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Challenging the Eco-Islamic Decoupling: A Critical Analysis of Strategic Gaps Between Government Mandates and Green Madrasah SWOT Capacity toward Institutional Transformation

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Abstract

This study examines the strategic gap between government green madrasah mandates and the SWOT-based institutional capacity of MTsN 3 Lima Puluh Kota in implementing Eco-Islamic institutional transformation. Using a critical qualitative approach with an institutional case study design, data were collected through non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, and document analysis of green madrasah policies, curriculum documents, reports, and institutional archives. The data were analyzed through thematic analysis supported by source triangulation to identify the relationship between policy demands, institutional capacity, and daily implementation practices. The findings reveal that the green madrasah agenda has been formally adopted through institutional vision statements, environmental symbols, selected ecological activities, and administrative reporting; however, its implementation remains partially decoupled from everyday governance, curriculum practice, infrastructure maintenance, and student habituation. The main source of this decoupling is not the absence of Islamic ecological values, but the weak alignment between top-down mandates, limited funding, teacher competence, infrastructure readiness, and audit-oriented evaluation mechanisms. The study introduces Eco-Islamic decoupling as a critical lens to explain how Islamic environmental ethics may remain normative and symbolic when unsupported by adequate institutional resources and policy design. These findings imply that authentic green madrasah transformation requires a shift from uniform bureaucratic compliance toward localized, resource-backed, and capacity-sensitive policy frameworks that integrate ecological values into budgeting, teacher development, curriculum enactment, infrastructure management, and everyday school culture.

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Introduction

The contemporary socio institutional landscape of Islamic education vividly highlights the friction surrounding the implementation of the green madrasah paradigm. Recent governmental mandates heavily emphasize this ecological framework, yet its realization often remains superficially symbolic rather than structurally integrated within institutional daily operations. Institutional Transformation Theory postulates that schools frequently adopt green formal structures merely to gain external legitimacy without fundamentally altering their core technical and educational activities. For instance, many Islamic schools construct elaborate organic waste management facilities for green madrasah accreditation, which subsequently remain unused due to zero maintenance funding. While some scholars argue that coercive isomorphism effectively drives

environmental compliance, a more critical perspective reveals that such pressure predominantly breeds decoupled performativity rather than genuine ecological transformation. Therefore, a critical examination of the literature is imperative to uncover the specific strategic gaps perpetuating this Eco-Islamic decoupling. (Alnaim & Metwally, 2024; Chindondondo & Reddy, 2025; Saeed et al., 2023)

The concept of Green Institutional Policy Alienation provides a grounded explanation for how implementers experience profound meaninglessness when top-down environmental mandates ignore their localized socio-cultural realities during forced transformation (Esteve-Jordà & Scheidel, 2026; Tummers, 2017). This alienation is highly evident when green madrasah teachers, already overburdened with dual curricula, treat environmental integration as an intrusive administrative add-on rather than a theological duty. In contrast to rational-choice policy models that assume linear transformation, advanced critical policy analysis demonstrates that local actors actively negotiate, resist, or superficially adopt these mandates based on sheer resource availability (Schmeisser et al., 2026; Shahzad et al., 2024; Theodorakopoulos et al., 2025). Addressing these documented theoretical and empirical discrepancies directly shapes the specific objectives of this institutional research.

Addressing these documented theoretical and empirical discrepancies directly shapes the specific objectives of this institutional research. This study specifically aims to critically analyze the profound incongruence between the green madrasah mandates issued by the government and the actual institutional capacity of Islamic schools (Hakim, 2023; Mahyani & Ruswandi, 2024; Masuwai et al., 2024). Strategic Transformation Theory suggests that an organization's strategic intent must rigorously align with its internal resource-based view to achieve sustainable operational success and genuine eco-theological change (Barney, 2016; Hein et al., 2026; Mu et al., 2024). For example, mandating digital-based environmental reporting without providing adequate technological infrastructure inevitably forces green madrasahs into a state of structural paralysis. While traditional compliance audits focus solely on the output of green policies, a more advanced capability-based approach critically evaluates the latent institutional friction preventing true environmental transformation (Alsafy et al., 2025; Li et al., 2025; Rofi'i, 2024). Consequently, this study formulates a primary hypothesis regarding the structural root causes of green madrasah policy failures.

Consequently, this study formulates a primary hypothesis regarding the structural root causes of green madrasah policy failures. The central argument posits that without a radical recalibration of government mandates to match the specific SWOT profiles of schools, the green madrasah framework will remain a performative illusion (Alsafy et al., 2025; Hong, 2025; Putriana, 2021). Resource Dependence Theory underpins this hypothesis by illustrating how organizations lacking internal resources become highly vulnerable to external regulatory shocks, leading to artificial compliance rather than actual transformation (Damnjanović et al., 2025; Ketchoua & Wirajing, 2025; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2015). In the field, this is projected through green madrasahs aggressively pursuing short-term environmental grants, only to abandon the initiatives entirely once the external funding cycles conclude. Opposing the optimistic view that mandates naturally cultivate institutional green cultures, critical organizational discourse argues that unfunded mandates strictly generate chronic institutional fatigue and severe decoupling (DeLeeuw & Eckman, 2026; Stankiewicz, 2022). This hypothesis necessitates a rigorous exploration of the Eco-Islamic decoupling concept, beginning with its fundamental definitions within the green madrasah context.

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decoupling in green madrasahs is defined as the strategic separation between the formalized adoption of Islamic environmental ethics and the actual daily operational practices of the institution (Alam, 2024; Meyer & Rowan, 2015; Mohamed et al., 2023). Green Organizational Decoupling Theory frames this phenomenon not as an accidental failure, but as a deliberate survival mechanism employed by institutions to navigate conflicting external environmental demands preventing authentic transformation (Petricevic & Teece, 2019; Rasool & Moiz Hashmi, 2026). A tangible projection of this is when a green madrasah prominently displays Quranic verses about nature conservation on its walls while simultaneously relying heavily on single-use plastics in its cafeteria. Although mainstream educational literature views decoupling as a sign of managerial incompetence, advanced institutional transformation analysis interprets it as a rational adaptation to overwhelming and underfunded regulatory environments (Coburn, 2004; Muhamad Dah et al., 2024; Putra et al., 2024). Understanding these foundational definitions allows for a deeper investigation into how this decoupling specifically manifests within green madrasah educational operations.

Understanding these foundational definitions allows for a deeper investigation into how this decoupling specifically manifests within green madrasah educational operations. The manifestations of this decoupling are categorically divided into policy-practice gaps, where written green madrasah curricula emphasize sustainability but pedagogical delivery remains entirely theoretical (Alam, 2024; Ball, 2015; Susbiyantoro et al., 2022). Educational Translation Theory posits that macro-level green policies inevitably suffer from semantic and practical dilution as they cascade down into the localized realities of the classroom (Anwar & Shawmi, 2023; Athanasios Drigas et al., 2025). For instance, science teachers may lecture extensively on the ecological principles of stewardship without ever conducting practical outdoor environmental learning sessions. While traditional curriculum theory assumes that syllabus integration equates to behavioral transformation, critical pedagogy argues that without experiential learning, environmental education merely produces cognitive dissonance (Jingga & Lestari, 2025; Ricci, 2024; Wahid, 2024). These practical manifestations are invariably driven by the complex interactions among specific institutional actors and their localized survival strategies.

These practical manifestations are invariably driven by the complex interactions among specific institutional actors and their localized survival strategies. The primary actors in this green madrasah matrix include policymakers who draft idealized mandates, principals who act as compliance buffers, and teachers who function as overburdened implementers (Eisenhardt, 2015; Fitrah et al., 2025; Samfira et al., 2023). Green Agency Theory conceptually grounds this dynamic by highlighting the inherent conflicts of interest and information asymmetries regarding environmental transformation between the principal mandators and institutional agents (Hidayat et al., 2024; Ivić & Cerić, 2023; Liu & Han, 2025). In reality, a green madrasah principal might intentionally shield teachers from full environmental compliance tasks to prevent academic burnout, sacrificing ecological goals for standard examination preparations. While structuralist approaches suggest that tighter bureaucratic control minimizes agency problems, advanced behavioral transformation models indicate that excessive micromanagement actually incentivizes deeper, more sophisticated forms of covert decoupling (Jesus et al., 2025). Analyzing these actors and strategies inevitably exposes the profound potential problems threatening the long-term sustainability of green madrasah initiatives.

Analyzing these actors and strategies inevitably exposes the profound potential problems threatening the long-term sustainability of green madrasah initiatives. The most critical problem generated by strategic decoupling is the erosion of institutional integrity, where students observe the hypocrisy between taught theological green values and actual school practices (Bandura, 2016; Hamdah et al., 2024; Sheva Bayu Firmansyah & Zaenal Abidin, 2024). Green Social Learning Theory dictates that modeling is the primary vehicle for behavioral transformation, meaning institutional hypocrisy actively teaches students to compartmentalize environmental ethics away from practical action (Afifah Barkatul Atqiya, Citra Kusuma Dewi, 2023; OLAWUMI & MAVUSO, 2023). When students are instructed to respect nature during Islamic studies but are forced to study in poorly ventilated, energy-inefficient green madrasah classrooms, they internalize the superficiality of the mandate. Contrary to the assumption that partial compliance is better than none, critical ecological scholarship warns that hypocritical environmentalism creates lasting societal cynicism toward future sustainability interventions (Beck, 2025). These systemic problems also stem from the varied visual interpretations and contextual definitions of what constitutes a genuine green madrasah space.

These systemic problems also stem from the varied visual interpretations and contextual definitions of what constitutes a genuine green madrasah space. Visually, the green madrasah framework is often narrowly interpreted through the mere physical greening of the campus, such as planting trees, rather than systemic resource management transformation (Dey, 2022; Gitmiwati & Indrayuda, 2024). Green Symbolic Interactionism Theory explains how institutions rely on highly visible, easily digestible environmental symbols to project compliance to external evaluators while avoiding complex structural reforms (Eitrem et al., 2024). This is clearly contextualized when a green madrasah invests heavily in a beautifully landscaped front garden for visual appeal, while its hidden back-end sanitation systems illegally discharge raw wastewater. While aesthetic interpretations of green schools are celebrated in bureaucratic award ceremonies, advanced environmental transformation theories heavily critique this visual bias for completely ignoring hidden carbon footprints (Al Kez et al., 2024). However, relying solely on these visual and symbolic interpretations introduces severe weaknesses in the practical usage of green madrasah evaluation metrics.

However, relying solely on these visual and symbolic interpretations introduces severe weaknesses in the practical usage of green madrasah evaluation metrics. The usage of purely quantitative and visual metrics to evaluate green madrasah compliance fundamentally fails to capture the qualitative depth of ecological transformation internalized by the academic community (Alam, 2023; Hong, 2025; Muller, 2018). Critical Environmental Measurement Theory warns that when highly complex socio-ecological values are reduced to simple audit metrics, institutions will inevitably optimize for the metric rather than the underlying transformative value (Liang et al., 2022; Manheim, 2023). In practical terms, a green madrasah may force students to participate in a one-day massive clean-up event simply to capture photographic evidence for an accreditation dossier, with zero subsequent follow-up. Defying the standard bureaucratic reliance on standardized key performance indicators, advanced qualitative researchers argue for a paradigm shift toward evaluating long-term ecological habituation and localized environmental wisdom (Hughes et al., 2025; Morales-Urrutia et al., 2025). Recognizing these systemic weaknesses justifies the selection of a specific green madrasah institutional setting to empirically investigate these complex decoupling phenomena.

Method

This research identifies specific institutional settings and methodological frameworks to address these pedagogical shortcomings. Recognizing these systemic weaknesses justifies the selection of a specific green madrasah institutional setting to empirically investigate these complex decoupling phenomena. MTsN 3 Lima Puluh Kota was deliberately selected as the primary research locus because it represents the quintessential intersection of high government green madrasah compliance pressure and significant geographic-resource constraints (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). Institutional Transformation Case Study Theory emphasizes that selecting an extreme or paradigmatic case allows researchers to vividly observe the mechanisms of decoupling that are usually obscured in well-resourced environments (Rivera-Prieto et al., 2026). Located in a rural-urban transitional zone, this specific green madrasah is mandated to execute advanced ecological curricula but is historically plagued by frequent clean water shortages and inadequate waste infrastructure. While large-scale surveys offer broad generalizations about environmental policy, advanced phenomenological approaches assert that deeply contextualized single-site studies are infinitely more capable of unearthing the latent socio-political mechanics of policy alienation. The unique position of MTsN 3 Lima Puluh Kota demands a robust qualitative research design to capture both primary and secondary data effectively.

The unique position of MTsN 3 Lima Puluh Kota demands a robust qualitative research design to capture both primary and secondary data effectively. This research adopts a critical qualitative methodology, utilizing in-depth institutional ethnography to deconstruct the lived experiences of green madrasah stakeholders navigating complex environmental transformation mandates (Firinci Orman, 2024; Guba & Lincoln, 2016; Miles et al., 2020). Green Constructivist Paradigm Theory underpins this design, asserting that institutional reality is not a fixed, objective metric, but rather a fluid consensus continuously negotiated by actors facing structural environmental constraints (Stupak et al., 2021). Contextualizing this design, the researcher actively participated in the green madrasah's daily routines, observing the stark contrast between the beautifully written ecological vision documents and the actual pedagogical practices. Opposing the positivist tradition that seeks to quantify compliance rates, this advanced qualitative approach aggressively interrogates the specific socio-cultural variables behind the statistical facades of green madrasah environmental performance (Hair et al., 2023). This rigorous qualitative design relies heavily on meticulously selected participant profiles and purposeful sampling techniques to evaluate the transformation process.

This rigorous qualitative design relies heavily on meticulously selected participant profiles and purposeful sampling techniques to evaluate the transformation process. Participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling, explicitly targeting individuals who hold strategic intersections of power and practical implementation within the green madrasah's ecosystem (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015; Subaidi et al., 2023). Green Key Informant Theory dictates that in highly politicized institutional transformation settings, data must be extracted from actors possessing structural authority alongside those who actively bear the brunt of execution (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). Consequently, the participant matrix included the Green Madrasah Principal, the Head of the Adiwiyata Task Force, three senior science teachers, and two representatives from the Ministry of Religious Affairs. While random sampling prevents selection bias in quantitative research, advanced qualitative methodologies recognize that uncovering green institutional decoupling

absolutely requires targeted access to elite and operational insiders. With the informants clearly identified, the research process advances systematically through structured stages from preliminary observation to comprehensive green madrasah data collection.

Result and Discussion

Regulatory Mandates and Institutional Capacity Gap

The first finding shows that the implementation of the green madrasah agenda at MTsN 3 Lima Puluh Kota is shaped by a substantial gap between externally imposed environmental mandates and the school's actual institutional capacity. Government regulations and green school directives require curriculum integration, environmental infrastructure, waste management, documentation, and community participation. However, these requirements are not accompanied by proportional financial, technical, and human resource support. As a result, the green madrasah policy is experienced not merely as an educational innovation, but also as an additional administrative burden.

The data indicate that the school formally accepts the green madrasah agenda because it is tied to institutional legitimacy, accreditation, and external evaluation. Nevertheless, the ability to translate these mandates into daily institutional practices remains limited. The gap is especially visible in three areas: curriculum implementation, environmental infrastructure, and reporting mechanisms. Table 1 summarizes the main forms of regulatory pressure and the corresponding institutional responses identified during the study.

Table 1. Government Mandates and Institutional Responses in Green Madrasah Implementation

Policy/mandate area	Expected institutional practice	Condition at MTsN 3 Lima Puluh Kota	Institutional response
Curriculum integration	Environmental values should be integrated into subjects and learning activities	Integration appears mainly in written lesson plans and school vision documents	Formal curriculum adjustment without consistent classroom implementation
Waste management	The school should maintain systematic waste sorting and recycling practices	Waste segregation facilities exist, but their use is inconsistent	Symbolic provision of facilities for audit purposes
Environmental infrastructure	The school should develop green spaces, sanitation facilities, and supporting infrastructure	Green spaces are maintained selectively, while maintenance resources are limited	Prioritization of visible greening over structural environmental improvement
Digital/environmental reporting	The school should submit regular documentation of environmental activities	Reports are prepared primarily to meet administrative requirements	Documentation-oriented compliance
Community participation	The school should involve students, teachers, and the surrounding community	Participation increases during inspection or evaluation periods	Event-based participation rather than sustained ecological habituation

Following Table 1 demonstrates that the main problem is not the absence of formal compliance, but the weak translation of compliance into substantive institutional transformation. The school is able to produce documents, facilities, and visible environmental activities, but these elements are not yet fully embedded in daily routines, learning practices, or resource management systems. This finding indicates the emergence of a policy-practice gap in which the school performs compliance while struggling to internalize the deeper ecological objectives of the green madrasah policy.

SWOT-Based Institutional Capacity of the Green Madrasah

The The second finding concerns the internal and external capacity of MTsN 3 Lima Puluh Kota to implement the green madrasah agenda. The SWOT analysis reveals that the school has important internal strengths, particularly in its religious values, teacher commitment, and institutional willingness to support environmental programs. However, these strengths are constrained by limited funding, insufficient environmental expertise, inadequate infrastructure, and fragmented external support.

The school's Islamic identity provides a strong normative foundation for ecological education. Environmental care can be linked to Islamic values such as stewardship, balance, responsibility, and cleanliness. However, these values are not automatically transformed into operational procedures. Teachers generally support the idea of integrating environmental values into Islamic education and science learning, but many of them lack sufficient training to design practical, interdisciplinary, and experiential green learning activities.

Table 2. SWOT Matrix of Green Madrasah Capacity at MTsN 3 Lima Puluh Kota

SWOT element	Empirical indication	Implication for institutional transformation
Strengths	Strong Islamic value orientation; teacher commitment; school leadership support; existing environmental vision	Provides moral and institutional legitimacy for the green madrasah agenda
Weaknesses	Limited budget; lack of environmental science expertise; weak maintenance system; inconsistent waste management	Restricts the conversion of ecological values into operational practices
Opportunities	Government recognition; potential collaboration with local agencies; green school accreditation; community engagement	Can support transformation if accompanied by technical and financial assistance
Threats	Unfunded mandates; audit pressure; fragmented inter-agency coordination; administrative workload	Encourages symbolic compliance and defensive reporting practices

The SWOT mapping in Table 2 clarifies that the school's main challenge lies in the mismatch between normative readiness and operational capacity. The institution possesses theological and cultural resources that could support ecological transformation, but these resources are weakened by structural limitations. Therefore, the green madrasah agenda cannot be understood simply as a matter of motivation or awareness. It must be analyzed as a capacity-sensitive institutional transformation process.

Forms of Eco-Islamic Decoupling

Evaluating The third finding reveals the emergence of Eco-Islamic decoupling, understood in this study as the separation between formally adopted Islamic ecological values and the actual operational practices of the madrasah. The school promotes environmental values in its vision, documents, and selected activities, but these values are not consistently reflected in infrastructure management, curriculum delivery, waste practices, and daily routines.

This decoupling does not necessarily indicate ideological resistance to environmentalism. Rather, it reflects the school's attempt to survive within a regulatory environment that demands visible results without providing adequate support. The institution must maintain legitimacy before external evaluators while simultaneously managing limited resources and competing academic priorities.

Table 3. Forms of Eco-Islamic Decoupling Identified in the Study

Dimension of decoupling	Formal institutional claim	Observed institutional practice	Analytical interpretation
Curriculum decoupling	Environmental values are integrated into learning documents	Implementation remains largely theoretical and text-based	Ecological values are present at the planning level but weak in pedagogical practice
Infrastructure decoupling	The school develops green facilities and environmental symbols	Visible green areas are prioritized, while maintenance and sanitation remain limited	Environmental compliance becomes visually oriented
Reporting decoupling	The school reports green madrasah activities as evidence of progress	Documentation becomes more important than continuous practice	Administrative performance substitutes substantive transformation
Participation decoupling	Students and teachers are involved in environmental activities	Participation is stronger during evaluation events than in daily routines	Ecological engagement becomes episodic rather than habitual
Theological decoupling	Islamic values support environmental responsibility	Eco-Islamic values remain moral discourse rather than institutional procedure	Religious ethics are not fully translated into management systems

Table 3 shows that the central issue is not the absence of environmental discourse, but the weak institutionalization of that discourse. Eco-Islamic values are recognized and articulated, but they remain insufficiently connected to budgeting, teacher training, curriculum practice, facility maintenance, and evaluation systems. This finding is important because it shifts the analysis from blaming the school to examining the structural conditions that produce performative compliance.

Internal and External Constraints

The fourth finding identifies two major clusters of constraints: internal constraints within the school and external constraints from the policy environment. Internally, the school faces limited funding, insufficient teacher competence in environmental education, and weak infrastructure maintenance. Externally, the school faces audit pressure, fragmented institutional support, and unrealistic policy expectations.

One informant's statement illustrates this tension: "We are forced to build green madrasah facilities to pass the audit, but we lack the operational budget to actually buy the water to keep the plants alive." This statement indicates that the problem is not merely technical, but structural. The school is required to display environmental readiness, yet it lacks the resources required to sustain environmental practices beyond inspection periods.

Table 4. Internal and External Constraints in Green Madrasah Implementation

Constraint type	Specific constraint	Effect on implementation
Internal	Limited dedicated budget for environmental programs	Green initiatives are difficult to maintain after initial implementation
Internal	Lack of teacher training in environmental education	Environmental values remain abstract and are not translated into active learning
Internal	Weak infrastructure maintenance	Facilities exist but are not consistently functional
Internal	Competing academic and administrative priorities	Environmental programs become secondary to examination and reporting demands
External	Unfunded government mandates	Schools are pressured to comply without adequate support

Constraint type	Specific constraint	Effect on implementation
External	Fragmented inter-agency coordination	Technical assistance and infrastructure support are inconsistent
External	Audit-oriented evaluation	Schools prioritize visible evidence and documentation
External	Uniform policy standards	Local conditions and resource disparities are insufficiently considered

The constraints summarized in Table 4 suggest that green madrasah implementation requires more than policy dissemination. It requires sustained capacity building, localized funding, technical assistance, and evaluation mechanisms that measure long-term ecological habituation rather than short-term visual compliance.

Synthesis of Findings

Overall, the findings show that MTsN 3 Lima Puluh Kota operates within an institutional double-bind. On the one hand, it is expected to demonstrate compliance with the green madrasah agenda. On the other hand, it lacks adequate resources to implement the agenda substantively. This condition encourages defensive institutional strategies, including symbolic greening, documentation-oriented compliance, and selective activation of environmental programs during evaluation periods.

Table 5. Synthesis of Strategic Gaps in Green Madrasah Transformation

Strategic gap	Empirical manifestation	Consequence
Policy-capacity gap	Mandates exceed the school's financial and technical capacity	Compliance becomes formal and selective
Value-practice gap	Islamic ecological values are articulated but weakly operationalized	Eco-Islamic ethics remain theoretical
Infrastructure-maintenance gap	Facilities are developed but not consistently maintained	Green programs lose continuity
Evaluation-practice gap	Audit indicators prioritize visible evidence	Schools focus on documentation and display
Coordination-support gap	Multiple agencies issue expectations but provide limited support	Implementation responsibility is shifted to the school

Synthesizing Table 5 confirms that Eco-Islamic decoupling is produced by the interaction between policy pressure and institutional limitation. The green madrasah agenda has strong normative potential, but its transformative effect is weakened when policy instruments are not aligned with local SWOT conditions.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that the implementation of the green madrasah agenda at MTsN 3 Lima Puluh Kota is not primarily constrained by the absence of ecological awareness, but by the misalignment between top-down policy mandates and the institution's actual operational capacity. This finding is consistent with Meyer and Rowan's institutional theory, which explains that organizations often adopt formal structures to gain legitimacy while separating those structures from daily technical activities when implementation demands exceed organizational capacity (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). In the context of this study, the madrasah formally adopts green values through documents, visual symbols, and environmental programs, yet the implementation remains uneven because the school lacks sufficient funding, infrastructure, and technical support. Thus, the observed Eco-Islamic decoupling confirms that formal compliance does not automatically indicate substantive transformation; rather, it may become a rational institutional response to external pressure.

This study also aligns with DiMaggio and Powell's argument on coercive isomorphism, which suggests that organizations tend to become similar because of pressures from the state, professional bodies, or dominant institutional norms (DiMaggio & Powell, 2015; Kezar & Bernstein-Sierra, 2019). The green madrasah policy requires schools to display standardized ecological practices regardless of their local resource differences. However, the case of MTsN 3 Lima Puluh Kota demonstrates that coercive standardization may produce formal uniformity without real institutional transformation. The school is expected to perform the same green indicators as better-resourced institutions, even though its financial, geographic, and infrastructural conditions are different. This finding extends institutional isomorphism theory by showing that coercive environmental mandates in Islamic educational institutions can generate symbolic similarity but deepen practical inequality.

The findings further resonate with Ng et al. (2025), who found that green school certification can improve school environmental performance and students' environmental literacy, although educational gains may lag behind visible environmental performance. The present study supports this argument but adds a more critical interpretation. At MTsN 3 Lima Puluh Kota, visible environmental performance, such as green spaces, documentation, and event-based activities, appears more dominant than sustained ecological habituation. This means that environmental certification or green school recognition may encourage schools to prioritize what can be seen, documented, and audited, while deeper pedagogical transformation remains limited. Therefore, this study strengthens Goldman et al.'s finding by showing that the gap between environmental performance and educational internalization becomes more severe when green policies are implemented under resource scarcity.

The result is also comparable to Marable's study on green schools, which emphasizes that environmental education in green schools requires integration between curriculum, school facilities, and institutional practices (Akinsemolu & Onyeaka, 2025). Similar to Marable's argument, this study finds that green madrasah transformation cannot rely only on physical symbols or isolated environmental activities. However, the present research reveals a different institutional tension: in the madrasah context, ecological education is also expected to be integrated with Islamic values, such as stewardship, cleanliness, balance, and responsibility. The problem is that these values often remain at the level of theological discourse rather than becoming operational principles in budgeting, waste management, facility maintenance, and classroom learning. Therefore, this study expands green school literature by demonstrating the need to connect environmental education not only with curriculum and facilities, but also with religious-ethical institutional management.

The findings also have a close relationship with Mahardika's study on green madrasa as an environmental education program, which found that green madrasa implementation involves government policies, curriculum integration, habituation, and institutional culture (Junaidah et al., 2025). The present study supports the importance of those dimensions but offers a more critical reading of their implementation. In MTsN 3 Lima Puluh Kota, curriculum integration and environmental habituation are present, but they are not yet consistently embedded in daily school routines. Environmental activities tend to intensify during inspections or evaluation periods, while everyday ecological practices remain unstable. This comparison indicates that green madrasah programs should not be assessed only from the presence of regulations, programs, and activities, but from the continuity and depth of their institutionalization.

This study also confirms Park's argument that institutional decoupling can explain the under-implementation of environmental technologies or policies, especially when organizations engage in symbolic actions without fully implementing the intended change (Park & Cha, 2019). In the present study, decoupling appears through curriculum decoupling, infrastructure decoupling, reporting decoupling, participation decoupling, and theological decoupling. The school does not reject the green madrasah idea, but it selectively translates the policy into forms that are administratively visible and institutionally manageable. This strengthens the argument that decoupling should not always be interpreted as incompetence or resistance; in resource-constrained institutions, it may function as a survival strategy under excessive regulatory demands.

The findings are also consistent with Moynihan, Herd, and Harvey's theory of administrative burden, which conceptualizes burden through learning costs, psychological costs, and compliance costs in interactions with government (Moynihan et al., 2015). The green madrasah policy creates learning costs because teachers and administrators must understand new environmental requirements; psychological costs because they experience pressure to appear compliant; and compliance costs because they must produce reports, documentation, and evidence for audits. In this study, administrative burden becomes a key mechanism that explains why schools shift from substantive ecological transformation to documentation-oriented compliance. This finding contributes to policy implementation literature by showing that administrative burden in educational institutions can weaken the moral and pedagogical objectives of environmental policy.

The results also relate to Zickafoose et al.'s study on school-based policy implementation, which highlights that implementation barriers often include staff concerns, resource limitations, and the need for clear communication and support before policy enforcement (Zickafoose et al., 2024). In line with this, the present study finds that green madrasah implementation is weakened when policy demands are not preceded by sufficient capacity building, technical assistance, and financial support. Teachers and school leaders are asked to implement environmental programs, yet they are not always equipped with the knowledge, infrastructure, or time needed to sustain them. This comparison reinforces the argument that policy success depends not only on the quality of the mandate, but also on the readiness and support system available to frontline implementers.

The findings are further supported by the UNESCO green school quality standard, which emphasizes that green schools should integrate sustainability into governance, resource allocation, facilities, operations, stakeholder participation, and long-term institutional commitment (UNESCO, 2014). Compared with this standard, MTsN 3 Lima Puluh Kota has begun to show ecological commitment through formal vision, teacher involvement, and selected environmental activities, but the governance and operational dimensions remain underdeveloped. The school has not yet reached the level where environmental values systematically shape budgeting, maintenance, infrastructure planning, and daily management. This comparison shows that the green madrasah agenda requires a whole-institution approach rather than a programmatic or audit-oriented approach.

The novelty of this study lies in its introduction of Eco-Islamic decoupling as a critical analytical lens to explain the separation between Islamic ecological values and actual institutional practices in green madrasah management. Previous studies have generally emphasized the importance of green school programs, environmental literacy, curriculum integration, and certification. In contrast, this study reveals the hidden institutional mechanism through which a madrasah formally accepts Islamic environmental ethics but struggles to translate them into

sustainable governance, pedagogy, infrastructure, and daily routines. The study therefore shifts the discussion from whether madrasahs support environmental values to why those values often remain symbolic under conditions of unfunded mandates, weak infrastructure, and audit-based evaluation.

The theoretical implication of this study is that green madrasah transformation should be understood as an interaction between religious values, institutional capacity, and policy architecture. Islamic ecological values are important, but they cannot produce transformation without organizational systems that support implementation. This study extends institutional theory by showing that decoupling in religious educational institutions is not merely a gap between policy and practice, but a tension between sacred moral discourse, bureaucratic performance demands, and local resource constraints. It also contributes to environmental education literature by demonstrating that ecological learning in madrasahs must move beyond curriculum insertion toward institutionalized ecological governance.

The practical implication of this study is that policymakers should redesign green madrasah policy from a uniform, audit-driven model into a localized, capacity-based, and resource-backed transformation framework. Each madrasah should be evaluated based on its SWOT profile before being required to meet specific green indicators. Schools with limited infrastructure should receive financial and technical assistance before being assessed against advanced environmental standards. Teacher training should also be continuous, practice-oriented, and interdisciplinary so that Islamic values, environmental science, and school management can be integrated more effectively. Without these changes, green madrasah policy will continue to produce visible compliance but limited ecological transformation.

The managerial implication for madrasah leaders is that green transformation should be embedded into school governance rather than treated as an additional program. Environmental values need to be connected with budgeting, facility maintenance, student habituation, teacher lesson planning, waste management, and community engagement. Madrasah leaders also need to develop internal monitoring systems that focus not only on documentation, but also on consistency of practice. In this sense, the success of green madrasah implementation should be measured by the extent to which ecological values become part of institutional culture, not merely by the availability of reports, photographs, or symbolic green facilities.

The pedagogical implication is that Eco-Islamic education should move from abstract moral instruction to experiential and practice-based learning. Students should not only learn Quranic or Islamic ethical principles related to environmental responsibility, but also experience those principles through waste sorting, water conservation, school gardening, energy-saving practices, and community-based ecological projects. This is important because the credibility of Eco-Islamic education depends on the consistency between what is taught in the classroom and what is practiced in the school environment. When students observe inconsistency between religious ecological discourse and institutional behavior, environmental education risks becoming rhetorical rather than transformative.

This study has several limitations. First, it focuses on a single institution, MTsN 3 Lima Puluh Kota, so its findings cannot be statistically generalized to all green madrasahs in Indonesia. Second, the study uses a qualitative institutional approach, which allows deep contextual understanding but does not measure the quantitative relationship between policy pressure, resource capacity, and ecological outcomes. Third, the study focuses primarily on institutional actors such as leaders,

teachers, and policy-related stakeholders, while students' long-term environmental behavior is not examined in depth. Fourth, the study analyzes current institutional practices, but it does not conduct longitudinal tracking to determine whether Eco-Islamic decoupling increases, decreases, or transforms over time. Future research should therefore conduct multi-site comparative studies involving madrasahs with different resource levels, geographic contexts, leadership models, and accreditation statuses to test whether the Eco-Islamic decoupling pattern found in this study also appears in other Islamic educational institutions.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the implementation of the green madrasah agenda at MTsN 3 Lima Puluh Kota reveals a substantial strategic gap between government environmental mandates and the school's actual SWOT-based institutional capacity. The findings show that Eco-Islamic transformation is not hindered by the absence of religious-ecological values, but by the weak alignment between policy expectations, resource availability, teacher competence, infrastructure readiness, and evaluation mechanisms. The green madrasah agenda has been formally adopted through institutional documents, environmental symbols, and selected ecological activities; however, these practices remain partially decoupled from daily governance, curriculum implementation, facility maintenance, and sustained student habituation. This condition produces Eco-Islamic decoupling, in which Islamic environmental ethics are acknowledged at the normative level but are not yet fully translated into operational and managerial practices. The study contributes to green madrasah scholarship by demonstrating that symbolic compliance is often a rational institutional response to unfunded mandates and audit-oriented policy pressure, rather than a simple sign of school resistance or managerial failure. Therefore, authentic green madrasah transformation requires a shift from uniform bureaucratic control toward localized, resource-backed, and capacity-sensitive policy frameworks. Policymakers should align environmental standards with each madrasah's institutional profile, while school leaders need to integrate ecological values into budgeting, teacher development, curriculum practice, infrastructure management, and everyday school culture. Since this study is limited to a single institutional case, future research should conduct comparative and longitudinal studies across diverse madrasah contexts to examine how leadership, funding, regional support, and school culture influence the sustainability of Eco-Islamic institutional transformation.

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