumerism, pragmatic efficiency, and the aesthetics of grandeur, religious rituals may shift from a realm of ethical experience into an arena for the reproduction of exploitative patterns.

Findings on Western-oriented environmentalism in the Islamic world also indicate that internal ecological sources within the Islamic tradition are often marginalised, so environmental reform in many Muslim communities tends to be technocratic rather than grounded in a theological reinterpretation from within the tradition itself. This explains why religious communities sometimes accept cleanliness programmes or waste reduction initiatives as administrative agendas, but do not always understand them as direct consequences of their creed and worship. Consequently, the reinterpretation of sacred texts is key to bringing about tangible changes in ritual behaviour. Reinterpretation here does not mean replacing the text, but rather shifting the interpretative framework from domination

towards responsibility, from utilitarianism towards relationality, and from narrow legalism towards maqasid that take into account the sustainability of life.

When verses concerning creation, balance, the prohibition of destruction, and stewardship are read not as moral embellishments but as the foundation of ritual ethics, religious behaviour can undergo concrete transformation. A reinterpretation of the hadith regarding the prohibition of excessive water use, for instance, can transform wudu from merely a personal purification procedure into an exercise in ecological discipline. Similarly, interpreting the sacrifice as a form of worship demanding ihsan does not stop at slaughter in accordance with sharia. Still, it extends to waste management, plastic-free packaging, low-emission distribution, and respect for animal welfare. Studies on knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding climate change within Muslim communities indicate that religion serves as a source of knowledge and an interpretative filter for environmental issues, and that messages articulated through a religious framework can shape mitigation attitudes, particularly when reinforced by religious leadership.

From a sociology of religion perspective, the success of reinterpretation depends heavily on the ability of authoritative actors to transform normative discourse into practical norms (Qadir & Alasuutari, 2022). New sacred texts influence ritual behaviour tangibly only when they are translated into the language of social obligation, exemplary conduct, and the infrastructure of practice. Consequently, religious scholars, mosque administrators, religious teachers, and community activists hold strategic positions as mediators between doctrine and action (Muhajir et al., 2024). Mosques possess great potential as community-based organisations to promote sustainability, yet many remain reactive or defensive towards environmental agendas (Adib, 2025). When mosques are built and managed as spaces for worship and ecological ethics, theological messages regarding the sanctity of creation take on a social form that is visible, measurable, and replicable.

Ritual reform should not be understood as a threat to Islamic identity, but rather as a restoration of the ethical dimension that an anthropocentric interpretation has long obscured. The reform in question does not involve abolishing rituals or subordinating them to external ecological demands, but rather reorganising practices to make them more faithful to Islam's own moral horizon. Theoretically, this aligns with the 'lived religion' approach, which views religion as a network of meanings constantly negotiated in daily life. Normatively, it aligns with the notion that the maqasid al-sharia cannot be separated from the protection of life, health, resources, and the public good. In practical terms, this means that Islamic rituals must be understood as arenas for the formation of an ecological habitus, such as water conservation during ablution, the reduction of single-use materials at religious events, respect for living creatures in sacrificial rites, and the use of sermons and religious study sessions to foster sensitivity towards the degradation of the earth. When the sacredness of nature enters the ritual habitus, worship produces not only individual piety but also collective ecological responsibility.

The Transformation of Ritual as an Arena for Identity Politics and Ecology

The transformation of Islamic religious rituals towards environmental awareness cannot be understood merely as a normative or technical process, but rather as a socio-political phenomenon unfolding within a complex field of power relations, identity, and global discourse, in which rituals function not only as spiritual expressions, but also as symbols of collective identity rich in cultural and historical significance. From a sociological perspective on religion, rituals are symbolic practices that reproduce community boundaries, strengthen

internal solidarity, and affirm differences from other groups (Kišjuhas, 2024). Consequently, any attempt to transform rituals inherently intersects with issues of identity and authority. Consequently, when initiatives emerge to integrate ecological awareness into Islamic ritual practices, this process does not take place in a neutral space but rather within an arena of contestation among actors with differing interests, interpretations, and ideological positions.

In a global context, pressure on religious communities to contribute to addressing the climate crisis is increasing, alongside the development of international discourse on sustainability and collective responsibility towards the earth (Sadouni, 2022). Agendas such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement, and various interfaith initiatives have fostered a narrative that religion, including Islam, must play an active role in ecological transformation. However, this global narrative often clashes with a more complex local reality, in which ritual practices are deeply rooted in traditions, customs, and social structures that are not easily altered. In this context, ritual transformation is not merely a technical matter of reducing environmental impact but also a political issue concerning who holds the authority to determine changes, which values are deemed legitimate, and how the community interprets them.

The debate arising between those who reject and those who support ritual transformation reflects the tension between locality and globality in contemporary religious practice. Those critical of environmentally based ritual transformation often view it as a form of colonisation of global values that disregards local contexts and traditional wisdom. From this perspective, the environmental agenda is perceived as a Western project cloaked in universal language, yet in practice it has the potential to erode the religious and cultural identity of Muslim communities. This criticism is not entirely without foundation, given the long history of colonialism and Western epistemic dominance that has often marginalised local knowledge and non-Western religious traditions. Consequently, resistance to ritual transformation can be understood as an effort to preserve cultural and religious autonomy in the face of external pressures.

Those supporting ritual transformation emphasise that the ecological crisis is global and existential, thus requiring an urgent, collective response across cultures and religions. Within this framework, religious rituals are viewed as a strategic arena for fostering broader awareness and behavioural change, given their symbolic and social power in shaping societal habitus. This approach is often based on a reinterpretation of Islamic teachings that emphasise humanity's responsibility as *khalifah* to maintain the balance of nature; thus, ritual transformation is not viewed as the adoption of external values, but rather as the actualisation of internal Islamic values that have hitherto been underutilised.

Cross-national comparisons across regions such as the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia indicate that local socio-political and cultural contexts heavily influence the dynamics of ritual transformation. In some Middle Eastern countries, initiatives such as the 'green Hajj' and environmentally friendly mosque management tend to be driven by strong state policies, allowing changes to be implemented in a more structured manner (Elgammal & Alhothali, 2021; Farabi & Fatharini, 2025). However, this is not always accompanied by a shift in grassroots awareness. In South Asia, ritual transformation often faces significant social complexities, including religious pluralism, social stratification, and infrastructure constraints, resulting in slower, more fragmented progress. Meanwhile, in Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia and Malaysia, there is a trend towards the emergence of community-based movements such as eco-pesantren and green mosques that combine local values with global discourse, meaning that ritual transformation occurs through a more adaptive and

participatory process of negotiation. These variations demonstrate that there is no single universal model of transformation, but rather various forms influenced by local configurations.

Within the framework of identity politics theory, ritual transformation can be understood as a process that can disrupt the stability of collective identity, particularly when such changes affect practices considered sacred and untouchable. Rituals are not merely acts of worship, but also symbols of the continuity of tradition; consequently, any change may be perceived as a threat to the authenticity and purity of the teachings. This explains why resistance is often irrational in a technical sense, yet highly rational within the framework of collective identity and emotion. Therefore, transformation strategies that disregard this dimension risk triggering conflict, polarisation, and even the delegitimisation of the actors driving change (Deitelhoff & Schmelzle, 2023). To address these challenges, a communication and cultural negotiation strategy is required that is sensitive, inclusive, and grounded in the internal legitimacy of Islamic tradition.

Firstly, an effective approach must avoid framing change as an external demand or global pressure, but rather as part of the revitalisation of authentic Islamic values. This can be achieved through the reinterpretation of sacred texts that emphasise ecological principles, as well as through religious narratives that link environmental protection to concepts of worship and reward. Thus, ritual changes are not perceived as foreign innovations but as a deeper form of piety. Secondly, it is important to involve authoritative figures within the community, such as ulama, mosque leaders, and traditional figures, in the transformation process. In many Muslim societies, religious legitimacy is heavily dependent on the authority of the ulama, so their support can be a key factor in reducing resistance (Whyte, 2024). This approach aligns with innovation diffusion theory, which emphasises the role of opinion leaders in accelerating the adoption of change. However, this engagement must be conducted through dialogue, rather than in a top-down manner, thereby enabling an exchange of knowledge between religious and scientific perspectives.

Thirdly, transformation strategies need to adopt a gradual, contextual approach that respects local traditions whilst opening space for innovation. Rather than implementing fundamental changes that risk provoking resistance, an incremental approach that demonstrates the practical and symbolic benefits of change is more likely to be accepted. For instance, the introduction of environmentally friendly materials in religious activities could begin on a small scale and be expanded gradually, allowing the community time to adapt. In this context, success is measured not only by changes in practice but also by shifts in the meaning inherent in those practices. Fourthly, it is vital to build a collective narrative that links religious identity with ecological responsibility, so that the two are not positioned as mutually exclusive. This narrative can be developed through education, the media, and religious activities that emphasise that caring for the environment is an integral part of faith. Thus, the transformation of rituals is no longer seen as a threat to identity, but as a new expression of that identity in a contemporary context.

CONCLUSION

The transformation of Islamic religious rituals towards environmental awareness demonstrates that religious practices play a strategic role in shaping society's ecological behaviour. Consequently, there is a need to reinterpret religious teachings and ritual practices so that they are no longer anthropocentric in orientation, but rather grounded in the principles of *khalifah*, *amānah* and *mīzān* as the foundations of Islamic environmental ethics. This study

emphasises that religious rituals can serve as both a source and a solution to ecological issues. Consequently, the effectiveness of this transformation depends on the integration of theological values, the legitimacy of religious scholars, and the community's socio-cultural context. These findings underscore the importance of an interdisciplinary approach linking religion and environmental sustainability, whilst also encouraging the development of more environmentally friendly religious practices. Nevertheless, the limited empirical scope and the diversity of contexts within Muslim communities indicate the need for further, more comparative and quantitatively based research to strengthen religion's contribution as an instrument of transformation towards sustainable, just and inclusive development.

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