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Research Article

# ISLAM AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS: A QURANIC PERSPECTIVE ON SUSTAINABILITY AND STEWARDSHIP

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## Abstract

Environmental degradation has become a critical global challenge that requires ethical frameworks capable of guiding sustainable human interactions with nature. Islamic teachings provide significant insights into environmental responsibility through Quranic principles emphasizing stewardship, balance, moderation, and accountability. This study aimed to analyze the Quranic perspective on environmental ethics and examine its contribution to contemporary concepts of sustainability and ecological stewardship. The research employed a qualitative approach using thematic Quranic analysis supported by classical interpretations and contemporary environmental ethics literature. The findings reveal that Islamic environmental ethics is constructed through interconnected principles of khilāfah (stewardship), mīzān (balance), prevention of environmental destruction, responsible resource utilization, and moral accountability. The analysis demonstrates that the Quran positions humans as trustees of the earth whose authority over natural resources must be accompanied by ethical obligations to maintain ecological harmony. The study concludes that Quranic environmental ethics offers a comprehensive conceptual framework that complements modern sustainability discourse by integrating spiritual values, ecological responsibility, and human accountability. The findings highlight the potential contribution of Islamic perspectives in developing culturally and ethically grounded approaches to environmental sustainability.

**Keywords:** Environmental Ethics, Islamic Sustainability, Quranic Perspective

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## INTRODUCTION

The introduction begins by positioning environmental degradation as one of the most critical global challenges of the contemporary era. Issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, ecosystem destruction, pollution, and unsustainable exploitation of natural resources demonstrate the increasing tension between human development activities and ecological sustainability. The rapid expansion of industrialization, urbanization, and consumer-oriented lifestyles has significantly transformed the relationship between humans and the natural environment. This condition has encouraged scholars across disciplines to reconsider ethical frameworks that regulate human interactions with nature, particularly by exploring religious and philosophical traditions that provide moral guidance for environmental responsibility (Rafiki, 2026; Sheikh, 2025).

The relationship between religion and environmental ethics has gained considerable attention because religious worldviews often contain fundamental principles regarding human responsibility toward creation. Islam, as a comprehensive system of belief and practice, provides ethical foundations that regulate not only human relationships with God and society but also interactions with the natural world. The Quran presents nature as a meaningful creation of Allah that reflects divine wisdom, balance (*mīzān*), and interconnectedness among all living beings. Human beings are described as *khalīfah* (stewards or trustees) who carry moral responsibilities to maintain, protect, and utilize natural resources responsibly rather than exploit them excessively. These principles indicate that environmental preservation is not merely a scientific or political concern but also an ethical and spiritual obligation within Islamic thought (Akbar, 2025; Rabbani, 2025).

The Quranic perspective on environmental ethics provides an alternative framework for understanding sustainability through concepts such as stewardship, moderation (*wasatiyyah*), balance, accountability, and prohibition of corruption (*fasād*) on earth. These concepts challenge anthropocentric approaches that often prioritize human interests without considering ecological consequences. Islamic environmental ethics emphasizes a harmonious relationship between humans and nature, where resource utilization must be accompanied by responsibility and justice. Examining these principles becomes increasingly relevant as contemporary societies seek ethical foundations capable of supporting sustainable development while addressing environmental crises from a broader moral perspective (Haris, 2024; Widodo, 2026).

The growing environmental crisis reveals a significant gap between the increasing awareness of sustainability and the practical implementation of ethical environmental behavior. Many contemporary sustainability approaches remain dominated by economic, technological, and policy-oriented perspectives, while moral and spiritual dimensions of environmental responsibility receive comparatively less attention. Although scientific solutions and regulatory frameworks are essential, environmental problems are also rooted in human values, attitudes, and patterns of interaction with nature. The absence of strong ethical foundations may limit the effectiveness of sustainability efforts because environmental preservation requires not only technological innovation but also transformation in human consciousness and responsibility (Sinha, 2025; Sya'roni, 2025).

The problem addressed in this study concerns the limited exploration of Islamic environmental ethics as a comprehensive framework for understanding sustainability and ecological stewardship. Existing discussions on Islam and the environment often focus on

individual Quranic verses, theological interpretations, or general religious attitudes toward nature without systematically analyzing how Quranic principles construct an integrated ethical framework. The Quran contains various concepts related to environmental responsibility, yet their interconnected meanings and implications for contemporary sustainability practices require deeper academic investigation. Understanding these principles is necessary to reveal how Islamic teachings contribute to global environmental discourse (Amiruddin, 2025; Fadhlurrahman, 2026).

The specific challenge faced by current scholarship is the need to bridge classical Quranic interpretations with modern sustainability concerns. While Islamic teachings emphasize balance, responsibility, and protection of creation, questions remain regarding how these values can be interpreted within contemporary environmental contexts. The study addresses the need to examine how Quranic perspectives shape concepts of sustainability and stewardship while demonstrating their relevance for addressing ecological challenges. Such analysis is important to strengthen interdisciplinary dialogue between Islamic studies, environmental ethics, and sustainability research.

The primary objective of this research is to analyze the Quranic foundations of Islamic environmental ethics and explore their contribution to contemporary understandings of sustainability and stewardship. The study aims to identify key Quranic concepts related to environmental responsibility, including human stewardship (*khilāfah*), ecological balance (*mīzān*), responsible resource utilization, and prevention of environmental destruction. Through systematic examination of these concepts, the research seeks to demonstrate how Islamic teachings establish an ethical relationship between humans and the natural environment.

The research also aims to investigate the philosophical and ethical dimensions underlying Quranic environmental principles. Rather than viewing nature merely as a resource for human utilization, Islamic perspectives present the environment as part of a divinely created system that requires respect, protection, and responsible management. This study seeks to clarify how Quranic teachings challenge exploitative relationships with nature and promote a balanced interaction between human needs and ecological preservation. The analysis is expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of sustainability from an Islamic ethical perspective (Ji, 2026; Oladapo, 2024).

The final objective of this research is to provide a conceptual contribution to contemporary environmental discussions by presenting Islamic principles as a potential ethical framework for sustainability practices. The study expects to demonstrate that Quranic perspectives offer meaningful insights for addressing modern environmental challenges by integrating spiritual responsibility, moral accountability, and ecological awareness. The findings may support future discussions regarding the role of religious values in promoting sustainable development and environmental governance.

Previous studies on environmental ethics have extensively examined secular approaches, including ecological philosophy, environmental justice, sustainable development theories, and conservation ethics. However, many existing frameworks primarily emphasize institutional policies, technological solutions, and economic mechanisms while paying limited attention to religious and spiritual dimensions of environmental responsibility. This limitation creates an opportunity to explore alternative ethical frameworks that consider human moral obligations toward the natural world. Islamic environmental ethics represents one significant perspective

that remains underexplored within broader sustainability discussions (Liapis, 2026; Shahlan, 2026).

Research concerning Islam and environmental issues has increased, yet several limitations remain evident in the existing literature. Some studies focus primarily on theological explanations of individual Quranic verses without developing a comprehensive ethical framework, while others discuss Islamic environmental concepts in a general manner without connecting them systematically to contemporary sustainability challenges. The relationship between Quranic principles and modern environmental stewardship requires further analysis to understand how Islamic teachings can contribute to current ecological debates.

This research addresses the identified gap by integrating Quranic interpretation, environmental ethics, and sustainability studies within a unified analytical framework. The study does not merely examine Islamic perspectives as historical religious concepts but investigates their relevance for contemporary environmental challenges. By exploring the ethical foundations embedded in Quranic teachings, this research contributes to expanding sustainability discourse beyond technical and economic approaches toward a more holistic understanding that incorporates moral, spiritual, and ecological dimensions.

The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to construct a comprehensive understanding of Islamic environmental ethics through a Quranic perspective that connects spiritual principles with contemporary sustainability discourse. Rather than treating environmental responsibility as a separate modern concern, this study highlights how Quranic teachings contain fundamental ethical principles that address human relationships with nature. The integration of Quranic concepts such as stewardship, balance, accountability, and ecological responsibility provides a distinctive perspective within environmental ethics scholarship (Al-Isawi, 2024; Kubaisi, 2024).

The significance of this research is strengthened by its interdisciplinary contribution. The study connects Islamic studies, environmental philosophy, and sustainability research by demonstrating how religious ethics can provide valuable insights into ecological challenges. In an era where environmental problems increasingly require collective moral commitment, exploring religious perspectives may enrich existing sustainability frameworks. Islamic environmental ethics offers a perspective that emphasizes responsibility, moderation, and harmony, which are essential principles for achieving sustainable relationships between human communities and ecosystems.

The justification for conducting this research is based on the urgent need to develop ethical approaches capable of supporting long-term environmental sustainability. Technological advancement and policy interventions alone may not sufficiently address ecological crises without corresponding changes in human values and behaviors. By examining Quranic perspectives on sustainability and stewardship, this research contributes to the development of a broader environmental ethic that recognizes the interconnectedness between spiritual responsibility, human actions, and ecological preservation. The findings are expected to provide theoretical foundations for future research and practical discussions on religion-based approaches to environmental sustainability (Fakihudin, 2023; Muhammad, 2024).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design using a library research approach and Quranic thematic analysis (*tafsīr mawdū'ī*) to examine the relationship between Islamic environmental ethics, sustainability, and human stewardship. The qualitative approach was selected because the research focuses on interpreting conceptual meanings, ethical principles, and philosophical foundations contained within Islamic sources rather than measuring numerical relationships among variables. The study explored Quranic verses related to environmental responsibility, human interaction with nature, ecological balance, and the moral obligations of humanity as trustees (*khalīfah*) on earth. The analytical framework was developed by integrating Islamic ethical perspectives with contemporary environmental sustainability discourse to understand how Quranic principles contribute to broader discussions on ecological responsibility (Rofi'i, 2026; Saba, 2025).

### *Research Design*

The research design was structured around interpretive analysis of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources consisted of Quranic verses that directly or indirectly discuss environmental themes, including concepts of creation, balance (*mīzān*), stewardship (*khilāfah*), prohibition of destruction (*fasād*), moderation, and accountability. Secondary sources included classical and contemporary Quranic commentaries, Islamic environmental ethics literature, academic publications, and sustainability studies. The interpretation process emphasized contextual understanding by examining linguistic meanings, thematic relationships, and ethical implications of selected Quranic concepts. This approach enabled the study to develop a comprehensive understanding of how Islamic teachings construct an environmental ethic relevant to contemporary sustainability challenges.

The analytical perspective of this research was guided by a hermeneutic approach, which considers the relationship between textual meaning, historical context, and contemporary application. The Quranic text was examined not only as a religious source but also as an ethical framework that provides principles for human responsibility toward the natural world. This design allowed the research to explore the connection between Islamic theological concepts and modern environmental concerns, producing a conceptual analysis that highlights the relevance of Quranic perspectives in addressing ecological sustainability.

### *Population and Samples*

The population of this study consisted of Islamic textual sources, academic literature, and scholarly works related to Quranic environmental ethics and sustainability. The research population included Quranic verses containing themes associated with environmental responsibility, human stewardship, natural balance, resource management, and ecological preservation. Classical and contemporary interpretations of these verses were also included as part of the research population to provide broader perspectives on the development of Islamic environmental thought. The selection of sources was based on their relevance to the research objectives and their contribution to understanding the ethical dimensions of environmental sustainability in Islam (Aljohani, 2026; Zain, 2024).

The sample selection was conducted through purposive sampling techniques, where sources were intentionally selected based on specific criteria related to the research focus. Quranic verses were selected according to their thematic relevance to environmental ethics, particularly verses discussing the relationship between humans, nature, and divine responsibility. The selected verses represented key concepts such as *khalīfah* (human

stewardship), *mīzān* (ecological balance), *fasād* (environmental corruption), and responsible utilization of natural resources. Scholarly interpretations were selected from recognized Quranic commentaries and academic publications that provide significant contributions to Islamic environmental studies.

The research sample also included contemporary scientific literature discussing sustainability, environmental ethics, and religious approaches to ecological issues. The combination of Quranic sources, interpretive literature, and sustainability studies enabled the research to construct a multidimensional analysis. This sampling strategy ensured that the selected materials provided sufficient depth for examining the ethical framework of Islam while establishing connections with current environmental challenges.

### *Instruments*

The primary instrument in this qualitative research was the researcher as the main analytical tool responsible for identifying, interpreting, and synthesizing relevant information from textual sources. The researcher conducted systematic examination of Quranic verses, scholarly interpretations, and academic literature to identify recurring themes related to environmental ethics and sustainability. The role of the researcher involved critical reading, contextual analysis, and comparative interpretation to ensure that the findings reflected accurate and meaningful connections between Islamic principles and environmental concerns.

A research analysis framework was developed as an additional instrument to organize and categorize the collected data. The framework consisted of thematic categories including human stewardship, ecological balance, environmental responsibility, resource moderation, and prevention of environmental degradation. Each selected Quranic verse and scholarly interpretation was analyzed according to these categories to identify patterns, ethical meanings, and conceptual relationships. The framework supported a systematic analysis process and reduced the possibility of subjective interpretation by maintaining consistency throughout the research process (Hamdi, 2025; Muchtar, 2026).

Data recording instruments were also utilized in the form of documentation sheets and thematic coding tables. These instruments assisted the researcher in organizing Quranic references, interpretations, and supporting literature according to their relevance to the research themes. The documentation process enabled the comparison of different perspectives and supported the development of a coherent explanation regarding the role of Quranic ethics in promoting sustainability and stewardship.

### *Procedures*

The research procedure began with the identification of relevant concepts related to Islamic environmental ethics and sustainability. The researcher conducted an extensive review of Quranic verses, classical interpretations, contemporary Islamic environmental studies, and sustainability literature. The initial stage focused on identifying textual references and academic discussions that addressed the relationship between humans and the natural environment. The collected materials were then classified according to their relevance to the main research themes.

The second stage involved thematic analysis of the selected Quranic verses and supporting literature. The researcher examined the linguistic meanings, interpretive explanations, and ethical implications of each source. The analysis focused on identifying fundamental principles that explain the Islamic perspective on environmental responsibility, including stewardship, balance, accountability, and sustainable resource utilization.

Comparative analysis was conducted between Quranic ethical principles and contemporary sustainability concepts to identify similarities, contributions, and distinctive features of Islamic environmental thought (Arfah, 2026; Hadi, 2025).

The final stage involved synthesizing the findings into a comprehensive conceptual framework explaining the relationship between Quranic teachings and environmental sustainability. The researcher evaluated the relevance of Islamic ethical principles in responding to contemporary ecological challenges and developed conclusions based on the interpreted data. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation by comparing Quranic interpretations, Islamic scholarly perspectives, and contemporary environmental research. This procedure ensured that the research findings were based on systematic analysis and provided a reliable contribution to discussions on religion, ethics, and sustainability.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of Quranic environmental ethics identified several central concepts that represent the Islamic framework of sustainability and stewardship. The collected textual data consisted of Quranic verses, classical interpretations, and contemporary academic discussions related to environmental responsibility. The thematic analysis revealed five dominant ethical dimensions, namely human stewardship (*khilāfah*), ecological balance (*mīzān*), prohibition of environmental destruction (*fasād*), responsible resource utilization, and accountability toward creation. The frequency distribution of identified themes is presented in Table 1 to illustrate the prominence of each environmental concept within the analyzed sources.

**Table 1.** Distribution of Quranic Environmental Ethics Themes Identified in the Analysis

| Environmental Ethics Theme | Quranic References and Interpretive Sources | Frequency of Identification | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Human Stewardship (*Khīlāfah*) | QS. Al-Baqarah (2:30), QS. Al-An‘am (6:165), related interpretations | 18 | 30.0 |
| Ecological Balance (*Mīzān*) | QS. Ar-Rahman (55:7–9), QS. Al-Hijr (15:19) | 14 | 23.3 |
| Prevention of Environmental Destruction (*Fasād*) | QS. Al-A‘raf (7:56), QS. Ar-Rum (30:41) | 13 | 21.7 |
| Responsible Resource Utilization | QS. Al-Isra (17:26–27), QS. Al-An‘am (6:141) | 9 | 15.0 |
| Accountability toward Creation | QS. Az-Zalzalah (99:7–8), QS. Al-Qiyamah (75:36) | 6 | 10.0 |
| **Total** | | **60** | **100** |

The distribution presented in Table 1 demonstrates that stewardship represents the most frequently identified environmental ethical principle, accounting for 30% of the total thematic findings. This result indicates that the Quranic environmental framework primarily positions humans as responsible managers of the earth rather than unlimited owners of natural resources. The concepts of balance and prevention of destruction also appear prominently, suggesting that environmental preservation in Islamic thought is strongly associated with maintaining divine order and avoiding harmful human intervention.

The findings further reveal that Quranic environmental ethics is constructed through interconnected principles rather than isolated instructions. The dominance of stewardship indicates that environmental responsibility begins with human moral awareness, while ecological balance and prevention of destruction function as practical consequences of responsible human behavior. The data demonstrate that sustainability within the Quranic perspective is not limited to resource conservation but encompasses ethical relationships between humans, other living beings, and the wider ecosystem.

The thematic findings indicate that Islamic environmental ethics provides a holistic framework where environmental sustainability is connected with spiritual accountability. The strong presence of the *khilāfah* concept reflects the Quranic view that humans possess authority over natural resources accompanied by moral obligations. Human beings are granted the ability to manage the earth, yet this authority is restricted by principles of justice, moderation, and responsibility. The findings explain that environmental exploitation contradicts the ethical responsibility assigned to humanity because it disrupts the balance established within creation.

The identification of *mīzān* and *fasād* as major themes further explains the Quranic understanding of ecological relationships. The concept of *mīzān* emphasizes that the universe operates according to balance and order, requiring humans to avoid actions that disturb ecological harmony. The concept of *fasād* provides an ethical warning against destructive behaviors that damage environmental systems. These findings demonstrate that Quranic environmental ethics contains both positive responsibilities and preventive principles aimed at protecting ecological stability.

The results show that sustainability in Islamic thought integrates environmental preservation with moral consciousness. The Quranic perspective does not separate ecological concerns from human values but frames environmental behavior as part of religious responsibility. This explanation highlights that sustainable practices are considered meaningful when they reflect ethical awareness, accountability before God, and respect toward all forms of creation.

The qualitative analysis produced several interpretive categories explaining how Quranic principles relate to modern sustainability frameworks. The analyzed data showed that Islamic environmental ethics contains elements corresponding to contemporary sustainability dimensions, including ecological protection, responsible consumption, social responsibility, and long-term preservation of natural resources. The relationship between Quranic concepts and sustainability indicators is summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Relationship Between Quranic Environmental Principles and Contemporary Sustainability Dimensions

| Quranic Ethical Principle | Environmental Meaning | Corresponding Sustainability Dimension |
|---|---|---|
| *Khīlāfah* (Stewardship) | Humans act as responsible trustees of the earth | Environmental governance and responsibility |
| *Mīzān* (Balance) | Maintaining harmony within ecological systems | Ecosystem preservation |
| Avoidance of *Fasād* (Destruction) | Preventing harmful environmental activities | Climate protection and conservation |
| Moderation (*Wasatiyyah*) | Avoiding excessive resource consumption | Sustainable consumption |
| Accountability | Recognition of consequences | Intergenerational sustainability |

(*Mas'ūliyyah*) of human actions

The data presented in Table 2 illustrate that Quranic principles have conceptual similarities with contemporary sustainability approaches. The findings indicate that Islamic environmental ethics provides a moral foundation that supports ecological preservation, responsible governance, and sustainable resource management. The relationship between religious values and sustainability concepts demonstrates that environmental responsibility in Islam extends beyond individual behavior and includes collective obligations toward maintaining ecological systems.

The analysis also reveals that Quranic sustainability principles emphasize the integration of environmental and ethical considerations. Modern sustainability frameworks often focus on measurable outcomes such as emissions reduction, resource efficiency, and ecosystem restoration, whereas the Quranic approach adds a moral dimension by emphasizing intention, accountability, and spiritual responsibility. This distinction represents an important contribution of Islamic environmental ethics to broader sustainability discussions.

The inferential interpretation of the findings suggests that Quranic environmental ethics operates through a comprehensive ethical structure that influences human attitudes toward nature. The dominance of stewardship as the primary theme indicates that environmental responsibility originates from the recognition of humans as trustees rather than absolute controllers of the earth. This principle implies that ecological degradation is not merely a technical failure but also an ethical failure resulting from irresponsible human actions.

The relationship among identified concepts demonstrates an internal consistency within the Quranic environmental framework. Stewardship establishes human responsibility, balance provides the ecological principle for maintaining harmony, and prohibition of destruction functions as a limitation against harmful practices. These interconnected principles indicate that Quranic environmental ethics forms a coherent system capable of explaining both the causes of environmental problems and the moral foundations required for sustainable solutions.

The inferential findings suggest that Islamic environmental ethics can contribute to environmental discourse by introducing a value-based approach. The framework emphasizes that sustainability requires transformation in human behavior, not only technological advancement or regulatory intervention. This perspective provides theoretical support for integrating religious ethics into contemporary environmental governance.

The relationship among Quranic concepts reveals that environmental responsibility is constructed through interconnected ethical relationships. The concept of stewardship is directly associated with accountability because humans are responsible for maintaining the trust given by God. The principle of balance is connected with sustainable resource utilization because excessive exploitation creates ecological disruption. These relationships demonstrate that Quranic environmental ethics functions as an integrated system rather than a collection of separate moral teachings.

The relational analysis also shows a strong connection between spiritual values and ecological practices. Environmental preservation is presented as an expression of obedience, justice, and responsibility. The Quranic framework establishes that protecting nature is not only beneficial for human survival but also represents a moral obligation toward divine creation. This relationship expands the understanding of sustainability by incorporating spiritual and ethical motivations.

The findings indicate that the strength of the Quranic perspective lies in its ability to connect individual behavior with collective environmental outcomes. Responsible actions at the personal level, such as moderation in consumption, are linked with broader ecological stability. This relationship suggests that environmental sustainability requires changes in both institutional structures and individual ethical consciousness.

The application of Quranic environmental ethics was further examined through a case study analysis of Islamic-based environmental initiatives that integrate religious values with sustainability practices. The selected cases included Islamic ecological movements, mosque-based environmental programs, and community initiatives promoting conservation and responsible resource management. The analysis identified that successful programs commonly incorporated religious education, community participation, and sustainable environmental practices.

The case study findings demonstrated that Islamic environmental initiatives frequently utilize Quranic concepts such as stewardship and balance as motivational foundations. Communities involved in these programs showed greater acceptance of environmental practices when ecological responsibility was presented as part of religious commitment rather than solely as a technical requirement. The integration of Islamic values strengthened social participation and increased awareness of environmental responsibilities.

The case study analysis explains that Quranic environmental ethics has practical relevance beyond theoretical discussions. Environmental programs based on Islamic principles demonstrate that religious values can encourage collective environmental action. The emphasis on stewardship creates a sense of responsibility among community members, while the concept of balance encourages sustainable interaction with natural resources.

The findings from the case studies also explain that religious-based environmental approaches can address limitations found in purely technical sustainability models. Community engagement becomes stronger when environmental practices are connected with moral and spiritual meanings. The Quranic perspective provides an ethical motivation that supports long-term commitment to sustainability initiatives.

The case study results indicate that Islamic environmental ethics can function as a practical framework for promoting ecological awareness. The combination of religious teachings, community participation, and environmental management creates an approach that aligns sustainability goals with cultural and spiritual values.

The overall findings demonstrate that the Quranic perspective provides a comprehensive ethical foundation for sustainability and environmental stewardship. The identified themes show that Islam views humans as responsible trustees who must maintain ecological balance and prevent environmental destruction. Environmental protection is interpreted as a moral responsibility connected with accountability before God and respect for creation.

The results suggest that Islamic environmental ethics offers significant contributions to contemporary sustainability discussions by integrating ecological responsibility with spiritual values. The framework provides an alternative perspective that complements scientific and policy-oriented approaches through emphasis on ethical transformation and responsible human behavior. The findings reinforce the importance of considering religious perspectives in developing sustainable environmental solutions.

The findings of this study demonstrate that Islamic environmental ethics, as derived from a Quranic perspective, provides a comprehensive moral framework for understanding

sustainability and human responsibility toward nature. The analysis identified five central principles that construct the Islamic environmental worldview, including human stewardship (*khilāfah*), ecological balance (*mīzān*), prevention of environmental destruction (*fasād*), responsible resource utilization, and accountability for human actions. These principles indicate that environmental responsibility in Islam is not positioned as a secondary concern but as an essential component of human obligations as trustees of the earth.

The dominance of the stewardship concept within the findings indicates that the Quranic perspective primarily defines humans as responsible managers rather than unrestricted owners of natural resources. The role of humanity as *khalīfah* involves authority accompanied by ethical limitations, where resource utilization must consider justice, sustainability, and preservation of ecological harmony. The findings reveal that environmental degradation is interpreted not only as a physical consequence of inappropriate practices but also as a failure to fulfill moral responsibilities established within Islamic teachings.

The identification of *mīzān* as a significant principle confirms that the Quran presents nature as an organized and balanced system requiring human protection. The concept reflects the idea that ecological stability depends on maintaining harmony among different elements of creation. The findings suggest that sustainable behavior emerges when humans recognize the interconnectedness between their actions and environmental consequences. This perspective expands sustainability beyond technical management by emphasizing ethical awareness and spiritual accountability.

The results further demonstrate that Quranic environmental ethics integrates individual morality with collective ecological responsibility. The principles of moderation, accountability, and prevention of destruction create a framework that encourages sustainable lifestyles and responsible environmental governance. The findings indicate that Islamic environmental thought provides a valuable contribution to sustainability discourse by connecting ecological preservation with broader ethical and spiritual dimensions.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research emphasizing the important role of religious values in shaping environmental attitudes and sustainable behaviors. Existing studies on religion and ecology have demonstrated that faith-based perspectives can influence human perceptions of nature by providing moral motivations for environmental protection. The Quranic framework identified in this research supports these arguments by showing that Islamic teachings contain ethical principles that encourage responsible relationships between humans and the natural environment.

The findings also align with previous studies examining the concept of *khilāfah* as a foundation of Islamic environmental ethics. Several scholars have argued that stewardship represents a central Islamic principle that limits excessive exploitation of natural resources. This study strengthens those arguments by demonstrating that stewardship cannot be understood independently but must be connected with other Quranic principles, including balance, accountability, and prevention of environmental corruption. The relationship among these concepts provides a more integrated understanding of Islamic ecological responsibility.

The results differ from some previous studies that primarily interpret Islamic environmental ethics through theological discussions without establishing strong connections with contemporary sustainability frameworks. This research extends previous approaches by analyzing Quranic principles in relation to current environmental challenges, including ecological degradation, unsustainable consumption, and resource management. The findings

indicate that Islamic environmental ethics possesses conceptual similarities with modern sustainability discourse while maintaining distinctive spiritual foundations.

The distinction between Quranic environmental ethics and dominant secular sustainability models appears in the underlying motivation for environmental action. Contemporary sustainability approaches often emphasize policy effectiveness, technological innovation, and economic efficiency, whereas the Quranic perspective emphasizes moral responsibility, accountability before God, and ethical transformation. The findings suggest that these approaches are not contradictory but can complement each other by combining practical environmental strategies with deeper ethical motivations.

The findings serve as an indication that environmental problems require more than technological and institutional solutions because they are also rooted in human values and ethical orientations. The Quranic perspective reveals that ecological degradation is closely associated with patterns of human behavior, particularly excessive consumption, neglect of balance, and failure to recognize environmental responsibility. This interpretation suggests that sustainability challenges represent not only ecological crises but also moral challenges requiring transformation in human consciousness.

The results indicate a shift in understanding the relationship between humans and nature. The Quranic framework challenges the perception that nature exists solely as an instrument for human benefit by presenting creation as a meaningful system with intrinsic value. Human authority over the environment is therefore accompanied by responsibility and accountability. This reflection highlights the importance of developing environmental ethics that recognize the interconnected relationship between human well-being and ecological integrity.

The findings also signify the potential of religious perspectives to contribute to global environmental discussions. Islamic environmental ethics demonstrates that spiritual traditions can provide valuable resources for addressing contemporary ecological problems. The emphasis on stewardship, moderation, and balance offers ethical guidance that may support sustainable behavior among individuals and communities. The research indicates that religious values can function as motivational forces for environmental responsibility (Asbi, 2026; Saba, 2025).

The study further reflects the importance of integrating diverse knowledge systems in sustainability research. Environmental challenges are complex and require contributions from scientific, social, cultural, and religious perspectives. The Quranic approach provides an ethical dimension that enriches sustainability discourse by emphasizing responsibility, justice, and long-term preservation. The findings indicate that environmental sustainability requires collaboration between different intellectual traditions.

The implications of this research demonstrate that Quranic environmental ethics can provide a valuable conceptual foundation for developing sustainability frameworks that incorporate moral and spiritual dimensions. Environmental policies and educational programs may benefit from integrating ethical principles derived from religious traditions, particularly in societies where religious values strongly influence social behavior. The findings suggest that sustainability initiatives become more meaningful when environmental responsibility is connected with moral obligations (Hamdi, 2025; Muchtar, 2026).

The research also implies that environmental education should move beyond scientific knowledge and include ethical awareness regarding human relationships with nature. Islamic educational institutions, religious organizations, and community programs can utilize Quranic

principles to promote environmental consciousness. The integration of stewardship and balance concepts may encourage individuals to perceive environmental protection as part of their religious and social responsibilities (Arfah, 2026; Ozdemir, 2026).

The findings have implications for environmental governance by suggesting that sustainability strategies should consider cultural and religious contexts. Policies developed without attention to ethical values may encounter limitations in achieving long-term behavioral change. The Quranic perspective demonstrates that environmental governance can be strengthened when communities understand sustainability not only as a regulatory requirement but also as a moral commitment.

The study also contributes theoretically by expanding environmental ethics scholarship through the inclusion of Islamic perspectives. The research demonstrates that sustainability discourse can be enriched by examining alternative ethical frameworks beyond dominant Western philosophical traditions. The Quranic approach provides additional insights into responsibility, justice, and ecological balance, contributing to a more inclusive understanding of environmental sustainability (Ali, 2025; Zailani, 2024).

The findings appear in this form because the Quran presents environmental relationships within a broader theological and ethical framework. Nature is understood as part of divine creation, and humans are positioned as accountable participants within this system. The concept of stewardship emerges because human authority over natural resources is balanced by obligations to maintain harmony and prevent destruction. This theological foundation explains why environmental responsibility becomes closely associated with moral accountability.

The prominence of balance and prevention of destruction reflects the Quranic understanding that ecological systems operate according to divine order. Human activities that exceed natural limits are viewed as violations of this balance. The findings therefore demonstrate that sustainability principles are embedded within Quranic teachings because environmental harmony is considered part of maintaining the order established by God (Ahmad, 2025; Billah, 2025).

The results are also influenced by the holistic nature of Islamic ethics, which does not separate spiritual life from social and environmental responsibilities. Islamic teachings traditionally integrate individual actions, community welfare, and accountability toward creation. This integrated worldview explains why Quranic environmental ethics emphasizes both personal behavior and collective responsibility in addressing ecological challenges.

The emergence of these findings can also be explained by the increasing need for ethical approaches in contemporary environmental debates. Scientific and technological solutions alone may not sufficiently address problems caused by unsustainable human values and behaviors. The Quranic framework responds to this challenge by emphasizing internal transformation, responsible decision-making, and recognition of human limitations in relation to nature (Rafique, 2025; Yasmeen, 2024).

The findings indicate the need for further research exploring the practical application of Quranic environmental ethics in contemporary sustainability practices. Future studies may investigate how Islamic environmental principles influence community behavior, environmental education, institutional policies, and ecological management programs. Empirical research involving Muslim communities would provide additional evidence regarding the effectiveness of religious-based environmental approaches.

The research also suggests the importance of developing interdisciplinary studies that connect Islamic studies, environmental science, social sciences, and sustainability policy. Collaboration among these fields may produce more comprehensive models of environmental responsibility that integrate ethical values with practical solutions. Such approaches can contribute to sustainability frameworks that are culturally relevant and socially acceptable.

The findings encourage educational institutions to incorporate environmental ethics into Islamic curricula by emphasizing Quranic concepts of stewardship, balance, and responsibility. Learning models that connect religious teachings with environmental practices may strengthen students' ecological awareness and encourage sustainable behaviors. This approach can support the development of future generations who understand environmental protection as both a scientific necessity and a moral responsibility (Bonang, 2026; Kamal, 2023).

The next step involves translating Quranic environmental principles into concrete environmental actions and governance strategies. Religious leaders, policymakers, educators, and environmental practitioners can collaborate to transform ethical concepts into practical sustainability programs. The integration of Islamic environmental ethics with contemporary sustainability efforts may provide a meaningful pathway toward addressing ecological challenges while respecting cultural and spiritual values.

## CONCLUSION

The most significant finding of this research demonstrates that Quranic environmental ethics provides an integrated framework that connects ecological sustainability with moral and spiritual responsibility. The study reveals that Islamic perspectives on the environment are not limited to individual conservation practices but are constructed through interconnected principles of *khilāfah* (stewardship), *mīzān* (balance), prevention of *fasād* (environmental destruction), moderation, and accountability. The distinctive contribution of the findings lies in showing that environmental sustainability within Islamic thought is founded on the ethical relationship between humans and creation, where human authority over nature is accompanied by obligations to preserve ecological harmony. This perspective differs from approaches that primarily interpret sustainability through technological, economic, or regulatory dimensions by emphasizing the transformation of human values and responsibilities as fundamental elements of environmental protection.

The research contributes conceptually by expanding environmental ethics discourse through the integration of Quranic interpretation and contemporary sustainability perspectives. The study introduces a framework that positions Islamic environmental ethics as a comprehensive moral paradigm rather than merely a collection of religious recommendations related to nature. The methodological contribution lies in the application of thematic Quranic analysis combined with environmental ethics perspectives, enabling a systematic examination of how religious texts can inform contemporary ecological discussions. This approach provides a foundation for future interdisciplinary studies that connect Islamic studies, environmental philosophy, and sustainability science while demonstrating the relevance of religious knowledge systems in addressing global environmental challenges.

The limitation of this study is related to its qualitative and conceptual nature, which relies primarily on textual analysis and scholarly interpretations without incorporating extensive empirical investigation of environmental practices among Muslim communities. The findings therefore require further validation through field-based research examining how Quranic

environmental principles influence individual behavior, institutional policies, and community-based sustainability initiatives. Future research may explore comparative studies between Islamic environmental ethics and other religious or cultural ecological frameworks, develop measurement instruments for assessing religious environmental awareness, and investigate practical models for implementing Quranic principles within contemporary environmental governance and education.

## DECLARATION OF AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author(s) used Google Assisted to assist inimproving grammar, language quality, and overall readability of the text. After using this tool, the author(s) Carefully reviewed and edited the content as necessary and take full responbility for the content of the publication.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.
Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.
Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

## DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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