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SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE: A SYSTEMATIC SYNTHESIS

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Abstract

Rapid global urbanization calls for sustainable systems that resonate with local cultural and religious values; however integration of Islamic principles and modern urban planning is still in theory, fragmented and not yet researched. This systematic literature review overcomes this gap by synthesizing knowledge already existing to present a comprehensive framework for ethical and ecological urbanism. Following Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) protocol, an exhaustive search was performed using the Web of Science (WoS) and the SCOPUS databases, in order to guarantee the high standard of academic trustworthiness. From an initial pool of literature, the study finally identified and analyzed a selection of 30 primary studies (n=30) which met the inclusion criteria. The findings of this synthesis are categorized into three critical thematic dimensions: (1) Sustainable Islamic Architecture and Heritage Conservation, which emphasizes bio-climatic traditional designs and culture; (2) Islamic Urbanism, Spatial Planning, and Environmental Resources, which emphasize the symbiotic relationship between human settlements and

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natural ecosystems; and (3) Green Finance, Governance, and Socio-Economic Ethics, underlines the possibility of tools based on Shariah and ethical stewardship in the effort towards equitable growth. The numerical result shows the interest in and research on these intersections is increasing, especially in terms of the role of Waqf and Khaliffah (stewardship) in the management of the environment. The present review concludes that an Islamic perspective on sustainable urbanism presents a holistic human-centred way of thinking transcending technical solutions through integrating the spiritual values with socio-economic equity. These findings provide a vital roadmap for policymakers and urban planners to develop resilient cities that are both technologically advanced and culturally grounded. Specifically, this review translates these Islamic principles into actionable planning levers including land-use zoning, heritage overlay controls, Waqf-based land banking, green sukuk financing, participatory governance mechanisms, climate-responsive building standards, and public space provision policies offering a structured toolkit for planners operating in Muslim-majority urban contexts.

Keywords: Sustainable, Planning, Islamic Development, Urbanism, spiritual

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable urban development has become a highly important theme for many countries in the face of the elements of climate change and rapid urban growth. The concept of sustainability in relation to urban development involves various dimensions such as environmental, social and economic. In recent years, there is an increasing interest in learning how different cultural and religious perspectives can contribute to sustainable urban development (Cheshmehzangi et al., 2024; Guzmán et al., 2017).

The Islamic viewpoint offers a distinctive framework that is based on spirituality, morality, and ethics (Kamal et al., 2025; Kamal et al., 2023). This introduction is meant to present an overview of sustainable urban development from an Islamic point of view by pointing its relevance and possible contributions to our present-day urban planning. Sustainable urban development in the Islamic world has become an important research field, and it has become necessary because of the rapid urbanization, the environmental damage and the necessity to reconcile the doctrines of modern life with religious doctrines. This field covers a whole lot of disciplines, from architectural design and urban planning to financial mechanisms to social behaviour (Aydin, 2017).

As the climate risks and scarcity of resources are growing for cities in Muslim-majority countries, scholars are turning to history and theological principles in search of modern solutions. The importance of this topic is that it may provide alternative frameworks for sustainability that are culturally congruent and ethically grounded and may go beyond the generic global models to region-specific and spiritual models (Jimenez-Luque & Penha-Vasconcelos, 2023; Yoganathan et al., 2024).

Despite the growing volume of research, the existing literature remains fragmented, often operating in disciplinary silos that prevent a holistic understanding of the subject. For example, some research efforts make it very technical and specific to the law and technology of waste management and environmental jurisprudence (Maskun et al., 2025), others are deeply entrenched in historical analyses of agricultural revolutions and zooarchaeology (García García, 2026). There is a significant gap concerning the relationship between these historical precedents and modern financial instruments, such as green sukuk or municipal bonds, that are being evaluated in isolation these days (Alhowaish, 2025; Khairisma et al., 2025). Furthermore, while the conflict between economic growth and environmental protection is recognised (Kazak et al., 2025), studies examining the connection between these macroeconomic factors and individual level pro-environmental behavior driven by religiosity remain underdeveloped in the case of integrated urban strategies (Zafar & Abu-Hussin, 2025).

Islamic teachings stress on balance and moderation in everything in life including urban development. The principles of *Wasatiyyah* (moderation), *Khalifah* (stewardship), and *Maslahah* (public interest) are at the heart of the Islamic approach used for sustainability. These principles include the responsible use of natural resources, the protection of the environment, social justice and equity. These principles carry direct implications for urban planning practice. *Wasatiyyah* (moderation) supports density controls and mixed-use zoning that prevent urban sprawl while maintaining liveable neighbourhoods. *Khalifah* (stewardship) underpins mandatory green space ratios, environmental impact assessments, and the responsible governance of public land. *Maslahah* (public interest) provides the ethical basis for inclusive housing policies, community land trusts, and participatory planning processes that prioritise collective well-being over speculative development. By translating these principles into concrete planning instruments, Islamic urbanism moves beyond philosophical guidance to offer an operational framework for sustainable city-making. By incorporating these principles into urban planning, cities can ensure that a harmonious balance between development and environmental conservation is achieved in order to ensure the well being of present and future generations (Bsoul et al., 2022; Kamal et al., 2023; Khan & Haneef, 2022).

The Islamic approach to sustainable urban development is also focused on the community and individual responsibility. Teachings in the Islamic religion promote community development and environmental protection. This is reflected in the concept of Shura (consultative decision-making) and Hisbah (public oversight), which promote inclusive and participatory governance. Promoting a community responsibility and engagement with the community, the Islamic values would help in developing tough and sustainable city spaces (Ahmed, 2025; Zuraidi & Zainol, 2025).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable urban development literature identifies various main themes and principles as related to the Islamic view of the subject which can inform the modern systems of urban planning. The integration of environmental stewardship and social and economic development is one of the main themes. Islamic faith underlines the interrelation of every life sphere and believes in the holism of the development approach. This manifests in the idea of *Maqasid al-Shariah*, which would emphasize on ethical investment, social good, and the environment by using the Shariah compliant securities like *sukuk*, *zakat*, and *waqf* (Ahmad & Berghout, 2025; Khan & Haneef, 2022; Rahim et al., 2024). These tools can be employed in order to invest in projects that may ensure not only environmental sustainability but also social responsibility that will lead to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The other issue that stands out in the literature is how Islamic finance can be used to facilitate sustainable urban development. Sustainable infrastructure and smart cities could be built with the help of various tools of long-term financing provided by Islamic finance, including *sukuk*. The financing mechanisms generate employment as well as enable self-sufficiency and mitigate the social economics effects of major development projects in less developed areas (Kamal et al., 2025). By leveraging Islamic finance, cities can secure the necessary funding for sustainable urban development while adhering to ethical and moral principles.

Another major topic that is obvious in the literature is the importance of urban green spaces (UGS) in ensuring sustainability in the Islamic perspective. There are many positive effects of urban green spaces such as increased quality of air in cities, less urban heat islands and increased well-being of the population. Islamic doctrines promote preservation and conservation of natural environments and development of UGS cannot be in contradiction with Islamic doctrines. An example of the interaction between green spaces, historical and cultural heritage through the authors of a case study can reveal how the chosen elements can strengthen the social, economic, and environmental conditions of cities (Abowardah, 2024; Ariff et al., 2024; Hatta et al., 2024).

Besides, the literature highlights the relevance of community participation and participatory governance in the process of sustainable urban development. Islamic values like *Shura* (consultative decision-making) and *Hisbah* (public oversight) translate directly into planning participation levers: mandatory community consultation requirements at the local plan stage, neighbourhood-level planning committees with binding advisory powers, and third-party environmental monitoring bodies modelled on Hisbah principles. These mechanisms move participatory governance from an aspiration to a procedural requirement embedded in planning law, ensuring that urban decisions reflect community priorities rather than top-down technocratic mandates. This would promote the social cohesion, responsibility and transparency that form the key to the successful execution of sustainable development efforts (Ahmed, 2025; Zuraidi & Zainol, 2025). By involving the community in the planning process, cities can create more resilient and adaptable urban environments that reflect the values and aspirations of their residents.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Identification

To have a thorough literature acquisition of the relevancy, the identification stage of this systematic review incorporated a stringent methodological approach. The process involved identification of primary keywords, and this process was followed by the expansion of the primary keywords through the consultation of dictionaries, thesauri, and extant research in order to encompass all the relevant terminology. These keywords were informing the creation of certain search strings specific to the database of Scopus and Web of Science (see Table 1). The first search strategy provided 367 publications data, including 289 publications found on Scopus and 78 publications found on Web of Science.

TABLE 1

Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY ((Sustainability OR Sustainable OR Green OR Ecological OR Environmental OR Resilience) AND (Urban OR City OR Planning OR Infrastructure OR Architecture OR Settlement OR Town) AND (Islam OR Islamic OR Muslim OR Sharia OR Waqf OR Quranic OR Caliphate)) AND PUBYEAR > 2024 AND PUBYEAR < 2026 AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")) Date of Access: January 2026
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Web of Sciences	TS=((Sustainability OR Sustainable OR Green OR Ecological OR Environmental OR Resilience) AND (Urban OR City OR Planning OR Infrastructure OR Architecture OR Settlement OR Town) AND (Islam OR Islamic OR Muslim OR Sharia OR Waqf OR Quranic OR Caliphate)) AND 2024-2026 (Publication Years) AND DT=(Article) AND LA=(English) Date of Access: January 2026
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Screening

The literature located during the screening stage was strictly considered to make sure that the literature does not contradict the main research questions, which are concerned with the pedagogical practice of flipped classes applied to the Malaysian context. This phase included cleaning all the records systematically, in which eight duplicate records were found and the predetermined eligibility criteria. As a result, 36 articles were eliminated, which reduced a total number of papers chosen to be analyzed and discussed in terms of the parameters presented in Table 2, which is 331. In order to achieve the quality and relevancy of the findings, the inclusion criteria were focused on scholarly sources that included practical recommendations, including meta-analyses, systematic reviews, books, and conference proceedings that were not covered by the latest literature. In addition, the review was strictly focused on the English-language publications published between 2024 to 2026.

TABLE 2
The selection criterion is searching

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English	Non-English
Time line	2024 – 2026	< 2023
Literature type	Journal (Article)	Conference, Book, Review
Publication Stage	Final	In Press
Subject	Social science, environmental science and Art and Humanities	Besides Social science, environmental science and Art and Humanities

Eligibility

In the third step of the selection process, which is the eligibility phase, the rest of the articles were put through a strict screening procedure to determine their appropriateness in terms of inclusion. It was a crucial stage of the evaluation

process that presumed an overall analysis of the titles and the substantive material to ensure it complies with the presupposed inclusion criteria and the overall aims of the study. Articles have been filtered out in an organized way based on the exclusion criterion that they had to be outside the field under study, irrelevant titles and abstracts that could not cover the research objectives. In addition, the papers were excluded when the complete versions of the articles could not be found or when they did not have a high empirical basis. The outcome of this purified selection process was a final list of 30 articles that will be incorporated in the review.

DATA ABSTRACTION & ANALYSIS

To integrate the different research designs and methodologies found in the 30 publications selected in this study, an integrative thematic analysis was adopted. The main idea was to derive and to classify over-riding themes and sub-themes pertaining to the issue of sustainable urban development in the Islamic worldview. The systematic data extraction step of analysis has started, and the authors started to carefully examine the 30 papers to formulate core assertions and empirical results (see Figure 2). This review has involved an inquiry into the research methodologies used and a research-content results that have been reported in both studies. After that, the authors form a thematic framework based on the evidence. To achieve analytical rigour and reflexivity, a research log has been kept as part of the process so as to record insights regarding interpretation, conceptual difficulties and developing attitudes.

Finally, the authors performed a comparative review of the results to clear and initiate any conflicts in the thematic organization, and all conceptual controversies were solved by a discussion and agreement with each other. Comparisons were also made by the authors to clear any differences in the theme making process. It should be noted that in case of any discrepancy on the themes to be discussed, the authors discuss the same with each other. Lastly, the themes that were developed were refined to make them consistent. It has been modulated according to the tool of the author depending on feedback and comments of experts. The questions are as follows below:

1. How can the principles of traditional Islamic architecture and heritage conservation be integrated into contemporary frameworks to promote sustainable urban development?
2. In what ways do Islamic concepts of urbanism and spatial planning facilitate the equitable and sustainable management of environmental resources?
3. What role do Islamic socio-economic ethics and green finance mechanisms play in shaping the governance and implementation of sustainable urban projects?

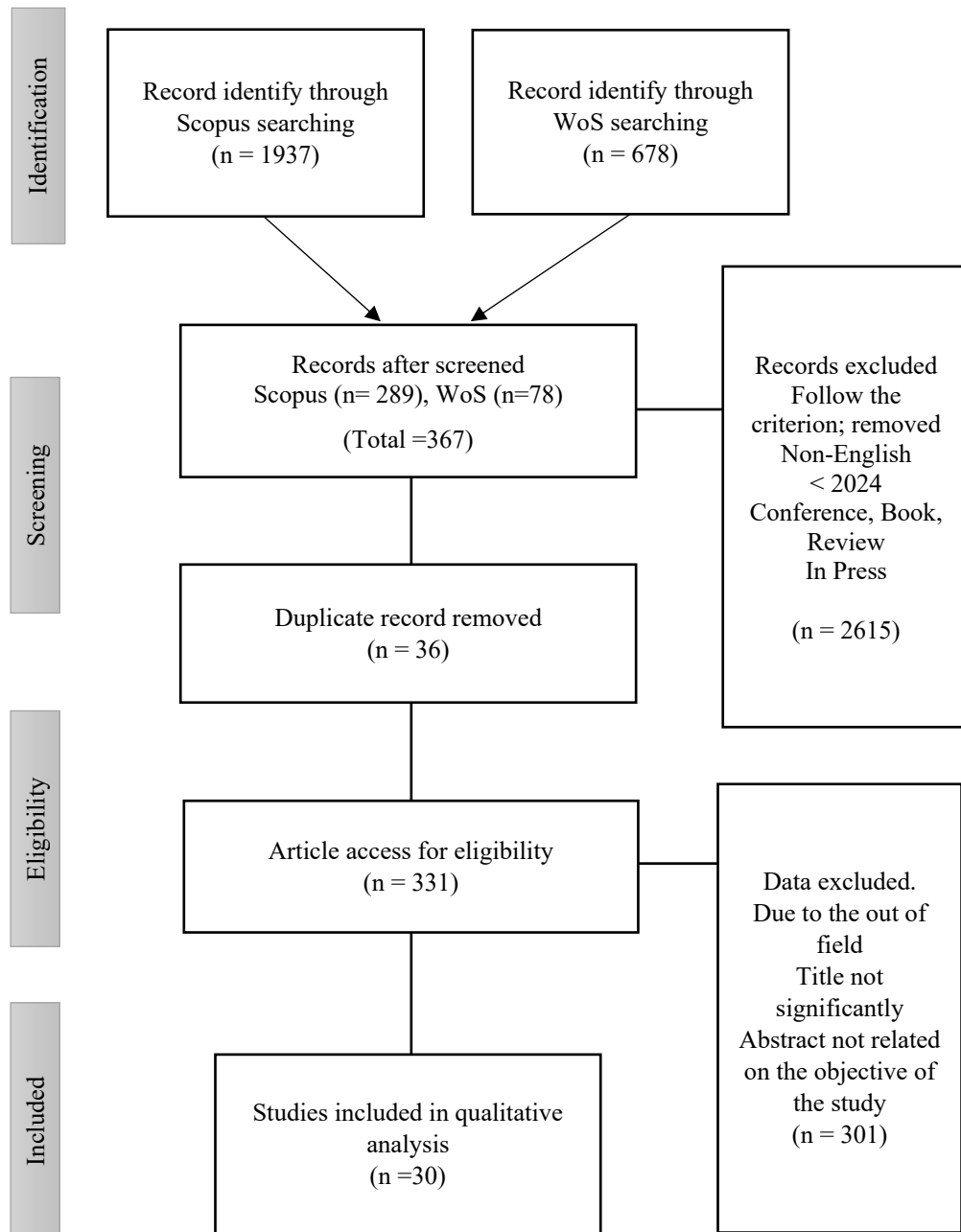


FIGURE 2. Flow diagram of the proposed searching study (Page et al., 2021)

RESULT AND FINDING

Sustainable Islamic Architecture and Heritage Conservation

Incorporation of environmental design solutions in the context of the Islamic architecture is a complex mix of cultural identity, religious ideals and adaptation to climatic conditions. According to the recent scholarship, historical architectural styles were not aesthetic solutions and designed to explicitly, practically, and critically adapt to environmental limitations, which provided important insights into contemporary sustainability. Mohson et al. (2025) insists that the morphological changes of Islamic buildings whether as complete form change or partial form change act as the historical archives of sustainable design as it can be noted in the comparison between Abbasid and other modern buildings such as the Louvre Abu Dhabi. Such a cooperation between material and performance is also measured by Abdelalim et al. (2025), who redesigns the decorative arabesque and traditional masonry, but not as ornamentation, but rather as environmental logic of use. The fact that the traditional walls of Bayt Al-Razzaz constructed using 40-cm of limestone perform much more efficiently in thermal regulation than modern concrete blocks shows that the historical methods of passive building construction were much more energy-efficient than most currently used variants that many people think they should be (Abdelalim et al., 2025).

Moreover, the focus on local resources and local engineering techniques, including the seismically robust Saka guru system in the Indonesian mosques, emphasizes the tradition of low embodied energy and durability (Sari, 2024). This is supported by Naghipour et al. (2025), who admits that the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque is stable because of the constructions methods that were highly sensitive to the specifics of the local climate, which implies that these historical principles must be restored to ensure face-saving in the context of the modern shortage of resources (Mohson et al., 2025; Naghipour et al., 2025; L. H. Sari et al., 2024).

In particular, referring to religious infrastructure, the literature defines a dilemma between the innate sustainability of traditional mosques and the managerial issues confronting modern institutions. Yu et al. (2025) uses a case example of the Raja Haji Fisabilillah Mosque in Malaysia as a model of modern success, where the Platinum Green Building Index is obtained, which shows that the Islamic stewardship (*Khalifah*) can be implemented through the high-tech ecological restoration and energy efficiency. This is in contrast with the findings of Hamidi et al. (2025), who implements the Quadruple Bottom Line model (Prosperity, People, Planet, Prophet) to Indonesian mosques and finds out that even though the spiritual aspect of the framework is robust, most religious institutions have reactive or defensive responses to proactive sustainability, especially on the social aspect of the framework, which is the People. Although

Yu et al. (2025) points to the possibility of the existence of mosques as spreading the vegetation cover and serving as ecological hubs, the necessity of the managerial paradigm shift to put these values into reality. Pre-modern constructions aged to old and traditional tend to have sustainable balance with their surroundings, which modern structures are unable to match without pre-canvassed structures (L. H. Sari et al., 2024).

On a larger city size, the Islamic ideals are applied to landscape architecture, residential planning and urban planning, with the focus on social sustainability and human relations to nature. Abowardah (2024) uses the example of the Al-Azhar Park project where the historical sites are revived by the bottom-up method and says that, besides preserving the past, this strategy can be used as the engine of social and economic revitalization of densely built areas. This need to associate urban populations with the natural environment is also emphasized by Ariff et al. (2024), who reports that there is a significant lack of connection in Malaysian low-cost housing; the work proposes biophilic design based on Islamic ideologists to reinstate the right of the residents to a natural environment of good health and integration into nature. The author also points out the rationale of returning to conventional city planning and offers statistical data that the solar orientation of the streets in the vernacular M'Zab Ksour is much more effective in forming microclimates that are much more comfortable than non-traditional designs in arid areas (Dahmani et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Salam et al. (2024) suggests that these traditional sensibilities can be developed via biomimicry, but points out that there is a research gap in practicing the successful combination of biological emulation and the Islamic cultural values. All these studies provide insights that sustainable urbanism in the Islamic world relies on a simultaneous performance of heritage and a sense of biophilic access to both be in place.

Translating these architectural insights into planning levers, three instruments emerge as particularly actionable. First, heritage overlay zones can be adopted within local development plans to protect bio-climatic building typologies such as thick masonry walls, wind-catchers, and shaded courtyards from demolition or unsympathetic alteration. Second, climate-responsive building codes can mandate passive design standards (solar orientation, natural ventilation, thermal mass) informed by vernacular precedents, reducing reliance on energy-intensive mechanical systems. Third, mosque and religious building sustainability standards can be adopted nationally, requiring new religious infrastructure to meet minimum ecological performance benchmarks. Together, these levers institutionalise the wisdom embedded in Islamic architectural heritage within contemporary regulatory frameworks.

Islamic Urbanism, Spatial Planning, and Environmental Resources

Modern sustainable development could gain the most out of the historical development of Islamic agrarian systems and urban morphology. Recent research questions received histories of the so-called Islamic Green Revolution, especially in the management of resources and space organization. An example of this would be the use of zooarchaeology (García García, 2026) in al-Andalus to propose a multi-dimensional, integrated framework of agro-ecological transformation, as opposed to the more common, historical view, which isolates irrigated agriculture and livestock management.

Roskin et al. (2025) reports on the historical ingenuity of resource management by recording the level of the Early Islamic sunken groundwater-harvesting agroecosystems in aeolian sand. Such systems also offered water security with unceasing shallow groundwater access, which showed an exemplary site-specific resilience that modern planning frequently has failed to control. Regarding city structure, Alkhresheh (2025) deplores how modernist grid patterns disrupted the historic Arab-Islamic urban structure in Riyadh by considering cars idealistic instead of community. A dialectical synthesis of the theory of fused grids and Islamic fractal geometry is proposed to recover environmental adaptability and walkability as part of the restoration of historical spatial principles, in accordance with current safety and connection requirements.

Outside of historical institutionalized agricultural and structuring modes, the concept of incorporating faith-based values in planning and controlling urban green spaces is indispensable to the discourse of environmental stewardship. Suhartanto et al. (2025) shows that holistic faith-focused experiences in urban forests, which involve sense-making and enrichment factors, have a direct positive impact on visitor satisfaction and responsible environmental behaviors among the Muslim populations. The same correlation of spiritual values and practical use can be embraced by Rochani et al. (2024), who looks at the illustration of *Waqf* (endowment) space in Semarang. According to him, *Waqf* is not only a charitable gesture but also a creator of a sustainable community that offers communal amenities and viable coexistence. In addition, Iswoyo et al. (2025) discusses the profound lack of green field in the urban areas of cities such as Makassar, suggesting that the cemetery should be optimized. Unique patterns of planting which are adapted to religious customs (symmetrical tree spacing in Islamic cemeteries, etc.), may contribute greatly to vegetation cover and preserve the culture at the same time. From the other perspective, international models of green cities to the Islamic worldview by asserting that the Quran and the Hadith offer a solid theological basis to ensure green city ecological balance (Hatta et al., 2024; Suhartanto et al., 2025)

Sustainability in urban areas must also involve the aligning of governance structures, zoning policies and legal system with Islamic ethical

guidelines. Zuraidi and Zainol (2025) uses the framework of agile cities to inform the Banda Aceh case and concludes that the inclusion of such notions as *maslahah* (public welfare) into spatial planning can contribute to the economic resilience. These strategies are to balance between modernity and cultural identity include zoning flexibly and using adaptive reuse. Nevertheless, it has not been introduced in the law yet. There are also mismatch between the supposedly Islamic-based policies in Aceh about environmental regulations (*Qanun*) and actual Aceh policy (Natsir et al., 2024). He recommends rewriting these laws to facilitate the dispute resolution procedures that are grounded in Islamic jurisprudence to make religious values work in environmental management. It is consistent with the findings of Rochani et al. (2024), who claim that treating concepts of religion as a social-environmental one by abstracting them via adaptive comprehensiveness, or similar categories into that group can make urban systems more resilient. Thus, researchers believe that the planning strategy should depart superficial labeling and integrate the Islamic values structurally into the city regulatory and economic framework.

Lastly, water resource management is a critical crossroad in technology, popular society and religion among Muslims. To explore the feasibility of Rainwater Harvesting (RWH) systems in Brunei, Suni et al. (2025) uses a long version of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The research shows that although there are technical and financial challenges, the fact that the use of recycled water in ablution is religiously acceptable is a motivating aspect towards its use. The modern sustainability potential of water is comparable to the historical tenacity of agroecosystems (sand) as described by Roskin et al. (2025), wherein investment in the sustainability of water security over long periods of time enabled the agricultural yield of arid zones. Further, the effective water management can be closely tied with overall agricultural approaches as described by García García (2026), where a continuity of care about the issue of water scarcity starts in the medieval period up to now. To facilitate the implementation of new technologies such as RWH, to achieve this, Suni et al. (2025) recommends the education and technical assistance, whereas Suhartanto et al. (2025) recommends to promote these environmental measures as an obligation of the religion, which is likely to enhance the involvement rates of people. Taken together, all these studies suggest that sustainable resource management in the areas dominated by Muslims becomes most efficient when technical solutions can be justified by cultural and religious frameworks.

These findings point toward a suite of spatial planning levers that can operationalise Islamic urbanism principles in contemporary practice. In land-use planning, the reintroduction of fractal street hierarchies and mixed-use zoning can restore walkability and reduce car dependency in rapidly expanding Muslim-majority cities. Water-sensitive urban design policies, informed by historical

agroecosystem management, can mandate rainwater harvesting systems and permeable surfaces as baseline requirements in development approvals. Waqf land can be formally recognised within national land tenure frameworks as a distinct category of community-held land, protected from privatisation and earmarked for affordable housing, urban green space, and community facilities. Regarding public space, cemetery greening programmes can be codified as a dual-purpose land use in zoning ordinances, simultaneously addressing green space deficits and cultural conservation. Climate resilience planning at the municipal level can draw on the site-specific hydrological intelligence embedded in historical Islamic water systems, integrating these lessons into flood risk mapping and drought contingency frameworks.

Green Finance, Governance, and Socio-Economic Ethics

The point of green finance, green governance and socio-economic ethics forms one of the crucial inquiries in the wider quest to incorporate Islamic values in urban sustainability. The current literature reveals the usefulness of financial tools to propel ecological aims, albeit with unequal successes across the sectors and regions. Kazak et al. (2025) says that green finance can be used as a statistically significant process to reduce the ecological footprint of carbon in Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states, but there is also an evident trade-off between economic growth and the environment. In order to achieve fiscal deficits arising in these emerging economies, Alhowaish (2025) suggests implementing Green Municipal Bonds (GMB) in requirements such as Saudi Arabia, as this type of Shariah-compliant financing mechanisms would help to fill up to 40% of municipal revenue shortfalls and promote low-carbon infrastructure construction. Nevertheless, the extent to which these Islamic financial instruments are taken in the market is varied; Khairisma et al. (2025) notes that, whereas stocks of energy and climate sectors react positively to the issue of green sukuk issuance, the response of water and land related objectives has been slow and weak. These studies in aggregate imply that although financial resources are essential (Kazak et al., 2025), their effectiveness is determined by targeted sectoral focus (Khairisma et al., 2025). Also, the development of an efficient regulatory framework that would help balance Shariah compliance with international Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) requirements (Alhowaish, 2025).

In addition to these financial mechanisms, according to the literature, there is a need to incorporate religious ethics within legal and governance systems to generate just sustainability. Mascon et al. (2025) points out a problematic gap in waste management in Indonesia where weak enforcement of the law and the lack of funding remains even though the potential of Islamic-based tools such as Green Zakat and Eco-Waqf exists. The need of balancing national environmental

law and *fiqh al-bi'ah* (environmental jurisprudence) to establish a binding model of law. This correlates with the discussion by Allahham (2024), who compares capitalist urban reform with Islamic traditions, regarding the historical practice of Islamic built environments in achieving social equity and sustainability by rights-based governance, which the contemporary capitalist manner of doing so fails to achieve.

A modern notion of governance activity as discussed by Alibašić (2024), demonstrates that the effectiveness of resiliency planning in Muslim majority countries is not necessarily a result of religious identity but an indicator of pluralist societies, strong economies and inclusive governments. Successful governance therefore must be a combination of traditional ethical frameworks (Allahham, 2024), integration of religious principles into legal frameworks through their formatting (Maskun et al., 2025), and incorporation of modern administrative inclusivity (Alibašić, 2024).

Individual behavior and neighborhood ethics are players at the micro-social level that contribute significantly to the sustainability of any urban center and which are moderated strongly by religiosity. A cross-cultural example of this is given by Zafar and Abu-Hussin (2025) showing that religiosity is a strong predictor of pro-environmental behavior in Muslim-majority nations, in which there are more social norms that support environmental ethics compared to non-Muslim societies where faith is more individual. The behavioral connection is supported by Baran et al. (2024), which shows that religiosity plays a significant role in influencing the intention to minimize food waste among the Muslim population, and environmental concern serves as a mediator. To operationalise these values, schools are key vectors. Aulia et al. (2024) proves that eco-pesantrens (Islamic boarding schools) are effective in teaching green behaviours to children with role modeling by its leaders and habituation to sustainable behaviours because of their location in Indonesia. As a result, to achieve a sustainable urban culture, the intrinsic motivation that faith offers to people by itself (Baran et al., 2024; Zafar & Abu-Hussin, 2025) needs to be exploited, and community institutions should be used to exemplify and implement these abstract concepts into everyday routines (Aulia et al., 2024).

The integration of these various strands helps in coming up with an Islamic truth that to establish Islamic principles to modern sustainability systems, it is important that an integrated approach should be adopted that incorporates realms of strategic management, finance, and ethics. Sari et al. (2024) demonstrates this integration in the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSME) sector and confirms that when the green management and digital transformation are adjusted to the Halal business ethics, they significantly improve ecological, social and economic performance. This smaller-scale achievement is reflected in the macro-scales suggestions of Kazak et al. (2025)

and Alhowaish (2025), who propose policy tools that balance economic growth and ecology protection. Nevertheless, issues on gaps in implementation and regulatory disharmony are still imminent (Maskun et al., 2025). Ultimately, the literature suggests that achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in this context relies on a synergistic model where financial innovation (Khairisma et al., 2025), governance (Allahham, 2024), and faith-driven behavioral changes (R. K. Sari et al., 2024; Zafar & Abu-Hussin, 2025) converge and form resilient and ethically grounded urban systems.

The literature collectively points toward a layered financing and governance architecture that planners and policymakers can adopt. At the financing lever, municipalities in Muslim-majority countries can issue Green Municipal Bonds structured as Shariah-compliant instruments, directing proceeds specifically toward low-carbon infrastructure, affordable housing, and climate adaptation, addressing the municipal revenue gaps identified by Alhowaish (2025). Green sukuk frameworks should be expanded beyond energy and climate sectors to cover water infrastructure and urban land rehabilitation, correcting the sectoral imbalance noted by Khairisma et al. (2025). At the governance lever, Waqf institutions can be restructured as urban land banks, acquiring and holding strategic parcels for public benefit uses a model that integrates traditional endowment law with modern land assembly mechanisms. Environmental jurisprudence (fiqh al-bi'ah) should be formally codified into national environmental legislation, giving Islamic ethical principles binding legal status rather than remaining as aspirational policy references. At the participation lever, eco-pesantren networks and mosque-based environmental committees can be formally recognised as community planning partners, channelling faith-driven behavioural change into structured neighbourhood improvement programmes. Finally, at the individual and household level, religiosity-based environmental education can be integrated into national sustainability literacy campaigns, leveraging the demonstrated link between faith and pro-environmental behaviour.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the current study show that there is consistency in the existing literature in that Islam is seen as a holistic framework for the path of sustainable urban development with a significant emphasis on the principles of stewardship, balance, and the unity of creation. Foundational concepts such as tawhid, and the role of human as khalifah, provide an ethical basis integrated with the ecological, social, and economic dimensions in a coherent manner. Previous work has also shown that traditional Islamic cities inherently incorporated the principles of sustainability in the form of compact cities, with natural ventilation and communal shared spaces which facilitated social cohesion and efficient use of resources.

At the level of planning practice, this review identifies seven actionable lever categories through which Islamic sustainability principles can be institutionalised: (1) governance — embedding Shariah-informed environmental jurisprudence into national planning law and establishing Hisbah-modelled oversight bodies; (2) land use — adopting heritage overlay zones and fractal street hierarchy guidelines in local development plans; (3) housing — recognising Waqf land as a distinct tenure category for affordable and community housing provision; (4) public space — mandating mosque greening, cemetery dual-use zoning, and biophilic design standards in urban parks; (5) climate resilience — integrating passive design codes and water-sensitive urban design requirements informed by vernacular Islamic precedents; (6) financing — expanding Shariah-compliant green municipal bonds and sukuk to cover a broader range of urban sustainability objectives; and (7) participation — formalising community consultation through Shura-based planning committees and recognising faith institutions as neighbourhood planning partners. Together, these levers provide urban planners and policymakers with a structured, culturally grounded toolkit for translating Islamic urbanism from theory into built reality.

Contemporary trends in the literature show a resurgence of interest in adapting these approaches of Islamic architecture and urban planning to respond to current challenges in modern society, such as climate change and social fragmentation. In addition, this synthesis recognizes the remarkable contribution of Islam to promote a discourse on the sustainable city through the frame of the objectives of the Islamic legislation (maqasid al-shariah), especially the protection of life, intellect, family, and property. This perspective privileges as a meaningful alternative to the purely technocratic models for sustainability the incorporation of spiritual and cultural dimensions in urban planning practices. The results also hint that urban policies which are sensitive to local religious and cultural identities have the capacity to increase public acceptance and environmentally responsible behavior. Consequently, the integration of Islamic ethical values into urban planning aside from strengthening environmental resilience also contributes to creating more inclusive, resilient and human-centered cities.

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