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REVISITING ISLAMIC ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMICS

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Abstrak

Tulisan ini membahas bagaimana etika lingkungan dalam Islam dapat diintegrasikan ke dalam sistem ekonomi berkelanjutan, dengan merujuk pada gagasan Ibrahim Özdemir tentang hubungan etis manusia dengan alam. Penulis menilai bahwa praktik ekonomi Islam saat ini kurang memperhatikan aspek ekologis dari maqasid al-shariah dan lebih menitikberatkan pada aspek finansial serta institusional. Melalui analisis tekstual dan sintesis teoretis, digunakan prinsip *maqasid, tawhid, mizan, khilafah*, dan amanah untuk menjelaskan keterkaitan antara tanggung jawab moral, keseimbangan ekologis, dan tujuan sosial-ekonomi. Hasilnya menegaskan bahwa keberlanjutan dapat dipahami sebagai kondisi seimbang antara kesejahteraan material, keadilan sosial, dan kelestarian lingkungan—keadaan *falah* yang holistik. Tulisan ini juga mengajukan penerapan praktis seperti sukuk hijau, eco-waqf, dan zakat lingkungan untuk memperkuat etika ekologis dalam keuangan Islam. Kesimpulannya, etika ilahiah dinilai sebagai dasar penting bagi pembangunan berkelanjutan yang spiritual dan ramah lingkungan.

Kata kunci: Etika lingkungan Islam; *maqasid al-shariah*; ekonomi berkelanjutan; Ibrahim Özdemir; pemikiran ekonomi Islam

Abstract

The paper examines how Islamic-based environmental ethics can be incorporated into sustainable economic systems through re-examination of the ethical aspect of human attitude towards nature as expounded by Ibrahim Özdemir. It claims that the contemporary Islamic economic practices have not taken into consideration much of the ecological nature of maqasid al-shariah, but rather on financial and institutional processes. Through a qualitative, interpretive method based on textual analysis and theoretical synthesis, the paper uses the principles of maqasid, tawhid, mizan, khilafah, and amanah to make a connection between the moral responsibility and ecological balance on the one hand and the socio-economic goals on the other hand. The results suggest that sustainability can be theorized as a value model in which the concept of sustainability can be viewed as a state where the balance between the material well-being, social justice, and environmental balance is reached, that is, a state of falah, holistic falah. It also proposes operational uses like green sukuk, eco-waqf and environmental zakat to incorporate ecological ethics in the Islamic finance. The paper concludes that divine ethics in the economy is a sure way to have a spiritually based and ecologically sound system of sustainable development.

Keywords: Islamic environmental ethics; *maqasid al-shariah*; sustainable economy; Ibrahim Özdemir; Islamic economic thought

A. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the increasing pace of global environmental degradation has not only become an indication of ecological and economic weaknesses, but also a more profound ethical crisis that underlies the interaction of humanity and nature (UN Environment Programme, 2023). As much as Islamic education places high emphasis on *tawhid, mizan, khilafah* and *amanah* as the moral tenets of environmental stewardship, the modern day Islamic economic activities are largely preoccupied with institutional and financial processes. Such instruments as the Islamic banking, zakat, and waqf have developed quickly, though the ecological aspects of the maqasid al-shariah have not been adequately incorporated in the economic decision-making. This lack of connection brings out a major issue; the ethical and environmental promises that form the basis of Islam remain uncoordinated and not well incorporated in the Islamic economic ideologies and theories of sustainable development.

Though the philosophical foundation of the Islamic environmental ethics was explained by such scholars as Ibrahim Ozdemir (2003; 2013) and Izzi Dien (2000), the current discourse is rather normative in nature. The gap between the ethics and economic implementation has not been completely addressed in the literature. In particular, the lack of maqasid-oriented analytical tools that can be used to produce an operational translation of Islamic environmental ethics into an economic model, policy instrument, or financial tool is specifically underrepresented. Green sukuk, eco -waqf, and environmental zakat have not, yet, been placed within the Islamic ethical theory systematically and linked to a more comprehensive sustainable economic model. This loophole curtails the potential of Islamic economics to address the modern sustainability issues in a way that is both faith-based and practical.

Simultaneously, the ethical and value-based approaches to sustainability requested worldwide open a productive prospect of the Islamic thought to make a significant contribution to the modern discourse. A second opportunity to redefine sustainability as not just economic efficiency but holistic falah, a state of material well-being, social justice, and environmental balance, would be to re-consider the framework of Ozdemir within the framework of maqasid al-shariah. This approach places Islamic ethics at a vantage point both in terms of providing a range of normative guidance and pragmatic solutions to long-term development and as providing a spiritually-based and ecologically-focused alternative to current paradigms.

Against these considerations, this paper will attempt to address some of the central questions: What does the maqasid al-shariah mean to reinterpret the Islamic environmental ethics of Ibrahim Ozdemir as a way to think sustainably about the economic? Which ethical concepts, namely *tawhid, mizan, khilafah* and *amanah*, can be used as the pillars of a maqasid based sustainable economic model? What are the possible ways of operationalizing ecological ethics using Islamic economic tools of green sukuk, eco-waqf, and environmental zakat? And lastly, how can the idea of falah be reintroduced to include material wellbeing, social justice and environmental harmony? The research will answer these questions to come up with a framework of applying divine ethics, ecological responsibility and social-economic goals to a clear vision of sustainable Islamic economics.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Foundations of Islamic Environmental Ethics

Islamic environmental ethics is based on the idea that nature is part of a divine trust (amanah) and that humans are a khalifah (stewards) who have the responsibility of maintaining the ecological balance. This moral philosophy is also present in some of the first foundational literature like Izzi Dien (2000), who highlights the Quranic concepts of *mizan* (balance) and the forbidding of environmental corruption (fasad) as the cornerstones of Islamic environmental philosophy. On the same basis, Ozdemir (2003) states that the environmental degradation is not merely a consequence of the policy failures, but it is also the symptom of a deeper moral and spiritual crisis of the contemporary society. His work underscores *tawhid, khilafah, amanah* and *mizan* as very critical ethical concepts which should be used by the human being when interacting with nature. This normative ethical approach has influenced the future researchers to reconsider the presence of Islam in the regulation of the environment and the conservation of nature. Auda (2008) adds to this discussion by developing the philosophical vision of maqasid al-shari'ah in a systems perspective in that ecological welfare needs to be included in the welfare goals of the holistic goals of Islamic law. All these studies have been able to develop a robust ethical-theoretical framework of the connection between environmental stewardship and Islamic normative values.

2.2. Maqasid al-Shariah and Environmental Sustainability

Modern scholarship is becoming more convinced of the necessity of considering environmental protection as a vital aspect of the maqasid al-shari'ah. By elaborating their concept of eco-maqasid, Haris et al. (2024) show that the eco-maqasid concept includes the environmental justice, future generations protection, and ecological balance in the overall goals of Islamic law. This expands the previous normative findings by other researchers like Ozdemir (2003), who traced ecological degradation to be closely related to the failure of human ethics. This theoretical course is supported by practical advances in Islamic jurisprudence. Makraja and Ramlah (2025) analyze the implementation of the environmental fiqh (*fiqh al-bi'ah*) in Indonesia, which states that the maxims (*maqasid*) policies, in their implementation, are based on the protection of life (*hifz al-nafs*) and property (*hifz al-mal*), they naturally relate to environmental conservation. Their results are consistent with systems-based interpretation of *maqasid* by Auda (2008), which provides maqasid with an opportunity to interpret the modern ecological issues.

2.3. Integrating Environmental Ethics into Islamic Economic Thought

Traditional Islamic economics was concerned with the problems of finance, redistribution and institutional design. The recent academic literature has however starting incorporating environmental ethics in the conceptualization of Islamic economic systems. According to Ozdemir (2003) and Izzi Dien (2000), economic prosperity can not be isolated of environmental responsibility as environmental degradation has a direct negative impact on the welfare of human beings and stability of society. This reasoning has been used to inform modern efforts to define a sustainability-based Islamic economic scheme. Giving an example, Sanawati and Putri (2025) discuss the possibility of using Islamic ethics, especially, *khilafah, amanah*, and anti-*israf* (avoidance of waste), to inform green economy policy in Indonesia. Their observations resonate with that of Auda (2008) which argues that the Islamic law should be system-oriented in order to be able to tackle the environmental challenges. In the meantime, Fahmi (2025) indicates the lapses in Islamic social finance organizations, which in most cases do not consider the environmental aspects in their operational systems. This shows the lack of association between normative Islamic environmental ethics and its effective implementation in economic institutions.

2.4. Islamic Finance Instruments Supporting Environmental Objectives

Green Sukuk

Much literature has been done in the research to understand the contribution of green sukuk toward environmental sustainability. In Indonesia, Khalillurrahman (2022)concludes that the green sukuk distributions are very much in line with the maqasid of safeguarding lives and succeeding generations. Correspondingly, Fitrah and Soemitra (2022) contend that green sukuk are the instrument that will operationalize the Islamic ecological ethics in the national financing plans and also show how the traditional Islamic tools can be used to deal with contemporary environmental issues.

Eco-Waqf and Green Waqf

Within the context of waqf, there is a recent research on how endowments can be used to fund the conservation of the environment. Gumansari et al. (2023) examine the example of green waqf, i.e., tamanu trees, and come to the conclusion that these projects meet the principles of maqasid as they improve the quality of the environment and the overall well-being of society in the long term. Their results widen the previous normative deliberations since they offer practical templates of environmental waqf.

Blended Islamic Finance Instruments

To develop multi-impact financial instruments that can contribute to the restoration of the environment and social development, Musari (2022) suggests combining green sukuk with Cash Waqf Linked Sukuk and integrating them into a unified model. Such an integrative approach is a part of wider trends in Islamic finance of ethical and ecological goals overlapping.

SRI/ESG Sukuk and Climate Policy

Mohamed (2025) that SRI sukuk may be helpful tools to fight climate change. Their results support the fact that the idea of the global environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards does not have to be incompatible with the Shariah principles in Islamic finance.

Islamic Social Finance Institutions

However, in spite of these innovations, institutional capacity is still a problem. According to Fahmi (2025), zakat, waqf, and other social finance institutions do not have environmental indicators and are not strategically integrated and therefore cannot be used to support sustainability agendas.

C. METHODOLOGY

The research approach used in this study is qualitative and conceptual research methodology to study the concept of environmental ethics of Islam studying how it can be integrated with sustainable economic thinking. The data were gathered by document analysis, which involved the systematic review of the Quranic verses, Hadith and classical texts of jurisprudence, current treatises on environmental ethics of Islam, and peer-reviewed publications on green sukuk, eco-waqf, and environmental zakat and Islamic social finance, complemented with the relevant policy documents. The sources have been chosen through specific searches in scholarly databases and manual filtering on conceptual relevance. Data analysis was carried out based on textual analysis to determine the core ethical constructs, such as *tawhid, mizan, khilafah*, and *amanah*, and through thematic analysis to cluster repetitive ideas into thematic groups, such as Islamic ecological ethics, eco -maqasid and sustainability-oriented Islamic finance. Themes that were thus generated were then merged through interpretive reasoning (*ijtihad manhaji*) to formulate a conceptual model that would bridge the Islamic ethical principles and sustainable economic policy tools. Such a strategy is explained by the fact that the study focuses on theoretical interpretation, instead of an empirical measurement, and, therefore, requires the processes which help to systematically identify, select, and analyze textual and conceptual data.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Ethical Foundations of Islamic Environmental Ethics

The Islamic environmental ethics are based on four main principles *tawhid, mizan, khilafah* and *amanah*. *Tawhid* claims unity and interdependence of all of creation under God and as a result, environmental degradation becomes placed as a direct opposition to divine order (Izzi Dien, 2000). Mizan highlights the balance created by God in nature and the need of people to maintain the ecological balance (Khalid, 2010). Khilafah reminds human beings that they are moral stewards called upon to take care of the earth whereas amanah emphasizes upon responsibility in the preservation and utilization of natural resources in a way that would ensure the survival of the future generation. These theoretical principles support the perception of the problem of ecological degradation as a result of moral and spiritual neglect than technical and economic incompetence as advocated by Ozdemir (2003). Collectively, these values form a rational ethical system of conducting sustainable Islamic economic thinking.

Table 1. Ethical Foundations

Principle	Meaning	Economic Implication
Tawhid	Unity of creation	Integrated worldview
Mizan	Balance	Harmony in consumption and production
Khilafah	Stewardship	Responsible management of resources
Amanah	Trust	Accountability to God and Society

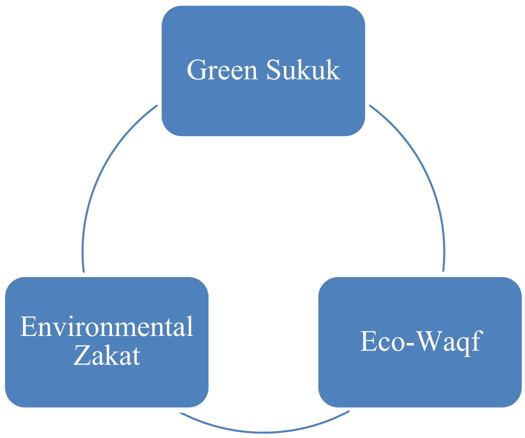
Source: Author, 2025

In addition to its theological significance, these ethical sources shape a rather different economic model where sustainability is perceived as a necessary ethical responsibility, not as a policy option. Ontological unity of creation, as the proponents of *tawhid* say, encourages integrative decision-making, which views ecological, social, and economic aspects of the world as mutually reinforcing and not compartmentalized. Mizan proposes a system of moderation and ethical consumption, thus discouraging excess and wantonness within the Quran requirements of moderation and proportion. *Khilafah* and *amanah* create a stewardly duty towards resources, promoting intergenerational equity and long-term strategic planning, and sustainability in the discharge of environmental resources (2006; 1996). Taken altogether, these principles form not just a spiritual basis of ecological ethics but a normative basis of developing a system of the Islamic economic system of sustainability based on justice, restraint, and overall well-being.

4.2. Environmental Applications within Islamic Finance

The instruments provided by Islamic finance have a wide range of tools that convert environmental ethics into an actual practice. An example of such tools is green sukuk, which have turned out to be effective Shariah-compliant investments in renewable energy, climate insurance, and conservation projects, especially in the Indonesian and Malaysian context (World Bank, 2020). Eco-waqf is a sustainable endowment model that has the potential of supporting long-term projects in protecting biodiversity, restoring ecology as well as community-based environmental programmes (Abdullah, 2018). Environmental zakat incorporates ecological justice into the Islamic social finance by providing resources to communities that are disproportionately impacted by environmental degradation (Sadeq, 2002). Despite the fact that these instruments are in line with Islamic ethical principles, they are under-implemented due to the disjointed efforts and scarce deployment of environmental requirements in the Islamic financial governance. This situation reflects broader criticisms that the modern Islamic finance is inclined to focus on formal compliance rather than on substantial ethical goals (Asutay, 2012).

Figure 1. Application to Islamic Economics



Source: Author, 2025

Besides their practical functions, these financial instruments demonstrate how the Islamic economic thinking is able to operationalize the ethical principles of *tawhid, mizan, khilafah*, and *amanah* in the modern sustainability agendas. Integrating ecological goals into monetary systems, Islamic finance has chances to promote a value oriented model of development in accordance with the higher goals of the Shariah, especially the preservation of life, wealth, and successive generations. Incorporating environmental screening, eco-maqasid indicators and sustainability reporting in the Islamic financial governance might enhance the environmental effects of these tools to a considerable degree. As Dusuki and Abozaid (2007) point out, the modification of the Islamic finance to conform to maqasid al-shari'ah is vital since the financial activities will maintain justice, equilibrium, and social welfare. By enhancing the use of green sukuk, eco-waqf, and environmental zakat by ensuring a better institutional coordination, and regulatory frameworks, Islamic finance would thus be able to serve not just as a Shariah-compliant industry, but as a revolutionary force of environmental conservation and sustainability.

4.3. Re-conceptualizing *Falah* as Ecological Prosperity

The modern concept of *falah* tends to represent a multidimensional paradigm to unite social justice, ecological harmony and long-term human wellness along with material and spiritual well-being. This broadened meaning are in line with Auda (2008) systems based formulation of maqasid al-shariah that prefigures interdependence across the ethical, social, and environmental aspects. In this expanded definition, ecological well-being plays a necessary role in it as the destruction of the environment is directly the threat to life, human dignity, social stability, and the well-being of generations. This reinventing places sustainability at the centre of the Islamic vision of prosperity challenging existing economic paradigms that focus on expansive growth at the ecological limits.

The incorporation of ecological well being in the conceptualization of falah also supports the moral economy approach to Islamic economics and highlights the fact that prosperity must be measured in moral terms and not only using measures of financial performance. This will be consistent with the Islamic model of moral-economy as suggested by Asutay (2012) which holds that real development requires a twist between material progress, social justice and environmental conservation. Placing sustainability at the center of human well-being, the redesigned meaning of falah helps create a comprehensive outlook at the development that goes beyond GDP paradigms and adopts the model of development that focuses on resilience, equity, and environmental sustainability. This is an idea that strengthens the idea that Islamic economics is well-positioned to tackle the modern global challenges that require a value-based, justice-oriented approach and include the following issues: climate change, resource depletion, and socio-environmental inequality.

4.4. *Maqasid al-Shariah* as a Framework for Sustainability

Maqasid al-Shariah provides a full-scale analytical framework to synchronise Islamic economic practices with the current sustainability goals. Classical objectives, including the preservation of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), the safeguarding of wealth (*ḥifẓ al-mal*), and the safeguarding of future generations (*ḥifẓ al-našl*) align very closely with environment-related priorities of modern sustainability models (Dusuki & Abozaid, 2007). This intersectional testifies to the fact that the teleological goals of the Islamic law are inseparable by environmental stewardship. The integration of maqasid in policy making, the financial governance in Islam, and institutional reporting increases the ecological responsibility and the creation of the environmentally friendly financial instruments. In general, Islamic ethics and maqasid-based reasoning provide both conceptual and operational principles of developing sustainability-focused economic systems.

E. CONCLUSION

Based on the pillars of *tawhid, mizan, khilafah*, and *amanah*, Islamic environmental ethics presents a solid moral framework of the endeavor towards sustainability-minded economic development. The modern-day Islamic financial tools such as the green sukuk, eco-waqf, and environmental zakat are physical tools which are used in the operationalization of these ethical requirements. However, the scope of their influence is currently constrained by the comparably low institutional adoption and the lack of assimilating the standardized environmental standards into the context of the wider Islamic finance. A broader definition of falah which prefigures ecological and social prosperity goes even further to support the claim that sustainability is embedded in Islamic conceptualizations of human wellbeing. The maqasid al-shariah doctrine internalizes the environmental stewardship to the broader goals of the conventional Islamic legal tradition, hence its legitimacy as a paradigm to govern the environment. The enhancement of the contribution of the Islamic economics to the global environmental agenda needs augmented institutional commitment, the development of metric systems that are consistent with eco-maqasid, and broader use of sustainability-oriented Islamic financial instruments.

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