



From Islamisation to Sustainability: Integrating Islamic Ethics into Scientific Approaches to Sustainable Development

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Abstract

In an era of unprecedented scientific and technological progress, development is too often measured by material advancement alone. Yet such approaches fall short in tackling the moral, social, and environmental crises that define our time. This research argues that integrating Islamic ethics into scientific models can generate a more holistic and sustainable vision of development. Islamisation, through relevantisation, integration, and harmonisation, offers a framework that balances scientific achievement with spiritual and moral imperatives. The study underscores the relevance of Qur'anic and Prophetic values, including justice (*'adl*), equity (*qist*), integrity (*amanah*), moderation (*wasatiyyah*), excellence (*ihsan*), cooperation (*ta'āwun*), reform (*iṣlāḥ*), and stewardship (*khilafah*), in examining governance, economic systems, and environmental responsibility issues. Employing content analysis of Qur'anic exegesis, Hadith, and contemporary Islamic scholarship, the research extracts principles that directly address the shortcomings of secular paradigms by embedding accountability, fairness, inclusivity, and ecological balance in development processes. Findings demonstrate that the integration of Qur'anic ethics with scientific approaches produces a comprehensive, morally grounded model that upholds human dignity, ensures justice, and promotes long-term social and environmental stability. Policymakers, practitioners, and educators are urged to embed Islamic ethical values into governance, economics, and environmental strategies for truly sustainable progress.

Keywords: *Islamic Ethics, Sustainable Development, Justice and Equity, Integrity and Trustworthiness, Moderation and Excellence, Cooperation, Stewardship*

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1. Introduction

In recent decades, sustainable development has become a central global agenda, promoted as a strategy to address poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation (Carpentier and Braun, 2020). Rooted in modern scientific and policy frameworks, sustainability seeks to balance economic growth with social welfare and ecological preservation. Yet, the discourse is often dominated by secular paradigms that prioritise material progress, technical solutions, and measurable outcomes (Jaiyeoba et al., 2024). While such approaches have generated important strategies for global development, they remain incomplete without addressing the ethical, spiritual, and moral dimensions of human life. In its truest sense, development must encompass not only the physical needs of society but also its moral compass, guiding principles, and accountability to higher values (Grasso and Tàbara, 2019).

While the modern approach to sustainable development has recorded notable progress in areas such as poverty reduction, healthcare, education, and technological innovation (Islam, 2025), it continues to face contradictions that limit its effectiveness. Menton et al. (2020) note that frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals often prioritise GDP growth and technical efficiency, even when this comes at the expense of social justice and environmental sustainability. Menton et al. (2020) emphasise the contradictions between economic expansion (SDG 8) and commitments to climate action, biodiversity, and conservation (SDGs 13, 14, and 15), revealing the shortcomings of development models that remain rooted in neoliberal capitalist systems. These contradictions illustrate how sustainability, especially when detached from a strong ethical foundation, risks perpetuating inequality, fostering unchecked consumption, and accelerating ecological degradation (Menton et al., 2020). This research responds to such limitations by proposing Islamisation as a framework that integrates Islamic ethical values into scientific approaches to development, ensuring that material progress is balanced with moral accountability and long-term sustainability.

It is in this context that Qur'anic ethics and Prophetic guidance offer profound relevance. The Islamic worldview embeds justice (*'adl*), equity (*qist*), integrity (*amanah*), trustworthiness (*amīn*), moderation (*wasatiyyah*), excellence (*ihsan*), cooperation (*ta'āwun*), reform (*iṣlāḥ*), and stewardship (*khilafah*) as essential principles of individual and collective life. These values provide a moral framework that directly addresses the gaps left by secular models, offering guidance on governance, economy, and environmental care (Jaiyeoba et al., 2024). By framing development as both a material and spiritual responsibility, Islamic ethics ensure that progress upholds human dignity, prevents exploitation, and preserves balance within creation (Chapra, 2008). Such principles are not merely religious ideals but practical guidelines for achieving justice, accountability, and sustainability in contemporary societies (Bhat and Nabi, 2024).

Unlike many existing studies that examine sustainable development from an Islamic perspective (Benamraoui, 2021; Bsoul et al., 2022; Kalkavan et al., 2021), this research deliberately integrates Qur'anic and Prophetic ethics into modern scientific approaches through the processes of relevantisation, integration, and harmonisation. By doing so, it moves beyond abstract discussions of values and provides a structured, methodological basis for aligning Islamic ethical principles, such as justice, integrity, moderation, cooperation, and stewardship (Wani and Azhar, 2025), with contemporary governance, economic policy, and environmental responsibility (Hariram et al., 2023). This dual focus on both ethical foundations and practical development challenges makes the study distinctive, offering not only theoretical insights but also actionable pathways for rethinking sustainability in light of Islamic teachings.

Meanwhile, the significance of this research lies in its ability to bridge the gap between ethical tradition and modern development discourse. For Muslim-majority societies, it provides a structured framework for rethinking policies and strategies in ways that remain faithful to Islamic teachings while directly addressing contemporary challenges of governance, economy, and the environment. For the wider global context, it demonstrates that faith traditions are not obstacles to progress but vital resources that can enrich and humanise the sustainability agenda. By integrating Islamic ethical values, drawn from the Qur'an and Sunnah, into scientific approaches, this study advances a model of development that is not only materially effective, but also morally accountable and socially just. In addition, this research will contribute to academic scholarship by offering a distinctive paradigm of Islamisation to sustainability, while at the same time providing practical insights for policymakers, educators, and development practitioners seeking holistic alternatives to purely secular frameworks.

2. Literature Review

Islamisation of Knowledge and Sustainable Development

The Islamisation of Knowledge has emerged as a response to the intellectual and developmental crises faced by Muslim societies in the modern era (Khan and Donni, 2024). Conventional models of education and development, heavily influenced by Western secular paradigms, often marginalised or excluded religious and ethical dimensions (Campbell, 2012). This created a dichotomy between revealed knowledge (naqli) and modern scientific knowledge ('aqli), leaving many Muslim societies dependent on external models of progress that did not reflect their spiritual or cultural values. Scholars, such as Ismail al-Faruqi and Syed Naquib al-Attas, spearheaded the Islamisation movement to bridge this divide, arguing that scientific progress should not be rejected, but rather critically evaluated and restructured through the guidance of the Qur'an and Sunnah (Ali et al., 2025; Musa, 2021). This intellectual project sought to ensure that development in Muslim societies was not only materially advanced but also morally rooted and spiritually uplifting (Chapra, 2008).

The first process in the Islamisation methodology is relevantisation (Hashim et al., 2024), which involves relating contemporary issues and scientific findings to the worldview of Islam. According to Idris and Ali (2022), relevantisation represents a comprehensive approach that goes beyond a simple notion of Islamisation, as it emphasises contextualising Islamic principles within contemporary realities, while Islamisation itself remains inherently grounded in the Islamic worldview and its foundational sources. In the context of sustainable development, relevantisation means recognising the global urgency of poverty eradication, environmental protection, and equitable resource distribution while situating these issues within the Qur'anic vision of human beings as khalifah (stewards) of the Earth (Rehman, 2025). On this basis, Muslim scholars and policymakers can frame sustainability not as a secular objective but as an ethical and spiritual responsibility, particularly to ensure that development goals resonate with the values of justice, accountability, etc. as prescribed by Islamic teachings.

The second process, integration, calls for the merging of empirical scientific knowledge with revealed knowledge in order to create a comprehensive understanding of development (Hashim et al., 2024). Integration requires identifying points of convergence between Islamic values and modern sustainability frameworks while correcting any contradictions that may undermine ethical or spiritual principles. For instance, scientific models that promote environmental conservation align naturally with

the Qur'anic prohibition against corruption (*fasad*) on Earth (Jaiyeoba et al., 2024). Similarly, economic models that promote equity and fairness can be integrated with Islamic injunctions on justice (*'adl*) and trustworthiness (*amanah*) (Jaiyeoba et al., 2024). Through integration, modern scientific insights are enriched and grounded by Qur'anic guidance, leading to a holistic framework that addresses both material and moral dimensions of sustainability.

The final process, harmonisation, involves reconciling apparent tensions between secular scientific approaches and Islamic teachings, ensuring that contradictions are resolved in favour of balance and justice (Hashim et al., 2024). For example, while modern development often emphasises economic growth at all costs, the Islamic principle of moderation (*wasatiyyah*) harmonises progress with restraint, encouraging responsible use of resources without exploitation or excess (Abdullah et al., 2025). Likewise, where globalisation promotes individualism and competition, Islam harmonises these tendencies with the value of cooperation (*ta'awun*) and collective welfare. Harmonisation thus ensures that sustainable development models remain ethically balanced, scientifically sound, and spiritually coherent. Together, the processes of relevantisation, integration, and harmonisation transform the Islamisation of Knowledge into a practical methodology (Idris and Ali, 2022) for guiding development towards true sustainability.

Scientific Approaches to Development

Modern scientific approaches have become a cornerstone of global development, shaping the ways societies respond to social, economic, and environmental challenges. Rooted in research, innovation, and evidence-based policy, these approaches seek to harness knowledge and technology to improve the quality of human life. They are not merely theoretical constructs but practical frameworks that have transformed healthcare, education, governance, and resource management across diverse contexts (Biermann et al., 2022). By systematically studying problems and applying measurable solutions, scientific development models have positioned themselves as central drivers of progress in the modern world (Gebara et al., 2024). Development frameworks, such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are themselves products of scientific research and collaboration, offering a structured global response to issues like climate change, inequality, and food insecurity. This highlights the beneficial aspects of scientific approaches, particularly when they are directed towards human welfare and the preservation of natural resources.

However, the same scientific approaches that yield benefits can also generate destructive outcomes when applied without ethical restraint. The relentless pursuit of industrialisation and technological advancement has often led to environmental degradation, deforestation, and the depletion of natural resources (Menton et al., 2020). Economic models that prioritise growth over equity have contributed to widening wealth gaps, exploitation of vulnerable communities, and systemic corruption. In the social sphere, unchecked scientific and technological innovations can promote consumerism, materialism, and alienation, undermining spiritual values and community cohesion (Jaiyeoba et al., 2024). These negative consequences demonstrate that scientific development, when guided solely by profit and secular interests, risks creating harm that outweighs its benefits.

The destructive aspects of modern development also stem from the absence of a moral compass in many scientific frameworks. For instance, while financial innovations can enhance efficiency and accessibility, they may also fuel unethical practices, such as interest-based exploitation, speculative bubbles, and economic inequality (Mohamed,

2024). Similarly, advancements in biotechnology and artificial intelligence, while promising, raise serious ethical questions about human dignity, privacy, and social justice (Ali Ashfi, 2024). Without a set of guiding values to ensure accountability and fairness, science can easily become a tool of oppression rather than liberation. These examples show that development cannot be judged merely by its material output but must also be evaluated in terms of its ethical and social implications.

Therefore, the challenge lies in ensuring that scientific approaches to development are directed towards outcomes that promote justice, equity, and sustainability rather than exploitation, corruption, and imbalance (Jaiyeoba et al., 2024). To achieve this, development models must be complemented by ethical frameworks that safeguard against destructive tendencies. This is where the integration of Qur'anic ethics becomes essential, as it provides guiding principles, such as justice ('adl), moderation (wasatiyyah), and trustworthiness (amanah) to regulate the use of scientific knowledge. By embedding these values into development strategies, the beneficial aspects of science can be preserved and enhanced, while the destructive aspects can be curtailed, ensuring that development remains both sustainable and morally sound.

Qur'anic Ethics and Sustainable Development

Sustainable development seeks to balance economic growth, social justice, and environmental stewardship in a way that ensures the well-being of present and future generations (Hariram et al., 2023). However, without an ethical foundation, these goals can become narrowly defined by material progress, neglecting the deeper needs of justice, accountability, and collective responsibility. The Qur'an provides a comprehensive framework of ethics and values that are indispensable to achieving true sustainability (Muhamad et al., 2020). Principles, such as justice ('adl), equity (qist), moderation (wasatiyyah), trustworthiness (amanah), cooperation (ta'awun), and ihsan (excellence), ensure that development is not only efficient but also morally grounded and socially inclusive. These values serve as guiding lights that prevent sustainability from becoming a purely technical or economic exercise.

Justice ('adl) and equity (qist) are foundational to the Qur'anic vision of human society and directly address the imbalances that often undermine development. The Qur'an commands believers to act justly even when it is against their own interests (Qur'an 4:135), emphasising that fairness is a divine obligation rather than a human choice (Jaiyeoba et al., 2024). In the context of sustainability, justice ensures equitable distribution of resources, protection of vulnerable groups, and accountability in governance. Without justice and equity, development risks perpetuating inequality and corruption, both of which obstruct long-term stability and harmony. Thus, these values are central for ensuring that sustainable development achieves its intended purpose of universal well-being.

The principle of moderation (wasatiyyah) is equally vital in guarding against overconsumption and exploitation of resources. The Qur'an describes the Muslim community as a "justly balanced nation" (Qur'an 2:143), highlighting the importance of restraint and balance in all human affairs (Abdullah et al., 2025). In sustainability discourse, moderation translates into responsible consumption, environmental care, and economic practices that avoid extremes of wastefulness and greed. Coupled with ihsan (excellence), moderation ensures that development initiatives aim not only for adequacy but for the highest moral and social standards, promoting harmony between material needs and spiritual well-being.

Cooperation (ta'awun) is another central Qur'anic value that underpins collective responsibility in building sustainable societies. The Qur'an commands believers to cooperate in righteousness and piety (Qur'an 5:2), setting a clear framework for collaborative efforts in solving global challenges such as poverty, climate change, and inequality (Mhd Sarif et al., 2023). In the same vein, the Qur'an repeatedly condemns corruption (fasad) and warns against causing harm to the Earth (Qur'an 7:56) (Habibi et al., 2025). Together, these teachings provide both a positive call for collaboration and a clear prohibition against destructive practices. By embedding cooperation and anti-corruption ethics into development strategies, societies can ensure that sustainability is pursued in a way that is inclusive, transparent, and free from exploitation.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, through content analysis, to explore the Qur'an and Sunnah as primary sources of ethical guidance for sustainable development (Jaiyeoba et al., 2024). The aim is to demonstrate how Islamic ethics, including justice, equity, integrity, moderation, cooperation, and stewardship, can be systematically integrated into modern scientific approaches through the Islamisation framework. Given the normative and interpretive nature of the research, content analysis was employed as the most appropriate method, allowing for the systematic identification of key ethical principles within Islamic sources and their application to contemporary development challenges (Ibrahim et al., 2024).

The research design follows three interconnected processes: relevantisation, integration, and harmonisation (Hashim et al., 2024). At the first stage, a review of literature was undertaken to establish the theoretical foundation for the Islamisation of knowledge and to identify ethical gaps in modern scientific approaches to development. At the second stage, an in-depth examination of the Qur'an, Sunnah, classical tafsir, and selected contemporary Islamic scholarship was conducted to identify verses and traditions that highlight principles relevant to governance, economy, and environmental responsibility. To ensure comprehensive coverage, ethical themes, such as justice, trustworthiness, moderation, cooperation, reform, and stewardship, were used as guiding categories in identifying relevant texts.

At the third stage, the identified texts were analysed using the Islamisation framework. Relevantisation was applied to connect revealed knowledge to contemporary contexts; integration was employed to synthesise Islamic values with scientific insights; and harmonisation was used to ensure coherence between revealed guidance and modern practices. Each verse or hadith was examined in light of its historical context and moral implications, followed by an evaluation of its applicability to contemporary ethical challenges in governance, economy, and environmental sustainability. Finally, the findings from the analysis were interpreted in relation to sustainable development discourse. This process allowed the study to demonstrate how Islamic ethics not only provide spiritual and moral direction but also offer practical and actionable guidance for addressing issues such as corruption, inequality, wastefulness, and environmental degradation (Jaiyeoba et al., 2024). Thus, the methodology ensures that the outcomes of this research are both rooted in Islamic sources and relevant to the modern quest for sustainable and just development.

4. Analysis of Qur'an and Hadith as the Islamic Ethical Foundation for Sustainable Development

The ethical vision of the Qur'an and Hadith provides a comprehensive foundation for sustainable development, guiding humanity towards balance, justice, and responsibility. To understand how these scriptural sources contribute to contemporary sustainability discourse, this analysis is organised thematically around key values emphasised in the Islamic tradition. Central principles such as justice ('*adl*) and equity (*qist*), integrity (*amanah*) and trustworthiness, moderation (*wasatiyyah*) and excellence (*ihsan*), as well as cooperation (*ta'awun*) and the prohibition of corruption (*fasad*), will be examined. Each theme is supported by Qur'anic verses and Prophetic traditions, which not only articulate moral imperatives but also provide practical guidance for addressing social, economic, and environmental challenges. By structuring the analysis thematically, this study demonstrates how Islamic ethics directly align with, and in many cases surpass, the objectives of modern sustainable development frameworks.

Justice ('Adl) and Equity (Qist) as Pillars of Development

Justice ('*adl*) and equity (*qist*) are central to the Islamic worldview and serve as foundational pillars for sustainable development. Justice refers to fairness, balance, and giving every individual their due rights, while equity ensures that these rights are distributed in proportion to people's needs and circumstances (Jaiyeoba et al., 2024). Together, they establish the ethical bedrock for governance, economics, and social life, ensuring that development is not only materially progressive but also morally sound. In the context of sustainability, justice safeguards against exploitation, discrimination, and corruption, while equity promotes inclusive growth and the fair distribution of resources. Without justice and equity, development risks becoming exclusionary and oppressive, widening social disparities and undermining long-term stability. Thus, these principles are not optional virtues but divine imperatives that underpin the legitimacy of leadership and the wellbeing of societies.

Having examined the Qur'an and Hadith, it becomes evident that justice ('*adl*) and equity (*qist*) are essential ethical foundations for sustainable development. The legitimacy of leadership and governance in Islam is inseparable from their commitment to justice, which the Qur'an frames as a divine command and moral duty. Leaders and institutions are obliged to establish systems that guarantee equality before the law and fairness for all, regardless of wealth, race, gender, or social status. Any form of injustice, whether social discrimination, corruption, or economic inequality, contradicts the Qur'anic vision of justice and threatens the sustainability of society. Economically, the Qur'an promotes fairness by encouraging *zakat*, *sadaqah*, honest trade, and the prevention of wealth concentration, ensuring that resources are distributed in ways that benefit the whole community.

The Hadith further reinforce justice as a practical necessity by praising just leadership and condemning oppression in all forms. The Prophet (PBUH) described the just ruler as beloved to Allah and warned that oppressive leaders would face ruin in the Hereafter, highlighting accountability as a cornerstone of governance. Similarly, the Sunnah emphasises fairness in business, honesty in contracts, and equity in family matters such as inheritance and divorce. Together, the Qur'an and Hadith demonstrate that justice and equity are not abstract ideals but practical pillars of development, providing a framework for governance, economics, and social relations that secures balance, prevents corruption, and safeguards human dignity. Several verses of the Qur'an, together with numerous hadith that praise just leadership and condemn oppression, illustrate that

justice and equity are not only spiritual ideals but practical necessities for sustainable development in all dimensions of human life. Some of the verses of the Quran, alongside Hadith, that directly address the concept of justice are quoted as follows:

“Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allah instructs you. Indeed, Allah is ever Hearing and Seeing.” (Qur’an 4:58)

“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So follow not personal inclination, lest you not be just. And if you distort your testimony or refuse to give it, then indeed Allah is ever, with what you do, Acquainted.” (Qur’an 4:135)

“Indeed, Allah commands justice, good conduct, and giving to relatives, and He forbids immorality, bad conduct, and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.” (Qur’an 16:90)

“And establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance.” (Qur’an 55:9)

“And do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do.” (Qur’an 5:8)

The Prophet (PBUH) said: “Help your brother whether he is an oppressor or oppressed.” It was asked, “O Messenger of Allah, we help the oppressed, but how do we help the oppressor?” He said: “By preventing him from oppressing others.” (Sahih al-Bukhari, 2444)

The Prophet (PBUH) said: “Whoever cheats us is not one of us.” (Sahih Muslim, 102)

The Prophet (PBUH) said: “The most beloved of people to Allah on the Day of Judgement will be the just leader, and the most hated of people to Allah and the farthest from Him will be the oppressive leader.” (Sunan al-Nasa’i, 5379)

Integrity (Amanah) and Trustworthiness (Amīn) in Governance and Economy

Integrity (*amanah*) and trustworthiness (*amīn*) are central Qur’anic and Prophetic values that form the backbone of governance and economic life, making them indispensable for sustainable development (Jaiyeoba et al., 2024). The Qur’an identifies true believers as those “who are to their trusts and their promises attentive” (Qur’an 23:8), underlining that fulfilling responsibilities with honesty and reliability is an essential mark of faith. In governance, *Amanah* requires leaders and institutions to regard authority as a sacred trust, exercised with fairness, transparency, and accountability rather than personal ambition or exploitation. The Prophet (PBUH), who was known as al-Amīn (the Trustworthy), warned that leadership devoid of trustworthiness leads to ruin, directly linking integrity to the legitimacy of rulers and the stability of society. In the sphere of economy, *Amīn* as a personal trait translates into honesty in trade, fairness in contracts, and the protection of wealth and resources from corruption or misuse. The Qur’an and Sunnah strictly prohibit fraud, deception, and betrayal, with the Prophet (PBUH)

declaring: “There is no faith for the one who cannot be trusted, and no religion for the one who cannot keep a promise” (Musnad Ahmad, 12567). By safeguarding public trust and embedding reliability in both personal and institutional dealings, Amanah and Amīn function as safeguards against corruption, injustice, and inequality. Together, they provide the ethical foundation for good governance and equitable economies, ensuring that development is not only materially successful but also morally sustainable.

The findings indicate that Amanah (integrity) is a fundamental requirement for both governance and economic life, functioning as a divine trust that secures justice, accountability, and social stability. In governance, integrity establishes the legitimacy of leadership, obliging rulers and institutions to exercise authority with fairness, transparency, and responsibility. In the economic sphere, it ensures ethical dealings, equitable distribution of resources, and the prevention of exploitation or corruption. Integrity is therefore not merely an abstract moral principle but a practical necessity for sustaining order and promoting equitable development within society. Similarly, Amīn (trustworthiness) emerges as a defining personal trait that safeguards social and economic relations. Trustworthiness validates the character of leaders, public officials, and business actors, reinforcing confidence in contracts, transactions, and governance systems. The findings highlight that without trustworthiness, faith itself is compromised, while its presence strengthens the ethical fabric of society. Together, Amanah and Amīn serve as protective mechanisms against injustice, betrayal, and corruption, providing the moral and practical foundation for sustainable governance and economic systems that uphold human dignity and social welfare. Some of the verses of the Quran, alongside Hadith, that directly address these concepts are quoted as follows:

“Woe to those who give less [than due], who, when they take a measure from people, take in full. But if they give them by measure or by weight, they cause loss.” (Qur’an 83:1–3)

“And fulfil the covenant of Allah when you have taken it, and do not break oaths after their confirmation, while you have made Allah a witness over you. Indeed, Allah knows what you do.” (Qur’an 16:91)

“Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts (amanat) to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allah instructs you. Indeed, Allah is ever Hearing and Seeing.” (Qur’an 4:58)

“And establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance.” (Qur’an 55:9)

The Prophet (PBUH) said: “Render back the trust (amanah) to the one who entrusted you, and do not betray the one who betrays you.” (Sunan Abu Dawud, 3534)

The Prophet (PBUH) warned: “When a man governs over ten people, he will be brought shackled on the Day of Judgement until justice brings him to freedom or injustice brings him to ruin.” (Musnad Ahmad, 23408)

Moderation (Wasatiyyah) and Excellence (Ihsan) in Resource Use

Moderation (*wasatiyyah*) is a central Qur’anic principle that calls for balance and avoidance of excess in all aspects of life, including the use of resources. It positions the Muslim community as a “justly balanced nation,” highlighting that neither extravagance

nor neglect aligns with Islamic ethics. In the context of resource use, moderation ensures responsible consumption, conservation, and fair distribution of wealth and materials. It discourages wastefulness, greed, and exploitative practices that harm the environment or disadvantage vulnerable groups (Biplob and Abdullah, 2021). By promoting equilibrium, moderation safeguards both human needs and ecological sustainability, ensuring that resources are utilised in ways that serve present generations without compromising the rights of future ones.

Excellence (*Ihsan*), closely tied to moderation, elevates resource use from mere sufficiency to a standard of responsibility, care, and accountability performed with sincerity toward Allah. It means striving to use resources ethically and purposefully, seeking not only efficiency but also moral and social good. *Ihsan* demands that individuals, communities, and institutions aim for the highest standards in stewardship, whether in governance, trade, or environmental management, by aligning their actions with both ethical values and long-term sustainability. Together, moderation and *Ihsan* ensure that resource use is not only balanced and efficient but also infused with integrity, compassion, and accountability, forming an indispensable ethical foundation for sustainable development.

Having examined the Qur'an and Hadith, it is evident that moderation is a defining principle of the Islamic approach to resource use, promoting balance, fairness, and responsibility in managing wealth, time, and the environment. The sources consistently condemn extravagance, wastefulness, and greed, framing them as forms of corruption that undermine social welfare and ecological harmony. Moderation establishes a middle path between deprivation and excess, ensuring that resources are used efficiently and shared equitably. This principle is particularly relevant to sustainable development, as it safeguards against the overexploitation of natural resources while encouraging social justice in their distribution.

The Qur'an and Hadith also emphasise excellence (*Ihsan*), which raises human conduct beyond minimal compliance to a higher standard of moral responsibility and accountability. In resource use, *Ihsan* means using wealth, goods, and natural resources with sincerity, responsibility, and concern for both present and future generations. It encourages individuals and institutions to go beyond fulfilling obligations by actively seeking to maximise benefit and minimise harm in economic, social, and environmental practices. The findings highlight that together, *wasatiyyah* and *Ihsan* form a complementary framework: moderation provides the boundary that prevents misuse, while excellence inspires a proactive commitment to ethical stewardship. Both are indispensable for creating sustainable systems that reflect justice, compassion, and divine accountability. Some of the verses of the Quran, alongside Hadith, that directly address these concepts are quoted as follows:

"And thus We have made you a justly balanced nation that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you." (Qur'an 2:143)

"And give the relative his right, and [also] the poor and the traveller, and do not spend wastefully. Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and ever has Satan been to his Lord ungrateful." (Qur'an 17:26-27)

"And those who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor stingy but hold a medium way between them." (Qur'an 25:67)

*“Eat and drink but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess.”
(Qur’an 7:31)*

“Indeed, Allah commands justice and excellence and giving to relatives, and forbids immorality, bad conduct, and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.” (Qur’an 16:90)

“And establish prayer and give zakah and whatever good you put forward for yourselves – you will find it with Allah. Indeed, Allah sees what you do.” (Qur’an 2:110)

The Prophet (PBUH) said: “The best of affairs are those that are moderate.” (Musnad Ahmad, 20552)

The Prophet (PBUH) said: “Eat, drink, give charity, and wear clothes without extravagance or arrogance.” (Sunan Ibn Majah, 3605)

The Prophet (PBUH) said: “Allah has prescribed excellence in all things. So if you kill, then kill well; and if you slaughter, then slaughter well. Let each of you sharpen his blade and spare suffering to the animal he slaughters.” (Sahih Muslim, 1955)

The Prophet (PBUH) said: “Verily, Allah loves that when one of you does a job, he perfects it.” (Al-Bayhaqi, Shu’ab al-Iman, 5313)

The Prophet (PBUH) said: “Indeed, Allah has recorded excellence upon everything.” (Sahih Muslim, 1955)

Cooperation (Ta’awun) and Building a Corruption-Free Society

Cooperation (*ta’awun*) is a central principle in Islamic ethics, urging individuals and communities to work together for righteousness, justice, and collective well-being. It emphasises that human beings, as social creatures and stewards of the Earth, have a moral duty to support one another in promoting good and preventing harm (Mhd Sarif et al., 2023). In the context of development, *ta’awun* ensures that progress is not the responsibility of individuals alone but a shared endeavour involving governments, institutions, and communities working collaboratively for the common good. It encourages inclusivity, mutual assistance, and solidarity, which are essential for addressing global challenges such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation. By embedding cooperation into governance and economic systems, societies can strengthen social cohesion and create development strategies that are both participatory and sustainable.

Building a corruption-free society, on the other hand, requires the rejection of *fasād* (corruption, injustice, and exploitation) and the pursuit of *iṣlāḥ* (reform, rectification, and moral order). The Qur’anic worldview consistently links corruption with the destruction of social and environmental harmony, while reform is presented as a moral obligation for individuals and institutions. In practice, this means establishing systems of governance and economics that are transparent, accountable, and just, ensuring that resources are used ethically and for the benefit of all. Corruption-free societies safeguard human dignity, protect the weak from exploitation, and preserve natural resources from abuse, all of which are vital for sustainable development. Together, *ta’awun* and *iṣlāḥ* provide an

ethical framework for collective action and moral reform, ensuring that development is not only materially beneficial but also socially just and spiritually accountable.

The findings from the Qur'an and Hadith indicate that *ta'āwun* (cooperation) is not simply encouraged but mandated as a collective responsibility to ensure the establishment of justice, compassion, and social welfare. Believers are urged to cooperate in areas that promote righteousness, piety, and common good, while avoiding collaboration in harmful or unjust practices. This principle extends beyond personal morality to collective action, requiring governments, institutions, and communities to work hand-in-hand in addressing challenges such as poverty, environmental care, and social inequality. By fostering solidarity, *ta'āwun* ensures that development is participatory, inclusive, and rooted in shared responsibility, creating stronger and more resilient societies. Some of the verses of the Quran, alongside Hadith, that directly address this concept are quoted as follows:

“And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty.” (Qur’an 5:2)

“Help one another in acts of birr (righteousness) and taqwa (piety).” (Qur’an 5:2).

“The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy.” (Qur’an 49:10)

And do not cause corruption on the earth after its reformation. And invoke Him in fear and aspiration. Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to the doers of good.” (Qur’an 7:56)

“And when it is said to them, ‘Do not cause corruption on the earth,’ they say, ‘We are but reformers.’ Unquestionably, it is they who are the corrupters, but they perceive it not.” (Qur’an 2:11–12)

“Eat and drink from the provision of Allah and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption.” (Qur’an 2:60)

“And do not consume one another’s wealth unjustly or send it [in bribery] to the rulers in order that [they might aid] you [to] consume a portion of the wealth of the people in sin, while you know [it is unlawful].” (Qur’an 2:188)

The Prophet (PBUH) said: “Cursed is the one who bribes and the one who takes bribes.” (Sunan Abu Dawud, 3580)

The Prophet (PBUH) said: “The believers, in their mutual love, mercy, and compassion, are like one body. When one part of the body suffers, the whole body responds with sleeplessness and fever.” (Sahih Muslim, 2586)

The Prophet (PBUH) said: “None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.” (Sahih al-Bukhari, 13; Sahih Muslim, 45)

The Prophet (PBUH) said: “The people before you were destroyed because they used to inflict legal punishments on the poor and forgive the rich. By Him in Whose Hand is

my soul, if Fatimah the daughter of Muhammad were to steal, I would cut off her hand.” (Sahih al-Bukhari, 3475; Sahih Muslim, 1688)

Human Stewardship (Khilafah) and Environmental Responsibility

Human stewardship (*khilafah*) is a foundational concept in the Qur’anic worldview, describing humanity’s role as Allah’s vicegerents on Earth. This position is not one of ownership but of trust, where humans are entrusted with authority and responsibility to manage the Earth in accordance with divine guidance. *khilafah* entails accountability, as every individual and community will be held answerable before Allah for how they utilised resources, governed societies, and treated creation (Alfyah et al., 2024). In the context of sustainable development, stewardship means exercising justice, equity, and care in managing natural resources, ensuring that human progress does not come at the expense of future generations or the natural environment. It emphasises that leadership and development must reflect responsibility to both the Creator and creation, making *khilafah* a core ethical principle for governance, economics, and social order.

Environmental responsibility is a natural extension of *khilafah*, as the trust of stewardship includes protecting and preserving the balance of nature. The Qur’an repeatedly affirms that creation has been made in balance and harmony, warning against wastefulness, excess, and corruption that disturb this equilibrium. As stewards, humans are required to use resources wisely, avoid exploitation, and ensure that environmental systems remain intact for the benefit of all living beings. This responsibility includes sustainable consumption, conservation, and protection of biodiversity, aligning closely with the principles of modern environmental ethics. By combining *khilafah* with environmental responsibility, Islam provides a holistic vision where development is not merely about economic growth but about maintaining harmony between humanity and the natural world, ensuring that all forms of life are respected and safeguarded.

The findings from the Qur’an highlight *khilafah* as a divinely mandated role for humanity, framing humans as trustees of the Earth rather than absolute owners. This stewardship carries moral and spiritual accountability, requiring that authority and resources be managed with justice, integrity, and responsibility. The Qur’anic discourse consistently ties human leadership to accountability before Allah, making stewardship not only a social duty but a religious obligation. From this perspective, sustainable development becomes part of fulfilling the trust of *khilafah*, where leaders and communities must ensure equitable resource use, social justice, and the protection of future generations.

The Qur’an and Hadith also stress environmental responsibility as a key dimension of stewardship. Creation is described as existing in balance, and humans are instructed to preserve this order by avoiding waste, excess, and actions that cause harm or corruption. The Prophetic traditions reinforce this by urging moderation in consumption, kindness to animals, and care for the natural environment, presenting ecological responsibility as an extension of faith. These teachings establish that protecting the environment is not a peripheral concern but integral to Islamic ethics. Together, *khilafah* and environmental responsibility provide a holistic framework for development that honours divine trust, safeguards natural systems, and ensures that human progress does not undermine the well-being of creation. Some of the verses of the Quran, alongside Hadith, that directly address this concept are quoted as follows:

“It is He who has made you successors (khala’if) upon the earth and raised some of you above others in degrees [of rank] that He may try you through what He has given

you. Indeed, your Lord is swift in penalty; but indeed, He is Forgiving and Merciful.” (Qur’an 6:165)

“And He it is who has made you successors (khala’if) of the earth and has raised some of you above others in ranks, so that He may test you in that which He has given you.” (Qur’an 35:39)

“Eat and drink, but waste not by extravagance. Indeed, He likes not the wasteful.” (Qur’an 7:31)

And He is the one who has produced for you gardens trellised and untrellised, date palms, crops of different shape and taste, olives and pomegranates, similar and dissimilar. Eat of their fruit when they ripen, but pay the due thereof on the day of harvest, and do not waste. Indeed, He does not like the wasteful.” (Qur’an 6:141)

The Prophet (PBUH) said: “The world is green and beautiful, and Allah has appointed you as stewards over it. He sees how you acquit yourselves.” (Sahih Muslim, 2742)

The Prophet (PBUH) said: “If a Muslim plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person, or an animal eats from it, it is regarded as a charity for him.” (Sahih al-Bukhari, 2320; Sahih Muslim, 1553)

The Prophet (PBUH) said: “There is none amongst the believers who plants a tree, or sows a crop, and then a bird, or a man, or an animal eats from it, but it is regarded as a charitable gift from him.” (Sahih Muslim, 1552)

The Prophet (PBUH) forbade wasting water, even when using it for ablution at a flowing river. (Sunan Ibn Majah, 425)

The Prophet (PBUH) said: “If the Hour (the Day of Resurrection) is about to be established and one of you has a palm shoot in his hand, then let him plant it.” (Musnad Ahmad, 12902)

Overall, the analysis of Qur’anic verses and Prophetic traditions reveals that Islamic ethics provide a comprehensive foundation for sustainable development, centred on justice (*‘adl*) and equity (*qist*), integrity (*amanah*), trustworthiness (*amīn*), moderation (*wasatiyyah*), excellence (*ihsan*), cooperation (*ta’āwun*), reform (*iṣlāḥ*), and stewardship (*khilafah*). Justice and equity ensure fairness in governance and economic systems, preventing discrimination and exploitation while promoting inclusive growth. Integrity and trustworthiness safeguard leadership and transactions from corruption, fraud, and betrayal, making them essential to public trust and institutional legitimacy. Moderation and excellence guide resource use by preventing waste and promoting responsible, purposeful stewardship, while cooperation and reform encourage collective action for righteousness and accountability, opposing corruption in all its forms. Stewardship as *khilafah* establishes humanity’s divine role as custodians of the Earth, ensuring balance in social, economic, and environmental systems.

Together, these principles demonstrate that sustainable development in the Islamic worldview is not merely technical or material but deeply moral and spiritual. The Qur’an and Hadith consistently link human well-being with ethical conduct, insisting that true

progress must protect human dignity, promote social justice, and maintain harmony with the natural environment. Unlike secular frameworks that often separate development from morality, the Islamic approach integrates spiritual accountability with practical responsibility, ensuring that governance, economics, and resource management reflect divine guidance. Thus, the findings affirm that Qur'anic ethics and Prophetic teachings are not abstract ideals but actionable principles that provide the moral and practical foundation for a just, corruption-free, and sustainable society.

5. Research Implications

The findings of this research highlight that sustainable development cannot be confined to material or technical progress alone but must also be grounded in a strong ethical and spiritual framework. By integrating Qur'anic ethics into scientific approaches, the study demonstrates that Islam offers a comprehensive vision where justice, equity, and accountability are central to governance, economics, and environmental responsibility. This has the implication of expanding the scope of development discourse to include moral imperatives, ensuring that growth is not pursued at the expense of human dignity, social cohesion, or ecological balance. The research therefore challenges policymakers, scholars, and practitioners to rethink development frameworks in a way that harmonises material progress with ethical accountability.

For governance, the implication is that leadership must be rooted in *amanah* (integrity) and *amīn* (trustworthiness), with justice and equity serving as the benchmarks of legitimacy. Institutions cannot sustain development if they are built upon corruption, injustice, or inequality. The Qur'anic emphasis on accountability and Prophetic warnings against betrayal of trust highlight that effective governance requires moral credibility as much as technical efficiency. This research therefore suggests that governments and institutions in Muslim-majority societies, and beyond, should adopt ethical governance models inspired by Islamic principles to strengthen transparency, inclusivity, and trust in leadership.

In the economic domain, the implications point towards a system where moderation (*wasatiyyah*) and excellence (*ihsan*) guide resource use, ensuring that wealth is generated and distributed fairly. The prohibition of wastefulness, fraud, and exploitation implies that sustainable economic systems must prioritise equitable distribution of resources, fair trade, and social welfare mechanisms such as *zakat* and *sadaqah*. This approach directly addresses issues of poverty, inequality, and concentration of wealth, offering an ethical corrective to purely capitalist or consumerist models of development. Integrating Qur'anic ethics into economic practices therefore provides a pathway for building economies that are both productive and socially just.

Furthermore, the implications for environmental responsibility are significant. The Qur'anic vision of humanity as *khulafā'* (stewards) of the Earth calls for a development paradigm that respects ecological balance and prohibits corruption (*fasād*) against nature. This research implies that environmental sustainability is not an optional concern but an integral part of faith and accountability before Allah. Policies addressing climate change, resource depletion, and biodiversity loss can thus draw on Islamic teachings to cultivate a sense of moral responsibility towards the environment. In sum, the research underscores that Islamisation, when applied to sustainability, produces a holistic model where spiritual, ethical, and material dimensions converge to ensure balanced and enduring development.

Therefore, policymakers in Muslim-majority are encouraged to always design development policies grounded in Qur'anic ethics of justice, equity, accountability, and

stewardship, ensuring anti-corruption, welfare, and environmental frameworks to promote fairness. Educators and scholars are called upon to advance Islamisation of knowledge by integrating these values into curricula on economics, governance, and sustainability, preparing future leaders for holistic development. Religious leaders and institutions should raise public awareness by linking Qur'anic principles such as moderation, cooperation, and stewardship to poverty reduction, social justice, and environmental care. Meanwhile, civil society and communities should adopt ta'āwun (cooperation) and iṣlāḥ (reform) through initiatives in charity, fair trade, and conservation to create community-based models of sustainable living.

6. Conclusion and Limitations

This research has demonstrated that sustainable development, when viewed through the lens of Islamisation, extends far beyond material growth and scientific advancement to embrace justice, equity, integrity, moderation, cooperation, and stewardship as ethical imperatives. By analysing the Qur'an and Hadith thematically, it has been shown that these principles form a comprehensive moral framework that complements and enriches contemporary scientific approaches to development. The integration of Qur'anic ethics into development discourse ensures that human dignity, social justice, and environmental balance are preserved, while also holding individuals and institutions accountable to higher spiritual values. Thus, the study affirms that Qur'anic teachings provide not only timeless moral guidance but also practical solutions for the challenges of modern governance, economy, and environmental sustainability.

The study further concludes that Islamisation, through the processes of relevantisation, integration, and harmonisation, offers a constructive approach for engaging with modern scientific knowledge. Rather than rejecting scientific progress, it reorients it within an ethical framework that guards against its destructive potential, such as corruption, exploitation, and environmental degradation. In doing so, this research underscores the potential of Islamic ethics to act as a bridge between faith and science, providing a balanced model of development that meets material needs while upholding moral accountability. This integrative approach has particular relevance for Muslim-majority societies, but its implications extend globally, offering an alternative paradigm that resonates with universal aspirations for justice, sustainability, and human flourishing.

Nevertheless, this research is not without limitations. The analysis has primarily focused on textual sources, the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical as well as contemporary Islamic scholarship, without extensive empirical case studies to demonstrate how these principles are being applied in practice across different contexts. Additionally, the study has highlighted key ethical values but has not exhaustively examined all dimensions of the Islamic intellectual tradition relevant to development, such as jurisprudential applications or historical precedents. Future research could therefore expand by incorporating comparative studies, fieldwork, and policy analysis to test the practical applicability of Qur'anic ethics in contemporary development projects. Such efforts would deepen the understanding of how Islamic principles can be translated into actionable strategies, ensuring that the vision of "From Islamisation to Sustainability" moves from theory to tangible practice.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest. We confirm that the submitted manuscript is an original work and is not under consideration or review by any other publication.

Note

1. All Qur'an and Hadith translations were retrieved from <https://quran.com> and <https://sunnah.com>.

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