



[Research Article]



Environmental Ethics Relevance in Theology Perspective: An overview from Islamic, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucian

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<p>Received: 14 April 2024</p> <p>Accepted: 7 July 2024</p> <p>Published: 2 September 2024</p> <p>Keywords: environmental ethics; environmental protection; religion; sustainability.</p>	<p><i>Environmental ethics is an important issue in the context of sustainability and environmental protection. This research aims to discuss Islamic, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucian religious perspectives regarding environmental ethics and its importance in the context of sustainability. This research method uses literature study and analysis of sacred texts and religious teachings according to religious perspective. This research found that each religion has different views, but emphasizes the same important aspect of protecting and caring for the environment as the moral responsibility of religious communities. The concept of stewardship is emphasized considering the role of humans as managers and protectors of the universe. Environmental ethics in this religious perspective has similarities in teaching the importance of protecting and caring for the natural environment. This view can be the basis for individuals and communities to develop awareness and responsibility for environmental sustainability. Understanding and practicing religious-based environmental ethics is very relevant to overcoming the environmental challenges facing humanity in this century.</i></p>

Informasi Artikel:	Abstrak
<p>Diterima: 14 April 2024</p> <p>Disetujui: 7 Juli 2024</p> <p>Dipublikasi: 2 September 2024</p> <p>Kata kunci: etika lingkungan; perlindungan lingkungan; agama; keberlanjutan.</p>	<p><i>Etika lingkungan menjadi isu penting dalam konteks keberlanjutan dan perlindungan lingkungan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membahas perspektif agama Islam, Kristen, Hindu, Buddha, dan Konghucu mengenai etika lingkungan dan arti pentingnya dalam konteks keberlanjutan. Metode penelitian ini menggunakan studi literatur dan analisis terhadap teks-teks suci dan ajaran agama-agama sesuai perspektif agama. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa masing-masing agama memiliki pandangan yang berbeda, namun menekankan pada muara yang sama penting dalam menjaga dan merawat lingkungan sebagai tanggung jawab moral umat beragama. Konsep stewardship sangat ditekankan mengingat peran manusia sebagai pengelola dan pelindung alam semesta. Etika lingkungan dalam perspektif agama tersebut memiliki kesamaan dalam mengajarkan pentingnya menjaga dan merawat lingkungan alam. Pandangan ini dapat menjadi dasar bagi individu dan komunitas untuk mengembangkan kesadaran dan tanggung jawab terhadap keberlanjutan lingkungan. Pemahaman dan praktik etika lingkungan berbasis agama sangat relevan untuk mengatasi tantangan lingkungan yang dihadapi umat manusia di abad ini.</i></p>

INTRODUCTION

According to Athanassakis (2017), environmental ethics is an increasingly important concept in the context of sustainability and environmental protection. In many religious traditions in the world, including Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, there are views and teachings regarding the importance of protecting and caring for the natural environment. These religions teach that humans have a moral responsibility to maintain the balance of nature and prevent environmental damage.

In this modern era, when environmental challenges are increasingly complex and pressing, religious views on environmental ethics have great relevance. These religions emphasize a holistic view of the universe in which humans are considered part of nature and should protect and care for it. This emphasis indirectly relates to the concept of stewardship. The concept of stewardship is the concept of humans as managers and protectors of the environment where humans become the ethical basis in many religions (Pamungkas, 2021; Saifudin, 2023).

The concept of environmental ethics in the Islamic religion is based on the belief that the universe is God's creation which must be protected and cared for by humans as caliphs (managers) on earth. The Quran and hadith provide clear instructions regarding human responsibility to protect nature in a balanced manner. The concept of "*mizan*" or balance is an important focus in Islamic environmental ethics. Muslims are called to maintain the balance of nature by not wasting resources, avoiding behavior that damages the environment, and maintaining biodiversity (Munji, 2014; Adi, 2019).

Environmental ethics in the Christian tradition is based on the belief that the universe is God's beautiful work and humans are called to act as a "*pekapapan*" between God and His creation. The Bible presents teachings about the importance of protecting and caring for the environment, as well as living a life that is in line with the values of social justice and environmental sustainability. Christianity emphasizes the importance of maintaining balance and harmony in the relationship between humans, nature, and God (Adi, 2019).

Environmental ethics in Hinduism arises from the belief that the universe is an incarnation of the same God known as Brahman. Hinduism

honors nature as a deity that should be treated with utmost respect and balance. The concept of "*ahimsa*" (non-harm) also plays an important role in Hindu environmental ethics, with the belief that humans should avoid violence against living creatures and nature. Hinduism emphasizes the importance of maintaining sustainable activities and harmony with nature (Mun'im, 2022).

Buddhism teaches in environmental ethics the concept of "*dharma*" or the right path. Buddha taught that all living things are interrelated and cannot be separated. Humans are called to live ethically by not causing suffering and destroying nature. An understanding of the interconnectedness of all phenomena in nature is the basis for Buddhist environmental ethics. Buddhism emphasizes the importance of awareness, simplicity, and wise thinking in efforts to maintain the sustainability of nature (Mun'im, 2022).

In the Confucian tradition, environmental ethics arises from admiration for nature and the belief that humans are part of a larger nature. Confucianism emphasized the importance of maintaining the balance of nature and behaving ethically. The concept of "*ren*" or goodness has become an important cornerstone in Confucian environmental ethics by placing human relationships with nature and each other as a priority blessed by harmony and moral responsibility (Hadiana & Wakhudin, 2022).

Each religion has a unique and rich view of environmental ethics. Although there are differences in form and emphasis, all religions emphasize the importance of maintaining natural balance, sustainability, and human responsibility as protectors and managers of the natural environment. In facing current environmental challenges, understanding and integrating environmental ethical values from the perspective of these religions can provide a strong foundation for facing increasingly pressing global environmental problems.

Many studies have conducted theoretical studies to discuss environmental ethical views from the perspective of these religions (Raduan, 2011; Adi, 2019; Remikatu, 2020; Yusuf, 2020; Saifudin, 2023), but there are still gaps in understanding that need to be explained further. Apart from that, aspects of the interaction between religion, ethics, and the natural environment also need to be detailed further.

This research aims to comprehensively understand Islamic, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist,

and Confucian views on environmental ethics, as well as highlight the similarities and differences in these perspectives. By conducting an in-depth analysis of sacred texts and relevant teachings, this research aims to explore the environmental values promoted by these religions and analyze their importance in the context of sustainability.

Through this research, it is hoped that an understanding of the role of religion in shaping human attitudes and behavior toward the natural environment can be deepened. It is also hoped that the results of this research can contribute to the development of more holistic environmental protection policies or programs that involve religious, ethical, and sustainability values.

In facing current environmental challenges, this research focuses on religious views on environmental ethics which have significant relevance. It is hoped that understanding the thoughts and teachings from the perspectives of different religions can broaden your knowledge of environmental ethics and integrate them into daily practices to protect and care for the natural environment.

METHOD

This research uses literature study and analysis of sacred texts and the teachings of the religions that are the research study. Comparative studies are also applied to compare environmental and ethical views of various religions.

The data used in this research are sacred texts and religious literature related to environmental ethical views from Islamic, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucian perspectives. References and quotations from verified sources are used as research data.

Data from sacred texts and religious literature were analyzed using a qualitative approach to identify environmental ethical views and values expressed by each religion. The research results were verified through careful and in-depth analysis of the sacred texts and religious literature used as data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Environmental Ethics in Islamic Perspective

Environmental ethics in Islam is based on the view that the universe (including the earth and all creatures in it) is God's creation that must be protected and maintained. This view is related to the concept of *tawhid*. The concept of *tahwid* is the belief in the existence of one God who created and controls everything, so this concept is an

important basis in Islamic environmental ethics. Muslims are given the responsibility of being Allah's caliphs on earth. This means that Muslims have a role as wise managers of this nature. The principles of environmental ethics in Islam include maintaining natural balance, sustainability, and avoiding waste and abuse (Harahap, 2015; Yasin & Saputra, 2021).

Environmental ethics from an Islamic perspective includes several important principles. First, maintain the natural balance. Muslims are invited to understand that the universe has a balance regulated by God, and it is human's duty to maintain this balance. For example, avoiding environmental damage or degradation such as deforestation, water pollution, or air pollution which can disrupt the balance of the ecosystem (Albab, 2019). The second is sustainability. Islam teaches that humans must live in harmony with nature and avoid excessive or destructive use of natural resources. Muslims must be wise consumers and use natural resources with full consideration of sustainability and justice for future generations (Albab, 2019). Third, avoid waste and misuse (Samad, 2018). Islam teaches Muslims not to waste or abuse natural resources. For example, reducing excessive water use, avoiding excessive production and disposal of waste, and utilizing energy efficiently.

Environmental ethics in Islam also emphasizes the importance of compassion for all of God's creation. Muslims are invited to be friendly towards animals, plants, and the surrounding environment. Avoiding cruel or destructive treatment of other living creatures (Aritonang, 2021). Understanding and applying these principles in everyday life is expected to make a positive contribution to the natural environment. Muslims are reminded to be agents of change in safeguarding and maintaining the universe which is a mandate from God.

Environmental Ethics in a Christian Perspective

Environmental ethics in Christian teachings is closely related to theological views and human relationships with God, fellow humans, and nature. Christians value nature as God's beautiful creation and worthy of respect, and humans have a responsibility as careful stewards and guardians of this nature. The concepts of true love and social responsibility form the basis of the principles of Christian environmental ethics. Christians are invited to review their way of life and

consumption and take responsibility for managing natural resources sustainably (Gae, 2018; Aritonang, 2021).

Christian teachings are based on a theological view of the relationship between humans, nature, and God. The principles of environmental ethics from a Christian perspective include respect for nature as God's beautiful creation and worthy of respect. Humans are seen as having a responsibility as caretakers and careful guardians of nature, as part of the responsibility of Christians as caliphs of God's creation (Bernanda & Wakhudin, 2023).

The concepts of true love and social responsibility form the basis of the principles of Christian environmental ethics. True love teaches that humans must love the universe as a gift from God that must be guarded with full attention and wisdom. Social responsibility as God's creatures commands Christians to review their way of life and consumption and be responsible for managing natural resources sustainably.

Christians are also invited to reflect on ecological service, namely how they can serve the universe as part of their calling as followers of Christ. This includes protecting biodiversity, maintaining the environment, and participating in efforts to protect and restore nature.

As part of Christian environmental ethics, Christians are also invited to collaborate with fellow humans and other communities in environmental protection efforts. Christians are invited to take an active role in sustainable development, promote environmental justice, and support policies that maintain biodiversity and the sustainability of nature.

Through environmental ethical principles like these, Christians are expected to be able to protect nature as part of their moral and spiritual responsibility, as well as being responsible actors in preserving the earth, as an act of service to God's creation.

Environmental Ethics in a Hindu Perspective

Environmental ethics in Hinduism is influenced by *Veda's* ethical teachings and the ethical concept of *karma*. The Hindu view teaches that the natural environment is a gift from the gods and is a manifestation of God that is worth protecting. Hinduism considers every living creature to have a soul and is part of an infinite cycle of reincarnation. Hindu environmental ethics encourages respect for all forms of life and

the promotion of balance and harmony between humans and nature. Hinduism also teaches avoiding unnecessary damage to nature and inappropriate actions.

Central to the principles of Hindu environmental ethics is the ethical concept of *karma*. This concept suggests that every human action will produce consequences that are proportional to the good or bad of the action. Therefore, Hinduism teaches that humans have a moral responsibility to maintain and protect the universe.

Respect for life is considered very important in Hindu environmental ethics. Hinduism considers that every life form has a soul (*atman*) and is an inseparable part of the infinite cycle of reincarnation. Therefore, every living creature must be treated with respect and compassion. This indirectly relates to the principle of *ahimsa*. The principle of *ahimsa* is the principle of non-violence. This principle is an important aspect of Hindu environmental ethics. Hindus are taught to avoid causing unnecessary suffering and damage to other living creatures (Akbar, 2020; Hadiana & Wakhudin, 2022).

In addition, environmental ethics in Hinduism encourages harmony between humans and nature. Hinduism considers nature as a larger family (*vasudhaiva kutumbakam*) and teaches the importance of protecting and nurturing the environment wisely or what is known as *tri guna*. The concept of *tri guna* consists of *guna-sathva* (kindness), *raja guna* (spirit), and *tama guna* (firmness). All three also play a role in Hindu environmental ethics. Hindus are taught to live in balance between these three *guna* in relationship with nature and the surrounding environment.

Hindu environmental ethics also encourages the avoidance of unnecessary damage to nature and inappropriate practices. Hindus are taught to live as guardians and custodians of nature and avoid destructive behavior such as water pollution, deforestation, and misuse of natural resources.

Environmental ethics in Hinduism is not only a theoretical concept but must also be implemented in daily practice. Hindus are invited to live a simple lifestyle, use natural resources wisely, and reduce unnecessary use. This religion teaches us to live in harmony with nature and respect the various forms of life that exist in it. By applying the principles of environmental ethics, Hindus are expected to be able to become protectors and maintainers of the universe and

take responsible actions in preserving nature for future generations.

Environmental Ethics in a Buddhist Perspective

Environmental ethics in Buddhism emerged as part of the *Dhamma-Nature* teachings and the ethical principles of the *Sangha* (Toharuddin, 2016; Suharno & Sartini, 2022). The Buddhist view teaches the importance of being aware of and respecting all forms of life and the reciprocal relationship between humans and nature. Buddhist environmental ethical teachings prioritize love, *welas asih*, and wise care for nature. The principle of *ahimsa* (non-violence) is also an important cornerstone of Buddhist environmental ethics, advising against causing suffering to living creatures and avoiding excessive use of resources.

The Buddhist view teaches that all forms of life have intrinsic value and deserve respect. Compassion (*metta*) and *welas asih* (*karuna*) are central principles of Buddhist environmental ethics. Hindus are taught to feel empathy and respect for all living creatures, including animals, plants, and other natural elements. This religious teaching reminds us not to cause suffering to other living creatures and to free ourselves from egoism.

The principle of *ahimsa* or non-violence is also an important cornerstone in Buddhist environmental ethics. Followers of this religion are required to try to avoid violence against all forms of life, both physical and mental. This includes avoiding actions that damage or harm the environment, such as forest burning, air and water pollution, and other environmental pollution.

In addition, Buddhist environmental ethics also teaches the importance of wise care for nature. This religious teaching reminds us to use natural resources sparingly and wisely and to avoid excessive use. This aims to reduce negative impacts on the environment and maintain ecosystem balance.

In practicing this environmental ethic, Buddhists are taught to live a simple and non-materialistic lifestyle. Prioritize essential needs and avoid excessive consumption which can harm the environment. Buddhists are generally taught to live in moderation and not ignore the importance of social justice in managing natural resources.

Environmental ethics from a Buddhist perspective also teaches the importance of practicing spiritual development as part of human

responsibility towards nature. In paying attention to personal development and achieving enlightenment, these people are also given the ability to have a more harmonious and wise relationship with nature.

By practicing the principles of environmental ethics from a Buddhist perspective, Buddhists are expected to be able to protect and protect nature and play a role in promoting balance and harmony between humans and the environment they live in.

Environmental Ethics in a Confucian Perspective

Environmental ethics in Confucianism is an integral part of moral and ethical principles which include human relations with nature and social responsibility. Ethical concepts such as *ren* (humanity), *yi* (rights and obligations), and *li* (justice) are used to guide ethical actions in protecting nature (Viviana, 2015; Kencana, 2023). Confucianism taught the hope of wise and responsible humans as managers of nature. Confucian environmental ethics also emphasizes the importance of balance, harmonization, and maintenance of natural resources so that they can provide benefits for future generations.

Through the environmental ethics perspective above, these religions provide guidance, values, and moral responsibilities for their adherents in protecting and maintaining the natural environment. Environmental ethics from the perspective of these religions encourages humans to live sustainably, maintain the sustainability of nature, and carry out their responsibilities as caliphs of Allah, custodians of nature, and managers of wisdom.

Relevance of Perspective

The view of environmental ethics from the perspective of the religions above not only has relevance but also offers strong guidance for collective and individual action in preserving nature. The concepts that emerge from the teachings of these religions offer a strong moral foundation in supporting holistic environmental conservation efforts.

The resulting interpretation of the environmental ethics view from the perspective of these religions is that protecting and maintaining the natural environment is the moral responsibility of religious communities. These religions teach that the universe and its contents are a gift from God that must be respected,

guarded, and preserved. In this view, humans are considered as managers and caliphs of God on earth, whose task is to manage nature wisely and responsibly. The principles of environmental ethics in these religions include maintaining the balance of nature, avoiding waste and abuse of natural resources, and having a sense of compassion and responsibility towards all forms of life.

This interpretation reminds religious communities to consider the impact of their actions on the natural environment and promote sustainable thinking and lifestyles. This emphasizes the importance of wise use of natural resources, sustainability, and harmonious relationships between humans, nature, and God. This interpretation also provides an understanding that environmental ethics is not only an individual responsibility but also a social and collective responsibility.

All religious communities are expected to work together to preserve nature for the sake of sustainability and shared prosperity. By understanding and adopting an environmental ethical view from the perspective of these religions, it is hoped that religious communities will play an active role in protecting and preserving the natural environment which is a valuable heritage for present and future generations.

This research has deep significance because it can provide a new perspective on preserving nature and overcoming increasingly pressing environmental impacts. The integration of environmental ethical values from the perspective of religions can be an important basis for all related parties, from individuals, and communities, to public policy, to take sustainable action in protecting natural ecosystems. Thus, this research not only has academic value but also has practical implications in efforts to maintain environmental sustainability for future generations.

Thus, the results of this research indicate that the view of environmental ethics from the perspective of religion has great potential to make a significant contribution in guiding more responsible actions towards nature and the environment.

CONCLUSION

Environmental ethics from the perspectives of various religions, such as Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, have

similarities in teaching human responsibility towards the environment. In Islam, people are taught to care for the earth as caliphs, while in Christianity the importance of human cooperation with God is emphasized in caring for the universe. Hinduism teaches respect for nature as a gift from gods and goddesses, while Buddhism emphasizes love, *welas asih*, and *ahimsa* as the basis for environmental ethics. On the other hand, Confucianism paid attention to harmony and balance between humans and nature. Even though they differ in spiritual and philosophical details, all religions provide a basis for protecting, caring for, and respecting the environment as a form of human moral responsibility towards God's creation of the universe.

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