



Perceptions, Practice, and Impacts of Islamic Eco-Consciousness on Environmental and Animal Protection among Yoruba Muslims in Epe, Lagos State

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Abstract

The intensifying global discourse on environmental sustainability and animal welfare has increasingly underscored the ethical obligations of religious communities, including Yoruba Muslims. Although Islamic teachings unequivocally prescribe *khilāfah* (stewardship) over the Earth and the compassionate treatment of animals, a noticeable gap persists between these theological imperatives and their practical realisation. Consequently, this study critically examined the perceptions, practices, and impacts of Yoruba Muslims in Epe, Lagos State, Nigeria, concerning environmental and animal protection within the conceptual framework of Islamic eco-consciousness. The study employed a descriptive survey design to gather data from 301 respondents drawn from ten Islamic organisations, selected through purposive and proportional random sampling techniques. A self-developed instrument, the *Muslim Perception, Practices, and Roles in Environmental and Animal Protection Questionnaire* (MPPREAP-Q), was utilised for data collection. Analytical methods comprised both descriptive statistics and inferential tests, including the Chi-Square. Findings revealed that Yoruba Muslims in Epe demonstrated a high level of understanding ($\bar{x} = 2.93$) and a strong appreciation ($\bar{x} = 2.90$) of Islamic ethical obligations related to environmental and animal protection. Respondents acknowledged the influence of socio-cultural norms, economic conditions, personal experiences, and media, while governmental influence was comparatively low ($\bar{x} = 1.70$). Challenges ($\bar{x} = 3.05$) included inadequate policy enforcement, cultural misconceptions, and limited religious advocacy. The study concluded that while Islamic eco-consciousness is present, systemic barriers necessitate integrated, faith-based, and culturally grounded interventions. The study, therefore, recommended a strategic integration of religious education, community mobilisation, and institutional support to translate Islamic ecological consciousness into sustained and meaningful environmental action.

Keywords: Animal Welfare, Cultural Influences, Environmental Protection, Islamic Eco-Consciousness, Yoruba Muslims

1. Introduction

Across various theological traditions, a shared understanding persists that the natural world is an *amānah* (sacred trust) and a divine creation, deserving of reverence, care, and responsible stewardship. This universal ethos transcends religious boundaries, underscoring the intrinsic sanctity of the environment and the myriad creatures that inhabit it. Within Islam, this spiritual mandate is embedded in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah, which consistently advocate for *mīzān* (ecological balance), *i’tidāl* (moderation in consumption), and humane treatment of animals. The conceptual framework of Islamic environmental ethics is underpinned by four foundational principles: *Tawhīd* (divine unity), *Khilāfah* (stewardship), *Mīzān* (balance), and *Maṣlahah* (public welfare), each of which shapes Muslim attitudes and practices towards environmental and animal protection (Abd Rahman & Jalil, 2021;

Khalid, 2002; Hasan, 2022).

The ecological imperative in Islam is further reinforced by Qur’ānic injunctions such as: “*Eat and drink, but do not be excessive. Indeed, He does not like those who commit excess*” (Qur’ān 7:31). This verse, among many others, accentuates the moral and spiritual obligation to uphold sustainability, eschew *isrāf* (wastefulness), and preserve the natural order. The Prophet Muḥammad (SAAS) also exhorted compassion towards animals and the environment, famously stating: “*Whoever is kind to the creatures of God is kind to himself*” (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ḥadīth No. 6009). These ethical teachings are not merely theoretical; they are intended to manifest in the daily lives of Muslims as expressions of obedience to the will of Allāh.

Despite these profound teachings, the present environmental crisis, marked by biodiversity loss, climate change, deforestation, and ecosystem degradation, has intensified due to rampant materialism and anthropogenic pressures (Rocha et al., 2018; Voulvoulis & Burgman, 2019). As global discourse increasingly acknowledges the urgency of sustainable

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living, scholars have turned to religious worldviews as sources of environmental wisdom and motivation for behavioural change (Tlili, 2016, 2017, 2018). Within this context, Islamic eco-consciousness refers to the integration of divinely inspired principles in managing one's relationship with the environment and all non-human creatures.

However, while the literature on Islamic environmental ethics is growing, most studies have concentrated on Arab, Asian, and European Muslim communities, with limited empirical engagement with African contexts. In particular, the Yoruba Muslim communities of southwestern Nigeria remain under-represented in academic discourse, despite their notable adherence to Islamic teachings and their rich cultural heritage that fosters a close connection with nature. The town of Epe, in Lagos State, serves as a valuable microcosm of this intersection, being home to a significant Muslim population that coexists with a vibrant and ecologically rich environment.

This study addresses this scholarly lacuna by exploring how Islamic environmental ethics, grounded in the principles of *Tawhīd*, *Khilāfah*, *Mīzān*, and *Maṣlahah*, are interpreted and practised among Yoruba Muslims in Epe. It investigates the interplay between religious belief, cultural values, and environmental responsibility, focusing particularly on the protection of the natural environment and the ethical treatment of animals. It also interrogates the extent to which theological imperatives translate into environmentally conscious behaviours and community practices.

2. Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was to assess the perception and practice of the protection of the environment and animals among Yoruba Muslims in Epe, Lagos State, Nigeria. Other objectives were to:

- i. Investigate the level of Islamic eco-consciousness among Yoruba Muslims in Epe;
- ii. Examine the perceptions of Yoruba Muslims in Epe towards environmental and animal protection;
- iii. Explore the factors influencing Yoruba Muslims' perceptions towards environmental and animal protection;
- iv. Analyse the challenges in upholding environmental and animal protection; and
- v. Propose practical recommendations for improving the perception and practice of environmental and animal protection among Yoruba Muslims in Epe.

3. Methodology of the Study

The study employed a descriptive survey design to examine the perceptions, practices, and impacts of Yoruba Muslims in Epe, Lagos State, Nigeria, on environmental and animal protection. The descriptive approach was considered appropriate for capturing detailed insights into existing attitudes and behaviours

within a naturalistic setting, without manipulating any variables. The target population consisted of 1,203 Muslim members drawn from ten Islamic organisations in Epe. A sample size of 301 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamane formula. A two-stage sampling technique was adopted: purposive sampling was initially used to select three executive members from each organisation, followed by proportional random sampling to select additional members based on each group's relative population size. This ensured that the sample was adequately representative and that the data collected were both robust and reliable.

Data were collected using a researcher-designed instrument titled the *Muslim Perception, Practices and Roles of Environmental and Animal Protection Questionnaire* (MPPREAP-Q). The instrument comprised two sections: Section A addressed demographic variables, while Section B was subdivided into five thematic parts focusing on knowledge, perceived importance, influencing factors, challenges, and recommendations regarding environmental and animal protection. The instrument's face validity was established through expert reviews of three senior lecturers in Islamic Studies at Tai Solarin Federal University of Education, while its reliability was confirmed via a pilot test conducted among Muslims in Ikorodu, Lagos State, with Cronbach's Alpha used to assess internal consistency. Ethical clearance was secured, and formal permissions were obtained from relevant authorities within each organisation. Data collection was carried out over two weeks with the assistance of trained research aides. Descriptive and inferential statistical tools, including frequency counts, percentages, mean scores, and chi-square tests, were employed in the analysis using SPSS version 23, providing both numerical accuracy and interpretive depth.

4. Review of Related Literature

4.1 Concept of Islamic Eco-Consciousness

Islamic teachings contain comprehensive guidelines that uphold the sanctity of life and the preservation of the environment. These guidelines form the basis of Islamic eco-consciousness, which is essential to human well-being and addresses both moral and ecological balance. Islam, recognised as a complete way of life, acknowledges the rights and responsibilities of humans toward the natural world. It offers a system of accountability and reward, both in this world and in the Hereafter, as motivation for ethical and sustainable living. The Qur'an states in Sūrah al-Raḥmān (55), verses 10 to 13:

كَمَامُوا الْأَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْأَوَّارِ
وَالْحَبُّ ذُو الْعَصْفِ وَالرَّيْحَانُ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

Translation:

And the earth, He has set it for living creatures. Therein is fruit and date palms having sheathed clusters. And the grain with

its husk and sweet-scented herbs. So, which of the favours of your Lord will you both deny? (Qur'an 55:10-13)

These verses highlight the divine trust placed upon humans to act as stewards of the Earth, affirming that the natural environment is a blessing to be preserved and respected. They underscore the importance of thoughtful interaction with nature, grounded in gratitude, responsibility, and restraint.

The Prophet Muḥammad (SAAS) also exemplified this eco-conscious responsibility. An authentic narration found in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī states:

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ
مَا مِنْ مُسْلِمٍ يَغْرِسُ غَرْسًا، أَوْ يَزْرَعُ زَرْعًا، « قَالَ:
فَيَأْكُلُ مِنْهُ طَيْرٌ أَوْ إِنْسَانٌ أَوْ بَهِيمَةٌ، إِلَّا كَانَ لَهُ بِهِ
صَدَقَةٌ»

Translation:

Anas ibn Mālik (may Allāh be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (SAAS) said: "If a Muslim plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, a person, or an animal eats from it, it is counted as a charitable act for him." (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 2320)

The implication of this narration extends to all acts of sustaining the environment. Even simple practices, such as planting a tree or caring for animals, become virtuous when done with the right intention. These actions reflect the Islamic principle of stewardship and reinforce the notion that eco-conscious behaviour is a form of worship and charity.

Al-Qaraḍāwī, in his book *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*, explained the ethical obligations embedded in Islamic dietary and environmental laws. He noted that while the consumption of animals is permitted in Islamic jurisprudence, it must be done ethically and compassionately. Animals are to be slaughtered using a sharp instrument and in a swift manner, minimising pain. Intentions must be rooted in necessity, such as hunger, and never in cruelty or pride. According to Al-Qaraḍāwī, Islamic ethics also include the protection of animals from disease and harm, as neglecting animal welfare can lead to the misuse of resources and disrupt the balance ordained by Allāh. Wastefulness and negligence in managing animals, plants, and other resources contradict Islamic principles of responsibility and harmony with nature.

Rush and Ahmad (2018) viewed eco-consciousness as a pathway toward environmental protection and harm reduction, describing it as a manifestation of sustainable or "green" practices embedded in everyday life. In the same vein, Abdul-Matin (2010) emphasised that Muslims, who constituted 1.4 billion people in 2010 and are projected to number 2.8 billion by 2050, are religiously bound by their submission to Allāh and His

Messenger. This submission entails the protection of all that has been made available to humanity on Earth. It requires maintaining balance and engaging in actions that ensure sustainability. Yet, despite these divine directives, humans often fail to show gratitude for the blessings entrusted to them.

4.2 Concept of Environmental Protection in Islam

The primary aim of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), set forth by the United Nations in 2015, is already embedded in Islam and was practised by Prophet Muḥammad (SAAS) centuries ago. Islam provides perspectives on contemporary environmental challenges such as the depletion of natural resources, pollution, and poverty. These challenges can be addressed through Islamic ethical principles and practical conduct towards the environment. The Prophetic traditions and teachings deal extensively with environmental matters, such as the preservation of natural resources, the reclamation of land, and the maintenance of cleanliness in the environment. Sustainable behaviour is promoted in Islam through criticism of overconsumption, as Prophet Muḥammad (SAAS) forbade extravagance in consumption or indulgence in luxury. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr narrated that:

The Messenger of Allah passed by Sa'd when he was performing ablution, and he said: 'What is this extravagance?' He said: 'Can there be any extravagance in ablution?' He said: 'Yes, even if you are on the bank of a flowing river.' (Sunan Ibn Mājah, Ḥadīth 159)

In another narration by Ibn 'Umar, the Prophet (SAAS) said: "Do not be extravagant, do not be extravagant (in using water)." (Sunan Ibn Mājah, Ḥadīth 158). These *aḥādīth* imply that Muslims are taught to be mindful of unethical or excessive practices even when performing acts of worship. Hence, environmental protection can be regarded as a form of submission to the will of Allah.

The Qur'ān also contains several injunctions that support environmental protection. Consider the following verses:

أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا وَٰلِي مَدْيَنَ
لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ ۖ فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَأَوْفُوا
الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا
هَٰذَا ذِكْرُكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ تَقْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِ
إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

Translation:

And to Madyan (We sent) their brother Shu'ayb. He said: O my people! Worship Allah, you have no deity other than Him. A clear proof has come to you from your Lord, so give full measure and weight and do not deprive people of their due, and do not cause corruption on the earth after it has been set in

order. That is better for you if you are believers. (Qur'an 7:85)

وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِنْ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفُسَادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

Translation:

But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And do not seek to cause corruption in the land. Verily, Allah does not love the corrupters. (Qur'an 28:77)

أَوَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ يَدُ اللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلُعِنُوا بِمَا قَالُوا بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ يُنفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ وَلَيزِيدَنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُنَّ مَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ رَّبِّكَ طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا وَأَلْقَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ كُلَّمَا نَارًا لِّلْحَرْبِ أَطْفَأَهَا اللَّهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

Translation:

And the Jews say, 'The hand of Allah is chained.' May their hands be shackled, and cursed are they for what they say. Rather, both His hands are extended; He spends; however, He wills. And that which has been revealed to you from your Lord will surely increase many of them in transgression and disbelief. And We have cast among them enmity and hatred until the Day of Resurrection. Every time they kindle the fire of war, Allah extinguishes it. And they strive throughout the land to cause corruption, and Allah does not love the corrupters. (Qur'an 5:64)

These verses establish that Muslims are obligated to respect, care for, and preserve the environment. The mismanagement or destruction of natural resources can be regarded as an act of disobedience to Allah.

Various scholars support the perspective of environmental protection in Islam. Abdul Matin (2010) argued that Islam encourages environmental stewardship through its laws and principles. Islamic teachings outline clear responsibilities, including care for oneself, one's neighbours, and the resources within society. He further stated that Muslims are expected to be advocates of a better environment and a better planet. These actions are commonly referred to as green practices or behaviours. Even while promoting economic development, it is essential to safeguard the environment for a sustainable future. Islam forbids unethical and excessive exploitation, including during times of war.

Prophet Muhammad (SAAS), despite his religious obligations, was reported in many traditions, including *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, *al-Muwatta'*, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, and *al-Tirmidhī*, to have instructed his companions before battle with the following ethical rules:

Do not kill a woman, or a child or an old man; do not burn palms or crops; do not destroy inhabited areas; do not slaughter any of the enemies' sheep, cow or camel except for food; do not burn date palms, nor inundate them; and do not embezzle nor be guilty of cowardice. (Bsoul et al., 2022)

These regulations imply that Islam wholly condemns the destruction of Allah's creation, whether human, animal, or plant life, during conflict or otherwise.

Bsoul (2022) explained that actions such as excessive environmental exploitation, industrial pollution, ecosystem destruction, and the reckless mismanagement of natural resources are detested by Allah. Hasan (2022) also examined Islamic perspectives on environmental challenges and emphasised the significance of Islamic environmental teachings in addressing such issues. Matters such as resource depletion, pollution, and poverty could be effectively mitigated through this approach.

Bakloo (2018) posited that the SDGs, especially those relating to environmental sustainability, are rooted in Islamic eco-consciousness and teachings on environmental protection. He highlighted sanitation and afforestation as core indicators of environmental sustainability. Bakloo (2018) also pointed to the particular emphasis Islam places on preventing deforestation even during wartime, showcasing Islam's long-standing commitment to the protection and conservation of the environment.

4.3 Animal Protection in Islam

In the light of the Qur'an, animals are classified into various categories, including reptiles, insects, birds, and humankind. Surah al-Nūr, verse 45, offers a vivid description of the different kinds of animals in each category:

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَابَّةٍ مِّن مَّاءٍ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَمْشِي عَلَى بَطْنِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَمْشِي عَلَى رِجْلَيْنِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن لَّهُ مَاءٌ يَشَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

Translation:

And Allah has created every animal from water: of them are those that creep on their bellies, some that walk on two legs, and some that walk on four. Allah creates what He wills, for verily, Allah has power over all things (Qur'an 24:45).

Table 1: Demographic Information

Demographic Information	Frequency	Percentage
Age	-	-
18-25 years	45	15.0%
26-35 years	78	25.9%
36-45 years	56	18.6%
46-55 years	34	11.3%
56 and above	88	29.2%
Total	301	100.0%
Gender	-	-
Male	150	49.8%
Female	151	50.2%
Total	301	100.0%
Position within the organization	-	-
Leadership/Management	92	30.6%
Clergy/Religious Leader	45	15.0%
Administrative/Support Staff	64	21.3%
Member/Participant	100	33.2%
Total	301	100.0%
Formal educational level	-	-
High School Diploma	40	13.3%
Bachelor's Degree	90	29.9%
Master's Degree	75	24.9%
Doctoral Degree	32	10.6%
Other (Specify):	64	21.3%
Total	301	100.0%
Islamic educational level	-	-
Basic Islamic Education	56	18.6%
Intermediate Islamic Education	78	25.9%
Advanced Islamic Education	45	15.0%
None	122	40.5%
Total	301	100.0%

The Prophet's traditions also address ethical practices towards animals and highlight the spiritual benefits of such deeds. Al-Sharīd (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah (SAAS) say: "If someone kills a sparrow in futility, it will cry out to Allah Most High on the Day of Judgement

saying, 'O Lord! So-and-so killed me in vain, and did not kill me for any useful purpose'" (Sunan al-Nasā'ī 4446; Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān 5894; Musnad Aḥmad, 4/489).

The implication of this prophetic teaching reflects the rights and responsibilities that Allah has granted to all

creatures, along with the commensurate rewards or punishments awaiting those who act in obedience or disobedience. The main lesson from this *ḥadīth* is the affirmation of the reality of the Day of Reckoning, where all of Allah's creatures are afforded equal privileges by their Creator. Hasan (2022) describes the Prophet as an advocate for the protection of both living and non-living things, encouraging his followers to ensure the safety and preservation of everything placed in their care by Allah. Unnecessary killing, particularly in the context of hunting, is strongly discouraged.

Waheed et al. (2021) noted that cases involving waste and unlawful food consumption should not be misunderstood. If an animal dies due to plague, poisoning, or communicable disease, its meat becomes unlawful, and discarding such meat should not be considered a wasteful practice. This is why veterinary care is encouraged, and endangered species should be relocated to natural reserves as a protective measure (Muh. Said et al., 2023). Jawad (2025) argued that animals deserve protection because they are emotional and intelligent, similar to human beings. He maintained that, aside from Islamic law, other legal frameworks are generally less effective in safeguarding animal life.

A comparative study on *Animal Protection Theory in U.S. and Islamic Law* found that American anti-cruelty statutes align favourably with animal protection regulations contained in the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. For instance, acts such as overriding, torturing, mutilating, using animals for fighting, and abandoning sick animals to die are criminal offences in most U.S. states (Abdelkader, 2015). Overall, existing literature has shown that various factors influence and promote animal protection from the standpoint of Islamic eco-consciousness. However, there remains a significant gap in the literature from local African perspectives, despite the presence of cultural elements that could offer valuable insights into assumptions drawn from earlier research.

5. Results

The data reflect a diverse age distribution within the surveyed population of 301 individuals. The age group 26 to 35 years constitutes the largest segment, with 78 respondents representing 25.9% of the total sample. This is followed closely by the age group of 56 years and above, comprising 88 individuals, which accounts for 29.2%. The younger demographic, aged 18 to 25 years, makes up 15.0% of the respondents, while the age brackets 36 to 45 years and 46 to 55 years contribute 18.6% and 11.3%, respectively.

In terms of gender representation, the sample is almost evenly distributed between male and female respondents. A total of 150 males account for 49.8%, while 151 females constitute 50.2% of the sample. An examination of the organisational roles of participants reveals a broad spectrum of positions. Leadership and management roles are held by 92 respondents, representing 30.6% of the sample. Clergy or religious

leaders constitute 15.0%, while administrative and support staff make up 21.3%. The largest group, comprising 33.2%, are general members or participants within the Islamic organisations surveyed.

The educational backgrounds of respondents vary significantly. Ninety individuals, or 29.9%, hold a bachelor's degree, while 75 respondents (24.9%) possess a master's degree. Those with a high school diploma represent 13.3%, and 10.6% have obtained a doctoral degree. An additional 64 respondents, or 21.3%, fall under the category of 'Other', indicating a variety of alternative educational pathways.

With regard to Islamic education, respondents demonstrate a range of levels. Basic Islamic education is reported by 18.6% of participants, intermediate by 25.9%, and advanced by 15.0%. A notable 40.5% indicate that they have not received any formal Islamic education. These findings offer a nuanced understanding of the demographic, educational, and religious composition of the surveyed population.

Objective One: Level of Islamic Eco-consciousness among Yoruba Muslims in Epe

The Chi-square goodness-of-fit test (Table 2) was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 239.771$, $df = 3$, $p < .001$), indicating that respondents' responses were not evenly distributed across the response categories. The majority of respondents selected *Agree* and *Strongly Agree*, suggesting a high level of knowledge regarding environmental and animal protection.

Objective Two: Perceptions of Yoruba Muslims in Epe towards Environmental and Animal Protection

The Chi-square goodness-of-fit test presented in Table 3 yielded a statistically significant result ($\chi^2 = 50.159$, $df = 3$, $p < .001$), indicating that the distribution of respondents' responses regarding the perceived importance of environmental and animal protection differed significantly from what would be expected under an equal distribution of responses. The observed frequencies show that a substantial majority of respondents selected either *Agree* (148 respondents) or *Strongly Agree* (105 respondents), while only 48 respondents selected *Disagree*. The positive residuals for the *Agree* and *Strongly Agree* categories indicate that these responses occurred more frequently than expected, whereas the negative residual for the *Disagree* category suggests that fewer respondents than expected expressed disagreement. This finding demonstrates that Yoruba Muslims in Epe generally perceive environmental and animal protection as important responsibilities. The result further suggests a favourable perception of environmental stewardship and animal welfare among the respondents, which is consistent with Islamic ethical teachings that emphasise the protection of the environment and the humane treatment of animals.

Table 2: Chi-Square Result on Knowledge of Environment and Animals' Protection among Yoruba Muslims

				Chi-Square	Df	Asymp. Sig.
	Observed N	Expected N	Residual			
SD	3	75.3	-72.2			
D	30	75.3	-45.2			
A	90	75.3	14.8	239.771	3	.000
SA	178	75.3	102.8			
Total	301					

Table 3: Chi-square Result of Perceived Importance of the Protection of the Environment and Animals among Yoruba Muslims

				Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.
	Observed N	Expected N	Residual			
D	48	100.3	-52.3			
A	148	100.3	47.7	50.159	3	.000
SA	105	100.3	4.7			
Total	301					

Table 4: Chi-Square Result of Factors Influencing Perceptions of Protection of the Environment and Animals among Yoruba Muslims

				Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.
	Observed N	Expected N	Residual			
SD	18	75.3	-57.2			
D	31	75.3	-44.2			
A	105	75.3	29.8	149.751	3	.000
SA	147	75.3	71.8			
Total	301					

Table 5: Chi-Square Result Challenges in Upholding Environmental and Animal Protection among Yoruba Muslims

				Chi-Square	Df	Asymp. Sig.
	Observed N	Expected N	Residual			
SD	18	75.3	-57.2			
D	91	75.3	15.8	127.425	3	.000
A	45	75.3	-30.2			
SA	147	75.3	71.8			
Total	301					

Objective Three: Factors Influencing Perceptions of Protection of the Environment and Animals

The Chi-square goodness-of-fit test presented in Table 4 yielded a statistically significant result ($\chi^2 = 149.751$, $df = 3$, $p < .001$), indicating that the distribution of respondents' responses regarding the factors influencing perceptions of environmental and animal protection differed significantly from what would be expected under an equal distribution of responses. The observed frequencies reveal that the majority of respondents selected *Agree* (105 respondents) and *Strongly Agree* (147 respondents), whereas comparatively few respondents selected *Disagree* (31 respondents) or *Strongly Disagree* (18 respondents). The positive residuals for the *Agree* and *Strongly Agree* categories indicate that these responses occurred more frequently than expected, while the negative residuals for the *Disagree* and *Strongly Disagree* categories show that fewer respondents than expected expressed disagreement. This finding suggests that respondents generally acknowledge the existence and influence of various factors shaping perceptions of environmental and animal protection. The result implies that social, cultural, economic, educational, religious, and media-related influences play significant roles in shaping how Yoruba Muslims in Epe perceive environmental stewardship and animal welfare. Consequently, the perceptions of respondents towards environmental and animal protection are not arbitrary but are influenced by identifiable factors within their social and religious environment.

Objective Four: Challenges in Upholding Environmental and Animal Protection

The Chi-square goodness-of-fit test presented in Table 5 yielded a statistically significant result ($\chi^2 = 127.425$, $df = 3$, $p < .001$), indicating that the distribution of respondents' responses concerning the challenges in upholding environmental and animal protection differed significantly from what would be expected under an equal distribution of responses. The observed frequencies show that the largest proportion of respondents selected *Strongly Agree* (147 respondents), followed by *Disagree* (91 respondents), while fewer respondents selected *Agree* (45 respondents) and *Strongly Disagree* (18 respondents). The positive residuals for the *Strongly Agree* and *Disagree* categories indicate that these responses occurred more frequently than expected, whereas the negative residuals for the *Agree* and *Strongly Disagree* categories suggest that fewer respondents than expected selected these options. The predominance of responses in the *Strongly Agree* category suggests that many respondents recognise the existence of substantial challenges hindering effective environmental and animal protection within their communities. These challenges may include inadequate policy implementation, insufficient environmental awareness, cultural misconceptions, limited institutional support, and weak advocacy efforts. Overall, the finding

demonstrates that challenges to environmental and animal protection are widely acknowledged among Yoruba Muslims in Epe and constitute important obstacles to the practical implementation of Islamic ecological and animal welfare principles.

6. Discussion of Findings

The grand average mean of 2.93 for the knowledge assessment indicates a commendably high level of understanding among Yoruba Muslims in Epe regarding the protection of the environment and animals. This positive result underscores the community's strong awareness of ethical, religious, and environmental aspects, providing a solid foundation for potential initiatives and awareness campaigns. The correlation between individuals' knowledge levels and their understanding of ethical and religious principles surrounding environmental and animal protection within Islamic beliefs aligns with existing research. This finding corresponds with the research on Islamic eco-consciousness and animal protection by Hasan (2022).

It also aligns with the work of Rusli and Ahmad (2018), which explores the evolution of Islamic animal ethics and their application in demonstrating the moral superiority of Islamic teachings regarding the treatment of animals. These studies contribute significantly to the understanding of the cultural and religious contexts shaping the community's perception of animal protection.

Addressing the rising public concern for animal protection and welfare in the production and logistics chain, particularly regarding farm animals, Waheed et al (2021) emphasised the importance of understanding the variables affecting animal well-being and their impact on the quality and reputation of slaughter animals. This concurs with the findings of Barstow (2017), who examined animal welfare in the livestock industry and underscored the importance of humane treatment throughout the production process to ensure both welfare and product quality.

The findings of this study reveal a high level of understanding among Yoruba Muslims in Epe concerning environmental and animal protection, and they align with existing literature. This further emphasises the need for comprehensive investigations into Islamic teachings on animal ethics. The community's awareness, combined with the growing global concern for animal welfare, suggests a positive receptivity to initiatives promoting ethical treatment and protection for animals within this specific cultural and religious context.

The grand average mean for the perceived importance of environmental and animal protection is 2.9. This suggests a balanced and moderately high level of importance attributed to these issues within the Muslim community in Epe, providing a valuable foundation for

further understanding and engagement. This finding is consistent with the study by Abdelkader (2015), which highlights the need to account for aspects of animal welfare in the production chain, including environmental factors, behaviour, and physiological responses to stress in animals.

The current study's results suggest that the extent of agreement among individuals is closely linked to their collective perception of the significance of environmental and animal protection within Islamic beliefs and values in Epe. This aligns with Hasan (2022), who examined physiological and behavioural components of animal welfare and the impact of stress in production systems. These studies collectively reinforce the importance of comprehensive knowledge of animal welfare for the development of effective mitigation strategies.

Jawad (2025), in her evaluation of Islamic animal ethics, also emphasises the ethical treatment of animals within religious and production contexts and advocates for further research to address both challenges and opportunities. These findings imply that the Muslim community in Epe shows openness to further understanding and engagement with issues related to environmental and animal protection. This presents a valuable opportunity for educational campaigns and initiatives that promote sustainable practices and reinforce animal welfare within the community.

Community norms and values appear as having the strongest influence on perception, followed by economic factors, cultural beliefs, personal experiences, and media. Religious teachings, government policies, and education play comparatively lesser roles in shaping the perspectives of Muslims in Epe on environmental and animal protection. This finding corresponds with the work of Abdelkader (2015), who conducted an extensive review of public opinion regarding animal welfare. The study found that societal influences, personal experiences, and community values significantly shaped perceptions. The need for tailored communication strategies to effectively reach various audiences was also emphasised. Ali and Agushi (2024) further corroborated this by identifying sociocultural factors, personal beliefs, and lived experiences as central to public views on animal protection.

The stronger influence of community norms and values on Muslim perceptions in Epe is also significant, as reported by Ghali Zinoubi (2022). It suggests that awareness campaigns should be adapted to reflect the cultural and religious realities of the local context. Religious leaders and community elders are particularly instrumental in this process, as also noted by Bsoul et al (2022).

The importance of economic factors in shaping views further suggests that initiatives must be economically feasible and responsive to community needs. Bsoul et al, (2022), advocate for integrating sustainable livelihoods

and job creation into environmental and animal protection initiatives. These findings indicate that community norms and values, economic conditions, and religious beliefs are integral to how Muslims view environmental and animal protection. This aligns with earlier works such as Aman et al (2012, which stress the importance of cultural context in promoting environmental ethics in Islam.

A nuanced understanding of these elements is essential for crafting effective educational and outreach initiatives. The role of religious leaders, as well as communication strategies tailored to different demographic segments, cannot be overemphasised. Mukhtar and Todd (2023) reiterate that integrating economic and cultural considerations is critical for sustainable programme implementation.

This study finds that community norms, economic pressures, and religious considerations play critical roles in influencing how Muslims engage with environmental and animal protection, consistent with prior studies such as Islam and Islam (2015). The grand average mean of 3.05 for perceived challenges signifies that these obstacles are not only present but widely acknowledged. This confirms the need for a multi-pronged strategy incorporating education, cultural sensitivity, community participation, and strengthened institutional support as noted in Santos (2012) and Mohamed (2014).

Education emerges as a primary mechanism for addressing these challenges. Islamic teachings related to stewardship of the earth and the ethical treatment of animals must be clearly communicated. Islam and Islam (2015) emphasise the need for context-specific educational content that promotes both knowledge and behavioural change. Cultural awareness is also essential. Efforts must respect local customs while gently challenging misconceptions that may hinder progress. Islam and Chandrasekaran (2016) and Ali and Bahtera (2024) highlight the effectiveness of culturally responsive programming in promoting ethical environmental behaviour.

Community engagement is another cornerstone. Ghali Zinoubi (2022) suggests involving local leaders in both the design and implementation of intervention programmes. Ariswibowo and Ghazali (2017), along with Voulvoulis and Burgman (2019), argue that community-led initiatives often lead to better outcomes because they are grounded in local realities. Strengthening support systems is also vital. This includes financial support, technical training, and peer networks. Mukhtar and Todd (2023) underscore the benefits of collective learning and sharing best practices within such networks.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study critically explored the perceptions, practices, and impacts of Yoruba Muslims in Epe, Lagos State,

on environmental and animal protection within the framework of Islamic ethical teachings. Employing a descriptive survey design and drawing on responses from 301 participants across ten Islamic organisations, the research revealed a commendable level of awareness and knowledge, with a grand mean of 2.93 on knowledge-based items. Respondents demonstrated a strong moral valuation of environmental and animal welfare, shaped by religious obligations and ethical principles derived from the Qur'ān and Sunnah. The analysis identified significant socio-cultural, religious, and economic factors influencing these perceptions and practices, with community norms and Islamic teachings playing pivotal roles. However, various challenges, including inadequate educational outreach, economic limitations, and weak enforcement of environmental policies, were found to hinder the consistent implementation of faith-driven ecological behaviours. Chi-square analysis further established significant associations among the key variables, highlighting the interconnected nature of knowledge, perception, and behavioural disposition.

The findings underscore the potential of Islamic ecological ethics, rooted in concepts such as *tawhīd* (divine unity), *khilāfah* (trusteeship), *mīzān* (balance), and *maṣlahah* (public interest), as transformative tools for promoting sustainability within Muslim communities. While the Yoruba Muslims in Epe exhibit a deep-seated ethical commitment to environmental and animal protection, the realisation of these values in practice is moderated by socio-economic constraints and structural limitations. Nonetheless, the respondents' readiness to embrace community-led initiatives, policy interventions, and religious advocacy offers a promising avenue for impactful change. Thus, the study concludes that effective environmental and animal protection in this context requires a holistic, culturally embedded, and theologically grounded approach. The study recommends a strategic integration of religious education, community mobilisation, and institutional support to translate Islamic ecological consciousness into sustained and meaningful environmental action.

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