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Green Leadership in Development Management: Synthesizing Islamic Ethical Paradigms and Sustainability Science

[Kepimpinan Hijau dalam Pengurusan Pembangunan: Mensintesis Paradigma Etika Islam dan Sains Kemampanan]

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Islamic Leadership, Sustainability, *Khalīfah* Stewardship, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, Green Khalifah Leadership Framework.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the epistemological roots of the contemporary leadership and environmental crises, arguing that both arise from the secularisation of knowledge and the disconnection between ethics, governance, and transcendence. Employing a qualitative, conceptual methodology grounded in textual and normative analysis, it constructed the Green Khalifah Leadership Framework (GKL-F), a model that re-integrates spiritual ontology, ethical formation, and jurisprudential teleology into sustainability governance. The study synthesised classical and modern Islamic perspectives, including al-Fārābī's virtuous city, al-Māwardī's ordinances of government, al-Faruqī's Islamisation of knowledge, and al-Zuhaylī's civilisational eco-theology, to propose an integrative framework where leadership functions as stewardship (*khilāfah*) rooted in *tawhīd* (divine unity) and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (higher objectives of Islamic law). The synthesis suggests that re-sacralising sustainability requires aligning governance with moral purpose, institutionalising *adab* (ethical discipline), and operationalising *amānah* (trust) and *'adl* (justice) in leadership practice. The GKL-F thus transforms sustainability from a managerial concept into an act of *'ibādah* (worship through responsibility), providing a theological and policy-relevant model for Muslim-majority contexts and beyond. Methodologically, this article is a normative-conceptual civilisational analysis and does not report primary empirical data.

Contribution: This study contributed an integrative epistemological model of Islamic sustainability leadership, bridging classical political thought, Islamic jurisprudence, and contemporary policy frameworks. It provided a conceptual foundation for re-sacralising leadership and environmental governance within a coherent *tawhīdī* worldview.

Kata Kunci:

Kepimpinan Islam, Kelestarian, Amanah, *Khalīfah*, *Maqāṣid al-*

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini meneliti akar epistemologi kepada krisis kepimpinan dan alam sekitar masa kini, dengan hujah bahawa kedua-duanya berpunca daripada proses pensekularan ilmu dan pemisahan antara etika, tadbir urus dan transendensi.

Shar'ah, Rangka Kepimpinan Khalifah Hijau.

Dengan menggunakan metodologi kualitatif berasaskan analisis teks dan normatif, kajian ini membangunkan Rangka Kepimpinan Khalifah Hijau (GKL-F), iaitu satu model yang mengintegrasikan ontologi kerohanian, pembentukan akhlak dan teleologi perundangan Islam dalam tadbir urus kelestarian. Kajian ini mensintesis pandangan klasik dan moden Islam, termasuk Madīnah al-Fāḍilah oleh al-Fārābī, al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyyah oleh al-Māwardī, gagasan Islamisasi ilmu oleh al-Faruqi, dan teologi alam sekitar peradaban oleh al-Zuhaylī, untuk membentuk kerangka kepimpinan sebagai amanah (khilāfah) berasaskan tauhid dan maqāṣid al-shar'ah. Sintesis kajian mencadangkan bahawa proses memaknai semula kelestarian memerlukan penyelarasan antara tadbir urus dan tujuan moral, penginstitutionan adab serta pengoperasian nilai amānah dan 'adl dalam kepimpinan. GKL-F mentafsir semula kelestarian daripada konsep pengurusan kepada ibadah yang bersifat amanah, menawarkan asas teologi dan polisi yang relevan dalam konteks dunia Islam dan sejagat. Dari segi metodologi, artikel ini merupakan analisis konseptual-normatif berteraskan analisis peradaban dan tidak melaporkan data empirikal primer.

Sumbangan: Kajian ini menyumbang satu model epistemologi integratif dalam kepimpinan kelestarian Islam yang merentas pemikiran politik klasik, perundangan Islam dan kerangka dasar kontemporari. Ia memberikan asas konseptual bagi proses memaknai semula kepimpinan dan tadbir urus alam sekitar dalam kerangka dunia pandangan tawḥīdī.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The global sustainability crisis confronting humanity today is not merely ecological or managerial; it is fundamentally civilisational. At its deepest roots lies an epistemological rupture, a disconnection between knowledge, morality and metaphysics that has shaped the modern age. Max Weber described this as the disenchantment of the world (*Entzauberung*), wherein the sacred and the rational became estranged, and bureaucratic rationalism replaced transcendent meaning (Weber, 2002). As modern societies institutionalised instrumental rationality, ethical inquiry was displaced by procedural efficiency, resulting in what Taylor (2007) later conceptualized as the “immanent frame”: a worldview that confines human aspiration within the limits of material existence. In this paper, Weber and Taylor are engaged as analytic lenses for diagnosing how modern institutions frame meaning and rationality, not as foils to be dismissed.

In this context, sustainability governance has largely evolved within the same secular rationality that contributed to ecological degradation in the first place. Leadership models emphasising innovation, efficiency, and strategic adaptation have sought to optimise organisational performance but often without addressing the deeper moral or metaphysical foundations of human responsibility toward the environment (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011). The crisis, therefore, is not only ecological but also epistemic, a crisis of meaning and value.

This ontological fragmentation was classically systematised by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann in *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, where they argued that human knowledge is

socially produced and institutionalised through language, norms, and cultural systems (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Their thesis became a cornerstone of modern sociology, offering an explanatory framework for how social structures create and maintain realities. Yet, as later critics observed, this process also normalised secularisation by removing transcendental referents from the foundations of knowledge. Reality became a product of human consensus rather than divine order. As Berger (1999, 2008) himself later admitted, the secularisation thesis overreached; the world has remained, and in many ways become, as furiously religious as ever. Nonetheless, the epistemological shift inaugurated by Berger and Luckmann entrenched the assumption that knowledge could be autonomous from revelation, thereby shaping the secular foundation of modern governance and leadership.

This intellectual trajectory found its institutional manifestation in the modern university. Peter Fleming (2021) in *Dark Academia: How Universities Die* and Richard Hil (2012) in *Whackademia: An Insider's Account of the Troubled University* expose how neoliberal imperatives have hollowed out the moral core of higher education, transforming universities from spaces of ethical formation into bureaucratic enterprises obsessed with metrics, rankings and profitability. Similarly, Harry Lewis (2006; 2007) lamented that even elite institutions, such as Harvard, articulate “no ideals of what it means to be a good person, as opposed to a well person” (Lewis, 2007). Education, once meant to cultivate virtue and wisdom, has been reduced to the transmission of instrumental competencies. The university, historically the heart of civilisation’s moral and intellectual vitality, now mirrors Weber’s iron cage: efficient, productive, but ontologically limited.

This erosion of metaphysical purpose has profound implications for leadership and sustainability. The global environmental crisis, as Chvala-Smith (2024) and Hunter (2025) both observe, represents not only a technological or policy failure but a spiritual disorientation, a failure to see the world as a sacred trust rather than a utilitarian resource. Wamsler (2018) identifies this disconnection as the “mindfulness gap” in sustainability science, the absence of moral awareness and inner transformation in ecological discourse. Without integrating spirituality and ethical consciousness, sustainability efforts risk perpetuating the very mindset they seek to transcend.

Modernisation has often been accompanied by processes of secularisation that marginalise religious worldviews within governance and public policy. Yet the trajectory of secularisation in Muslim-majority societies diverges significantly from the classical Western model, with religion continuing to shape social and institutional life despite modernisation (Yazid, Saufi, Hamzah, Hamid, & Sanyinna, 2025). Within this intellectual vacuum, Islamic thought offers an alternative epistemology rooted in *tawhīd* (Divine Unity), *khalīfah* (vicegerency) and *amānah* (trust). A range of contemporary Muslim scholars, among them al-Faruqi (1982; 1986; 2013; AbuSulayman, 1989), Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1996), Wahbah al-Zuhayli (2010) and M. Kamali (2010) have, in varying degrees and through distinct intellectual concerns, engaged the consequences of epistemic fragmentation in modern Muslim and global thought. While Nasr explicitly frames the ecological crisis as a manifestation of metaphysical alienation, others such as al-Faruqi and AbuSulayman diagnose a broader epistemic rupture characterised by the bifurcation of sacred and secular domains. Al-Zuhayli and Kamali, for their part, articulate legal-ethical frameworks that presuppose a unified moral ontology, grounding environmental responsibility within *Sharʿ* obligation rather than secular policy preference. Taking together, their contributions suggest that ecological disorder cannot be separated from deeper questions of knowledge, value, and moral purpose.

Consequently, this study positions the Green Khalifah Leadership Framework (GKL-F) as an epistemic response to the civilisational malaise produced by secular modernity. It argues that sustainable leadership in Muslim societies must begin not with managerial reform but with epistemological renewal, the reintegration of revelation, reason, and ethics within the structures of governance and education. The objective is twofold: (1) to develop a theologically coherent and practically viable leadership model grounded in Islamic metaphysics and (2) to demonstrate that sustainability is not merely a technocratic agenda but a sacred trust, a manifestation of human vicegerency under divine command.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical foundation of this study rests upon the dialectic between secular epistemology and Islamic metaphysics. This dialectic reveals how knowledge systems shape moral consciousness and institutional behavior and how their reform is essential for sustainable governance.

2.1 The Social Construction of Secular Knowledge

Berger and Luckmann (1966) in *The Social Construction of Reality* marks a pivotal moment in the sociology of knowledge. Their assertion that “reality is socially constructed and knowledge is the product of social interactions” dismantled the classical belief in objective universality. However, this also inadvertently secularised knowledge by locating its authority exclusively in human consensus. The epistemic locus shifted from divine revelation to social negotiation. In practice, this redefined truth as contingent, context-bound, and instrumental, a shift that underlies the technocratic ethos of modern governance.

Swedberg (2014) notes that every social theory carries “a moral anthropology,” an implicit view of human purpose and value. The secular social sciences, in centering human agency as the sole arbiter of meaning, fostered a utilitarian anthropology that privileges control over contemplation and production over reflection. This constructed realism became the epistemic foundation of global institutions, education systems, and leadership models, reinforcing Weber’s iron cage of instrumental rationality. As a result, sustainability discourse, though noble in intent, often replicates the same anthropocentrism that produced ecological imbalance leading to humanitarian and natural catastrophes.

2.2 Islamisation of Knowledge

Ismail Raji al-Faruqi’s *Islamisation of Knowledge* (1982; 1986; 2013; AbuSulayman, 1989) directly confronts this epistemological secularisation. He argues that the crisis of Muslim civilisation, and modern civilisation in general, stems not from material backwardness but from the “loss of *tawhīd*ic vision in the organisation of knowledge.” For Al-Faruqi, modern knowledge divorced from revelation contributes to a growing tendency of fragmentation, alienation, and injustice. His proposed solution, the re-integration of all sciences under the unity of divine purpose, seeks to restore coherence between knowing, being, and acting. As he critically observes that in any integral civilisation and certainly in Islam, the elements of life are unified by a single supreme principle. For Islam, this principle is *tawhīd*, the Divine Oneness that gives coherence and purpose to all things. Hence, Islam recognises no split between the sacred and the profane; every aspect of life is religious and therefore ethical, grounded in the unity that *tawhīd* affirms (Al-Faruqi, 1982; 1986; 2013; AbuSulayman, 1989).

In this sense, the Islamisation of knowledge is not a rejection of science but its moral recalibration (Al-Faruqi, 1982; AbuSulayman, 1989). It demands that knowledge production be guided by this supreme principle, i.e. *tawhīd*, teleologically legislated in the so called *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah* (higher objectives of Islamic law), which aim to secure justice (*‘adl*), public welfare (*maṣlahah*), and environmental balance (*mīzān*). This epistemological reform aligns directly with the goals of sustainability but transcends its secular limitations by rooting ethical accountability in divine trust. Thus, al-Faruqi’s framework provides the metaphysical foundation for the Green Khalifah Leadership Framework (GKL-F), a model that unites spiritual ontology, moral formation and institutional design.

2.3 Tawhīd, Khalīfah and Ethical Ontology

At the heart of Islamic epistemology lies *tawhīd*, the affirmation of divine unity and coherence in all existence. This principle negates dualism between sacred and secular, body and soul, or human and nature. Leadership, therefore, is a sacred trust (*amānah*) under God, not an autonomous exercise of power (Al-Faruqi, 1982; 1986; 2013; AbuSulayman, 1989). The Quranic notion of *khalīfah* situates human agency within divine accountability: {I am placing upon the earth a vicegerent} (Q. [2]: 30; [6]: 165; [35]: 39). This vicegerency is not dominion but stewardship, grounded in moral awareness (*taqwā*) and sustained by justice.

In the GKL-F model, *tawhīd* provides the ontological foundation; *adab* (ethical discipline), *iḥsān* - the pursuit of excellence through consciousness of God (as stated in the authentic *ḥadīth*: “to worship Allah as though you see Him”) - *qiyam al-jamāl* (aesthetic sensibility and disciplined engagement with his surroundings) constitute the ethical and moral formation (Al-Zuhayli, 2010); and *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah* offer the jurisprudential teleology that links leadership to public welfare and ecological balance. This triadic integration ensures that governance reflects both divine intent and social justice, uniting metaphysics with praxis.

2.4 Toward an Epistemic Reconstruction of Leadership

The theoretical framework thus positions the GKL-F as a corrective paradigm, a re-sacralisation of leadership and knowledge. It critiques secular modernity not for its rationality, but for its reductionism bitterly spelt out

by Sorokin (1941), not for its progress, but for its moral amnesia. The epistemic secularisation described by Berger and Luckmann (1966) produced efficient systems but emptied them of holistic and transcendental meaning. The Islamisation of knowledge, by contrast, reclaims the moral and teleological dimensions of knowledge, reintegrating faith and reason into a coherent worldview.

Wamsler's notion of mindful sustainability complements this Islamic vision by emphasising the necessity of inner transformation in environmental action (Wamsler, 2018). Likewise, contemporary works such as Bowley and Hill (2024) on the global environmental, social, and governance (ESG) stewardship ecosystem highlight that genuine sustainability requires not only regulatory compliance but moral intentionality. The GKL-F situates this intentionality within the Quranic paradigm of *amānah*, positioning leadership as both stewardship and worship (*ibādah*).

In sum, this theoretical foundation establishes the intellectual scaffolding for the GKL-F, an integrative model that unites Islamic metaphysics, ethical psychology, and institutional reform. By reuniting knowledge with revelation and leadership with servanthood, it offers a transformative pathway toward re-enchanting governance and restoring the moral ecology of modern civilisation.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The scholarship on sustainability leadership reveals an evolving dialogue between secular rationalism and faith-based ethics. While the Western canon of leadership studies has emphasised organisational efficiency, innovation, and stakeholder engagement, Islamic intellectual traditions frame leadership as a sacred trust, stewardship and aesthetic sensibility under divine accountability. The literature on these two trajectories, one secular, the other metaphysical reveals both a philosophical disjuncture and a potential for integrative synthesis.

3.1 Secular Leadership Paradigms and the Epistemic Crisis

Building on the civilisational problem statement articulated in Sections 1–2, this subsection reviews how influential strands of modern leadership theory are shaped by constructionist and instrumental-rational assumptions (e.g., Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Taylor, 2007; Weber, 1946). While these approaches have enabled many effective organisational and policy reforms, they often leave metaphysical accountability and virtue formation under-specified in sustainability governance. This is the specific conceptual gap the GKL-F seeks to address.

3.2 Islamic Epistemic and Ethical Countermodels

In contrast to secular paradigms, Islamic scholarship situates leadership within an integrated ontology that unites knowledge (*ilm*), ethics (*akhlāq*) and worship. At the centre of this worldview is *tawhīd*, the unity of God and the coherence of all creation, which rejects dichotomies between sacred and secular, spirit and matter. From this metaphysical foundation emerges *khalīfah*, the human role as steward of the Earth, bound by *amānah* and accountable to the Creator (Foltz, Denny, & Baharuddin, 2003; Kamali, 2010; Moneim, 2023; Nasr, 1996; Özdemir, 2012).

Al-Faruqi (1982; 1986; 2013; AbuSulayman, 1989) further expanded this paradigm through his *Islamisation of Knowledge* project, diagnosing the fragmentation of modern thought as the core of Muslim civilisational malaise and global crises (Al-Nadawī, 1981). He maintained that Islam does not admit the division of life into sacred and profane; all is religious, and hence ethical. His call for epistemic reform aimed to reintegrate revelation and reason so that scientific inquiry and policy serve moral and spiritual ends. Al-Faruqi's framework parallels contemporary decolonial epistemologies but surpasses them by rooting reform in divine ontology rather than sociopolitical critique.

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas deepened this discourse by identifying the loss of *adab*, ethical discipline as the core of modern moral disintegration. For al-Attas (1980, 1993), education is not mere skill acquisition but the cultivation of *ihsān* and *taqwā*. His educational philosophy anticipates Lewis (2006), Hil (2012) and Fleming (2021) critique that the crisis of modern education is not technical but ethical.

Building upon these metaphysical and ethical foundations, classical Islamic political philosophy provides two enduring models of leadership that anchor the civilisational depth of the GKL-F. Abū Naṣr Al-Fārābī's *al-Madīnah al-Fāḍilah* (The Virtuous City) conceives leadership as the highest expression of rational and moral perfection. The virtuous ruler, guided by divine wisdom, mirrors prophetic qualities and govern not through

coercion but through knowledge and justice. In al-Fārābī's schema, the ideal city achieves harmony when each element of society fulfills its proper function in accordance with divine order, a metaphysical vision that resonates with *tawhīd* and *mīzān*. The *madīnah al-fāḍilah* thus represents a moral ecology of governance, where virtue, knowledge, and cosmological harmony are inseparable foundations of civilisation (Al-Fārābī, 1985).

Complementing this ethical idealism, Abū al-Ḥasan Al-Māwardī's *al-Aḥkām al-Sultāniyyah* (The Ordinances of Government) grounds leadership in juridical necessity. For al-Māwardī (1996), the imamate is a *farḍ kifāyah* (collective obligation) that ensures the realisation of justice, the protection of religion and life, and the preservation of social order. His framework delineates the institutional duties of rulers as custodians of *amānah*, emphasizing accountability, consultation (*shūrā*) and *maṣlahah*. Whereas al-Fārābī articulates the metaphysical ideal of governance, Al-Māwardī translates it into *sharī* institutional order, ensuring that moral vision is realised through law, justice and administrative structure. Together, their contributions embody the ethical and juridical poles of classical Islamic leadership theory, ideal and practical, spiritual and administrative, each grounded in divine law and moral responsibility. The GKL-F builds upon their synthesis, recasting these insights within a contemporary paradigm of ecological and civilisational stewardship.

Within this epistemic continuum, environmental order (*nizām al-bī'ah*) is not a matter of administrative regulation but a reflection of moral and spiritual harmony. Wahbah Al-Zuhaylī (2010), in his treatise *Himāyat al-Bī'ah fī al-Sharī'ah al-Islāmiyyah* (Preservation of the Environment in the Islamic Sharī'ah), advances a civilisational understanding of ecology grounded in moral consciousness. He argues that *ḥaḍārah* (civilisation) is not measured by material expansion but by ethical beauty and the order manifested in the built environment. Environmental neglect, therefore, signifies spiritual decay, while cleanliness, balance, and harmony represent acts of worship and markers of civilisational maturity.

This classical perspective reinforces al-Attas's notion of *adab* as the ordering of knowledge and behavior according to divine purpose (Al-Attas, 1980), enriching the GKL-F by situating sustainability within the continuum of Islamic moral consciousness and civilisational ethics. From a jurisprudential angle, al-Tāhir ibn 'Āshūr's *Treatise on Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* provides a dynamic framework for aligning law with moral purpose (Ibn 'Āshūr, 2006). Later thinkers such as Auda (2008), Dusuki and Abozaid (2007), and Hashem (2023) expanded this teleological framework to contemporary governance and sustainability, arguing that the *maqāṣid*, preservation of life, intellect, faith, lineage and property, naturally extend to environmental protection and intergenerational justice.

Modern applications of this ethical jurisprudence are visible in Islamic finance and environmental governance. Moghul and Safar-Aly (2015) introduced the concept of green *sukūk*, combining Islamic investment principles with sustainability goals. Uddin and Hossain (2025) developed a Zakat-based ownership model for sustainable poverty alleviation in developing Muslim countries. Ismail and Shahwan (2022) emphasise how *waqf* (charitable endowment) can be mobilised for climate projects, while Huda, Trianto, Masrizal and Maskuroh (2025) explore community-based green *waqf* initiatives in Indonesia. These examples demonstrate the operational potential of Islamic ethics in addressing contemporary environmental challenges.

Recent works further bridge Islamic environmental thought and global policy frameworks. Kasri, Bouheraoua and Mohamed Radzi (2023) identify synergies between the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, while Haque (2023) articulates an Islamic green policy integrating spirituality with governance. Patriadi (2018), Hajar (2024), Wakhidah and Erman (2022), Isbah and Sakhiyya (2023), Subaidi et al. (2023), and Qizam, Berakon and Ali (2025) document how *eco-pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) in Indonesia cultivate ecological consciousness through faith-based education, a practical realisation of al-Attas's vision of *adab*-driven moral formation.

Together, these studies form a growing corpus of Islamic sustainability scholarship that transcends both secular utilitarianism and symbolic religiosity. They situate environmental stewardship as an act of worship and leadership as moral accountability before God.

3.3 Toward an Integrative Framework for the GKL-F

Despite these developments, existing research remains fragmented. Islamic environmental ethics often operate in isolation from institutional leadership studies, while sustainability governance literature rarely integrates Islamic metaphysics. The GKL-F seeks to bridge this gap through epistemological synthesis, uniting spiritual ontology, ethical formation, and institutional design. Theoretically, the GKL-F synthesises three intellectual lineages:

- i. Metaphysical Unity (Al-Faruqi) – grounding leadership in *tawhīd* and *khalīfah*
- ii. Ethical Self-Formation (Al-Attas and Al-Zuhaylī) – cultivating *adab*, *ihsān*, *jamāl* and *amānah*
- iii. Teleological Governance (Ibn ‘Āshūr) – operationalising *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah* in policy.

This triadic model aligns with Sorokin’s vision of civilisational renewal through spiritual integration and Christensen’s notion of disruptive innovation redefined in moral terms: genuine transformation arises when institutions rethink their ultimate purpose (Christensen, 1997; Sorokin, 1941). By embedding *amānah* and *mīzān* as evaluative criteria for leadership, the GKL-F redefines success not in terms of profit or power, but justice and balance.

Contemporary management literature is beginning to recognise this convergence. Kim, Scullion, Avvari, Jooss and Uddin (2025) highlight inclusive leadership during global crises, emphasising moral adaptability and empathy. Masyhuri, Pradana, Gienardy and Wibisono (2025) and Tapsir, Yusof and Hashmi (2025) document how higher education institutions in Malaysia and Indonesia integrate Green HRM and responsible leadership to foster sustainability. However, these remain largely secular in ontology. The GKL-F advances a civilisational synthesis by uniting these institutional insights with metaphysical grounding.

In this sense, the GKL-F is not merely an Islamic variant of sustainability leadership but a comprehensive epistemic reform, an Islamisation of leadership knowledge, that addresses both the environmental and moral crises of modernity. It operationalises al-Faruqi’s and al-Attas’s visions through contemporary institutional pathways, offering an integrated model that re-enchants governance with ethical and spiritual meaning.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Conceptual Research Design and Epistemological Orientation

This study adopts a qualitative–conceptual design situated within normative civilisational analysis rather than empirical hypothesis testing. Its purpose is not to measure behavioural variables or statistically evaluate institutional outcomes, but to reconstruct an epistemic and ethical framework for sustainability leadership grounded in Islamic metaphysics and jurisprudence. Accordingly, the methodology employs interpretive, hermeneutic inquiry, critically engaging classical Islamic sources alongside contemporary social theory to develop a coherent normative model.

The analytical approach draws upon insights from constructivist hermeneutics while extending its scope beyond purely secular assumptions. Berger and Luckmann (1966) demonstrated how social realities are institutionalised through processes of meaning construction and legitimation. This study engages their framework analytically but situates it within the Islamic metaphysical principle of *tawhīd*, where knowledge is understood not as purely socially contingent but as emerging through the interaction between human interpretation and transcendent moral order. The interpretive lens therefore recognises the phenomenological processes through which knowledge is constructed while acknowledging the ontological role of revelation within Islamic intellectual traditions.

Following al-Faruqi (1982; 1986; 2013; AbuSulayman, 1989), the Islamisation of Knowledge is treated here not as a procedural research technique but as a meta-epistemological orientation guiding interpretive synthesis. In this perspective, knowledge production is oriented toward ethical purpose and civilisational responsibility rather than value-neutral description. The Islamisation framework therefore informs the analytical integration of metaphysical ontology (*tawhīd*), ethical formation (*adab* and *ihsān*), and teleological governance (*maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*).

Within this methodological orientation, the GKL-F should be understood as a conceptual and normative contribution to leadership studies. It represents a theoretical synthesis that integrates Islamic ethical philosophy with contemporary sustainability governance debates, offering an analytical framework that may guide future empirical investigation and policy experimentation. The methodological logic of the study is therefore interpretive, comparative and theory-building, aimed at reconstructing a coherent ethical architecture for sustainability leadership.

4.2 Data Sources and Selection Criteria

To operationalise the study as a normative–conceptual civilisational analysis, sources were selected using explicit inclusion/exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria: (1) peer-reviewed journal articles and books in sustainability

leadership, governance, Islamic ethics, *maqāṣid*, or civilisational studies; (2) foundational classical/modern Islamic texts directly addressing leadership, knowledge, stewardship, or public welfare; and (3) policy and institutional documents (e.g., ESG/SDG, Islamic finance governance) used only to illustrate plausible institutional translation. Exclusion criteria: non-scholarly devotional materials, non-attributed web content, and sources without a clear argument relevant to leadership/sustainability governance. The final corpus was then read closely and coded using the conceptual categories listed in Section 4.3.

Coding categories (codebook) used for thematic content analysis were: (A) Epistemic assumptions (sources of authority; sacred/secular boundary); (B) Moral anthropology (human purpose; stewardship vs. domination); (C) Ethical formation (*adab*, *iḥsān*, *amānah*, *ʿadl*; virtues/character); (D) Jurisprudential teleology (*maqāṣid*/*maṣlaḥah*; prioritisation and harm-prevention logic); (E) Institutional mechanisms (*shūrā*/accountability, transparency, enforcement, incentives); (F) Policy instruments and evaluative indicators (rules, financing tools, KPIs/metrics). These codes were applied deductively (from the GKL-F architecture) and inductively (allowing new sub-themes to emerge).

The data were synthesised using qualitative content analysis, identifying recurrent themes across disciplines, metaphysics, ethics, institutional theory, and sustainability policy, and mapping them against the theoretical architecture of the GKL-F. Sources were coded by conceptual relevance (e.g., epistemic critique, moral formation, teleological governance), ensuring triangulation between classical Islamic principles and modern sustainability discourses.

4.3 Analytical Procedure

The analysis followed a three-step Islamisation-of-knowledge (IoK) analytic procedure: (1) Epistemic diagnosis (identifying implicit anthropology, ontology, and value-claims in selected leadership/sustainability theories); (2) Normative reconstruction (interpreting Islamic sources, *tawḥīd*, *khalīfah*, *adab* and *maqāṣid* into explicit normative principles and decision-rules); and (3) Institutional translation (mapping those principles into institutional design features, policy instruments, and evaluative indicators suitable for sustainability governance).

Steps (1), (3) are implemented through the sub-activities below (hermeneutic comparison, thematic synthesis, and model construction), ensuring traceability from texts → codes → framework components. The analysis unfolded in three interpretive phases:

i. Textual hermeneutics:

Classical Islamic and modern secular sources were examined through a hermeneutic approach to discern underlying assumptions about human purpose, leadership, and knowledge. Works such as [Weber \(1946\)](#), [Berger and Luckmann \(1966\)](#), [al-Faruqi \(1982; 1986; 2013\)](#), [AbuSulayman, 1989](#)) were analyzed comparatively to identify epistemological contrasts between secular modernity and Islamic metaphysics.

ii. Thematic synthesis:

Using a deductive-inductive logic, data were clustered into major themes, *spiritual ontology*, *ethical formation*, *jurisprudential teleology*, and *institutional governance*. These form the scaffolding of the Green Khalifah Leadership Framework (GKL-F).

iii. Model construction and validation:

The identified themes were integrated into a conceptual model (Figure 1) linking metaphysical principles to sustainability outcomes. The framework was then compared against contemporary case studies (eco-pesantren, green zakat & *waqf*, eco-mosques) for theoretical validation and contextual resonance.

4.4 Conceptual Framework

The GKL-F integrates theology, ethics, jurisprudence, and institutional design into a unified model that bridges spiritual ontology and sustainability practice ([Al-Attas, 1980](#); [Al-Faruqi, 1982](#); [Auda, 2008](#); [Ibn ʿĀshūr, 2006](#)). It represents a multi-layered conceptual chain, linking metaphysical principles of *tawḥīd* and *khalīfah* with ethical formation, jurisprudential teleology, and institutional implementation to achieve transformative sustainability outcomes. This framework situates leadership as both a spiritual vocation and a civilisational duty, redefining governance as stewardship accountable to God, humanity and creation.

At its foundation lies spiritual ontology, derived from the principles of *tawḥīd* and *khalīfah*. These principles establish the ontological unity between Creator, creation, and human responsibility. Leadership, therefore, is not

an autonomous exercise of power but a divinely entrusted guardianship. The metaphysical premise of *tawhīd* unifies knowledge and action, while *khalīfah* embodies the human role as steward of the earth (*‘imārat al-ard*) (Q. [11]: 61). This ontological dimension grounds all subsequent layers of the framework in divine accountability and moral coherence.

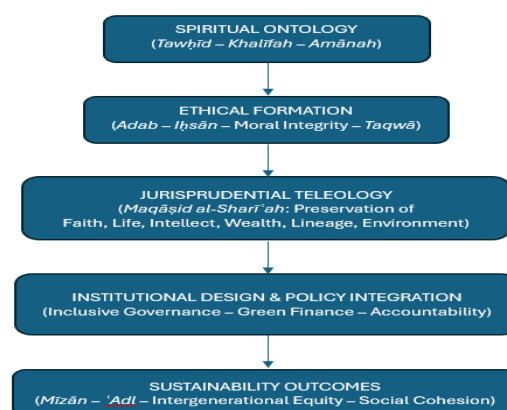
Building upon this metaphysical base, ethical formation constitutes the inner moral architecture of leadership through *adab*, *iḥsān* and *amānah*. These concepts emphasise that moral and spiritual integrity are prerequisites to sustainable governance. Leadership training, therefore, must focus not merely on managerial skill but on the cultivation of virtue and humility (*tawāḍu‘*). The ethical dimension internalizes responsibility, ensuring that decisions reflect sincerity (*ikhlaṣ*) and justice (Al-Attas, 1980; Al-Zuḥaylī, 2010; Nasr, 1996).

The third layer, jurisprudential teleology, draws upon *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*, the higher objectives of Islamic law as a moral compass that links intention (*niyyah*) to outcome. These objectives, preserving faith (*dīn*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*‘aql*), wealth (*māl*), lineage (*nasl*), and environment (*bī‘ah*) provide a normative structure for public policy and institutional governance. Through this lens, sustainability is not merely a policy goal, but a legal-ethical obligation embedded within divine law (Auda, 2008; Hashem, 2023; Ibn ‘Āshūr, 2006).

The fourth dimension, institutional design and policy integration, operationalises the preceding ethical and teleological principles within governance systems. Here, Islamic ethical values inform the creation of inclusive, transparent, and accountable institutions. Instruments such as green *waqf*, *ṣukūk*, entrepreneurship (Pusparini, et al., 2025) and *maqāṣid*-oriented policy design translate theological commitments into practical mechanisms that promote social welfare, environmental conservation, and economic equity (Hidayat, 2023).

Finally, sustainability outcomes represent the cumulative result of this integrative process: achieving *mīzān*, *‘adl* and intergenerational equity. These outcomes embody the Quranic vision of harmony between human development and cosmic order. Thus, the GKL-F not only redefines leadership through metaphysical reintegration but also provides a systemic pathway for aligning spiritual consciousness with institutional performance and ecological well-being (Al-Zuḥaylī, 2010; Kamali, 2010; Nasr, 1996). In sum, the conceptual framework demonstrates how the re-sacralisation of leadership knowledge through the fusion of ontology, ethics, jurisprudence and institutional practice, can restore moral coherence to sustainability governance and produce transformative socio-environmental outcomes.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework Linking Methodology to GKL-F Model



Notes. The GKL-F conceptual framework presents a vertical flow from divine ontology to tangible outcomes. It begins with *tawhīd* and *khalīfah* as ontological anchors, progresses through the moral cultivation of *adab* and *iḥsān*, aligns with *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah* as jurisprudential guidance, and culminates in institutional mechanisms that manifest these values in policy and governance. The resulting sustainability outcomes, justice, balance and equity illustrate how spiritual epistemology can generate measurable social and environmental transformation.

5. ANALYTICAL SYNTHESIS AND THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 From Weberian Disenchantment to Al-Faruqi's Re-enchantment

The conceptual synthesis revisits and affirms Max Weber's thesis of modernity as a process of disenchantment (*Entzauberung*), the removal of the sacred from social life. Modern bureaucratic rationality, by prioritizing efficiency over morality, created an iron cage of proceduralism devoid of transcendence (Weber, 1946). In his *The Secular City*, Harvey Cox advanced the Biblical justification for the Weberian secularisation confirming that contemporary secular cities, are not places to avoid but places to celebrate (Cox, 1965). Charles Taylor expanded this into the immanent frame, wherein human agency is confined to material horizons (Taylor, 2007).

The GKL-F proposes a constructive response to this process through rational re-enchantment. It does not denote a rhetorical return to symbolism or the mere addition of religious language to policy documents. Rather, it restores leadership's moral core by grounding it in *tawhīd* and *amānah*. Leadership is thus redefined not as control or management but as *'ibādah*, a sacred responsibility (Al-Faruqi, 1982; Kamali, 2010; Nasr, 1996).

Al-Faruqi's (1982; 1986; 2013) and AbuSulayman (1989) Islamisation of knowledge embodies this reversal. He diagnosed the crisis of modern Muslim thought as a symptom of Western epistemic colonisation, the fragmentation of knowledge from value. In his view, to know is to be responsible before God, meaning that intellectual and moral life must be inseparable. In this respect, al-Faruqi's vision performs the same corrective function for Islamic civilisation that Weber hoped moral rationalisation would perform for the West yet offers an alternative framework in which meaning and rational governance method can be reintegrated.

5.2 Berger, Luckmann and the Construction of the Secular Mind

Berger and Luckmann (1966) argued that reality is institutionally constructed and sustained by human action. While their sociological theory explained how social order becomes taken for granted, it inadvertently contributed to a growing tendency of secularisation by treating metaphysical truth as a human convention. Later, Berger (1999, 2008) recanted his early secularisation thesis, observing the desecularisation of the world. This reassessment did not resolve the debate on secularisation but highlighted its empirical complexity. This shift validates the GKL-F's claim: that religion and spirituality retain explanatory and normative power even in post-industrial societies.

Cox, who had been celebrating secularisation, similarly at the end of the twentieth century found himself compelled to revise this celebration, observing secularisation as a modern myth (Cox, 1999). Within this re-evaluated context, the GKL-F represents not a nostalgic return to pre-modern religiosity but a forward-looking integration of metaphysical meaning with ethical governance.

5.3 Ethical Formation and the Moral Architecture of Leadership

The GKL-F posits that leadership reform begins with *self-reform* (*islāḥ al-nafs*). Al-Attas (1980) identifies *adab*, the recognition of one's proper place in relation to God and creation as the foundation of social order. Without *adab*, knowledge degenerates into *ẓulm* (injustice). Similarly, *iḥsān* (spiritual excellence) and *jamāl* (aesthetic values) cultivates the consciousness of divine presence, nurturing moral restraint (Al-Zuhayli, 2010).

These insights parallel Harry Lewis's critique that universities produce competent but soulless graduates (Lewis, 2006; 2007). Fleming (2021) and Hil (2012) further document the erosion of moral purpose in academic and institutional life. By contrast, GKL-F positions *iḥsān* and *amānah* as the inner architecture of sustainable leadership. As Sorokin (1941) argued, no civilisation can survive without moral regeneration; GKL-F operationalises that regeneration through character ethics integrated with policy structures.

5.4 Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah as Framework for Public Policy

The *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* provides a unifying moral framework that links ethical vision with environmental governance and institutional design. As Ibn 'Ashūr (2006) argued, *sharī'ah* is an ethical teleology aimed at realising human welfare (*maṣlaḥah*) and preventing harm (*mafsadah*). Its core objectives preserving faith, life, intellect, lineage, wealth, and by extension, the environment (*bī'ah*) constitute a comprehensive vision of justice and stewardship. Hence, environmental protection is not discretionary but a *sharī'ī* necessity (*ḍarūrah sharī'iyah*) integral to divine justice on Earth.

Al-Zuhaylī (2010) deepens this moral jurisprudence by showing that ecological well-being mirrors the ethical vitality of civilisation. In *Ḥimāyat al-Bī'ah fī al-Sharī'ah al-Islāmiyyah*, he depicts environmental degradation as both a *fiqhī* violation and a spiritual disorder disrupting the divinely ordained *mīzān*. Neglecting nature thus signifies a failure of stewardship that erodes civilisational integrity, echoing the Quranic command to {not cause corruption on Earth after it has been set right} (Q. [7]: 56).

Contemporary scholars, Auda (2008), Dusuki & Abozaid (2007), Dusuki & Abdullah (2007) and Hashem (2023) reinterpret *maqāṣid* as a dynamic framework for modern governance, aligning ethical law with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Their approaches translate classical teleology into operational ethics for sustainability, transparency, and public welfare.

This study also acknowledges that *maqāṣid* theory is neither monolithic nor mechanically self-executing. The identification, extension, and prioritisation of *maqāṣid* remain matters of juristic reasoning and can vary across schools, contexts, and policy domains. In contemporary governance, questions such as how to weigh the preservation of life, wealth, public welfare, environmental integrity, and intergenerational justice often require deliberation rather than formulaic deduction. Accordingly, the GKL-F employs *maqāṣid* not as a single uncontested policy formula, but as a deliberative governance heuristic: a structured ethical framework for evaluating trade-offs, justifying priorities, and guiding institutional judgement under conditions of complexity.

Practical manifestations of *maqāṣid*-based governance include *green waqf* (Ismail & Shahwan, 2022), *eco-mosques* (Ramli & Yusuf, 2022), *zakat*-based ownership models (Uddin & Hossain, 2025), and green *ṣukūk* financing (Alkadi, 2024; Nurcahyo, Wikaningrum, & Thoha, 2025). These initiatives exemplify *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah* (preservation of the environment) as both moral duty and institutional objective, ensuring that development remains theocentric and ethically balanced.

Within the GKL-F, the *maqāṣid* paradigm elevates sustainability to a form of *'ibādah*, worship through responsibility, where governance embodies *'adl* and *iḥsān* (Auda, 2008; Dusuki & Abdullah, 2007; Ismail & Shahwan, 2022). It transforms environmental policy from procedural compliance into sacred accountability, restoring the moral legitimacy of leadership in the service of creation and the Creator alike.

5.5 Institutional Reform and Disruptive Moral Innovation

Clayton Christensen's theory of disruptive innovation illuminates the structural transformation envisioned by the GKL-F. Christensen (1997) argues that institutions fail when they merely optimise existing paradigms rather than reconsider their purpose. In the context of sustainability governance, the GKL-F proposes a form of disruptive moral innovation: a reorientation of institutional success away from purely technical efficiency toward ethical accountability grounded in *'adl*, *mīzān* and *maṣlahah*.

This perspective resonates with Acemoglu and Robinson's distinction between inclusive and extractive institutions (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). However, GKL-F extends this institutional insight by emphasising that inclusivity must be ethically grounded rather than merely procedural. Sustainable governance therefore requires not only institutional access but also normative criteria guiding decision-making.

To address the practical translation of these principles, the GKL-F envisions institutional reform across three operational levels: administrative governance, financial governance, and organizational leadership practice. At the administrative level, sustainability principles can be embedded into governance procedures through formal policy instruments. Environmental justice criteria may be incorporated into civil service performance evaluation systems, ensuring that public officials are assessed not only on administrative efficiency but also on ecological stewardship. Policy proposals may undergo *maqāṣid*-informed impact assessments, evaluating whether regulatory initiatives contribute to the preservation of life, environmental balance, and public welfare. Furthermore, transparent environmental auditing mechanisms linked to public reporting can strengthen accountability by aligning institutional oversight with the ethical obligation of *amānah* (Auda, 2008; Dusuki & Abdullah, 2007; Ismail & Shahwan, 2022).

At the financial governance level, the framework intersects with contemporary Islamic finance mechanisms that already demonstrate practical sustainability applications. Central banks and financial regulators may incorporate sustainability risks into macroprudential regulation, recognising environmental degradation as a systemic economic threat. Instruments such as green *ṣukūk* can be tied to measurable ecological performance indicators, ensuring that capital allocation reflects environmental responsibility (Alkadi, 2024; Nurcahyo et al., 2025). Similarly, the revitalisation of *waqf*-based environmental trusts offers a mechanism for mobilising philanthropic capital toward long-term ecological projects, aligning financial governance with the *maqāṣid* objective of public welfare (Ismail & Shahwan, 2022).

At the organizational and corporate level, leadership formation becomes a central institutional lever. Governance charters may embed ethical commitments derived from *amānah* and intergenerational responsibility, thereby redefining fiduciary duty beyond short-term profit maximisation. Leadership development programs can integrate ethical intentionality (*niyyah*) and stewardship ethics within professional training, encouraging decision-making guided by moral accountability as well as managerial competence. In this context, contemporary Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) frameworks may be reinterpreted through *maqāṣid*-informed evaluative criteria, linking corporate sustainability performance with broader ethical objectives (Bowley & Hill, 2024).

Empirical initiatives across Muslim societies provide early illustrations of such institutional transformations. In Indonesia, eco-pesantren integrate environmental education within Islamic curricula, cultivating ecological consciousness through faith-based moral formation (Hajar, 2024; Patriadi, 2018; Qizam et al., 2025; Subaidi et al., 2023; Wakhidah & Erman, 2022). In Malaysia, initiatives such as IIUM's Islamisation–Integration–Internationalisation–Comprehensive Excellence (IIICE) policy and the Islamic environmental education programs of IKIM demonstrate attempts to align academic governance with ethical civilisational values (Musa, Mokhtar, & Zakaria 2024; Thoha, 2018).

These examples illustrate that the GKL-F should not be interpreted as a turnkey bureaucratic blueprint. Rather, it establishes normative institutional criteria capable of shaping hiring standards, accountability structures, regulatory priorities, and policy evaluation mechanisms. By articulating these mediating pathways, the framework moves from abstract moral philosophy toward a practical architecture of governance capable of integrating ethical intentionality with institutional design.

5.6 The Re-enchantment of Sustainability

This section does not restate the broader civilisational diagnosis in Sections 1–2. Here, re-enchantment is used in a specific governance sense: embedding transcendent accountability (*tawhīd/taqwā*), stewardship (*amānah/khalīfah*), and *maqāṣid*-based public welfare into decision rules, institutional incentives, enforcement priorities, and evaluative metrics. The mechanism proposed in the GKL-F is sequential: values shape decision rules; decision rules shape policy instruments; and those instruments are monitored through measurable commitments and KPIs.

For example, a *maqāṣid/maṣlahah* orientation can guide water-pricing policy by combining affordability protections for basic household use with anti-*isrāf* (anti-waste) rules and escalating tariffs for excessive consumption; it can guide public procurement by embedding environmental stewardship, lifecycle responsibility, and corruption-control criteria into tender evaluation; and it can guide enforcement by prioritising harms that threaten life, health, shared ecological goods, and intergenerational welfare. In this way, re-enchantment becomes operational rather than declaratory (Auda, 2008; Hashem, 2023; Mansour, Hassan, & Bagheri, 2017).

Al-Zuhaylī (2010) conceives *ḥaḍārāh* as both aesthetic and moral order, where the external beauty of the environment mirrors the inner virtue of the community. Disorder in nature signals disorder in the soul, echoing al-Attas's analysis of the loss of *adab* (Al-Attas, 1980). Similarly, al-Faruqi (1982; 1986; 2013; AbuSulayman, 1989) advances *tawhīd* as the epistemic principle uniting all forms of knowledge. His *Islamisation of Knowledge* project reorients science and policy toward divine purpose, transforming environmental governance from bureaucratic control into moral renewal.

This theological reorientation resonates with contemporary calls for ethical renewal in sustainability discourse. Chvala-Smith (2024) and Hunter (2025) emphasise that ecological crises demand moral consciousness beyond technical solutions, while Bowley and Hill (2024) highlight stewardship within the global ESG ecosystem. Mishra (2024) critiques the de-spiritualization of business ethics, and Sajjad, Eweje and Raziq (2024) and Khalid, Iqbal and Akhtar (2025) demonstrate empirically that values-based leadership enhances transparency and ecological performance.

Within this framework, the GKL-F translates spirituality into institutional language, aligning metaphysical accountability with policy mechanisms. Leaders guided by *taqwā* and *iḥsān* are predisposed toward integrity, long-term vision, and environmental care, traits increasingly vital in global sustainability. By integrating ethical intentionality with structural reform, the GKL-F functions as disruptive moral innovation, answering Sorokin's call for moral regeneration (Sorokin, 1941) and Berger (1999) and Cox (1999) observation of desecularisation. In this sense, the GKL-F frames sustainability as accountable stewardship that can be translated into institutional design, policy instruments, and measurable governance commitments, not merely moral rhetoric.

5.7 Summary of Theoretical Synthesis

In sum, the GKL-F harmonizes four interdependent domains:

- a. Epistemic reconstruction, countering secular constructionism through divine ontology (AbuSulayman, 1989; Al-Faruqi, 1982; 1986; 2013; Berger & Luckmann, 1966).
- b. Ethical formation, internalizing *adab*, *ihsān*, and *taqwā* as leadership virtues (Al-Attas, 1980; Lewis, 2006).
- c. Jurisprudential governance, applying *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* as a teleological policy framework (Hashem, 2023; Ibn 'Āshūr, 2006).
- d. Institutional Reformation, using descriptive institutional diagnostics (e.g., Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012; Christensen, 1997) while applying normative Islamic ethical criteria to institutional design.

Together, these yield a re-enchanted leadership paradigm, a synthesis of theology, ethics and governance that reframes sustainability as an act of faith, intellect and justice.

6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Reclaiming the Sacred Epistemology of Leadership

The preceding analysis demonstrates that ecological and leadership crises are deeply connected to the epistemic fragmentation discussed throughout this study, the secularisation of knowledge. As Berger and Luckmann (1966) argued, social reality is constructed through human interpretation; yet, when this construction excludes transcendence, knowledge becomes value-neutral and leadership loses moral direction. In this vacuum, modern governance operates within Weber's iron cage, where bureaucratic rationality replaces spiritual accountability and efficiency supplants ethics (Weber, 1946).

The GKL-F offers a corrective grounded in the ontological unity of *tawhīd* and the moral purpose of civilisation. Drawing upon al-Faruqi (1982; 1986; 2013) and AbuSulayman (1989) call for the Islamisation of Knowledge, it reorients epistemology toward divine unity, restoring coherence between revelation, reason, and governance. Leadership thus becomes an act of *'ibādah*, embodying *amānah* and *ihsān*.

This re-enchancement of leadership transforms the secular construct of reality into a theocentric vision, where human agency functions as *khalīfah*-based stewardship (*khilāfah tawhīdiyyah*) within divine moral order. Leadership is no longer a utilitarian craft but a civilisational vocation. The GKL-F, therefore, is not simply an ethical model, it constitutes an epistemic paradigm shift, re-sacralising governance through the integration of faith, knowledge, and moral purpose.

6.2 Integrative Synthesis and Theoretical Implications

This synthesis confirms that secular leadership paradigms, even ethically progressive ones like ESG or sustainable leadership (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011; Bowley & Hill, 2024), remain anthropocentric and operating within a predominantly immanent moral horizon. They strive for equilibrium without metaphysical grounding, thereby addressing ecological symptoms while neglecting moral causes. As Sorokin (1941) and Taylor (2007) forewarned, a civilisation that divorces progress from transcendence risks experiencing moral fatigue when transcendental sources of meaning are marginalised.

Conversely, the GKL-F integrates three epistemic pillars that together reconstitute the foundation of sustainability governance:

- i. Metaphysical ontology (*Tawhīd*):
Establishes divine unity as the ontological source of ethical order (AbuSulayman, 1989; Al-Fārābī, 1985; Al-Faruqi, 1982; 1986; 2013; Nasr, 1996).
- ii. Moral formation (*Adab* and *Ihsān*):
Situates character and virtue at the heart of leadership (Al-Attas, 1980; Lewis, 2006).
- iii. Teleological governance (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*):
Aligns institutional design with the preservation of life, intellect, justice, and environment (Auda, 2008; Al-Māwardī, 1996; Hashem, 2023; Ibn 'Āshūr, 2006).

These triadic pillars synthesise classical and contemporary Islamic leadership theories. Al-Fārābī's virtuous ruler embodies the metaphysical ideal, Al-Māwardī's imamate grounds it institutionally, and al-Faruqī's epistemology renews it intellectually. Their integration within the GKL-F reconstructs governance as a moral covenant, a dynamic equilibrium of knowledge, virtue, and law. Leadership thus evolves from mere administrative command to 'aqīdah-driven stewardship, restoring moral coherence to public authority.

6.3 Practical Implications for Leadership and Policy

At the policy level, the GKL-F offers a framework for faith-informed sustainability governance that remains compatible with global development instruments such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through *maqāṣid*-based ethics, it provides a normative compass for:

- i. Environmental policy
Embedding *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah* (preservation of the environment) as a legal and moral imperative.
- ii. Islamic finance
Mobilising *green sukūk* and *waqf* for climate adaptation and social welfare (Huda et al., 2025; Moghul & Safar-Aly, 2015).
- iii. Education reform
Institutionalising *adab* and *iḥsān* in leadership curricula (Al-Attas, 1993; Hajar, 2024).
- iv. Institutional ethics:
Operationalising *amānah* and 'adl as measurable indicators of leadership performance, informed by but not reducible to descriptive institutional diagnostics (e.g., Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012).

At the organizational level, the GKL-F emphasises spiritual intentionality as a source of ethical innovation. Leaders grounded in *taqwā* naturally prioritize transparency, social inclusion, and environmental integrity, qualities indispensable for legitimacy in the post-carbon global economy. Thus, the framework bridges revelation and reason, positioning Islamic ethical rationality as a contributor to universal sustainability discourse rather than a sectarian counterpoint.

6.4 Civilizational and Academic Contributions

From a civilisational perspective, the GKL-F contributes to the ongoing project of knowledge reconstruction envisioned by al-Faruqī (1982; 1986; 2013; AbuSulayman, 1989). By aligning epistemology, ethics, and governance, it operationalises Islamisation of knowledge within leadership and sustainability studies. This integration also resonates with contemporary global debates on decolonising knowledge, as it challenges the Eurocentric epistemic monopoly without rejecting scientific rationality. From an academic standpoint, the study enriches three intersecting literatures:

- i. Leadership theory by integrating spirituality and virtue ethics into organisational analysis (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Kim et al., 2025).
- ii. Sustainability governance by infusing ethical teleology into environmental policy (Mansour et al., 2017; Sajjad et al., 2024).
- iii. Islamic studies and civilisational thought by demonstrating the policy relevance of classical Islamic epistemology (Al-Attas, 1993; Ibn Khaldūn, 1967).

It thus builds an interdisciplinary bridge between moral philosophy, social theory and policy science.

6.5 Limitations and Future Directions

Despite its theoretical breadth, the GKL-F remains a conceptual model. Future research should empirically assess its applicability across Muslim-majority governance systems, testing how *maqāṣid*-based ethics, leadership training, and *green waqf* initiatives influence sustainability outcomes. Comparative analyses between Islamic and secular models may reveal universal ethical convergences and contextual distinctions.

Moreover, interdisciplinary engagement with sociology, philosophy of religion, and environmental economics can deepen understanding of how metaphysical beliefs inform institutional norms. Such dialogue would extend Berger and Luckmann (1966) sociology of knowledge into the transcendent domain, offering a genuinely integrated 'ilm al-'umrān al-rūḥī (spiritual sociology of civilisation).

6.6 Governance Challenges and Institutional Limits of the GKL-F

While the GKL-F offers a normatively coherent model grounded in *tawhīd*, moral formation, and *maqāṣid*-based governance, its translation into contemporary political reality is neither automatic nor immune to contestation. Any attempt to re-anchor governance in metaphysical principles must confront historical, jurisprudential, and political complexities.

First, the *maqāṣid al-sharīah*, although widely recognised as a teleological framework (Auda, 2008; Hashem, 2023; Ibn ‘Āshūr, 2006), is not internally monolithic. Jurists have differed over the hierarchy, scope, and expansion of the objectives, particularly regarding the prioritisation of life, wealth, or public order (*niẓām*). Contemporary extensions to environmental preservation remain interpretive developments rather than uncontested classical formulations. The GKL-F therefore presupposes an interpretive methodology that is principled yet adaptive, requiring juristic deliberation (*ijtihād*) and institutional divergence rather than rigid doctrinal imposition.

Second, the invocation of *khalīfah* and *tawhīd* in political discourse carries the risk of authoritarian appropriation if detached from institutional safeguards. Classical political thought, including al-Fārābī’s virtuous ruler and al-Māwardī’s imamate (Al-Fārābī, 1985; Al-Māwardī, 1996), emerged within hierarchical contexts distinct from modern constitutional states. In contemporary governance, therefore, any *tawhīdīc* leadership model must be embedded within mechanisms of accountability, consultation (*shūrā*), rule of law, and separation of powers to prevent the sacralisation of unchecked authority. The GKL-F should be understood not as sacralising rulers, but as sacralising responsibility.

Third, the sustainability crisis cannot be reduced solely to moral or epistemic alienation. Structural political economy factors global capitalism, resource asymmetries, and geopolitical power imbalances shape environmental outcomes in ways that exceed individual virtue. While the GKL-F emphasises ethical intentionality and leadership formation, its implementation must engage institutional reform, regulatory frameworks, and economic restructuring. Moral ontology alone is insufficient without structural transformation.

Fourth, operationalisation remains context dependent. Translating *tawhīd* into bureaucratic decision-making requires intermediate ethical indicators, transparency metrics, environmental impact standards, distributive justice benchmarks, that can function within pluralistic societies. The GKL-F thus functions as a normative compass rather than a technocratic blueprint. Its viability depends on gradual institutional integration through education, policy design, and civic culture.

In acknowledging these constraints, this study does not diminish the framework’s civilisational aspiration. Rather, it situates it within the realities of contested interpretation, political divergence, and imperfect human agency. The GKL-F is therefore best understood as a regulative ideal guiding governance toward moral coherence while remaining open to institutional refinement and democratic negotiation.

6.7 Concluding Reflection

The Green Khalifah Leadership Framework embodies a civilisational response to modernity’s ethical vacuum. It reclaims moral coherence where secular modernism produced fragmentation and restores divine intentionality where technocracy bred alienation. By integrating *tawhīd*, *adab*, *maqāṣid* and *amānah*, it transforms sustainability from managerial rhetoric into sacred stewardship.

In this sense, the GKL-F represents the revival of the virtuous city envisioned by al-Fārābī, administered through the ethical ordinances of al-Māwardī, and intellectually renewed by al-Faruqī’s epistemic reform. It unites the ideal, the juridical, and the intellectual within one moral architecture. As humanity confronts ecological collapse and institutional exhaustion, the GKL-F invites scholars, policymakers, and faith communities to rediscover leadership as *‘ibādah*, a sacred trust toward both the Earth and the moral self. In doing so, it reaffirms the Quranic vision of *mīzān*, a balanced civilisation reflecting the beauty, justice, and unity of its Creator.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that he has no financial or personal relationship(s) that may have inappropriately influenced him in writing this article.

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