



Halal Culture from an Ecotheological Perspective: An Ethnographic Study of the Madurese Community

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Abstract

This research is a field study using an ethnographic approach that examines halal cultural practices from the perspective of Islamic eco-theology within Madurese society. The research focuses on two communities: Karang Penang Sampang Village and Lenteng Village in Sumenep Regency, Madura, which maintain traditional religious practices and resource management based on Sharia values and local

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wisdom. Data were collected through participatory observation, field documentation, and in-depth interviews with key informants, including religious leaders, traditional elders, women involved in cultural activities, local farmers, and young people active in the preservation of traditions. Research findings indicate that halal culture is understood not only as adherence to fiqh norms, but also as a form of ecological ethics that governs the relationship between humans and nature. For example, in the tradition “Mèngghulè,” In the lead-up to the Prophet’s Birthday or Ramadan, communities engage in communal cooking rituals, using pesticide-free local ingredients, slaughtering animals in accordance with Islamic law, and serving food on natural containers such as banana leaves. Meanwhile, within the settlement system “Tanean Lanjhang”, A pattern of collective life was discovered that reflects ecological and spiritual harmony through the management of water, land, and food based on family values. Values such as *barokah* (blessing), *sakkena* (peace), and the principle of *al-halal bi thayyib* serve as guidelines for the community’s social and ecological practices. This study shows that the halal culture in Madura is a manifestation of Islamic eco-theology that is contextual, sustainable, and rooted in local culture.

[Penelitian ini merupakan studi lapangan dengan pendekatan etnografi yang bertujuan untuk mengkaji praktik budaya halal dari perspektif ekoteologi Islam dalam masyarakat Madura. Penelitian ini berfokus pada dua komunitas: Desa Karang Penang Sampang dan Desa Lenteng di Kabupaten Sumenep, Madura, yang mempertahankan praktik keagamaan tradisional dan pengelolaan sumber daya berdasarkan nilai-nilai Syariah dan kearifan lokal. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, dokumentasi lapangan, dan wawancara mendalam dengan sejumlah informan kunci, termasuk pemimpin agama, tetua adat, perempuan yang terlibat dalam kegiatan budaya, petani lokal, dan kaum muda yang aktif dalam pelestarian tradisi. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa budaya halal dipahami tidak hanya sebagai kepatuhan terhadap norma-norma fiqh, tetapi juga sebagai bentuk etika ekologis yang mengatur hubungan antara manusia dan alam. Misalnya, dalam tradisi “Mèngghulè” menjelang Hari Raya Nabi atau Ramadan, masyarakat melakukan ritual memasak bersama, menggunakan bahan-bahan lokal bebas pestisida, menyembelih hewan sesuai dengan hukum Islam, dan menyajikan makanan di wadah alami seperti daun pisang. Sementara itu, dalam sistem pemukiman “Tanean Lanjhang”, ditemukan pola kehidupan kolektif yang mencerminkan harmoni ekologis dan spiritual melalui pengelolaan air, tanah, dan makanan berdasarkan nilai-nilai keluarga. Nilai-nilai seperti *barokah* (berkah), *sakkena* (perdamaian), dan prinsip *al-halal bi thayyib* berfungsi sebagai pedoman bagi praktik sosial dan ekologis masyarakat. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa budaya halal di Madura merupakan manifestasi dari ekoteologi Islam yang kontekstual, berkelanjutan, dan berakar pada budaya lokal.]

Key Word: halal culture; Islamic ecotheology, ethnography, Madurese tradition

Introduction

The concept of halal has evolved from a mere category of Islamic jurisprudence into an integral part of a global value system encompassing ethical, health, and sustainability dimensions.¹ In the context of the globalization of the food and cosmetics industries, demand for halal products has increased significantly, particularly among Muslim consumers who are becoming increasingly aware of the halal and *thayyib* principles, meaning products that are not only permissible under Islamic law but also beneficial for the body and the environment.² This phenomenon has prompted many countries, including non-Muslim ones, to adopt halal regulations as part of their economic diplomacy and soft power strategies.³

However, this expansion of the halal concept is often merely formalistic, focusing on certification labels and technical aspects of the industry without delving into the spiritual and ecological values at the heart of Islamic teachings.⁴ In fact, in classical Islamic tradition, halal cannot be separated from ethical responsibility toward nature, society, and a just way of life.⁵ Therefore, there is a need to re-establish the

¹ Warto Ahmad Saifuddin and Firman Setiawan, "Digital Innovation, Sustainability Principles, and Multi-Sector Diversification Models of Indonesia's Halal Industry: An Analysis of Sharia Economic Transformation," *Journal of Halal Product and Research* 8, no. 2 (30 December, 2025): 225–36, <https://doi.org/10.20473/jhpr.vol.8-issue.2.225-236>.

² Muhammad Imran ; Mohd Nazari Ismail Ahmad, "Revisiting the Concept of Halal: Ethics, Consumerism, and Sustainability," *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 12, no. 4 (2021): 675–692, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-09-2020-0290>.

³ Suddin Lada, Geoffrey Harvey Tanakinjal, and Hanudin Amin, "Predicting Intention to Choose Halal Products Using Theory of Reasoned Action," *International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management* 2, no. 1 (2009): 66–76, <https://doi.org/10.1108/17538390910946276>.

⁴ Fahmi Ali Hudaefi and Irwandi Jaswir, "Halal Governance in Indonesia: Theory, Current Practices, and Related Issues," *Journal of Islamic Monetary Economics and Finance* 5, no. 1 (2019): 89–116, <https://doi.org/10.21098/jimf.v5i1.1049>.

⁵ Sri; Hilda Fitriani Wahyuni, "Halal Governance in Indonesia: Beyond Certification," *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research* 12, no. 2 (2021): 183–197, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIABR-03-2020-0071>.

concept of halal within a more holistic framework, namely, as part of Islamic eco-theology.⁶

Islamic eco-theology emphasizes the sacred relationship between humans, nature, and God.⁷ Values such as *mīzān* (balance), *khalifah* (God's representation on Earth), and *amana* (responsibility) form the foundation for understanding how the concept of halal applies not only to consumption but also to production, distribution, and sustainable social relations.⁸ This approach links religious teachings with ecological awareness and extends the concept of halal into cultural practices and daily life.⁹

The current global ecological crisis is not merely about the physical degradation of nature, but also a crisis of human values and spirituality in how we treat the Earth. Excessive exploitation of resources.¹⁰ Unchecked industrialization and consumerism are the main causes of ongoing environmental degradation.¹¹ In this context, there is an urgent need to integrate religious values into the discourse and practice of sustainability. Islamic eco-theology emerges as a response to this crisis by emphasizing the spiritual relationship between humans and nature as part of God's creation.¹²

Islam has a strong theological framework for developing environmental ethics. The concept of *khalifah* positions humans as

⁶ M. Kabir; Md. Bakhtiar Mollah Hassan, "Faith, Ethics and Halal Consumption: An Islamic Perspective," *Journal of Islamic Business and Management* 11, no. 1 (2021): 90–102, <https://doi.org/10.26501/jibm/2021.1101-007>.

⁷ Agus and Ruzita Sulaiman Nurdianto, "Islamic Environmental Ethics and Sustainable Development," *International Journal of Ethics and Systems* 38, no. 4 (2022): 542–559, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOES-06-2021-0120>.

⁸ Nur Hafeeza, Nor Syahirah Salleh, and Ahmad Shahril Irwan Kamarulzaman, *Halal and Environmentalism: An Islamic Ecotheology Approach*, Environment, Development and Sustainability, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-021-01636-1>.

⁹ Nita Tubastuvi and Ahmad Ghozali Ramadani, *Maqasid Al-Shari'ah Perspective on the Green Economy for Halal Industry Sustainability* (Singapore: Springer, 2025), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-96-1729-6_5.

¹⁰ Desi Sabtina and Mahariah Mahariah, "Internalizing Islamic Ecotheology through School Culture to Foster Eco-Character," *Halaqa: Islamic Education Journal* 9, no. 2 (26 July, 2025): 21–41, <https://doi.org/10.21070/halaqa.v9i2.1754>.

¹¹ Stefan and Michael C. Hall Gössling, "Pandemics, Tourism and Global Change: A Rapid Assessment of COVID-19," *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 29, no. 1 (2021): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1758708>.

¹² Mohammad Ofighi, "Ecotheology and the Crisis of Environment: An Islamic Perspective," *Religions* 11, no. 2 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11020115>.

stewards of the Earth rather than absolute rulers.¹³ The principles of *mīzān* (balance) and *amanah* (responsibility) guide us toward managing the environment in a fair and sustainable manner.¹⁴ However, in the daily lives of Muslims, these values are still rarely translated into concrete ecological action.¹⁵ Therefore, there is a need for an approach that reconnects Islamic values with local cultural practices and communities.

Several studies have emphasized the importance of local, participatory approaches to integrating Islamic values into environmental conservation efforts.¹⁶ In Muslim communities, local culture can serve as a strategic entry point for integrating Islamic eco-theology into social life, particularly through ethical, responsible halal consumption.¹⁷ This approach is essential for effectively bridging the discourse on Islam, sustainability, and community.

In contemporary discourse on the relationship between religion, the environment, and culture, the concept of halal culture has undergone significant development. No longer limited to the halal status of food and drink, halal culture now encompasses a way of life consistent with Islamic ethical values, reflecting spiritual, social, and ecological engagement in daily life. In Islamic studies, this concept holds both theoretical and practical relevance as it pertains to aspects of Islamic law (*fiqh*), the *maqashid al-sharia*, and the social dynamics of Muslim communities in responding to modernity and globalization.¹⁸

¹³ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man* (Chicago: ABC International Group, 2020).

¹⁴ Mian Ahmad and Nazim Uddin Ahmed Hussain, "Islamic Environmentalism and Sustainable Development: A Theoretical Framework," *Sustainability* 13, no. 3 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13031429>.

¹⁵ Azizan and Wan Suhaimi Wan Abdullah Yusoff Baharuddin, "The Practice of Islamic Environmental Ethics among Muslim Consumers in Malaysia," *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 11, no. 4 (2020): 765–782, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-02-2019-0025>.

¹⁶ Achmad; Yayan Sulaeman and Muhammad Muslim Irawan, "Faith-Based Environmentalism: Islamic Community Participation in River Restoration," *Environment, Development and Sustainability* 24, no. 1 (22AD), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-021-01495-w>.

¹⁷ Nur and Yuyun Sari Rohmah, "Cultural Strategy of Eco-Islam in Indonesian Pesantren," *Studia Islamika* 28, no. 3 (2021): 543–568, <https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v28i3.12517>.

¹⁸ Sabtina and Mahariah, "Internalizing Islamic Ecotheology through School Culture to Foster Eco-Character."

In line with this, the eco-theological perspective offers an approach that brings together the spiritual dimensions of Islam with ecological awareness. In the Islamic context, eco-theology is grounded in the principles of tawhid, khalifah, and *amanah*, which position humanity as stewards of nature rather than its absolute rulers. This approach implies that religious practices, including halal consumption, are not merely ritualistic but also reflect ecological responsibility and spiritual ethics toward God's creation.¹⁹ Therefore, studying halal culture from an eco-theological perspective is essential for understanding how Muslims are reframing their relationship with the environment from both theological and cultural perspectives.

Madura Island, with its distinctive cultural richness and strong social and religious ties, offers much to explore in terms of an ethnographic study of halal cultural practices.²⁰ The Madurese people are known for their strong religious devotion, the practice of attending Islamic boarding schools, and a communal lifestyle rooted in traditional Islamic values. Within the context of local culture, halal practices are reflected not only in food choices but also in dress codes, social etiquette, and even in people's relationship with nature, such as in agriculture, fishing, and the use of natural resources.²¹ However, amid the encroachment of modernity and the commodification of halal products, new dynamics have emerged within this community that warrant in-depth examination.

This article aims to answer the question: How is halal culture practiced, understood, and interpreted by the Madurese community within the framework of Islamic eco-theology? Using an ethnographic approach, this study aims to explore local narratives, cultural symbols, and socio-ecological practices of the Madurese Muslim community

¹⁹ Dede Aji Mardani et al., "Religion and Ecology: Environmental Ethics in Maintaining the Food and Energy," *TEMALI: Jurnal Pembangunan Sosial* 6, no. 1 (2023): 45–54, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jt.v6i1.25284>.

²⁰ Muhammad Ali Al Humaidy et al., "The Social Piety Index in Sumenep Regency by Analyzing Stability, Solidarity, and Mutual Cooperation," *KARSA Journal of Social and Islamic Culture* 32, no. 1 (23 June, 2024): 1–32, <https://doi.org/10.19105/karsa.v32i1.12551>.

²¹ Lailatul Yusro and Khairul Umam, "Tandha' Dance in Sumenep: Dynamics and Shifting Islamic Values in Local Cultural Representation," *KARSA Journal of Social and Islamic Culture* 31, no. 2 (2023): 395–417, <https://doi.org/10.19105/karsa.v31i2.11817>.

related to the concept of halal. The specific objectives are (1) to describe the forms of halal cultural practices in the daily lives of the Madurese people; (2) to interpret the theological-ecological meanings of these practices; and (3) to examine the contribution of local culture to the discourse on Islam and ecology in the Indonesian context.

This study is significant in Islamic studies because it integrates three areas of inquiry: Islamic law, local culture, and spiritual ecology.²² First, from an academic perspective, this study expands the discourse on halal in the context of fiqh through an interdisciplinary approach. Second, from a practical perspective, the findings of this study can provide recommendations for sustainable, community-based halal cultural policies. Third, from a theoretical perspective, this study enriches the field of Islamic eco-theology, which is still relatively new in Indonesian Islamic literature.²³

Theoretically, this study is based on three key concepts: halal culture, eco-theology, and ethnography. In this context, halal culture is understood as a way of life that is fully compliant with Sharia law, encompassing social, economic, and environmental aspects.²⁴ Ecotheology refers to the relationship between Islamic teachings and the environment, positioning humans as God's vicegerents on Earth. Meanwhile, an ethnographic approach was chosen to explore in depth the experiences, practices, and cultural symbols of the Madurese people through observation and participatory interviews.²⁵

Previous literature has extensively discussed halal culture in the contexts of industry, tourism, and consumption.²⁶ However, few have linked it to the dimension of Islamic eco-theology and the local context

²² Ahamad Sihabul Millah, Suharko Suharko, and Hakimul Ikhwan, "Integration of Green Islam and Agro-Ecology for Food Sovereignty," *Komunitas* 12, no. 2 (2020): 188–97, <https://doi.org/10.15294/komunitas.v12i2.24318>.

²³ Abdullah Muhammad Amin, "Religion and Ecology in Islamic Worldview: Ethics of the Environment in Islam," *Studia Islamika* 27, no. 2 (2020): 189–211, <https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v27i2.14794>.

²⁴ Millah, Suharko, and Ikhwan, "Integration of Green Islam and Agro-Ecology for Food Sovereignty."

²⁵ Baso Syafaruddin, "Ecotheology in the Perspective of Islamic Education: A Conceptual Review," *ETDC: Indonesian Journal of Research and Educational Review* 4, no. 3 (27 June, 2025): 720–31, <https://doi.org/10.51574/ijrer.v4i3.3253>.

²⁶ Frans Wijzen and Ahmad Afnan Anshori, "Eco-Theology in Indonesian Islam: Ideas on Stewardship among Muhammadiyah Members," *Journal of Government and Civil Society* 7, no. 1 (2023): 109, <https://doi.org/10.31000/jgcs.v7i1.7303>.

of traditional communities such as Madura. Several studies on Islamic eco-theology in Indonesia have also focused more on environmental movements based in Islamic boarding schools or urban communities.²⁷ Consequently, there remains a gap in the literature regarding how halal values and ecological awareness are internalized within the local culture of Muslim communities. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by presenting a local perspective from traditional communities that has not been extensively explored in the literature on halal and eco-theology.

Methods

This research is a field study employing an ethnographic approach, chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of halal cultural practices within the context of daily life among the Madurese people. The ethnographic approach enables the researcher to uncover the meanings and values inherent in religious practices and the management of natural resources through direct engagement in local socio-cultural activities.²⁸ The choice of this method is based on the assumption that the halal culture in Madura is not merely a matter of Islamic jurisprudence, but also a living socio-ecological construct rooted in local traditions and wisdom.²⁹

The research was conducted in two main communities: Karang Penang Village in Sampang Regency and Lenteng Village in Sumenep Regency, Madura. Both communities are agrarian in nature and uphold traditional religious practices based on Islamic sharia principles. In Karang Penang, the tradition “Mèngghulè”, the tradition of communal cooking ahead of the Prophet’s Birthday or Ramadan, demonstrates the integration of halal values with ecological ethics, such as the use of pesticide-free local food ingredients, the slaughter of animals in accordance with Islamic law, and the use of natural containers like banana leaves for serving. Meanwhile, in Lenteng, a settlement system

²⁷ Mohamed Syazwan Ab Talib and Siti Norida Wahab, “Halal Logistics in a Rentier State: An Observation,” *Modern Supply Chain Research and Applications* 3, no. 2 (2021): 155–70, <https://doi.org/10.1108/mscra-04-2020-0005>.

²⁸ Zulkifli, Nuryaman, and Hafidhoh, “Islamic Approaches to the Environmental Preservation: A Systematic Literature Review,” *Al-A’raf: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam dan Filsafat* 20, no. 2 (2023): 176–209, <https://doi.org/10.22515/ajpif.v20i2.7848>.

²⁹ Rüdiger Lohler, “Islamic Ecotheology: Transcending Anthropocentrism through Wahdat Al-Wujūd,” *Ascarya: Journal of Islamic Science, Culture, and Social Studies* 4, no. 2 (4 November, 2024): 82–89, <https://doi.org/10.53754/iscs.v4i2.705>.

called “Tanean Lanjhang” was found, reflecting collective stewardship of water, land, and food in harmony with the principles of ecological and spiritual sustainability.

Data collection was conducted through participatory observation, field documentation, and in-depth interviews.³⁰ Participatory observation allows researchers to engage directly in cultural activities, such as *Mèngghulè* and daily activities at *Tanean Lanjhang*. Field documentation includes photographs, daily logs, and audio-visual recordings. In-depth interviews were conducted with religious leaders, traditional elders, women involved in cultural practices (collective cooks), local farmers, and young people dedicated to preserving traditions. Key informants were selected through purposive sampling, taking into account their involvement in halal cultural practices and eco-theology.

Data analysis using qualitative thematic analysis techniques.³¹ The analysis process included transcribing interview data, repeated readings to identify patterns of meaning, open coding, theme grouping, and interpreting the findings based on the framework of Islamic eco-theology. Validation was conducted through member checking with informants and triangulation of sources among interview data, observations, and documentation. This process ensures that the research results reflect the community’s own understanding of a sustainable halal culture, grounded in values such as *barakah* (blessing), *sakkènah* (peace), and the principle of *al-halal bi thayyib*.

Results

Halal Culture in Madura

In the villages of Karang Penang (Sampang) and Lenteng (Sumenep), halal practices are an integral part of daily life. The community’s religious and social activities always ensure compliance with the principle of *al-halal bi thayyib*.³² For example, in Karang Penang, Sampang, according to tradition, *Mèngghulè*, in the communal cooking rituals held ahead of the Prophet’s Birthday or Ramadan, all

³⁰ Moh Yardlo et al., “Pesantren and Ecotheology: Mainstreaming Ecological Consciousness in Pesantren Langitan, East Java, Indonesia,” *Journal of Education and Religious Studies* 4, no. 02 (2024): 75–87, <https://doi.org/10.57060/jers-mm1fwd90>.

³¹ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, *Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide* (SAGE Publications, 2021).

³² Interview with Samarwi, Resident of Karang Penang, Sampang, 20 July 2025.

food ingredients are sourced from local, pesticide-free crops; animals are slaughtered in accordance with Islamic law; and dishes are served on natural containers such as banana leaves or banana stalks. The use of local ingredients is not merely due to availability, but also as a form of respect for the Earth (the ancestral land), which is believed to bring blessings.

Meanwhile, in the traditional settlement system in Sumenep *Tanean Lanjhang*, the layout of the common room and public facilities facilitates shared activities such as communal meals, prayer services, and meetings.³³ This linear settlement pattern facilitates the distribution of halal food, maintains environmental cleanliness, and ensures separation between food processing areas and other activity areas. In the community of Karang Penang Village (Sampang), halal practices are woven into communal cooking rituals ahead of the Prophet's Birthday or Ramadan, known as *Mèngghulè*. The informant stated:

“We always choose ingredients from our own fields, grown without pesticides, and the meat is slaughtered in accordance with Islamic law. All dishes are wrapped in banana leaves; it's said that this helps spread the blessings. Moreover, the sense of togetherness is stronger when the whole family gathers and works together to prepare the dishes and gather the banana leaves from our own garden,” said Ibu Rofi'ah (farmer and collective cook, Karang Penang Village).³⁴

Local foodstuffs (corn, bananas, field vegetables) are prioritized and embody ecological and spiritual values. This practice reflects an understanding of *al-halal bi thayyib* not only as a formal halal status, but also as something of good quality, clean, and blessed. Meanwhile, in the Lenteng Village community of the Tanean Lanjhang settlement, culture is intertwined with the unique structure of the houses. The elongated houses with open structures facilitate communal meals, collective prayers, and the fair distribution of halal food. Another informant stated:

“With the Tanean Lanjhang community structure, everyone can share food so that no one goes without, and the environment stays

³³ Interview with Ahmad Surya Warga Lenteng Sumenep, 23 July 2025

³⁴ Rofi'ah Ibu Rumah Tangga di Desa Karang Penang, 20 July 2025

clean. Daily chores are also easier to manage because family members look out for one another, especially when someone is sick. This Tanean Lanjhang community really makes a difference for us, as it's never lonely and we look out for one another, for example, by watching over each other's belongings when a family member needs to be hospitalized.”³⁵

Halal culture has become a symbol of identity and social integrity for the Madurese people. Local religious leaders have stated:

“Halal food preserves the family's honor. If it is not halal, it lacks blessings; without blessings, there is no peace (*sakkènah*). This is the language our ancestors used when teaching us about the principle of halal in daily life; they always prioritized halal and blessings.”³⁶

The concept of halal here is also integrated with the local value of *barokah* (blessing). The value of *sakinah* reflects the inner peace derived from lawful and virtuous practices that are not only religiously pure but also in harmony with nature and the community. The interpretation of *thayyib* in Madura incorporates ecological and social values. It is not merely about food quality, but also environmental safety, the origin of ingredients, and the pure intention behind the preparation. This aligns with the theory of Islamic eco-theology, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of humanity, the environment, and spirituality.³⁷ The concept of “*thayyib*” as “wholesome” food, environmentally friendly, healthy, and reflecting ethical integrity, has been extensively elaborated upon by modern thinkers; for instance, research by the Taqwa organization emphasizes that good food encompasses both ecological and spiritual well-being.³⁸

Studies on Eco-Islam emphasize that Islamic values promote environmental protection, justice, and moderation in human interaction

³⁵ Interview with Hasan, sesepuh adat Desa Lenteng, 23 July 2025

³⁶ Interview with Kyai Abdullah di Desa Karang Penang Sampang, 21 July 2025

³⁷ Sarah Robinson-Bertoni, “Re-Territorializing Religiosity in Wholesome Muslim Praxis,” *Religions* 8, no. 7 (2017): 1–31, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel8070132>.

³⁸ Robinson-Bertoni.

with nature.³⁹ The principles of khalifah, tawhid, and *mīzān* serve as the ethical foundation for practices such as those in Madura. In the realm of education, the integration of halal-thayyib values into the curriculum reinforces moral sensitivity toward food, social justice, and environmental health.⁴⁰ This reflects a trend in contemporary Islamic thought that aligns with local Madurese practices. Halal culture is not only understood as a religious obligation but has become a symbol of the Madurese community's collective identity. Halal practices mark social boundaries, determine the legitimacy of event organizers, and serve as a means of building trust among community members. This aligns with the view of local religious figures that "halal food is part of preserving the family's *marwah*" (honor). Adherence to halal standards is also linked to the values of *barokah* (blessing) and *sakkènah* (peace), which are believed to influence both physical and spiritual well-being.

The Madurese people have adapted the concept of halal by integrating fiqh norms and local wisdom. For example, the standard of "thayyib" is understood not only as nutritional quality, but also as assurance regarding the origin of food ingredients, environmentally friendly production processes, and good intentions in its preparation. This adaptation creates an eco-theological approach in which halal compliance becomes part of maintaining the balance of nature (*taretan bi' alam*). In some traditional ceremonies, such as harvest celebrations, the community does not merely recite prayers but also organizes food distribution so that all residents receive an equal share, reflecting the value of social justice rooted in Islamic teachings.

An Ecotheological Perspective on Maduran Halal Culture

The halal culture in Madura examined in this study focuses on, for example, the tradition in Karang Penang, Sampang *Mèngghulè*, Sumenep, *Tanean*, and *Lanjhang*. It is not merely understood as compliance with Islamic law in the consumption, production, and distribution of goods and services, but also encompasses a strong eco-

³⁹ Dr. Muhamed Ali and Dr. Muaz Agushi, "Eco-Islam: Integrating Islamic Ethics into Environmental Policy for Sustainable Living," *International Journal of Religion* 5, no. 9 (2024): 949–57, <https://doi.org/10.61707/gq0we205>.

⁴⁰ Reza Saputra et al., "Integrating Halal-Thayyib Food Values into Islamic Education: A Systematic Review from the Perspectives of Food Ethics, Arabic Education, and Educational Management," *Journal of Posthumanism* 5, no. 6 (2025): 1827–47, <https://doi.org/10.63332/joph.v5i6.2286>.

theological dimension. The principles of Islamic eco-theology, which emphasize harmony in the relationship between humans and God (hablun min Allah), fellow humans (hablun min al-nas), and nature, are reflected in various community practices, ranging from consumption patterns and resource management to environmental conservation. Field findings indicate that the majority of respondents view halal as a concept that also encompasses thayyib (good, healthy, and beneficial to the environment). A religious leader in Karang Penang Village stated, “If something is halal, it’s not just about being free from pork or alcohol, it must also be good for people and the Earth. If it harms the environment, that means it’s not thayyib.”⁴¹

The principle of halalan thayyiban implies an environmental ethic that promotes ecosystem balance as part of humanity’s responsibility as *khalifah fil-ardh*.⁴² The results of ethnographic observations show that the Madurese community practices a number of behaviors rooted in eco-theological values, including:

Table 1. Traditional Practices, Mèngghulè and Tanean Lanjhang

No	Subcategory of Practice	Form of Behavior	Ecotheological Value	Ethnographic Quote
1	Waste Management	Burying food scraps or feeding them to livestock	Avoiding wastefulness (israf), preserving water purity, and reusing resources. ⁴³	Let’s give the leftover vegetables to the goats; don’t throw them away. God does not like waste.
2	Local Consumption	Selecting raw materials from farmers or vendors in the local village	Reducing our carbon footprint, supporting the local economy,	We prefer to buy rice from the neighboring village. Not only is it

⁴¹ Interview with Kh. Muhammad Baiqun, tokoh masyarakat Karang Penang, 25 July 2025

⁴² Alwi Alatas, “Education and Socio-Political Change in the 11th and 12th Centuries Abbasid Realm,” *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 11, no. 1 (2021): 79–98, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.111.05>.

⁴³ Abdul Basir Mohamad, “Environmental Preservation and Water Pollution from the Islamic Perspective,” *Samarah* 7, no. 2 (2023): 997–1015, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhc.v7i2.16019>.

			and preserving the natural balance ⁴⁴	cheaper, but it's also closer and doesn't cause pollution.
3	Eco-Friendly Packaging Materials	Using banana leaves to wrap food, avoiding plastic	Reducing pollution, preserving soil fertility, and living in harmony with God's creation ⁴⁵	People have always used leaves to wrap rice, not plastic. Leaves are halal, fragrant, and don't harm the soil.
4	Ecological Ritual	Performing traditional rituals related to environmental and water management	Preserving the balance of nature through local wisdom and environmental spirituality ⁴⁶	Conceptual: a ritual to harmonize the relationship between humans and nature as an expression of Maduran eco-theology

The Relationship Between Halal Lifestyles and Environmental Sustainability in Rural Muslim Communities.⁴⁷ Environmental awareness among the people of Madura does not always stem from academic discourse on sustainability, but often originates from practical religious teachings. A young man who runs a halal catering business

⁴⁴ Azwar Iskandar and Khaerul Aqbar, "Green Economy Indonesia dalam Perspektif Maqashid Syari'ah," *Al-Mashrafiyah: Jurnal Ekonomi, Keuangan, dan Perbankan Syariah* 3, no. 2 (2019): 83, <https://doi.org/10.24252/al-mashrafiyah.v3i2.9576>.

⁴⁵ Serge Silatsa Nanda et al., "Islam and Environmental Sustainability: Perspectives and Challenges," *Dauliyah: Journal of Islam and International Affairs* 8, no. 2 (2023): 112–30, <https://doi.org/10.21111/dauliyah.v8i2.10524>.

⁴⁶ A. Fitriyah, S. Solihin, and E. Mulyah, "Sustainable Environmental Management and Ojhung: The Raincall Ritual of Madurese Community," *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* 1105, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/1105/1/012048>.

⁴⁷ Yu Shang and Yanan Chi, "Corporate Environmental Information Disclosure and Earnings Management in China: Ethical Behaviour or Opportunism Motivation?," *Sustainability (Switzerland)* 15, no. 11 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15118896>.

said, “We’ve been taught that if we harm the Earth, we’ll be held accountable in the afterlife. So, we avoid materials that harm our health and the environment; moreover, working together to protect nature also enhances the beauty of our surroundings and benefits our health as well.”⁴⁸

Some informants emphasized that sustainability is not a new concept, but has long been an integral part of Madurese Islamic tradition. For example, the use of techniques *such as tandur* (traditional rice cultivation) maintains the natural water cycle. In practice, *Mèngghulè* Rice is a staple food that serves as the main ingredient in preparing for mass rituals. “We must take care of the water in the rice fields and keep it clean. This is a trust from God, and when we all work together to protect it, there will be no pollution around our rice fields, which will help the crops thrive and prevent unpleasant odors in the environment.”⁴⁹

Environmental awareness in the context of halal is often internalized through religious norms and social practices, rather than solely through formal policies.⁵⁰ The connection between halal culture and nature conservation in Madura is clearly evident in the way the community views nature as an integral part of their religious practice. Several informants noted that preserving the quality of water, soil, and air is part of fulfilling religious obligations. In the *Mèngghulè* ceremony, certain food ingredients are harvested from farm gardens and prepared as an expression of gratitude to God, while preserving the environment. “If we pollute our water, we are being unjust not only toward humanity but also toward God’s other creatures. Water is a source of life that God has entrusted to us to preserve. If humans destroy it, they are harming not only the current generation but also future generations”⁵¹

Overall, these findings indicate that Madurese halal culture encompasses three main eco-theological elements:

⁴⁸ Interview with Affan Aridi, Resident of Karang Penang, 23 July 2025

⁴⁹ Interview with Bapak Abdur Rof, Petani di Karang Penang 22 July 2025

⁵⁰ Yudi; Muhamad Fairuz Ahmad Jasmi; Ika Sari Wahyuni-TD; Fineke Mergeresa and Kamarul Azman Khamis Fernando, “Supply Chain Integration and Halal Frozen Meat Product Returns Available to Purchase,” *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 14, no. 5 (2023): 1369–1395.

⁵¹ Interview with Bapak Far'i, Karang Penang, 24 July 2025

Table 2. Eco-Theological Elements of Madurese Halal Culture

Cultural Practices	Key Aspects	Halal Dimensions	Dimensions of Ecotheology	Social-Spiritual Meaning
Halal Culture (common in Madura)	Food selection, slaughter, distribution, and consumption	Compliance with Islamic law (thayyib, halal), slaughter in accordance with Islamic law, fair consumption	Avoiding environmentally harmful products and preserving the natural balance through food choices	Strengthening the Islamic identity of Madura, a symbol of collective devotion
Mèngghulè (cooking together in preparation for Maulid/Ramadan)	Pesticide-free local food, halal slaughter, natural packaging (banana leaves)	Comprehensive halal and thayyib (clean, healthy, and in accordance with Sharia)	Reducing our ecological footprint: pesticide-free, plastic-free, sustainable	Fostering solidarity, mutual aid, and spirituality during Maulid and Ramadan
Tanean Lanjhang (Madura settlement)	Collective spatial planning: homes, land, water, and food within a single family unit	A family-centered approach to halal consumption, preserving the sanctity of relationships	Sustainable water and land management, based on community collaboration, preserving ecological harmony	Strengthening family bonds, collective spirituality, and a sense of ecological responsibility

Halal Practices in Ecotheology and the Potential for Conflict Between Halal Culture and Environmental Issues

The principle of halal in Islam emphasizes not only the legal aspects of food and drink but also the entire production process, which must be ethical, safe, and sustainable. This is encompassed by the concept of *halalan thayyiban*, meaning “halal and good,” which encompasses spiritual, health, social, and ecological dimensions. From an eco-theological perspective, humans, as stewards of the Earth, must maintain the balance of nature; thus, ethical, environmentally friendly halal practices are a tangible manifestation of humanity’s responsibility toward God’s creation.

A comprehensive application of halal principles tends to incorporate environmentally friendly production practices, such as waste management, energy efficiency, and the protection of natural resources.⁵² This demonstrates that the principles of halal are inseparable from ecological responsibility. An interview with Mrs. Rofi'ah, a teacher at an Islamic boarding school in Karang Penang, reinforces this point "Halal is not merely about food laws. Any action we take that harms the environment, even if the food is halal, is still wrong. Allah has entrusted us with the Earth, and we must safeguard that trust."⁵³

Muslim farmers who follow the principles of halal and *thayyib* are more likely to adopt organic farming practices and water-efficient irrigation.⁵⁴ In addition, halal practices in Madura are also linked to local traditions that preserve the ecosystem. Mr. Hasan, a farmer in Karang Penang, explains, "We grow spices using crop rotation and take care of the surrounding trees. This is part of respecting the natural environment so that the harvest remains good."⁵⁵

Ecological impacts can lead to disharmony between humans, God, and nature.⁵⁶ This perspective is relevant to the practices in Tanean Lanjhang in Lenteng, Sumenep, where the community's collective way of life truly reflects ecological harmony through the shared management of water, land, and food. However, some residents admit to facing a dilemma in balancing economic needs with ecological values. A resident of Lenteng, whom we will refer to as Pak Hosen, stated "Here in Tanean Lanjhang, we try to stick to the old ways sharing well water and growing vegetables without pesticides. But when the harvest is small, and buyers want their produce quickly and in large

⁵² Christian Bux et al., "Halal Food Sustainability between Certification and Blockchain: A Review," *Sustainability (Switzerland)* 14, no. 4 (2022): 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14042152>.

⁵³ Interview with Ibu Rofi'ah Karang Penang 24 July 2025

⁵⁴ Shaheed Tayob, "Sustainability and Halal: Procedure, Profit and Ethical Practice," *Journal of Digital Marketing and Halal Industry* 3, no. 2 (2021): 95–110, <https://doi.org/10.21580/jdmhi.2021.3.2.9586>.

⁵⁵ Interview with Ibu Rofi'ah Karang Penang 24 July 2025

⁵⁶ Aula Ma'rifah et al., "Halal Food as Gastronomy Tourism Strategy: Opportunities and Challenges for Indonesian Economy," in *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Islamic Development Studies 2019, ICIDS 2019, 10 September 2019, Bandar Lampung, Indonesia* (EAI, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.10-9-2019.2289382>.

quantities, we often find ourselves torn between adopting modern methods or sticking to traditional ones.”

This explanation shows that applying halal principles in daily life in Madura does not always align with environmentally friendly practices. There is a tension between group pressures, family economic needs, and a commitment to the *halalan thayyiban* tradition, which is intertwined with local wisdom.

This dilemma becomes even more complex as the younger generation in Karang Penang and Lenteng begins to engage in home-based halal food businesses. They are often more adaptable to the demands of the modern market, such as offering fast food or using single-use plastic packaging, but have not yet fully recognized the environmental impact. This has the potential to erode the “*thayyib*” values that have long been part of local culinary traditions, such as the use of natural containers made from banana leaves and the practice of mutual cooperation in food provision. A young man in Karang Penang, let’s call him Pak Rofi’i, shared “Selling food in plastic bags is faster and cleaner, and customers are happy. However, if we have to use leaves or woven bamboo, many people say it’s a hassle. Sometimes we feel torn between following tradition and catering to market demands.”⁵⁷

This statement highlights the tension between the modernization of halal practices and the ecological commitments passed down by previous generations. Thus, halal practices in Madura face a dual challenge: preserving religious authenticity while upholding ecological sustainability. The intersection of halal culture and eco-theology not only generates conflict but also opens opportunities to create synergy between Islamic teachings and ecological sustainability practices.⁵⁸ This synergy can occur when the principle of halal is understood holistically, encompassing spiritual, social, and ecological dimensions, so that every human action related to the production, processing, and consumption of food becomes part of our ecological responsibility. In an interview with Ahmad Rofiqi, he emphasized, “If

⁵⁷ Interview with Ika Fatmawati, Food Division, Karang Taruna of Karang Penang Village, 25 July 2025

⁵⁸ Anisah Dewi, “Green Halal: Sinergi Industri Halal dan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan,” *An-Natiq Jurnal Kajian Islam Interdisipliner* 4, no. 2 (2024): 119–30.

we truly understand the concept of halal and thayyib, then protecting the environment is the same as preserving the purity of food. True halal does not harm the Earth, for the Earth is a trust from Allah”⁵⁹

Islamic eco-theology views environmental conservation as part of worship and a moral responsibility of humanity.⁶⁰ The principles of eco-theology in halal practices can promote the conservation of marine resources while ensuring the economic sustainability of fishing communities. Furthermore, the integration of halal principles and eco-theology is also evident in the processed food industry. The implementation of halal practices that incorporate eco-theological principles improves the quality of life for local communities, reduces pollution, and strengthens food security.⁶¹ The integration of Islamic business ethics with ecological principles creates a sustainability model that can be emulated by both small and large businesses.⁶²

Discussion

Theoretical Implications

Research on halal culture from an eco-theological perspective among the Madurese community makes an important contribution to Islamic studies, particularly regarding the relationships among religion, local culture, and the environment. Until now, studies on halal have been primarily situated within the framework of Islamic law (fiqh al-ṭahārah and fiqh al-aṭ’imah wa al-asyrobah) as well as within the context of the global halal industry, which is driven by market dynamics, certification, and modern economics.⁶³ However, this study

⁵⁹ Interview with Ahmad Rofiqi, Karang Penang, 26 July 2025

⁶⁰ Annina Maulida and Raditha Dwi Vata Hapsari, “Understanding the Influence of Religiosity, Halal Label, Eco Label, and Halal Green Perception on Customer Loyalty,” *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science* (2147-4478) 13, no. 4 (11 June 2024): 64–75, <https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v13i4.3303>.

⁶¹ Adli Dzil Ikram, “ismail Raji Al-Faruqi’s Ecotheology: The Concept of Environmental Sustainability Faith-Based,” *Islamic Thought Review* 1, no. 2 (2023): 119–28, <https://doi.org/10.30983/itr.v1i2.7455>.

⁶² Teresia Njonge, “Influence of Psychological Well-Being and School Factors on Delinquency, During the Covid-19 Period Among Secondary School Students in Selected Schools in Nakuru County: Kenya” VII, no. 2454 (2023): 1175–89, <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS>.

⁶³ Darmawati Darmawati et al., “Halal Industry: A Literature Bibliometric Review on Halal Studies,” *Mazahib* 22, no. 1 (25 June 2023): 175–211, <https://doi.org/10.21093/mj.v22i1.5477>.

highlights another dimension rarely explored: the interpretation of halal as both a spiritual and an ecological expression. In the context of Madura, halal is not merely a sign of compliance with Sharia law, but also a reflection of ecological awareness that has emerged from the community's interaction with its environment.

This reflection implies a theoretical shift: from halal as a normative-legal concept to halal as green religiosity, understood as a form that positions Sharia compliance as a path toward environmental sustainability. This aligns with ideas emerging in the literature of Islamic eco-theology, where humans are positioned as *khalīfah* (God's vicegerents) and *amīn* (stewards) in safeguarding the Earth.⁶⁴ This realization underscores that halal practices cannot be separated from the cosmic principles of Islam, which emphasize balance (*mīzān*) and reject wastefulness (*isrāf*).

Reflections on Contributions to the Literature of Islamic Studies

Theoretically, the findings of this study expand the scope of halal research within Islamic studies. Previous literature generally divides the discourse on halal into two broad categories: first, halal as a legal norm regulated through fatwas, laws, and certification bodies; second, halal as an economic commodity in industries ranging from food and tourism to cosmetics. By introducing an eco-theological perspective, this study demonstrates that halal also functions as an ethical-ecological narrative. The principle of halal is not only about ritual validity but also about the spiritual relationship among humans, nature, and God.⁶⁵

The contribution of this research to Islamic studies lies in its ability to demonstrate that Islam has never separated theological, social, and ecological aspects in regulating life. When the Madurese community practices halal culture through the consumption of local foods, the use of simple agricultural products, and the avoidance of wasteful behavior, they are in fact applying the broader *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*: preserving religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), preserving life (*ḥifẓ al-naḥs*),

⁶⁴ Abdul Halim, Muhammad Rafii, and Edy Kusnadi, "Ecotheology In Promoting Environmental Sustainability: Conserving The Eco-Friendly Islamic Doctrine In Jambi Province," *Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Ushuluddin* 22, no. 2 (2023): 171–78, <https://doi.org/10.18592/jiiu.v22i2.10069>.

⁶⁵ Yardlo et al., "Pesantren and Ecotheology: Mainstreaming Ecological Consciousness in Pesantren Langitan, East Java, Indonesia."

and preserving the environment as part of ḥifẓ al-bi'ah. Thus, this study contributes to the academic literature by integrating the study of halal fiqh with the theory of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah and eco-theology. A source from Lenteng, Sumenep, stated, "For us, halal isn't just about meat that's slaughtered in the name of Allah. Halal also means taking only what we need from nature, not damaging it, and not being wasteful. If we take too much, even if it's legally halal, it's still not good for life."⁶⁶

This quote underscores the practical dimension of halal, which also reflects eco-theological values: halal embodies the ethics of simplicity and sustainability.

New Perspectives: Halal Culture as "Green Religiosity"

A new insight emerging from this research is that halal can be understood as "green religiosity," that is, a form of religiosity that connects faith with ecological awareness. In this context, halal is not merely a label or a certificate, but a way of life that preserves harmony between humans and the environment.⁶⁷ This article reinforces the idea by demonstrating that halal practices can support sustainable production and consumption.

The people of Madura provide a concrete example of how halal practices can be carried out with environmental awareness. For example, in an interview with a female farmer in Karang Penang, she stated:

"When we grow rice or corn, we don't use much chemical fertilizer. It's not just because it's expensive, but because we have to take care of the soil. If the soil is damaged, the harvest won't be a blessing. Halal food must also come from healthy soil."⁶⁸

This statement illustrates that halal is understood in a broader sense, not merely in relation to slaughter or certification, but also to production processes that are in harmony with the environment. Thus, halal becomes part of environmental ethics, aligning with the concept

⁶⁶ Interview with Abd Wahid, Lenteng Sumenep, 23 September 2025.

⁶⁷ Fanniar Rohman, Hafizhah Novianti, and Muhammad Said Auzar, "Green Economy and Halal Industry: Maqashid Syariah Perspective," *IWOS: Islam in World Perspectives* 3, no. 1 (2024): 55–66.

⁶⁸ Ibu Marsiyah Karang Penang 28 July 2025

of Islamic eco-theology. From a scholarly perspective, this approach challenges the old paradigm that views halal as a static and purely ritualistic entity. Instead, this study offers an understanding of halal as a dynamic religious practice that engages with local wisdom and can address contemporary challenges, such as the environmental crisis. The development of the concept of Qur'anic eco-theology as the foundation of sustainable development.⁶⁹

An Exploration of the Theoretical Framework of “Halal Ecotheology”

Based on these findings, a new theoretical framework, halal eco-theology, can be explored. This framework views halal as an epistemology that integrates three elements: Sharia norms, local cultural identity, and environmental ethics. From this perspective, halal is no longer understood merely as a legal category (halal-haram), but as a worldview that shapes human interaction with the environment. This framework finds support in the Islamic eco-theological literature, which emphasizes the importance of the principles of *tawhīd* (cosmic unity), *khilāfah* (human stewardship), *amanah* (divine trust), and *mīzān* (balance). These principles can serve as the foundation for Islam-based environmental conservation.⁷⁰

When applied to halal culture, this principle fosters the understanding that halal is a path to sustainability rather than mere legal compliance. In an interview, a student at UIN Madura stated, “We’ve been taught not to harm nature. If there’s halal food but the way it’s obtained damages the land or the sea, to us that isn’t truly halal. Halal must be good, clean, and not cause harm to others or to nature.”⁷¹ This quote underscores the concept of “true halal,” which is oriented not only toward formal law but also toward ecological ethics. The framework of

⁶⁹ Irfan Abu Nazar, Sunarto Sunarto, and Ihsan Nul Hakim, “Pengembangan Konsep Ekoteologi Al-Qur’an Untuk Mewujudkan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan,” *AL QUDS : Jurnal Studi Alquran dan Hadis* 7, no. 3 (2023): 561, <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v7i3.5447>.

⁷⁰ Alfadhili et al., “Ekoteologi Islam: Menjelajahi Hubungan Spiritual Antara Manusia, Alam, dan Tuhan dalam Tradisi Islam,” *Ta’wiluna: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur’an, Tafsir dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (2025): 300–310, <https://doi.org/10.58401/takwiluna.v6i1.2024>.

⁷¹ Interview with Fitri, a student at Universitas Islam Negeri Madura, Lenteng Sumenep 20 July 2025

halal eco-theology can thus serve as a new analytical lens in Islamic studies, while also contributing to the interdisciplinary literature linking religion to sustainability studies.

In addition to enriching the literature on Islamic studies, this research also paves the way for a new dialogue between the concept of halal and contemporary theories in eco-theology and the social sciences. Field findings in Madura indicate that halal does not stand as a rigid normative category, but rather as a fluid social practice, reproduced through the interaction between religious texts, local wisdom, and ecological needs. From this perspective, halal culture can be analyzed using a religious phenomenological approach, in which people's everyday experiences of consuming, producing, and celebrating halal reveal profound meanings regarding their relationship with God and nature.

Halal as an Ecotheological Practice

In a practical context, the Madurese communities in the villages of Karang Penang and Tanean Lanjhang, Lenteng, Sumenep, demonstrate that halal functions not only as a set of rules but also as an ethical way of life that guides socio-ecological relationships. Practices of simple consumption, the use of local food ingredients, and respect for the land and sea as sources of sustenance affirm the function of halal as an eco-theological practice. In other words, halal is practiced not merely because of prohibitions or fatwas, but because it is understood that upholding halal means preserving blessings, maintaining a relationship with God, and ensuring environmental sustainability.

A farmer in Karang Penang explained that using natural fertilizers and economically managing irrigation water are part of upholding halal, as fertile soil is viewed as a trust from God that must be safeguarded. Meanwhile, a fisherman along the coast of Lenteng, Sumenep, shared “If fish are caught in ways that harm the ocean for example, using explosives or poison—then even if the fish are halal, they are not a blessing to us. Allah is angry when we harm His creation. So, being halal must go hand in hand with doing it the right way.”⁷² This statement reinforces the understanding that, in the social practices of the Madurese people, the concept of halal encompasses ethical and ecological dimensions. Halāl ṭayyib does not merely refer to something

⁷² Interview with Mr. Sarkawi, Local Fisherman, 19 July 2025

that is permissible to eat, but also to something that is good, clean, healthy, and does not harm the environment.

Conceptual Transformation: From Halal and Haram to Ecological Halal

Theoretically, this study proposes a conceptual transformation in the understanding of halal. While halal has traditionally been understood in dichotomous terms, halal versus haram, field findings in Madura reveal a third dimension: ecological halal. This dimension refers to the understanding that true halal status can only be achieved when a product is not only legally permissible under Sharia law but also meets the principles of sustainability, justice, and ecological balance.

Ecological halal can be explained through an expanded theory of the maqāṣid of Sharia. Within the traditional framework, the maqāṣid encompass the five fundamental safeguards (al-ḍarūriyyāt al-khams). However, contemporary literature has begun to introduce ḥifẓ al-bi'ah (environmental protection) as a new maqāṣid relevant to addressing modern challenges. Thus, ecological halal represents a synthesis between classical norms and contemporary needs. A teacher at a pesantren in Karang Penang stated, “We teach our students that halal isn’t just about chicken or beef. Halal is also about how we treat this Earth. If we damage the soil and water, and then consume the produce, is that truly halal in the eyes of Allah? That is what we must reflect on.”⁷³ This reflection indicates that Madurese society is beginning to articulate halal as both a normative value and an ecological consciousness. This makes an important theoretical contribution: the emergence of the category of “ecological halal” as a new discourse in Islamic studies.

Halal Ecotheology as a New Theoretical Framework

The exploration of the Halal Ecotheology framework can be viewed as an effort to formulate a new analytical model that connects Sharia, local culture, and ecology. This framework has three main pillars. First, the normative pillar, namely Sharia, is the legal source that defines what is halal and haram. Second, the cultural pillar: local culture that shapes halal practices in the daily lives of the Madurese people. Third, the ecological pillar, namely the principles of sustainability and

⁷³ Ustazah Monirah, Madrasa Teacher, Karang Penang 29 July 2025

ecological balance. By integrating these three pillars, Halal Ecotheology positions halal as a living epistemology rather than merely an abstract norm. In an academic context, this framework can expand the study of Islamic ecotheology, which has traditionally tended to focus on the texts of the Qur'an and Hadith. Through an ethnographic approach, this research demonstrates that ecotheology can also be found in the social practices of Muslim communities at the local level.

The concept of Qur'anic eco-theology holds that ecological principles in Islam have great potential to serve as a foundation for sustainable development. When combined with the halal practices of the Madurese community, this creates a more contextually grounded analytical framework: Halal Eco-Theology as a model of Islamic sustainability rooted in local culture.

Contributions to the Global Discourse on Halal and Sustainability

The theoretical implications of this study extend beyond the literature on Islamic studies; they also contribute to the global discourse on halal and sustainability. Currently, many international studies highlight halal as an industry with significant economic potential, but few link it to sustainability issues⁷⁴. By demonstrating that halal can serve as the foundation of an ecological ethic, this study broadens the global understanding of halal from merely a market concept to a way of life. Halal and sustainability are not two separate agendas, but rather complementary ones.⁷⁵ Halal can provide a strong religious foundation for sustainable practices, while sustainability can enrich the *ṭayyib* dimension of halal. Findings from Madura offer a concrete example of how this integration plays out in the daily lives of Muslim communities.

Theoretical Implications

Thus, this study offers several important theoretical contributions. First, it expands the literature on Islamic studies by introducing an eco-theological perspective to the study of halal. Second,

⁷⁴ Mohammad Aizat Jamaludin Nur Wahida Md Tahaa, Betania Kartika Muflih, "Amorti: Jurnal Studi Islam Interdisipliner," *Amorti: Jurnal Studi Islam Interdisipliner* 4, no. 1 (2025): 1–8.

⁷⁵ Achmad; Muhammad Anwar; Siti Suryaningsih and Muhammad Fahmi Fahrullah, "Halal Is Green: The Synergy of Sustainability and Islamic Principles," *Proceedings of the Annual International Conference on Islamic Economics and Business (AICIEB)* 3 (2023).

it introduces the concept of halal as a form of green religiosity that combines faith and ecological awareness. Third, it proposes a Halal Eco-Theology framework as a new analytical model that integrates Sharia, local culture, and ecology.

Field quotes from the Madurese community reinforce the argument that halal is practiced not only for legal compliance but also to maintain harmony with nature. The concept of ecological halal emerging from this research offers a theoretical framework for the development of contemporary Islamic studies while contributing to the global discourse on sustainability. In this way, this research not only addresses local concerns but also affirms Islam's capacity to offer ethical solutions to modern ecological challenges.

Halal practices within Muslim societies, including the Madurese community studied here, demonstrate that halal is not merely a religious label governing consumption, but a social, cultural, and spiritual practice that shapes the patterns of human relationships with God, fellow human beings, and nature. Field research findings indicate that the Madurese people, particularly in villages with a strong Islamic foundation, interpret halal as an integral part of daily life, inseparable from moral obligations. They do not merely focus on halal in food consumption but also in trade practices, resource management, and a way of life that emphasizes simplicity and blessings. This perspective offers valuable insights for Muslim communities worldwide facing the challenges of modernity, consumerism, and environmental crises.

The experience of the Madurese community demonstrates that collectively practiced halal principles can strengthen both social solidarity and ecological awareness. For instance, when communities choose food from local sources, reuse organic waste for household needs, or avoid products considered harmful to the environment, these practices are not merely expressions of Sharia compliance but also tangible contributions to environmental sustainability. This phenomenon aligns with research emphasizing the importance of integrating halal principles and sustainability into the food industry and modern Muslim lifestyles. Thus, the findings from the Madurese community can serve as an inspiring example for Muslim communities across Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and the Muslim diaspora in Europe and the Americas, who strive to preserve their religious identity while addressing contemporary issues such as climate change and environmental degradation.

An exploration of the potential applications of Islamic environmental ethics derived from halal practices in Madura reveals that Islam possesses an adequate theological framework to promote a paradigm shift toward more environmentally friendly consumption and production. The concepts of *khilafah* (the role of humans as stewards on Earth), *amanah* (responsibility toward resources), and *maslahah* (the public good) serve as a foundation that can guide halal practices to become an ethical instrument in environmental protection. While halal certification has traditionally emphasized legal-formal aspects such as ingredients, processes, and product distribution, strengthening an eco-theological perspective can expand the scope of halal to include environmental sustainability. This is crucial because the majority of Muslims now live in an era of the global food industry, which often overlooks the ecological footprint of production. Muslim consumers are beginning to consider sustainability factors when purchasing halal products, including concerns about animal welfare and the carbon footprint of the global supply chain.⁷⁶ Thus, the potential for integrating environmental ethics into halal practices is not merely a normative ideal but has become a practical necessity that aligns with contemporary consumer awareness.

Cultural practices in Madura demonstrate the added value of treating halal as a cultural and spiritual ecosystem integrated with local ecology. When communities continue to uphold the tradition of mutual cooperation in utilizing agricultural land or sharing marine resources in accordance with Sharia principles, these practices support environmental sustainability while simultaneously strengthening Islamic identity. This model can be applied to other Muslim communities, particularly in urban areas facing the pressures of industrialization and modernization. For instance, Muslim communities in major cities can learn to adopt an ecology-oriented halal lifestyle, such as consuming local food, reducing plastic waste, or participating in urban farming initiatives grounded in Islamic values. A halal lifestyle has the potential to become a global trend that not only defines Muslim

⁷⁶ Abdulla Alourani and Shahnawaz Khan, “A Blockchain and Artificial Intelligence Based System for Halal Food Traceability” 2025 (2024).

identity but also offers tangible contributions to sustainable development.⁷⁷

In an institutional context, the recommendation to integrate an eco-theological perspective into halal certification is both important and urgent. Halal certification bodies in Indonesia and other countries generally emphasize halal status from a fiqh-based Sharia perspective, without incorporating ecological considerations. However, if the eco-theological dimension is integrated, the halal label could serve as both a sustainability label and a halal label. Products that pass certification are not only deemed Sharia-compliant but must also meet ethical standards for waste management, energy efficiency, sustainable sourcing of raw materials, and ecosystem well-being. This aligns with the literature's call for a "halal plus sustainability" framework in the global food and beverage industry.⁷⁸

The implementation of such a framework would broaden the meaning of halal so that it does not merely define "what is permissible to eat" but also "how that food is produced" and "what impact it has on nature." For example, products that use halal ingredients but harm the environment during production should not be considered fully aligned with Islamic values. Thus, halal certification can evolve into a regulatory and normative instrument that encourages the industry to be more socially and ecologically responsible. The experiences of local communities, such as Madura, can serve as a social laboratory, providing best practices for developing an eco-theology-oriented halal certification model.

Of course, this study has its limitations. The fieldwork was conducted only in a few Madurese communities with limited geographical coverage, so generalizations to other Muslim communities should be made with caution. Furthermore, halal practices in Madura have a distinct cultural context, so their adoption in other communities may require adaptation. Therefore, further research is urgently needed, particularly comparative studies among Muslim communities across regions with diverse cultural traditions.

⁷⁷ Nur Wahida Md Tahaa, Betania Kartika Muflih, "Amorti : Jurnal Studi Islam Interdisipliner."

⁷⁸ Haryono Haryono, "Islamic Farming, Halal, Sustainability, and Farmer Welfare Impact," *West Science Islamic Studies* 2, no. 04 (2024): 209–19, <https://doi.org/10.58812/wsiss.v2i04.1385>.

Furthermore, methodological limitations, such as the number of informants and variations in field data, must be acknowledged, indicating that these findings are exploratory rather than conclusive. However, this is precisely where the research's added value lies, as it opens the door to further, more systematic, and comparative research. Future studies could integrate quantitative approaches with global Muslim consumer surveys or adopt an interdisciplinary approach involving experts in fiqh, ecology, and the social sciences. Thus, the direction of halal development based on eco-theology can be both scientifically robust and practically relevant.

In short, halal practices observed in the Madurese community make a significant contribution to the global discourse on halal and ecology. These findings suggest that halal is not merely a religious identity but also a cultural and spiritual framework for developing a broader Islamic environmental ethics. The integration of eco-theology into halal certification offers transformative opportunities to position halal as a driving force for sustainability, rather than merely a religious label. By developing more comparative and interdisciplinary research, Muslims can build a new halal paradigm that aligns with the *maqashid al-sharia* while remaining relevant to global ecological challenges.

Conclusion

Research on halal culture in Madurese communities, particularly the Mèngghulè in Karang Penang, Sampang, and the Tanean Lanjhang in Lenteng, Sumenep, reveals that halal practices are not merely understood as fiqh rules governing consumption, but rather as a value system that is deeply integrated into the social, spiritual, and ecological life of the community. Halal traditions in both communities are rooted in adherence to Islamic law and are closely connected to local wisdom, which views the relationship between humans, nature, and God as a harmonious unity. Thus, Madurese halal culture can be understood as a model of religious practice that places consumption ethics within a framework of spirituality and ecology.

The eco-theological perspective in this study demonstrates that halal practices in Madura are not only aimed at fulfilling religious standards but also at maintaining ecological balance. This is reflected in how communities sustainably manage natural resources, choose local food products, and maintain social relationships through religious mechanisms that bind the collective. In this context, Maduran halal

culture demonstrates an integration of theological, social, and ecological dimensions, thereby reinforcing the argument that Islamic eco-theology can serve as a normative foundation for environmental management and consumption patterns among Muslim communities.

In terms of its significance for Islamic studies, the findings of this research make an important contribution to broadening the scope of halal studies, which have long been dominated by aspects of positive law and formal regulations. By incorporating an eco-theological perspective, this research reveals that halal practices are not only relevant to individual compliance but also have the potential to drive social and ecological transformation. Madura's halal culture can serve as an empirical reference for contemporary Islamic studies, helping bridge the gap between normative teachings and practical realities, particularly regarding themes of Islam, the environment, and sustainability. Furthermore, reflection on these findings suggests that the integration of eco-theology into halal practices holds great potential for strengthening environmental ethics within Islam. Halal certification, for example, could be expanded not only to assess the halal status of products in terms of ingredients and processes but also to consider the ecological impacts of their production chains. Thus, halal practices could evolve into both a moral and ethical instrument for promoting ecological sustainability, ensuring that Muslims are committed not only to the ritual dimension but also to the global responsibility of preserving the Earth.

In conclusion, this study confirms that the halal culture in Madura is a concrete example of religious practices that are integrated with Islamic eco-theology. These findings are significant not only for the local community but also for the global Muslim community, which seeks practical models of religious practice that are more inclusive of ecological concerns. By integrating an eco-theological perspective into halal practices, Islam has the potential to play a strategic role in building a sustainable civilization aligned with the *maqashid al-sharia* and the global sustainability agenda.

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