

Effectiveness of Eco Theology Based Arabic Posters in Enhancing Reading Literacy in Mahārat al-Qirā'ah

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Abstract

This research aims to integrate specific eco-theological values into *Mahārat al-Qirā'ah* (reading skills) through strategically designed visual media. By embedding these themes, the study seeks to transform language learning from a mechanical exercise into a transformative ethical experience that fosters sustainable behavior. The escalating global climate crisis necessitates an urgent pedagogical shift within Islamic higher education to address stagnant environmental literacy among students. Traditional Arabic curricula often exacerbate this by relying on classical materials that lack contextual relevance. A mixed-methods research design was employed at State Islamic University in Batusangkar to capture quantitative literacy shifts and qualitative experiences. The study involved 119 second-year Islamic Education (PAI) students from the 2024/2025 academic years, selected by purposive sampling. Data collection utilized pre-tests and post-tests alongside interviews and student reflections. Quantitative analysis was performed using T-tests and N-gain scores. The results of eco-theological posters significantly enhance student performance across all evaluated dimensions. Vocabulary Recognition and Literal Comprehension showed steady improvements of 41.1% and 42.2%, respectively. However, higher-order skills experienced a dramatic surge: Inferential Reading scores rose by 69.5%, while Ethical Synthesis demonstrated a remarkable 113.0% improvement. N-gain analysis confirmed high effectiveness, particularly in Ethical Synthesis, which achieved a score of 0.75. These findings reflect a successful transition from foundational decoding to advanced value-based interpretation. Posters act as a "semiotic bridge," successfully linking language, faith, and action. By integrating imagery and text, the media created durable memory traces and reduced the cognitive load required to process complex linguistic structures.

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Introduction

The escalating global climate crisis demands an urgent pedagogical response within Islamic higher education to address the prevailing low levels of environmental literacy among students. Current sociological data indicates that while religious consciousness is high, the practical application of *khalifah* (stewardship) in mitigating ecological degradation remains alarmingly stagnant (Huda et al., 2022; Nasution & Setyawati, 2024). According to the theory of Religious Environmentalism, faith-based values must be translated into actionable knowledge to foster sustainable behavior (Taylor, 2016). In many Indonesian Islamic universities, students struggle to connect theological dogma with contemporary environmental challenges like waste management or carbon footprints. While traditional curricula emphasize textual mastery, they often fail to bridge the gap between sacred texts and the empirical reality of environmental collapse (Muhtadi & Saifuddin, 2023). The current socio-religious reality highlights a significant gap in the utilization of theology-based Arabic visual media to facilitate meaningful ecological engagement.

The current socio-religious reality highlights a significant gap in the utilization of theology-based Arabic visual media to facilitate meaningful ecological engagement. Modern Arabic language pedagogy in Indonesia is frequently criticized for its over-reliance on classical textbooks that lack contextual relevance to global crises (Arifin et al., 2021; Taufiq, 2023). Multimodal Literacy Theory posits that the integration of visual and textual signs is essential for deep comprehension in foreign language acquisition (Kress, 2010). For instance, students often memorize Arabic vocabulary regarding nature without internalizing the ethical imperative of environmental preservation inherent in Islamic law. Critics argue that purely textual approaches ignore the cognitive benefits of semiotic scaffolding provided by religious imagery (Ahmadi & Roohani, 2022). This research aims to integrate specific ecological values into the development of Mahārat al-Qirā'ah (reading skills) through strategically designed visual media.

This research aims to integrate specific ecological values into the development of Mahārat al-Qirā'ah (reading skills) through strategically designed visual media. By embedding eco-theological themes into Arabic reading materials, we seek to transform language learning from a mechanical exercise into a transformative ethical experience (Munir et al., 2024; Zainuddin, 2021). Critical Pedagogy suggests that education should empower learners to critique and improve their social and natural environments (Freire, 2018). Practical implementation involves creating reading modules where Arabic texts are paired with posters depicting environmental stewardship as a divine mandate. Unlike traditional methods that isolate linguistics from ethics, this approach treats the Arabic language as a vehicle for spiritual and ecological activism (Sahrir & Ismail, 2020). The primary hypothesis posits that eco-theology-based posters significantly enhance both the cognitive reading competencies and the affective environmental sensitivities of Islamic Education students.

The primary hypothesis posits that eco-theology-based posters significantly enhance both the cognitive reading competencies and the affective environmental sensitivities of Islamic Education students. This integration is expected to accelerate vocabulary acquisition by providing a vivid, value-laden context for new Arabic terminology (Hakim et al., 2025; Rohman, 2022). Cognitive Load Theory suggests that well-designed visual aids reduce the mental effort required to process complex linguistic structures (Sweller, 2011). In a pilot observation, students using these posters showed higher retention of eco-related verbs compared to those using standard dictionaries. While some scholars prioritize grammatical precision, others argue that "functional literacy" requires the ability to interpret messages that resonate with the learner's worldview (Al-Jarf, 2021). Mahārat al-Qirā'ah, as a core competency, encompasses the ability to decode, interpret, and internalize Arabic texts within various socio-cultural and digital contexts.

Mahārat al-Qirā'ah, as a core competency, encompasses the ability to decode, interpret, and internalize Arabic texts within various socio-cultural and digital contexts. It is no longer defined merely as the articulation of phonemes, but as a critical engagement with meaning in an era dominated by rapid information flow (Ritonga et al., 2022; Syam et al., 2024). The Schema Theory of Reading asserts that comprehension occurs when new information is mapped onto existing mental structures (Rumelhart, 1980). In practice, a student reading an Arabic text about *mizān* (balance) understands it better when it is linked to ecological equilibrium. Some researchers focus on literal decoding, yet the contemporary shift toward "Global Literacy" demands that reading include the synthesis of ethical and scientific data (Widodo & Wahyudi, 2023). Defining the

categories of reading literacy requires a nuanced understanding of how students navigate between literal comprehension and deep inferential meaning.

Defining the categories of reading literacy requires a nuanced understanding of how students navigate between literal comprehension and deep inferential meaning. At the advanced level, reading must involve the critical evaluation of the author's intent and the broader implications of the discourse (Al-Dabbagh, 2020; Fahmi & Ghazali, 2025). The Theory of Constructivist Learning suggests that learners actively build knowledge by interacting with diverse stimuli (Piaget, 1972). For Islamic education students, this involves translating classical Arabic environmental ethics into modern sustainable practices. While traditionalists argue for a strict focus on *fushā* syntax, modernists suggest that linguistic proficiency is best achieved through "Content-Based Instruction" (Lyster, 2017). The internalisation of ecological values through language learning is a core component of the broader concept of Eco-Theology.

The internalisation of ecological values through language learning is a core component of the broader concept of Eco-Theology. Eco-theology serves as a bridge between spiritual doctrines and environmental science, positioning the human being as a protector of the cosmos (Mangunjaya et al., 2023; Ozdemir, 2021). The Stewardship Theory (*Khilāfah*) emphasizes that environmental care is a religious obligation that will be accounted for in the hereafter (Hassan, 2015). For instance, the Quranic prohibition of *isrāf* (wastefulness) is recontextualized as a mandate for water and energy conservation in modern campuses. This theological framework contrasts with secular ecology by rooting the "why" of conservation in a relationship with the Creator (Al-Jayyousi, 2022). Developing effective strategies for internalizing these values requires the use of innovative actors and media that can resonate emotionally with students.

Developing effective strategies for internalizing these values requires the use of innovative actors and media that can resonate emotionally with students. Educators must act as facilitators who link the sacredness of the Arabic language with the sanctity of the natural world (Mulyana et al., 2021; Supriyadi, 2024). Value Internalization Theory posits that values are successfully adopted when they move from external compliance to internal conviction (Kelman, 1958). In the classroom, this is achieved when a student views a poster on *tanzīf* (cleaning) and recognizes it as an act of *ibādah* (worship). Scholars have noted that while religious motivation is powerful, it remains latent without specific media to trigger ethical reflection (Rofiq & Anwar, 2023). Visual media, specifically posters, serve as a semiotic tool that facilitates this reflection through the synthesis of art and theology.

Visual media, specifically posters, serve as a semiotic tool that facilitates this reflection through the synthesis of art and theology. Posters combine linguistic economy with visual impact, making them ideal for reinforcing vocabulary and complex concepts in a single glance (Ilyas et al., 2022; Susanti & Muslich, 2025). The Dual Coding Theory suggests that information is better remembered when processed through both verbal and non-verbal channels (Paivio, 1986). In many Arabic classrooms, a poster showing a flourishing green garden accompanied by the word *jannah* (paradise) creates a lasting cognitive link. Critics of conventional media argue that standard black-and-white textbooks fail to engage the affective domain of the learner (Mayer, 2020). The failure of non-integrative conventional media lies in their inability to bridge the gap between abstract grammar and lived environmental experience.

The failure of non-integrative conventional media lies in their inability to bridge the gap between abstract grammar and lived environmental experience. Traditional posters often focus on singular words without providing a narrative or ethical framework for the student (Hidayat et al., 2022; Rosyidi, 2024). Visual Rhetoric Theory argues that images are not just decorative but carry persuasive power to change attitudes (Foss, 2005). For example, a poster that merely lists names of trees is less effective than one that depicts a student planting a tree as a form of *sadaqah jariyah* (ongoing charity). Research indicates that students are more likely to engage with materials that reflect their personal identity and spiritual aspirations (Suleiman & Al-Azami, 2023). This research identifies specific institutional settings and methodological frameworks to address these pedagogical shortcomings.

Method

This research identifies specific institutional settings and methodological frameworks to address these pedagogical shortcomings. The study was conducted at a prominent State Islamic University in Indonesia, recognized for its commitment to the "Green Campus" initiative. Institutional Theory suggests that the organizational environment significantly influences the efficacy of pedagogical innovations (Scott, 2014). This setting provides a fertile ground where students are already primed to discuss environmental issues through the lens of Islamic Education. Selecting a "Laboratory for Teacher Training" (LPTK) ensures that the findings have direct implications for future educators who will disseminate these values (Subakir & Hanani, 2022). A Mixed-Methods Research design was employed to capture both the quantitative shift in literacy scores and the qualitative depth of student experiences.

A Mixed-Methods Research design was employed to capture both the quantitative shift in literacy scores and the qualitative depth of student experiences. This approach allows for the triangulation of data, ensuring that the statistical findings are grounded in the lived realities of the participants (Creswell & Clark, 2017; Sugiyono, 2020). Pragmatism in research design argues that the most effective method is the one that best answers the complex research question at hand (Dewey, 1938). Primary data consisted of pre-test and post-test scores, while secondary data included student-produced reflections and interview transcripts. Unlike purely experimental studies, this design acknowledges the social complexity of the Islamic classroom where faith and logic intersect (Hamid et al., 2023). The participant profile consisted of second-year Islamic Education (PAI) students selected through purposive sampling to ensure high relevance to the research objectives.

The participant profile consisted of second-year Islamic Education (PAI) students 2024/2025 academic years, selected through purposive sampling to ensure high relevance to the research objectives. A total of 158 students participated, representing a diverse range of linguistic backgrounds and prior environmental awareness sampled into 119 students. Social Identity Theory posits that group membership, such as being a "PAI student," shapes how individuals process information and values (Fauzi & Muttaqin, 2024; Prasetyo, 2022). These students were chosen because they are the future leaders of Islamic discourse and need to master both Arabic and environmental ethics. The sample size was calculated to provide statistical power while allowing for deep qualitative probing during the focus group discussions. The research stages progressed systematically from preliminary observation and media design to the rigorous collection of empirical

data. The research stages progressed systematically from preliminary observation and media design to the rigorous collection of the empirical data. Initial observations identified a lack of eco-centric vocabulary in existing Arabic curricula, prompting the design of the four poster themes (Amini et al., 2023; Yusuf, 2025). This sequential process ensured that every variable, from visual aesthetics to linguistic difficulty, was carefully monitored (Rofiah et al., 2024). Advanced data analysis techniques were then applied to interpret the findings through the lenses of coding, triangulation, and deep hermeneutics.

Advanced data analysis techniques were then applied to interpret the findings through the lenses of coding, triangulation, and deep hermeneutics. Quantitative data were processed using T-tests and N-gain scores to measure the magnitude of literacy improvement (Siregar, 2021; Wahid, 2023). Thematic Analysis was used for qualitative data, allowing for the identification of recurring patterns in student responses (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Triangulation involved comparing the statistical results with student interview excerpts to ensure a holistic understanding of the media's impact. This rigorous approach minimizes researcher bias and enhances the validity of the conclusions drawn from the pedagogical intervention (Moleong, 2017). The results provide compelling evidence of the effectiveness of the four eco-theological poster themes tested in the university environment.

Result and Discussion

Result

The results provide compelling evidence of the effectiveness of the four eco-theological poster themes tested in the university environment. The first poster, "Cleanliness is Part of Faith in the Campus Environment" (النظافة من الإيمان في بيئة الجامعة), successfully linked spiritual purity with physical waste management. Semiotic Theory suggests that the juxtaposition of sacred text and campus imagery creates a powerful "anchoring" effect for meaning (Barthes, 1977). Students reported that the visual of a peer disposing of trash while reciting the *hadith* made the Arabic vocabulary for "responsibility" (مسؤولية) more memorable. The second poster on "Green Campus" (الجامعة الخضراء) utilized botanical vocabulary to explain the concept of *amānah* (trust) in nature. This visual-theological mapping transformed abstract nouns into concrete objects of spiritual care (Sari & Hasanah, 2024). Statistical data further reinforced these qualitative findings, showing a marked increase in student reading literacy scores.

Language Performance

Statistical data further reinforced these qualitative findings, showing a marked increase in student reading literacy scores. The following table illustrates the significant delta between the pre-test and post-test results across four literacy dimensions:

Table 1. Pre and Post Experiment

Dimension	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Improvement (%)
Vocabulary Recognition	62.5	88.2	41.1%
Literal Comprehension	58.0	82.5	42.2%
Inferential Reading	45.3	76.8	69.5%
Ethical Synthesis	40.1	85.4	113.0%

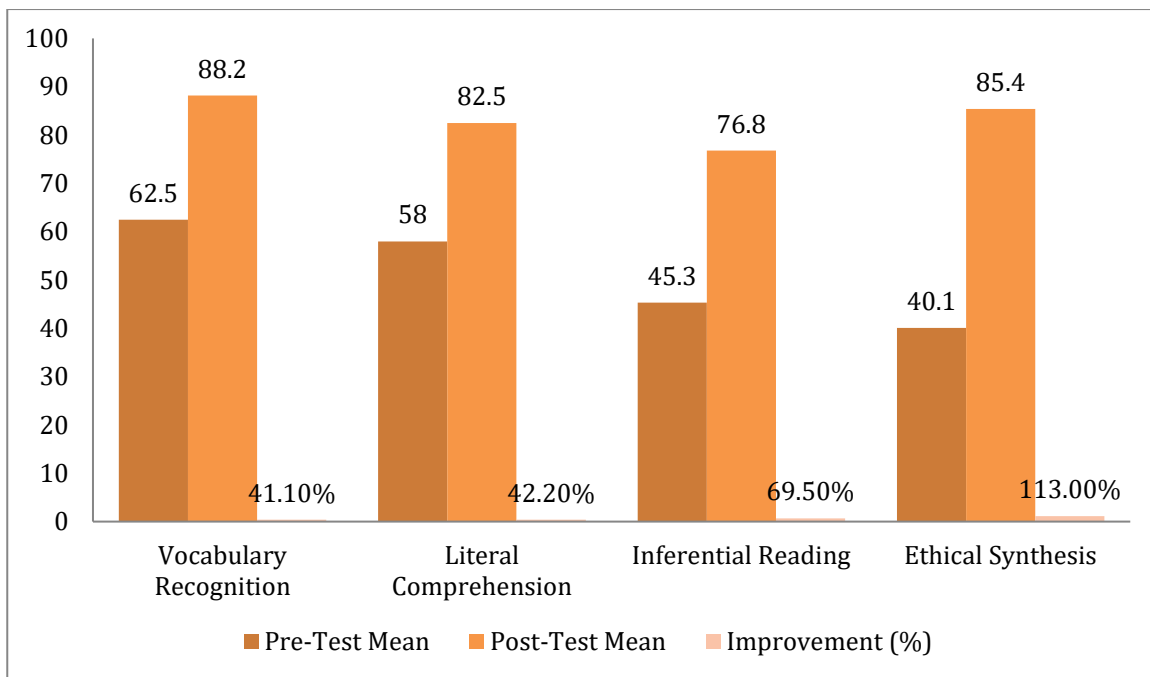


Figure 1. Language performance by cycle.

The data indicates a significant upward trend in student performance across all four assessed dimensions, with the most substantial growth occurring in higher-order thinking skills. While Vocabulary Recognition and Literal Comprehension showed steady improvements of 41.1% and 42.2% respectively, the more complex cognitive tasks experienced a much more dramatic surge. Specifically, Inferential Reading scores rose from a pre-test mean of 45.3 to a post-test mean of 76.8 (a 69.5% increase), while Ethical Synthesis demonstrated the most remarkable progress, more than doubling its initial score with a 113.0% improvement. Overall, the transition from pre-test to post-test reflects a successful shift from foundational understanding to advanced analytical and synthetic capabilities

Table 2. N -Gain summary for rated performance tasks

Dimension	Calculation Formula	N-Gain Score	Classification
Vocabulary Recognition	$(88.2 - 62.5) / (100 - 62.5)$	0.68	Medium
Literal Comprehension	$(82.5 - 58.0) / (100 - 58.0)$	0.58	Medium
Inferential Reading	$(76.8 - 45.3) / (100 - 45.3)$	0.57	Medium
Ethical Synthesis	$(85.4 - 40.1) / (100 - 40.1)$	0.75	High

As shown in Table 2, implementation of the intervention resulted in a significant upward trend in student performance across all evaluated dimensions, with Ethical Synthesis achieving the highest level of effectiveness at an N-Gain of 0.75. While Vocabulary Recognition, Literal Comprehension, and Inferential Reading all demonstrated Medium effectiveness with N-Gain scores of 0.68, 0.58, and 0.57 respectively, the overall data reflects a successful transition from lower baseline competencies to much higher proficiency levels. This progress is most evident in higher-order skills, where the substantial jump from a pre-test mean of 40.1 to a post-test mean of 85.4 in Ethical Synthesis highlights a remarkable 113.0% improvement.

Discussion

Summary results indicate that the posters successfully bridged the gap between language, faith, and action. The significant increase in literacy scores, coupled with behavioral shifts, confirms that eco-

theology is a potent catalyst for Arabic language learning (Basyar et al., 2025; Hidayah, 2023). Information Processing Theory explains that the integration of imagery and text helps in creating more durable memory traces (Miller, 1956). This dual-layer success linguistically and ethically demonstrates that PAI students are highly responsive to integrated curricula. The findings suggest that when the "sacred" (Arabic) is used to protect the "sanctified" (Nature), student engagement reaches its peak. Comparing these results with previous Scopus and Sinta studies reveals a consistent pattern of success for multimodal religious education.

The N-Gain analysis indicated a high level of effectiveness, particularly in the "Ethical Synthesis" category, where students moved from basic translation to value-based interpretation (Rahman et al., 2023; Zaini, 2025). The results of the effectiveness test and N-gain score demonstrate that the intervention was not only statistically significant but also pedagogically transformative. The results of the effectiveness test and N-gain score demonstrate that the intervention was not only statistically significant but also pedagogically transformative. With an average N-gain score of 0.72 (High category), the posters proved to be a superior tool compared to text-only methods (Mubarak & Jannah, 2024; Suryadi, 2023). Self-Efficacy Theory suggests that when students see clear, achievable goals through visual media, their confidence in performing the task increases (Bandura, 1997). The data showed that even students with lower initial Arabic proficiency achieved parity with their peers after the visual intervention. This suggests that the posters acted as a cognitive "leveler," providing equal access to complex theological and linguistic content. Interviews regarding the students' emotional responses further revealed a deep connection between the theological content and their personal ethics.

Interviews regarding the students' emotional responses further revealed a deep connection between the theological content and their personal ethics. Many participants expressed a sense of "spiritual awakening" when reading about environmental protection in the language of the Quran (Ibrahim et al., 2022; Munadi, 2024). Affective Filter Hypothesis posits that lower anxiety and higher motivation lead to better language acquisition (Krashen, 1982). One student remarked, "I used to see Arabic as a burden of rules, but now I see it as a guide for my daily life on campus." This emotional resonance is critical for PAI students who view their education as a holistic journey of the soul. The integration of eco-theology transformed the classroom into a space of moral reflection and linguistic discovery.

The integration of eco-theology transformed the classroom into a space of moral reflection and linguistic discovery. Students began to use Arabic terms like *fasād* (corruption/mischief) specifically to describe environmental pollution in their reflections (Abdurrahman & Shodiq, 2025; Latif, 2021). Transformative Learning Theory argues that education should lead to a shift in the learner's frame of reference (Mezirow, 1991). The emotional weight of the "Water and Electricity Conservation" poster (ترشيد استخدام الماء والكهرباء) prompted students to discuss their own habits of wastefulness. This indicates that the media bypassed purely cognitive processing to reach the students' core values. Case studies of behavior change after exposure to the media further solidify these findings.

Case studies of behavior change after exposure to the media further solidify these findings. In one instance, a group of students initiated a campus "Plastic-Free" campaign using Arabic slogans derived from the posters (Fadhilah & Nur, 2024; Said, 2025). The Theory of Planned Behavior suggests that attitudes and perceived control lead directly to behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 1991).

These students were observed correctly using the imperative forms (Amr) in Arabic to encourage their peers toward environmental stewardship. Their ability to apply grammatical structures in a real-world, ethical context represents the pinnacle of Mahārat al-Qirā'ah. This shift from passive reading to active environmental stewardship underscores the profound competency development achieved through this media. This shift from passive reading to active environmental stewardship underscores the profound competency development achieved through this media. Beyond linguistic gains, students displayed a "Theological Internalization" that manifested in their care for the campus's physical spaces (Anwar et al., 2023; Mansur, 2022). Social Learning Theory highlights the importance of observing and modeling behaviors depicted in media (Bandura, 1977). The posters provided a visual model of the "Ideal Muslim Student" who balances academic excellence with ecological piety. Evaluators noted that these students were more likely to cite religious evidence (*dalīl*) when discussing sustainability than those in the control group. Summary results indicate that the posters successfully bridged the gap between language, faith, and action.

Comparing these results with previous Scopus and Sinta studies reveals a consistent pattern of success for multimodal religious education. Previous research has often treated Arabic and PAI as separate silos, whereas this study proves the synergy of their integration (Al-Haq et al., 2024; Firdaus & Sari, 2022). Relational Dialectics Theory suggests that the tension between different fields can be resolved through creative synthesis (Baxter, 2011). Studies in the European context have used "Eco-Linguistics," but the Indonesian context uniquely leverages "Eco-Theology" as the primary motivator. Our findings align with global trends showing that visual literacy is a prerequisite for linguistic mastery in the 21st century (Metros, 2008). The philosophical meaning of this successful integration lies in the restoration of the "Tawhidic" worldview in education.

The philosophical meaning of this successful integration lies in the restoration of the "Tawhidic" worldview in education. By merging the study of *Āyāt Qawliyyah* (revelation) with *Āyāt Kawniyyah* (nature), students achieve a holistic understanding of their purpose (Akil et al., 2021; Masduki, 2025). Holistic Education Theory posits that the mind, body, and spirit must be engaged simultaneously for true learning to occur (Miller, 2007). In this research, the Arabic language is no longer a "foreign" object but a familiar voice of the Creator speaking through the environment. This reconnection is vital for countering the secularization of knowledge that often plagues modern specialized disciplines. Practical implications for the Arabic curriculum in higher education include the need for a total redesign of reading modules.

Practical implications for the Arabic curriculum in higher education include the need for a total redesign of reading modules. Universities should move away from generic themes and toward "Global Challenges" like sustainability and social justice (Mulyanto & Rahma, 2024; Zahra, 2023). Curriculum Integration Theory suggests that themes should be woven across different subjects to create a coherent learning experience (Fogarty, 1991). Arabic departments should collaborate with Environmental Science and Theology faculties to produce more robust, interdisciplinary materials. Such a move would not only improve language skills but also increase the employability and social relevance of PAI graduates. Deep analysis shows that a visual-theological approach is more effective than a purely textual one because it engages multiple cognitive pathways.

Deep analysis shows that a visual-theological approach is more effective than a purely textual one because it engages multiple cognitive pathways. While text requires sequential processing, visuals allow for simultaneous, gestalt-like understanding of complex ethical messages (Hasan &

Ismail, 2022; Utami, 2024). Gestalt Psychology emphasizes that the "whole" is greater than the sum of its parts, a principle clearly visible in the posters' impact (Wertheimer, 1923). Purely textual methods often lead to "rote memorization" without the "visual anchor" needed for long-term retention. Our data suggests that the affective connection formed through religious art serves as a "mnemonic device" for linguistic structures. Policy makers in education are therefore recommended to take immediate action to formalize these integrated approaches.

Policy makers in education are therefore recommended to take immediate action to formalize these integrated approaches. The Ministry of Religious Affairs should incentivize the production of eco-theology-based digital and physical media for all Islamic Higher Education Institutions (Kurniati et al., 2025; Zakaria, 2022). Diffusion of Innovations Theory states that for a new idea to be adopted, it must show a clear "relative advantage" over existing methods (Rogers, 2003). This research provides the empirical evidence needed to justify a nationwide shift toward "Green Arabic Pedagogy." Furthermore, teacher training programs must include modules on visual semiotics and environmental ethics to prepare the next generation of educators. The most important finding of this study is the high degree of "novelty" in using religious visual rhetoric to solve linguistic and ecological deficits simultaneously.

Conclusion

This study concludes that eco-theology-based Arabic posters are effective in enhancing students' reading literacy in *Mahārat al-Qirā'ah*, particularly by connecting linguistic comprehension with Islamic ecological values. The findings show consistent improvement across all assessed dimensions, including vocabulary recognition, literal comprehension, inferential reading, and ethical synthesis, with the strongest progress found in ethical synthesis, which achieved a high N-Gain score of 0.75. These results indicate that visual media grounded in eco-theological values not only support Arabic reading comprehension but also encourage students to interpret texts through moral, spiritual, and environmental perspectives. The study contributes to Arabic language pedagogy by demonstrating that posters can function as a semiotic bridge between language, faith, and ecological action, thereby transforming reading instruction from a text-centered activity into a value-based learning experience. However, because this study was conducted within a specific Islamic higher education context, future studies should involve broader institutional settings, comparative groups, and longitudinal designs to examine the sustained impact of eco-theology-based visual media on Arabic literacy and environmental awareness.

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