



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Role of Female Ulama in Formulating Eco-Friendly Fatwas: A Case Study in Indonesia

Asnal Mala,^{1*} Elli Masnawati,² Masfufah,³

^{1,2,3} Universitas Sunan Giri Surabaya, Indonesia

Received: 04 May 2025
Revised: 11 Desember 2025
Accepted: 18 Desember 2025

*Corresponding author:

Asnal Mala Name and
Affiliation
E-mail:
malaasnal12@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines the role of female scholars in formulating environmentally friendly fatwas in Indonesia, highlighting how gender perspectives influence religious approaches to ecological issues. This research is important because it highlights the contributions of female scholars from highly patriarchal communities, showing how they can articulate environmental issues as a religious mandate and provide faith-based responses to the ecological crisis—an approach that is rarely found in mainstream fatwas. This study used a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 12 female scholars involved in drafting environmental fatwas in East Java, West Nusa Tenggara, and South Sulawesi, supplemented by fatwa document analysis and participatory observation in regional religious forums. Data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis, focusing on gender narratives, ecological theological frameworks, and argument patterns in fatwas. The findings show that female scholars play a strategic role in promoting sustainable environmental practices on religious platforms. These findings emphasize that gender is not merely a social variable but a crucial factor in religious leadership and the use of fatwas as an effective tool for ecological advocacy in Muslim communities.

Keywords: Female Ulama, Eco-Friendly Fatwa, Indonesia

Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini mengkaji peran ulama perempuan dalam merumuskan fatwa ramah lingkungan di Indonesia, dengan menyoroti bagaimana perspektif gender memengaruhi pendekatan agama terhadap isu-isu ekologis. Penelitian ini signifikan karena menyoroti kontribusi ulama perempuan dari komunitas yang sangat patriarkis, menunjukkan bagaimana mereka mampu memposisikan isu lingkungan sebagai amanah keagamaan dan memberikan respons keagamaan terhadap krisis ekologis, yang jarang terlihat dalam fatwa mainstream. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan 12 ulama perempuan yang terlibat dalam perumusan fatwa lingkungan di Jawa Timur, Nusa Tenggara Barat, dan Sulawesi Selatan, dilengkapi dengan analisis dokumen fatwa dan observasi partisipatif pada forum keagamaan regional. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis isi kualitatif, dengan fokus pada narasi gender, kerangka ekoteologis, dan pola argumentasi dalam fatwa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ulama perempuan memainkan peran strategis dalam mendorong praktik lingkungan berkelanjutan melalui platform keagamaan. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa gender bukan sekadar variabel sosial, melainkan faktor penting dalam kepemimpinan agama dan penggunaan fatwa sebagai instrumen advokasi ekologis yang efektif di masyarakat Muslim.

Kata kunci: Ulama Perempuan, Fatwa Ramah Lingkungan, Indonesia

Published by :
Pusat Studi Gender dan Anak
(PSGA) of Universitas Islam
Negeri (UIN) Juri Siwo
Lampung

Website : <https://e-journal.metrouniv.ac.id/jsga>

Introduction

The global environmental crisis and the impact of climate change are issues faced worldwide, including in Indonesia. A country rich in natural resources, Indonesia faces major challenges in managing its resources sustainably while maintaining the preservation of its ecosystems (Idris, Mokodenseho, Willya, & Otta, 2020). Approximately 8,500 hectares of mangrove forests on the coast of Java have undergone land-use changes to become aquaculture areas and tourist developments (VIVA, 2017). The total remaining forest area in Indonesia is 124 million hectares. From 2010 to 2015, Indonesia experienced significant forest loss, ranking second highest in the world, with an average loss of approximately 684,000 hectares per year (Kompas Cyber Media, 2019). The government's role is to preserve and protect the environment (Ramadhan, 2019). The environmental crisis and increasing awareness of the importance of preserving nature (Siti Rohmah et al., 2022). Modern humans have the right to make maximum use of all natural resources (Zuhdi 2015). Environmental destruction is considered haram for two reasons. First, humans have depended on nature since the beginning of creation, and second, nature was created with a perfect balance (Al-Hijr [15]: 19). Humans are responsible for maintaining the balance of nature (Al-Baqarah [2]: 29) (Zuhdi, 2015). Nature and the earth are abundant sources of sustenance (Al-Qur'an, Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Diklat, B. L. D., & RI, 2009).

Deforestation and the conversion of green land are increasing, resulting in disasters such as floods, landslides, and tornadoes occurring with greater frequency and intensity (Siti Rohmah, In'amul Mushoffa, Moh. Anas Kholish, 2022). Environmental *fiqh* also plays an important role in instilling awareness that selling on sidewalks is an act that deprives pedestrians of their rights and is contrary to religious teachings (Ramadhan 2019). Several parties have proposed that the concept of *dharuriyat al-khams*, which consists of five primary components, be reconstructed to include *hifd al- bi'ah* or environmental preservation. This proposal emerged in response to the increasingly alarming environmental crisis (Yusuf, 2022). The KUPI (Indonesian Women Ulema Congress) also took decisive action by issuing a fatwa stating that damaging the environment is haram. KUPI emphasizes *hifdz al- bi'ah* as the main principle underlying the prohibition of environmental damage.

The Indonesian Women Ulema Congress (KUPI) Fatwa Number 3 of 2022 on Environmental *Fiqh* emphasizes that allowing environmental damage caused by waste is a haram act. This fatwa is based on the principles of reciprocity (*mubadalah*), goodness (*ma'ruf*), and true justice for women. Protecting the environment is part of the responsibility of worship, which

emphasizes the importance of harmony between humans and nature in Islam. Environmental damage often has a greater impact on vulnerable groups, including women, who face a double burden, both socially and economically, as a result of environmental degradation (Mubjadi, 2022). Some of these include unclear regulations or laws, limited waste disposal facilities, and minimal management of final disposal sites (TPA) in accordance with the required system (Mahyudin, 2017). The environmental crisis is one of the most pressing social issues in Indonesia today, as evidenced by increasing deforestation, water pollution, and soil degradation, the direct impact of which is felt by vulnerable groups, including women and children. Various approaches have been developed to address these issues, but the religious response has been relatively limited, especially in utilizing the authority of religious scholars as drivers of social change.

Female religious scholars have become involved in formulating eco-fatwas or environmentally friendly fatwas, an important phenomenon considering the position of women in religious structures that have traditionally been dominated by men. The presence of women opens the possibility of a more inclusive, gender-sensitive, and ecologically relevant religious ethical framework. This study aims to examine the role of female scholars in formulating fatwas and religious responses oriented towards environmental protection in Indonesia, seeking to reveal how gender perspectives and experiences influence religious approaches to environmental issues. how female scholars contribute to shaping a more inclusive religious discourse that is sensitive to ecological sustainability, and hopefully enriches the academic understanding of the relationship between gender, religious authority, and environmental ethics in the context of Indonesian Islam.

The urgency of this research lies in the lack of studies that explicitly discuss the contribution of female scholars in the process of formulating fatwas and religious movements related to the environmental crisis, despite their strategic role in influencing religious practices at the community level. Amidst the increasing threat of ecological damage and the urgent need for a religious approach that is more responsive to environmental issues, mapping the role of female scholars is important to show how a gender perspective can broaden the horizons of environmental ethics in Islam, not only filling a gap in the literature but also offering a scientific basis for strengthening policies, religious programs, and environmental advocacy that are more gender-equitable.

Literature Review

Global research conducted by Jambeck et al. shows that Indonesia ranks second in the world in terms of plastic waste contribution to the ocean. Data show that between 2011 and 2013, Indonesia experienced a significant increase in the volume of plastic waste. According to the 2013 Adipura report,

the amount of plastic waste increased from 429,254 m³ to 507,738 m³. Plastic waste found in urban environments consists of various types, including light-density polyethylene (LDPE), polypropylene (PP), high-density polyethylene (HDPE), Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC), Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET), and Styrofoam.

Among these types, polypropylene (PP) and high-density polyethylene (HDPE) are the most dominant in the composition of existing plastic waste (Ministry et al., 2022). One of the serious impacts of plastic waste pollution in the sea is its effect on biodiversity (Mahyudin, 2017). In the field of fiqh, Islamic law relating to the environment is known as fiqh bi'ah (environmental fiqh). Although no classical scholars specifically discuss fiqh bi'ah in their books, studies on this issue in classical works should be used as a basis for developing environmental fiqh in the modern era (Rohmah et al., 2022). Previous studies have shown a correlation between environmental degradation and its impact on female welfare. Research results from the World Bank (2020) reveal that women in rural areas often have to travel longer distances to obtain clean water because of the pollution of local water sources, which increases their workload and health risks (World Bank, 2020). The KUPI fatwa reinforces these findings by emphasizing that environmental protection is a collective responsibility that must be prioritized to prevent disproportionate negative impacts on women. Thus, KUPI invites Muslims to actively participate in sustainable waste management practices and various other environmental initiatives in accordance with the principles of social justice in Islam.

The issue of environmental *fiqh* in related research provides valuable insight. An article titled "Fiqh Al Bi'ah: Formulation of the Maqashid Syari'ah Concept in Environmental Conservation and Restoration" reviews various disaster prevention and mitigation efforts by applying the principle of *hifdzul bi'ah* (Ubaidillah, 2010). Second, an article written by Mariatul Istiani and Muhammad Roy Purwanto entitled "Fiqh Bi'ah in the Perspective of the Qur'an" reviews the application of theological principles to environmental management (Mariatul Istiani and Muhammad Roy Purwanto, 2019). Third, the article titled "Ecological Fiqh: Building Ecological Fiqh for Cosmic Preservation" discusses various steps that can be taken to preserve the environment by adopting an environmental fiqh approach (M. Ridwan, 2013). Based on the research presented, there are currently no articles discussing the role of female scholars in formulating fatwas oriented towards the environment in Indonesia, highlighting how gender perspectives influence religious approaches to environmental issues. Furthermore, this study identifies the contributions of female scholars to religious responses to the environmental crisis and develops a deeper understanding of the environment and gender roles.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach, specifically a case study method, to explore the role of female scholars in formulating environmentally friendly fatwas in Indonesia. Field data were collected through in-depth interviews with 12 female scholars actively involved in the formulation of environmental fatwas in several regions, namely East Java, West Nusa Tenggara, and South Sulawesi. Respondents were selected purposively, based on the criteria of female scholars who had direct experience in the fatwa drafting process, either through regional forums or interregional religious networks. The respondents' identities were kept confidential, but their backgrounds included formal religious education, experience in religious leadership, and active involvement in religious and environmental organizations. Interviews and document analyses were conducted to examine the content of the published fatwas. A literature review was conducted by analyzing Fatwa No. 3 of 2022 of the Indonesian Female Clerics Congress (KUPI) on the environment, which states that neglecting environmental damage caused by waste is haram (Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, 2022a).

The research involved participatory observation in religious deliberation forums and community activities discussing environmental issues, thus providing a direct understanding of the decision-making process and interactions among female religious leaders. The collected data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis, with the following steps: data reduction to select relevant information, categorization of themes based on gender narratives, ecotheological frameworks, and ecological arguments, and in-depth interpretation to understand how female scholars combine Islamic principles and gender experiences in environmental fatwas. This study integrates a literature review and field research approach, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the role of female scholars in drafting environmentally friendly fatwas, the challenges they face, and the strategies they use to strengthen religious legitimacy and ecological advocacy in Indonesia.

Result

Female Scholars as Ecological Agents

The word "*ulama*" can be defined as someone who has a deep understanding of its essence (Al-Razi & Al-Qasim, 1972). "*Ulama*" is the plural form of the word "*alim*", which comes from the verb "*alima*", meaning "to understand" or "to know". The term "*alim*" refers to someone with deep knowledge and expertise in Islamic religious studies. The name "*ulama*" comes from the plural term "*fa'il*" عالم, which means "to know", and 'عليم', which indicates the attribute of "omniscient". In addition, the term "*shighat mubalaghah*" refers to the nature of 'very' or "supreme." On the other hand, "الجهل," which means "not knowing," is the antonym of "*ilmu*" (Shihab, 2012). In

its plural form, the term “*ulama*” refers to Islamic religious leaders who have a deep mastery and understanding of Islamic knowledge and related disciplines (Muhtarom, 2005).

The word “*ulama*” in Arabic means scientist or researcher. In the Indonesian context, this term refers to someone with expertise in Islamic religious knowledge. Ulama are often described as individuals with extensive knowledge of religious matters. More specifically, ulama can be defined as A Muslim who has mastered Islamic religious knowledge. A Muslim who understands Islamic law in its entirety (*kaffah*), as explained in the Qur an and Sunnah. A role model for Muslims in understanding and practicing these teachings (Setiyaningsih, 2021). In general, ulama can be defined as “people of knowledge” in the field of religion. They are responsible for protecting, guiding, and educating Muslims in a proper manner regarding religious aspects and everyday issues from both religious and social perspectives. Based on this understanding, the title of *ulama* is not only reserved for Muslim men but can also be attained by Muslim women who meet the specified criteria.

In Indonesia, the term “*ulama*” generally refers to male scholars who are well-versed in classical Islamic texts and lead Islamic boarding schools. Studies by scholars also show the dominance of male scholars in this context. When the term female scholar emerged, a debate arose among a limited group. General knowledge about scholars and their relationships with women often makes the term “female scholar” feel unfamiliar. The term still feels foreign, even to those actively involved in Islamic social and intellectual discourse in Indonesia (Burhanudin 2002). This indicates a preconception that women do not have a significant role in the field of ulama or even in the world of scholarship as a whole (Muhammad, K. H., 2020).

The role of female scholars, alongside male scholars as heirs to the prophets, is crucial in continuing the prophetic mission. Their duties include spreading knowledge, freeing people from slavery to anything other than Allah SWT, and applying the principles of amar ma‘ruf and nahi munkar. In addition, they are committed to humanizing every individual and perfecting noble character to realize the vision of universal mercy (Rahmatan lil Alamin) (Muhammad, K. H., 2020). From the perspective of the duties of scholars, we need to question the extent to which female scholars have maximized their roles and functions. Several important challenges remain, one of which is the source of religious knowledge possessed by Muslims. To date, the main religious sources still largely originate from the thoughts and ijtihad of Muslims in the Middle Ages, which developed in the context of Arab culture and a patriarchal political, social, economic, and cultural system. This patriarchal system granted men the authority to regulate society.

A new paradigm for Muslims. First, scholars, both male and female, need to develop a more open and inclusive understanding of Islamic sources and religious texts. The approach taken must be critical, rational, substantive and contextual. Female scholars, together with male scholars, must work hard (*ijtihad*) to create fair and non-discriminatory sources of Islamic knowledge and fatwas. Second, it is time for scholars, both female and male, to move together in reconstructing their thinking, changing the traditional approach to interpretation to a model of *takwil* (hermeneutics), and shifting from conservatism to progressivism in their thinking. This change also includes a transition from simply interpreting the text (*fahm al-Khitab*) to understanding the ideals contained in the text (*fahm al-Murad min al-Khitab*), which is now better known as *maqashid al-syari'ah* in the current context (Abd al Wahab, 1980). This is reflected in personal, family, community, and state life, so that they can make a significant contribution to the formulation of state policies (Muhtarom, 2005).

Female scholars, especially those who are members of the Indonesian Women Scholars Congress (KUPI), play an important role in raising awareness of environmental issues in Indonesia. They not only emphasize religious values in understanding the environment but also integrate a gender perspective in nature conservation efforts. For example, KUPI proactively promotes inclusive environmental education and empowers women to contribute to natural resource management (KUPI (Indonesian Congress of Female Scholars, 2020). Female scholars also promote environmentally friendly principles in daily religious practices, emphasizing the importance of contributing to environmental sustainability through religious teachings, such as minimizing waste, reducing garbage, and using natural resources responsibly. This view not only changes individual behavior but also sets an example for the community to live in harmony with nature (Wardah, 2022). KUPI and female scholars are actively involved in advocating sustainable environmental policies. They engage in dialogue with the government and civil society to promote policies that respect and protect the environment. These efforts reflect their commitment to integrating religious values with conservation principles, thereby creating a collective awareness of the importance of protecting the Earth for future generations (Ahmad Tafsir, 2001).

Female scholars active in environmental advocacy, known as Teungku Inong in Aceh Province, play an important role in leading traditional Islamic boarding schools (*dayah*) and managing *majelis ta'lim* (religious gatherings). They routinely teach religious knowledge, including the Qur'an and hadith, to students and congregations. Teungku Inong participated in the Religion and Living Space Preservation Workshop held in Banda Aceh City, organized by the HAKA Foundation (Aceh Forest, Nature and Environment). This

foundation is a non-governmental organization focused on preserving the Leuser Ecosystem Area (KEL) and improving community social welfare. During the training, the Teungku Inong learned and shared experiences on various issues and solutions related to nature and environmental destruction in Aceh, discussing these issues from a religious and ecofeminist perspective. Female religious scholars from the Rahim Bumi Foundation, located in Amuntai, Hulu Sungai Utara, South Kalimantan, play a vital role in women's education, empowerment, and environmental management through a social entrepreneurship approach.

They actively raise public awareness of the importance of sustainable natural resource management, especially in the utilization and restoration of peatlands, which are a source of livelihood in Amuntai. In the creative economy sector, they offer a variety of attractive environmentally friendly products, such as purun and sasirangan crafts, colored with natural materials. These products were produced through training conducted by the Eco Teratai Darussalam group. In addition, the Rahim Bumi Foundation is committed to strengthening institutional capacity and cooperative management in Peduli Gambut Village. To support market development, they provide exhibition space to showcase the products that have been produced. This aims to expand market reach and build good relationships between artisans, financial institutions, and government agencies such as the Trade and Industry Office.

Female Scholars in Environmental Preservation: the KUPI Fatwa Approach

The Indonesian Female Scholars Congress (KUPI) strives to drive initiatives that form the basis of each of its fatwas by promoting the principle of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, which means mercy for all of creation. This principle is in line with the Islamic vision emphasized in various verses of the Qur'an, which call for *akhlak karimah* (noble character), as taught by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Within the framework of the basic values that form the KUPI paradigm, there are nine important aspects: 1) monotheism, 2) mercy, 3) benefit, 4) equality, 5) reciprocity (*Mubadalah*), 6) True Justice, 7) nationalism, 8) humanity, and 9) universality (Kodir, 2017). For KUPI, monotheism is the basis of all other values. Here, God refers to Allah SWT.

Complete obedience should only be given to God, while all creations are expected to support one another. Every good deed related to life in this world and the hereafter—such as faith, worship, and social charity in Islam—is a reflection of the vision of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* and of noble character. When all of this is applied by humanity, it is important to have a foundation that focuses on the principle of benefit to all. The ideas contained in these nine basic values will be implemented through three effective approaches (Kodir, 2017):

1. *Makruf* asserts that the nine basic values (KUPI paradigm) can provide useful solutions and create harmony between the dialectic of the text and the principles of Sharia, public reason, and various existing social agreements.
2. *Mubadalah* is an approach that places all parties, especially men and women, as equal subjects in receiving and realizing ideas derived from these nine values.
3. True justice for women means considering the unique conditions faced by women or individuals with certain conditions, both biological and social. These special conditions should not hinder access, participation, benefits, or control over the implementation of ideas in the nine basic values.

These three approaches—*makruf*, *mubadalah*, and true justice—are closely related and complementary, rather than independent. The foundations of monotheism, a vision of mercy, and a mission of benefit can be optimally realized when relationships are built on the values of equality, reciprocity, and justice. Therefore, it is important to apply interpretations that prioritize *makruf*, *mubadalah*, and true justice in the context of women (Kodir, 2017).

Female scholars in Indonesia have issued various fatwas emphasizing environmental preservation, focusing on different ecological issues. One of these is a fatwa on household waste management, which emphasizes the responsibility to care for the earth (*khilafah fi al-ard*) and the impact of waste on public health, especially the burden on women and children. This fatwa states that deliberately allowing waste to accumulate is *haram* and encourages household and community-based waste management practices, including sorting and recycling. Another fatwa relates to water conservation, emphasizing water as a human right and a gift from Allah, and noting that the impact of water shortages is felt more severely by women and children than by men. This fatwa encourages water conservation, pollution prevention, and collective community responsibility for protecting water resources.

Female scholars issued a fatwa on nature conservation and tree planting, considering the preservation of nature's balance as a religious mandate, the importance of trees for local communities, and moral responsibility towards future generations. This fatwa instructs Muslim communities to plant trees, care for local forests, and to prevent deforestation. Another fatwa highlights the reduction of single-use plastics, based on the impact of plastics on the ecosystem and Islamic teachings that emphasize simplicity and responsibility towards the environment. This fatwa calls on Muslims to reduce the use of single-use plastics, replace them with environmentally friendly materials, and encourage sustainable consumption. Overall, these fatwas show that female scholars combine Islamic principles with contemporary ecological knowledge and incorporate gender experiences

as a moral basis, offering practical solutions relevant to local communities and strengthening environmental advocacy through religious channels.

Source Reference Fatwa

Based on interviews with 12 female scholars from East Java, West Nusa Tenggara, and South Sulawesi, the study found that women play an active strategic role in formulating environmentally friendly fatwas, even though they come from highly patriarchal communities. Several fatwas that were the focus of this study included household waste management, water conservation, nature preservation, and the reduction in the use of single-use plastics. In the interviews, the scholars explained considerations such as the responsibility to care for the earth (*khilafah fi al-ard*), the impact of the environmental crisis on women and children, and the urgency of integrating Islamic principles with contemporary ecological knowledge to address the crisis.

The resulting fatwas emphasize that allowing environmental damage or deliberate pollution is haram and encourage practices such as waste management, water conservation, tree planting, and reducing single-use plastics. The interview results show that female scholars' arguments often stem from their experiences in local communities, such as witnessing firsthand the impact of water shortages on housewives or forest destruction affecting people's livelihoods. This approach makes fatwas not only normative but also contextual and field experience-based, making them socially and ecologically relevant. The interview results provide a strong empirical basis for understanding how female scholars balance religious perspectives, ecological knowledge, and gender experiences in formulating fatwas, while also presenting strategies for overcoming resistance and limited access to national fatwa institutions.

The KUPI deliberations highly respect the Qur'an and Hadith as their main foundations. Both are understood as complementary and mutually supportive units in conveying God's message for the welfare of the people. Therefore, the interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith must reinforce each other (*yufassiru ba'dluhu ba'dlan*) within the framework of a noble vision and the nine basic values/paradigms of KUPI (Kodir, 2017). Sources of knowledge outside the Qur'an and Hadith, such as social sciences, exact sciences, philosophy, and facts of life, must be integrated into a comprehensive framework. Each of these sources must be viewed as part of a complete, holistic, coherent system. In producing fatwas and formulating religious attitudes and views on social issues, KUPI's legal foundations always refer to the Qur'an, Hadith, *Aqwal Ulama*, and the Constitution (KUPI Indonesian Women Ulema Congress, 2020):

1. *Nash* Al-Quran, Quranic verses related to social issues have been collected thematically. Each verse is then translated and explained

to clarify the meaning and relevance of the relationship between them.

2. *Hadiths* related to social issues have also been collected thematically, covering various *sanads* and *matans*. Furthermore, these hadiths were translated and explained to highlight their meanings and their interrelationships.
3. *Aqwalul Ulama*, A collection of opinions and statements from scholars in a social context has been analyzed and presented to provide deeper insight. The views of classical and modern scholars relevant to the issues discussed are explained in relation to each other and the reasons why these views are used as reference sources.
4. The Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia is the basis for the laws and regulations applicable in the country.

In its efforts to carry out a movement focused on Islam, humanity, and nationality, KUPI has established a clear vision and mission: to eliminate all forms of injustice experienced by humanity, especially women. Therefore, in formulating fatwas, KUPI pays close attention to the life experiences of women and other vulnerable groups (KUPI Indonesian Women Ulema Congress, 2020). The legacy of past traditions, which include various disciplines such as Qur'anic interpretation, Hadith compilation and explanation, *fiqh*, *ushul fiqh*, and Sufism, illustrates the dynamics of applying this vision in everyday life. This process continues to evolve in accordance with changing contexts. This is in line with state laws and policies that demonstrate a continuous dynamic to realize the grand vision of *rahmatan lil alamin* (mercy and grace for all creation) and *akhlaq karimah* (good moral behavior and character) to achieve the benefit of society (Kodir, 2017).

Discussion

The results of the study show that female scholars play a strategic role in formulating environmentally friendly fatwas, especially those related to waste management, water conservation, nature preservation, and the reduction of plastic use. These findings are in line with those of Fetters et al. (2013), who emphasized the importance of integrating scientific knowledge and religious values in shaping environmental behavior. The scholars in this study emphasized gender experiences as the moral basis for fatwas, such as the impact of water shortages on women and children—a perspective that rarely appears in mainstream fatwas (Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, 2022b). The obstacles faced, such as limited access to national fatwa institutions and resistance from conservative groups, meant that female scholars often had to build cross-regional networks and utilize nonformal learning spaces to strengthen their legitimacy. The resulting fatwas tended to combine Islamic principles with contemporary ecological knowledge, offering practical

solutions appropriate to the local context and highlighting the need for a contextual approach to religion-based environmental advocacy. Overall, these findings confirm that gender is not merely a social variable but an important factor that influences religious leadership and the potential of fatwas as instruments of ecological advocacy, in line with previous research highlighting the role of women in religious leadership and social advocacy.

The climate change we have been experiencing lately is clear evidence of the failure of the global development model that has been implemented thus far (Ali Mutakin & Waheeda Binti H. Abdul Rahman, 2023). The results of the study reveal that human greed and excessive exploitation of natural resources are the main factors triggering ecological crises and disasters in various places. In addition, climate change and environmental damage are increasingly becoming urgent global issues that require immediate attention and action (Menkeu, 2021). The impact is not only felt by one country or a particular community but has become a common concern for all humanity on planet Earth. Currently, preserving and sustaining the environment has become a very important responsibility for society, including that of Islamic scholars and thinkers. In this context, an interesting discipline has emerged, namely "Ecological Fiqh." Ecological Fiqh is a study of the application of Islamic teachings in efforts to preserve the environment, with an approach based on the concept of *maslahat* (M. Ridwan, 2013).

Preserving the environment and ensuring its sustainability have become important responsibilities for all communities, including Islamic scholars and thinkers. In this context, a discipline that has attracted attention is "Ecological *Fiqh*." Ecological Fiqh is the study of the application of Islamic teachings to preserve the environment, with an approach based on the concept of *maslahat*. According to Atho Mudzhar, there are four main reasons for the development of ecological fiqh.

1. The deepening environmental crisis, both in Muslim countries and globally, requires the contribution of Islamic teachings as *rahmatan lil 'alamain* to address it. One way to play a role in overcome this challenge is to formulate environmental fiqh. Although Muslim scholars and intellectuals have developed this concept, there is still a need to expand it into more applicable ideas that can be implemented through formal institutions. The synergy between the values of Islamic teachings and social, cultural, and legal wisdom further strengthens the application of this concept. In the context of Muslims, this will also strengthen the spiritual aspect of the formal law applied. Therefore, Muslims need more comprehensive guidance regarding classical fiqh, because the existing guidance is considered insufficient and does not yet cover operational steps regarding environmental conservation, especially in the face of the ongoing crisis.

2. In contrast, environmental fiqh has not been recognized as an integral discipline in Islamic studies. The ontological and epistemological aspects of environmental fiqh are still debated, and it is often viewed as a part of environmental science. Although there are several themes related to the environment in fiqh mu'amalah, such as *thaharah*, *ihya' almawaf*, hunting laws, and *hima*, these themes are still general and ethics-oriented in nature. Therefore, a more concrete, contextual, and ecologically nuanced explanation is required for effective implementation.
3. Environmental fiqh, as a foundation for environmental conservation rooted in Islamic teachings, should be included in educational programs. This is important because awareness of environmental conservation can be achieved more effectively through educational and cultural approaches. Thus, the development of environmental fiqh will gain legitimacy and recognition from various parties (Atho Mudzhar, 2010).

Female scholars have succeeded in bringing a more inclusive and holistic perspective to the formulation of fatwas. This case study in Indonesia reveals how female scholars contribute to this process and the impact and implementation of the fatwas they formulate. The importance of female scholars' involvement in contemporary issues reinforces the argument that gender equality in religious leadership can bring about significant positive changes in the community and the environment. A healthy environment, characterized by clean air, water, plants, and animals, is highly beneficial to human life (Dawi et al., 2022) (Eisenstein, 1979). Preserving the environment is the responsibility of all for the welfare and survival of humans and the flora and fauna on Earth.

The main role of This research focuses on how female scholars actively formulate environmentally friendly fatwas that combine Islamic principles, ecological knowledge, and gendered experiences. One concrete example is the Indonesian Female Scholars Congress (KUPI) Fatwa Number 3 of 2022 on Ecological Fiqh, which states that allowing environmental damage due to waste is *harām*. This fatwa not only provides normative guidance for Muslims on waste management but also has a practical impact on promoting community awareness and sustainable environmental practices, especially at the household and local community levels. The research finding that female scholars utilize fatwas as tools for ecological advocacy presents an approach rarely seen in mainstream fatwas, where gender experiences are used as the moral basis. Fatwas issued by female scholars are not merely normative texts but also effective instruments for influencing community practices and strengthening religious leadership in the context of environmental advocacy.

Conclusion

Female religious scholars play an important role in promoting sustainable environmental practices through religious platforms. The fatwas they issue tend to combine Islamic principles with contemporary ecological knowledge, offering practical solutions relevant to the lives of local communities. The study found that gender experiences form the moral basis for the formulation of fatwas, an approach that rarely appears in mainstream fatwas. Despite obstacles such as limited access to national fatwa institutions and resistance from conservative groups in Muslim communities, female scholars have overcome these barriers through cross-regional networks, collaboration with environmental organizations, and the use of nonformal learning spaces, thereby strengthening religious legitimacy. The resulting fatwas are theologically relevant and provide practical solutions to environmental issues, reflecting significant progress in integrating religious teachings with contemporary issues. Gender equality in religious leadership can bring about positive changes in society and the environment, positioning female scholars as agents of change in an ecological context. The limitations of the study include the limited number of respondents, namely, 12 female scholars; therefore, the findings may not represent the entire Indonesian context. In addition, this study emphasizes documentation and interviews; therefore, the analysis of the fatwas' long-term impact on community practices has not been fully measured. The recommendations from this study are for national religious institutions to open access for female scholars in the fatwa formulation process, encourage collaboration with environmental organizations, and facilitate educational programs for the community to effectively implement environmentally friendly fatwas. This holistic and inclusive approach is expected to strengthen the role of female scholars in environmental advocacy and increase ecological awareness among the Muslim community.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank all those involved in this research.

Author Contribution Statement

A.M., E.M., and M. contributed from the initial concept of the manuscript to the writing and publication process.

References

- Abd al Wahab. (1980). *Khalaf, Ushul al Fiqh*,. (Al Qahirah: Dar al Kutub al Arabiyah),.
- Ahmad Tafsir,. (2001). *"Ilmu Pendidikan dalam Perspektif Islam."* Bandung: Remaja Rosda Karya,.

- Ali Mutakin & Waheeda Binti H. Abdul Rahman. (2023). Fiqh Ekologi; Upaya Merawat Lingkungan Hidup Berbasis Konsep Maqashid Syariah. *Syariah: Journal of Fiqh Studies*, 1(2), 107–126. <https://doi.org/10.61570/syariah.v1i2.31>
- Al-Qur'an, Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Diklat, B. L. D., & RI, D. A. (2009). *Pelestarian Lingkungan Hidup*.
- Al-Razi, A. Al-Qasim,. (1972). *Mu'jam Maqayis Al-Lughah*. (Mustafa Al-Bab Al-Halabiy, Mesir).
- Arauf, M. A. (2021). *Ecological View From The Perspective of Quranic Verses: Contesting the Idea of Religion and Environment*. 2(2).
- Atho Mudzhar,. (2010). *Membumikan Fiqh Ramah Lingkungan” dalam Mudhofir Abdullah, Al-Qur'an dan Konservasi Lingkungan*,. (Jakarta: Dian Rakyat,.
- Dawi, K., Haryono, D., Yulastini, A., & Astono, A. (2022). Restorative Justice Paradigm of Kanayat'n Dayak Customary Law on Environmental Damage Caused By Shifting Cultivation. *Jurnal Analisis Hukum*, 5(2), 245–252. <https://doi.org/10.38043/jah.v5i2.3918>
- Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir,. (2022a). *Metodologi Fatwa KUPI (Pokok-pokok Pikiran Musyawarah Keagamaan Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia*. KUPI Kampus Fahmina, Cirebon, Jawa Barat.
- Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir,. (2022b, February 21). “Metodologi Fatwa KUPI,.” <https://fahmina.or.id/metodologi-fatwa-kupi/>.
- Foltz, R. (2003). *Islam and ecology: A bestowed trust*. Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School.
- Idris, Muh., Mokodenseho, S., Willya, E., & Otta, Y. A. (2020). *Pendidikan Islam dan Konservasi Lingkungan*. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/sj4dc>
- Jajat Burhanudin. (2002). *Ulama Perempuan Indonesia*. ((Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama).
- Kamal Gueye, M., & Mohamed, N. (2023). An Islamic Perspective on Ecology and Sustainability. *IntechOpen*. <https://doi.org/doi:%252010.5772/intechopen.105032>
- KemKementerian Et Al.,. (2022, 2023). *Status Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup Dan Kehutanan*,.
- Kodir, Faqihuddin Abdul. (2017). Mafhum Mubadalah: Ikhtiar Memahami Qur'an Dan Hadits Untuk Meneguhkan Keadilan Resiprokal Islam Dalam Isu-Isu Gender. *Jurnal Islam Indonesia* 6, no. 2.
- Kompas Cyber Media,. (2019, February 22). “Setiap Tahun, Hutan Indonesia Hilang 684.000 Hektar,.” *KOMPAS.Com*,.
- KUPI (Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia),. (2020). “Bersama KUPI, Pemeliharaan Lingkungan Adalah Kewajiban Agama,.” *Retrieved from [KUPI]*. <https://www.kupi.or.id/>

- M. Ridwan,. (2013). Fiqh Ekologi, Membangun Fiqh Ekologis untuk Pelestarian Kosmos,Neliti. *Journal Mazahib*, 152. <https://doi.org/10.21093/mj.v12i2.331>.
- Mahyudin, R. P. (2017). KAJIAN PERMASALAHAN PENGELOLAAN SAMPAH DAN DAMPAK LINGKUNGAN DI TPA (TEMPAT PEMROSESAN AKHIR). *Jukung (Jurnal Teknik Lingkungan)*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.20527/jukung.v3i1.3201>
- Mariatul Istiani And Muhammad Roy Purwanto,. (2019). "Fiqh Bi'ah Urgensi Teologi Al-Quran,." *At-Thullab : Jurnal Mahasiswa Studi Islam*, 1(1), 27–44.
- Masrokhin. (2014). KONSEP EKOLOGI ISLAM SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR (STUDI KITAB AL-TAHARAH DALAM KAJIAN FIQH). *Irtifaq*, 1(1), 39–64.
- Menkeu: (2021, November). Perubahan Iklim Menjadi Isu Utama Pembahasan Global,. <https://www.menpan.go.id/site/berita-terkini/berita-daerah/menkeu-perubahan-iklim-menjadi-isu-utama-pembahasan-global>.
- Mubjadi. (2022). "Kupi li Fatwa: The Law Of Allowing Environmental Damage Due To Waste Is Haram,." *Mubadalah.or.id*. <https://kupi.or.id/fatwa-kupi-li-hukum-pembiaran-kerusakan-lingkungan-hidup-akibat-sampah-adalah-haram/>, 2022.
- Muhammad, K. H.,. (2020). *Perempuan Ulama Di Atas Panggung Sejarah*. (IRCiSoD.,).
- Muhtarom. (2005). *Reproduksi Ulama Di Era Globalisasi*. (Yogyakarta,Pustaka Pelajar).
- Ramadhan, M. (2019). MAQASID SYARI'AH DAN LINGKUNGAN HIDUP. *ANALYTICA ISLAMICA*, 21(2), 126–136.
- Shihab, M. Q. (2012). *Tafsir al-Misbah: Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian Al-Quran*. Lentera Hati.
- Siti Rohmah, In'amul Mushoffa, Moh. Anas Kholish. (2022). *Konstitusi Hijau & Ijtihad Ekologi, Genealogi, KOnsep, Masa Depan, Dan Tantangannya Di Indonesia*. Universitas Brawijaya Press. Malang.
- Sri Isnani Setyaningsih,. (2021). "Peran Ulama Perempuan Dalam Pendidikan: Sebuah Potret Pesantren,." Makalah disampaikan dalam diskusi dosen Fakultas Sains dan Teknologi.
- Ubaidillah, M. H. (2010). *(Formulasi Konsep al-Maqasid al-Shari'ah*. 13(1).
- VIVA. (2017, February 23). *Data Dan Fakta Kerusakan Hutan Di Indonesia*,. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5C6Oat_ig98.
- Wardah, F.,. (2022). "Ulama Perempuan, Konservasi Lingkungan, Dan Pendidikan Islam Lingkungan,." *Jurnal Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam*, 15(2), 183-200.

- Wildan Fatoni Yusuf. (2022). *Menimbang Hifdzul Bi'ah dalam Maqosid Al-Syari'ah*. 2.
- World Bank. (2020). "As The World's Largest Multilateral Source Of Financing For Water In Developing Countries, The World Bank Is Committed To Water For People And Planet.,. *The World Bank Is Committed To Water For People And Planet.,.* " <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/water/overview>, 2020.
- Zuhdi, M. H. (2015). FIQH AL-BÎ'AH: TAWARAN HUKUM ISLAM DALAM MENGATASI KRISIS EKOLOGI. *AL-'ADALAH*, XII,(4), 771–784.