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Islamic economics and sustainable development: a systematic literature review

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Abstract
This study systematically synthesises the Scopus-indexed literature at the intersection of Islamic economics and sustainable development in order to map publication trends, delineate the dominant thematic and conceptual domains, and identify research gaps that inform a forward-looking research agenda. The review was conducted using the Scientific Procedures and Rationales for Systematic Literature Reviews (SPAR-4-SLR) protocol and reported in accordance with PRISMA 2020. A structured Boolean search of Scopus returned 117 documents. After the removal of ineligible document types and non-English records, 71 journal articles and reviews were assessed for eligibility and quality; 20 studies satisfied all inclusion and quality criteria and were retained for qualitative synthesis. The corpus is recent and expanding: 80% of the included studies were published from 2022 onward, and 55% in 2025–2026. The literature is dominated by conceptual work (13 of 20 studies) and is concentrated in Muslim-majority Asia and the Gulf, though contributions from Thailand, China, and the United Kingdom signal growing internationalisation. Six interconnected thematic domains were identified: the maqāṣid al-sharīʿah as a foundational frame, Islamic finance and banking, financial inclusion, Islamic social finance (zakat and waqf), the halal industry and green economy, and ESG and sustainability reporting. By integrating a rigorous review protocol with an Islamic-economics lens, the study offers the first integrative map of this specific corpus and a structured agenda emphasising empirical, operational, and environmental research. The review is bounded by a single database, English-language coverage, and the specific search string employed.

Keywords: Islamic Economics, Islamic Finance, Islamic Social Finance, Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah, Sustainable Development.

Introduction

The pursuit of sustainable development has become one of the defining preoccupations of contemporary economic thought. Since the World Commission on Environment and Development articulated the now-canonical definition of development that meets present needs without compromising the capacity of future generations to meet their own (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987), and more recently since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015), scholars and policymakers alike have sought economic paradigms capable of reconciling material prosperity with social equity and ecological stewardship (Sachs, 2015). The persistence of poverty, widening inequality, financial instability, and environmental degradation has intensified scrutiny of the conventional, growth-centred economic model and has opened intellectual space for value-based and ethically grounded alternatives.

It is within this context that Islamic economics has attracted renewed scholarly attention. Grounded in the doctrine of divine unity (tawḥīd), the vicegerency of humankind over creation (khilāfah), and the imperative of justice (ʿadl), Islamic economics advances a normative vision in which economic activity is subordinated to higher moral and social objectives (Chapra, 1992). The prohibition of interest (ribā), the discouragement of excessive uncertainty and speculation, the institutionalisation of almsgiving (zakat) and endowment (waqf), and the overarching purposes of the Shariʿah (maqāṣid al-sharīʿah) collectively orient the economy toward the preservation of faith, life, intellect, progeny, and wealth (Chapra, 2008; Dusuki & Abdullah, 2007). These commitments resonate strongly with the economic, social, and environmental pillars of sustainable development, suggesting a conceptual affinity that has become an increasingly active site of inquiry.

The practical salience of this affinity is difficult to overstate. The global Islamic finance industry has expanded into a multi-trillion-dollar sector spanning banking, capital markets, and insurance (Iqbal & Mirakhor, 2011); institutions of zakat and waqf are being revitalised as instruments of poverty alleviation and social provisioning

(Ahmed, 2004); and the halal industry, green sukuk, and Shariʿah-compliant responsible investment have emerged as fast-growing frontiers. Since 2015, the alignment of these instruments with the Sustainable Development Goals has become an explicit concern of researchers, regulators, and multilateral bodies, producing a rapidly accumulating and increasingly heterogeneous body of literature.

Despite this growth, the scholarship remains notably fragmented. A substantial share of existing work concentrates narrowly on Islamic banking and finance, treating sustainability as a peripheral corollary rather than as a central organising theme, while studies addressing zakat, waqf, the halal industry, the green economy, and environmental governance tend to develop in relative isolation from one another. Existing reviews are frequently confined to a single instrument or sub-domain and are not always underpinned by transparent, replicable review protocols. Consequently, the field lacks an integrative and methodologically rigorous synthesis that connects Islamic economics, understood broadly, with the sustainable-development agenda as a whole. This absence constitutes the gap that the present review addresses.

To address this gap, the present study conducts a systematic literature review that applies the SPAR-4-SLR protocol (Paul et al., 2021) and adheres to the PRISMA 2020 reporting guideline (Page et al., 2021) to a corpus retrieved from Scopus. The novelty of the study lies in its integrative scope: rather than examining a single instrument, it maps the entire conceptual terrain in which Islamic economics and sustainable development intersect, while combining the analytical discipline of a business-and-management review protocol with the normative depth of the maqāṣid framework. The review is guided by three research questions concerning, respectively, the publication trends and bibliographic characteristics of the field (RQ1), its dominant thematic and conceptual domains (RQ2), and the research gaps and future directions it implies (RQ3).

The study contributes on three fronts. Theoretically, it consolidates a dispersed literature into a coherent thematic architecture and clarifies the conceptual bridges between the maqāṣid al-sharīʿah and the Sustainable Development Goals. Methodologically, it demonstrates the transparent application of an established review protocol to an Islamic-economics corpus, thereby offering a replicable template for subsequent reviews in the field. Practically, it distils implications for policymakers, financial institutions, and social-finance bodies seeking to operationalise Islamic economic principles in the service of sustainability. The remainder of the manuscript develops the conceptual background, details the method, presents the results in accordance with the three research questions, and discusses the findings before setting out conclusions, implications, limitations, and future directions.

Conceptual Background

Foundations of Islamic Economics

Islamic economics is best understood not as a technical subfield of conventional economics but as a distinct paradigm anchored in a comprehensive worldview (Aydin, 2013). Its axiomatic foundation is tawḥīd, from which follow the principles of trusteeship and accountability: resources are a trust (amānah) for which human beings, as vicegerents (khalīfah), are answerable. Justice (ʿadl) and benevolence (iḥsān) function as governing norms, while the prohibition of ribā, of excessive uncertainty (gharar), and of gambling (maysir) delimits the boundaries of permissible economic conduct (Chapra, 1992; Iqbal & Mirakhor, 2011). Distribution occupies a central place in this paradigm; instruments such as zakat, ṣadaqah, and waqf are designed to circulate wealth, restrain its concentration, and secure a dignified minimum for the vulnerable (Ahmed, 2004).

The purposive dimension of this framework is captured by the maqāṣid al-sharīʿah, classically enumerated as the protection of faith, life, intellect, progeny, and wealth. Chapra (2008) reframes development itself in maqāṣid terms, arguing that authentic human wellbeing (falāḥ) encompasses moral, social, and material flourishing rather than mere income growth. This purposive orientation gives Islamic economics an intrinsically multidimensional conception of progress, one that anticipates several of the concerns later formalised in the sustainable-development discourse.

The Sustainable Development Paradigm

Sustainable development, as articulated in the Brundtland Report and subsequently operationalised through the Sustainable Development Goals, rests on the integration of economic, social, and environmental objectives (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987; United Nations, 2015). The triple-bottom-line formulation popularised in management scholarship similarly insists that performance be evaluated along economic, social, and ecological axes rather than financial return alone (Elkington, 1997). More recently, environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria have become a dominant vocabulary through which investors and firms operationalise sustainability commitments. The paradigm is thus characterised by a deliberate widening of the evaluative frame, from narrow efficiency toward a plural set of intergenerational and distributive concerns.

Points of Convergence and Contestation

A growing literature contends that the ethical architecture of Islamic economics is substantively congruent with the sustainable-development agenda. The maqāṣid's protection of life, intellect, and progeny maps intuitively onto goals concerning health, education, and intergenerational equity; its emphasis on distributive justice speaks to poverty and inequality; and its trusteeship ethic provides a principled basis for environmental stewardship (Dusuki & Abdullah, 2007). At the same time, scholars have voiced a critical caution. Asutay (2007, 2012) argues that the practice of contemporary Islamic finance has often diverged from the aspirations of the Islamic moral economy, prioritising formal Shariʿah compliance and commercial parity with conventional finance over genuine social and developmental impact. This tension between normative promise and empirical practice frames much of the reviewed literature and recurs throughout the synthesis that follows.

Method

A systematic literature review was selected because the research objectives require a transparent, replicable, and comprehensive account of an accumulating and dispersed body of scholarship (Tranfield et al., 2003; Snyder, 2019). In contrast to narrative reviews, the systematic approach minimises selection bias through explicit protocols governing search, screening, and appraisal, thereby enhancing the reliability and auditability of the synthesis (Kraus et al., 2020; Lim et al., 2022). The review was structured according to the SPAR-4-SLR protocol and reported in accordance with PRISMA 2020, an approach consistent with prior systematic reviews conducted by the author's research group in adjacent domains (Herlina et al., 2023; Ifdil et al., 2025).

The SPAR-4-SLR Protocol

The review followed the three-stage SPAR-4-SLR protocol proposed by Paul et al. (2021), comprising the assembling, arranging, and assessing of the literature. In the assembling stage, the domain and research questions were specified and the source material was identified and acquired through a structured search of Scopus. In the arranging stage, the retrieved records were organised and purified through duplicate removal and the systematic application of inclusion and exclusion criteria. In the assessing stage, the surviving records underwent full-text evaluation and a structured quality appraisal, after which the retained studies were subjected to thematic and bibliographic analysis and reported. Each stage is mapped onto the PRISMA 2020 flow below.

Reporting Guideline: PRISMA 2020

The flow of records through the review was documented in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 statement (Page et al., 2021), which distinguishes the phases of identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. The number of records retained and excluded at each phase, together with the reasons for exclusion, is reported in Table 1 and may be rendered as a flow diagram (Figure 1) in the final manuscript.

Search Strategy and Search String

Scopus was selected as the sole database for identification on account of its broad, quality-controlled coverage of peer-reviewed literature in the social sciences, business, economics, and management, and its rich metadata, which supports both systematic screening and bibliographic analysis. The search was executed on the article title, abstract, and keyword fields using the following Boolean string:

TITLE-ABS-KEY (("Islamic Economics" OR "Islamic Economy" OR "Islamic Economic Development" OR "Islamic Economic System") AND ("Sustainable Development" OR "Sustainable Development Goals" OR SDGs OR Sustainability))

The search returned an initial pool of 117 documents, which entered the identification phase described below.

Eligibility Criteria

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were defined a priori. A record was included where it was an English-language, peer-reviewed journal article or review indexed in Scopus, substantively and directly concerned with the intersection of Islamic economics and sustainable development, and available in full text. Records were excluded where they were conference papers, books, book chapters, editorials, notes, letters, or errata; were written in a language other than English; were duplicates; addressed topics not directly relevant to the review; or failed to provide sufficient methodological information to permit appraisal.

Selection Process and Outcome

The selection proceeded through the four PRISMA phases. In the identification phase, the 117 records retrieved from Scopus were compiled; no duplicate records were detected. In the screening phase, records were removed on the basis of document type and language: 43 records were excluded as ineligible document types (13 books, 22 book chapters, and 8 conference papers), and a further 3 non-English records (in Malay, Indonesian, and Persian) were excluded, leaving 71 English-language journal articles and reviews. In the eligibility phase, the full texts of these 71 records were assessed against the inclusion criteria and appraised for quality; 51 records were excluded because the intersection of Islamic economics and sustainable development was not their central focus, because sustainability entered only incidentally, or because they provided insufficient methodological information. The remaining 20 studies satisfied all inclusion and quality criteria and were included in the qualitative synthesis. These 20 studies are listed in full in Table 2 and form the evidentiary basis of the results reported below.

Table 1. <PRISMA 2020 selection process>

Phase / criterion	Records (n)
Identification – records retrieved from Scopus	117
Duplicates removed	0
Screening – excluded: ineligible document type (13 books, 22 book chapters, 8 conference papers)	43
Screening – excluded: non-English (Malay, Indonesian, Persian)	3
Records assessed for eligibility (English articles and reviews)	71
Excluded at eligibility and quality appraisal (topic not central / sustainability incidental / insufficient information)	51
Studies included in qualitative synthesis	20

Note. Document-type and language exclusions were derived directly from the Scopus metadata of the 117 retrieved records; eligibility and quality exclusions were determined by full-text screening against the inclusion criteria.

Quality Assessment

Because a systematic review is only as trustworthy as the studies it synthesises, a structured quality appraisal was conducted before the final synthesis, adapting quality-assessment practice established for systematic reviews in business, management, and economics (Tranfield et al., 2003; Kraus et al., 2020). Each record that passed the document-type and language screening was appraised against eight criteria, namely: relevance to the research objectives; relevance to Islamic economics; relevance to sustainable development; methodological transparency; clarity of findings; availability of the full text; appropriateness of publication type; and absence of duplication. Each criterion was scored, and only studies satisfying all essential inclusion criteria and attaining the predefined threshold were retained. The appraisal was documented in a quality-assessment matrix so that the basis for the retention or exclusion of each study is fully auditable, ensuring that the final corpus of 20 studies comprised only high-quality, directly relevant, peer-reviewed contributions.

Data Extraction and Analysis

A standardised extraction form captured, for each included study, its bibliographic attributes (authorship, year, journal, and country), contextual and methodological attributes (research design and analytical approach), and substantive attributes (principal themes and their articulation with sustainable development). Two complementary analytical strategies were then applied. For RQ1, a descriptive bibliographic analysis characterised the corpus by year, outlet, geographical provenance, contributing authors, research method, and document type. For RQ2, a thematic synthesis following an inductive, code-to-theme logic (Braun & Clarke, 2006) grouped recurring concepts into a parsimonious set of higher-order domains and integrated them into a narrative synthesis. For RQ3, a gap analysis interrogated the thematic and methodological profile of the corpus to derive a future research agenda.

Results and Discussion

RQ1: Publication Trends and Bibliographic Characteristics

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The 20 included studies, which constitute the evidentiary basis of this review, are presented in Table 2, together with their year, source, geographical provenance, methodological approach, and thematic domain. The bibliographic analysis that follows draws directly on this corpus.

Table 2. <Characteristics of the 20 included studies>

#	Study	Yr	Source	Country	Method	Thematic domain
1	Ibrahim et al. (2011)	2011	European Journal of Social Sciences	Malaysia	Conceptual	Maqasid & foundational frame
2	Khan (2019)	2019	Journal of King Abdulaziz University, Islamic Economics	Qatar	Conceptual	Islamic finance & banking
3	Qadir & Zaman (2019)	2019	International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education	Pakistan	Conceptual	Maqasid & foundational frame
4	Fageh (2022)	2022	Journal of Islamic Economic Laws	Indonesia	Conceptual	Halal industry, green economy & finance
5	Khan & Haneef (2022)	2022	Journal of Islamic Monetary Economics and Finance	Bangladesh	Conceptual/Review	Maqasid & foundational frame
6	Yasmeen (2023)	2023	Islamic Quarterly	Oman	Conceptual	Islamic social finance
7	Al-Isawi (2024)	2024	Journal of Ecohumanism	Iraq	Conceptual	Financial inclusion
8	Khan & Tabet (2024)	2024	ISRA International Journal of Islamic Finance	Malaysia	Conceptual	Islamic finance & banking
9	Yasmeen et al. (2024)	2024	International Journal of Islamic Finance and Sustainable Development	Oman	Conceptual	Maqasid & foundational frame
10	Achyar (2025)	2025	Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research	Thailand	Quantitative	ESG & sustainability reporting
11	Al Fayyadh et al. (2025)	2025	Research Journal in Advanced Humanities	United Arab Emirates	Conceptual	Islamic social finance
12	Asni et al. (2025)	2025	Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research	Malaysia	Qualitative	Islamic social finance
13	Li et al. (2025)	2025	International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management	China	Quantitative	Halal industry, green economy & finance
14	Parven (2025)	2025	Islamiyyat	Bangladesh	Conceptual	Halal industry, green economy & finance
15	Sudana et al. (2025)	2025	Al-Muamalat	Indonesia	Qualitative	Halal industry, green economy & finance
16	Achyar (2026)	2026	Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal	Thailand	Quantitative	Halal industry, green economy & finance
17	Ahmed (2026)	2026	Intellectual Discourse	United Kingdom	Conceptual	Maqasid & foundational frame
18	Dunur'aeni et al. (2026)	2026	Mawaddah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam	Indonesia	Qualitative	Islamic social finance
19	Mahyudi (2026)	2026	Intellectual Discourse	Malaysia	Conceptual	Islamic finance & banking
20	Othman (2026)	2026	Environmental Economics	Jordan	Quantitative	Halal industry, green economy & finance

Note. "Study" gives the short in-text citation; full references appear in Appendix A. Country denotes the affiliation of the lead author. Method reflects the dominant approach reported in each study.

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With respect to the temporal distribution, research at this intersection is recent and expanding. Although the earliest included study dates from 2011, publication activity accelerates markedly thereafter: sixteen of the twenty studies (80 per cent) appeared from 2022 onward, and eleven (55 per cent) in 2025–2026 alone. This concentration, coinciding with and following the consolidation of the Sustainable Development Goals agenda, indicates a field in an active phase of growth rather than one that has reached maturity.

With respect to document type, the corpus comprises nineteen research articles and one review, a direct consequence of the inclusion criteria, which excluded conference papers, books, and book chapters. With respect to research method, conceptual and theoretical contributions clearly predominate: thirteen of the twenty studies are conceptual in orientation, whereas four adopt quantitative empirical designs and three employ qualitative methods. The scarcity of large-sample empirical work is a defining feature of the corpus and directly informs the gap analysis reported under RQ3.

With respect to geographical provenance, the literature is concentrated in, but not confined to, Muslim-majority contexts. Lead-author affiliations cluster in Malaysia (four studies) and Indonesia (three studies), followed by Bangladesh, Oman, and Thailand (two each), with single contributions from Qatar, Pakistan, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, China, the United Kingdom, and Jordan. The presence of contributions authored from Thailand, China, and the United Kingdom signals a gradual internationalisation of the field beyond its traditional centres, even as empirical attention to Muslim-minority and lower-income settings remains comparatively limited.

With respect to publication outlets and authors, the corpus is notably dispersed: the twenty studies are spread across eighteen distinct journals, with only the Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research and Intellectual Discourse contributing two studies each. This dispersion reflects the interdisciplinary character of the field, which spans dedicated Islamic-economics journals as well as outlets in sustainability, environmental economics, and development studies. At the author level, only three researchers (Khan T., Yasmeen K., and Achyar D. H.) contributed more than one included study, indicating an emerging rather than an established community of specialised authors.

RQ2: Thematic and Conceptual Domains

The thematic synthesis organised the substantive content of the corpus into six interconnected domains, bound together by the overarching normative frame of the maqāṣid al-sharīʿah. The distribution of studies across these domains is itself informative, and is summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. <Distribution of included studies across thematic domains>

Thematic domain	Studies (n)
Halal industry, green economy, and green finance	6
Maqāṣid al-sharīʿah as an integrative frame	5
Islamic social finance (zakat, waqf, social entrepreneurship)	4
Islamic finance and banking	3
Financial inclusion	1
ESG and sustainability reporting	1

Note. Each study was assigned to its single most salient domain; the domains are nonetheless interrelated and several studies touch on more than one.

The maqāṣid al-sharīʿah as an integrative foundational frame

The largest cluster of conceptual studies advances the maqāṣid al-sharīʿah as the principal bridge between Islamic economics and sustainable development. Contributions in this domain articulate the foundational concepts, principles, and management of sustainable economic development from an Islamic perspective (Ibrahim et al., 2011), read sustainable development through an explicitly Islamic lens (Qadir & Zaman, 2019), and examine religious responses to the Sustainable Development Goals from an Islamic standpoint (Khan & Haneef, 2022). More recent work proposes integrative frameworks that align Islamic principles with the SDGs (Yasmeen et al., 2024) and contrasts alternative Islamic economic systems in terms of their capacity to advance sustainable development (Ahmed, 2026). Collectively, these studies establish the normative correspondence between the maqāṣid and the multidimensional sustainability agenda, even as they remain largely conceptual in their treatment of that correspondence.

Islamic finance and banking as vehicles for sustainability

A second domain positions Islamic finance and banking as instruments through which sustainability objectives may be pursued. Studies here address the reform of Islamic finance for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in light of the maqāṣid (Khan, 2019), the design of sustainable Islamic financial engineering with reference to the Gulf Cooperation Council economies (Khan & Tabet, 2024), and the aspiration toward a sustainable and humane economy grounded in the ideal of the homo islamicus (Mahyudi, 2026). This domain carries the field's central critical tension, echoing the concern that the sector's practice has gravitated toward formal compliance and commercial parity rather than realising its declared social and developmental aspirations (Asutay, 2012).

Financial inclusion

A third domain treats financial inclusion as a channel connecting Islamic economics to sustainable development, examining Islamic economic mechanisms for achieving inclusiveness and the role of Islamic finance in extending sustainable financial services to underserved populations (Al-Isawi, 2024). Although represented by a single included study, this theme overlaps substantially with the social-finance domain and is analytically distinct in its explicit focus on access to, and participation in, the financial system as a developmental end in itself.

Islamic social finance: zakat, waqf, and social entrepreneurship

A fourth domain addresses Islamic social finance as a redistributive and welfare-enhancing set of institutions. Studies conceptualise Islamic social entrepreneurship as a means of empowering communities for sustainable development (Yasmeen, 2023), develop Islamic economic approaches to poverty alleviation (Al Fayyadh et al., 2025), design sustainable zakat frameworks delivered through interest-free microcredit (qarḍ ḥasan) for asnaf entrepreneurs (Asni et al., 2025), and analyse waqf as a sustainable fiscal instrument, including in the context of disaster management (Dunur'aeni et al., 2026). This domain represents the most direct expression of Islamic economics' distributive ethic within the sustainability agenda and connects visibly to the goals concerning poverty and social provisioning.

The halal industry, green economy, and green finance

The largest domain overall extends the analysis into the real and environmental economy. Studies examine the synergy between the halal industry and the green industry within a maqāṣid framework (Fageh, 2022), advance an Islamic perspective on an environmentally sustainable green economy (Parven, 2025), and develop sustainability models for Muslim small and medium-sized enterprises that integrate the triple bottom line with Islamic economic principles (Sudana et al., 2025). A distinctive empirical sub-strand investigates green Islamic finance, including the relationship between natural-resource endowment, institutional quality, and sustainable productivity (Li et al., 2025), Islamic climate bonds for electric vehicles and renewable energy (Achyar, 2026), and green sukuk and financial technology as drivers of environmental finance efficiency (Othman, 2026). This domain is where the corpus most actively engages the environmental dimension of sustainability, and it accounts for most of the empirical work in the review.

ESG and sustainability reporting

A sixth, still-nascent domain concerns the convergence between Islamic economic ethics and the environmental, social, and governance agenda, exemplified by empirical work on sustainability disclosure and its acceleration through digital reporting standards in Islamic banks (Achyar, 2025). Although represented by a single included study, this domain signals an emerging research frontier in which the accountability of Islamic financial institutions for their social and environmental performance is beginning to be examined empirically.

RQ3: Research Gaps and Future Directions

The bibliographic and thematic structure of the corpus reveals four categories of gap. First, a methodological gap is pronounced: with thirteen of twenty studies conceptual in orientation and only four adopting quantitative empirical designs, claims regarding the developmental and sustainability contributions of Islamic economic instruments rest predominantly on principled argument rather than measured outcomes. Future research should prioritise empirical, longitudinal, and impact-oriented designs capable of estimating the actual effect of instruments such as zakat, waqf, and green sukuk on defined sustainability indicators.

Second, a theoretical gap persists. Although the conceptual affinity between the maqāṣid and the Sustainable Development Goals is asserted across the foundational cluster, the corpus has not yet consolidated a robust, operational framework that translates the maqāṣid into measurable constructs and indicators. Future work should develop and validate maqāṣid-based measurement frameworks that render this correspondence empirically tractable.

Third, a geographical gap is apparent. The lead-author affiliations concentrate in Malaysia and Indonesia and, more broadly, in Muslim-majority Asia and the Gulf, leaving Muslim-minority settings, Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, and lower-income contexts comparatively underexamined. Comparative and cross-country studies would enhance the external validity of the field's claims and illuminate how institutional context conditions the sustainability contribution of Islamic economics.

Fourth, a thematic imbalance characterises the field. While the halal, green-economy, and green-finance domain and the foundational maqāṣid domain are comparatively well populated, financial inclusion and ESG and sustainability reporting are each represented by only a single included study, despite their evident policy importance. Strengthening these underdeveloped domains, and integrating the presently siloed strands into a more coherent research programme, constitutes a further priority for future inquiry.

Conclusion

This systematic literature review synthesised the Scopus-indexed scholarship at the intersection of Islamic economics and sustainable development, applying the SPAR-4-SLR protocol and reporting in accordance with PRISMA 2020. From an initial pool of 117 documents, a transparent process of screening, eligibility assessment, and structured quality appraisal yielded 20 high-quality studies for qualitative synthesis. The review found a recent and rapidly expanding but geographically concentrated and predominantly conceptual field, organised around six interconnected domains: the maqāṣid al-sharīʿah as an integrative frame, Islamic finance and banking, financial inclusion, Islamic social finance, the halal industry and green economy, and ESG and sustainability reporting. It further identified methodological, theoretical, geographical, and thematic gaps that together define a clear agenda for future research. By offering an integrative map of this corpus and a replicable review template, the study lays a foundation for a more empirically grounded and theoretically consolidated programme of inquiry.

The review carries several implications for practice and policy. For policymakers and regulators in Muslim-majority economies, the findings underscore the value of strengthening the governance, transparency, and measurement of zakat and waqf institutions so that their alignment with poverty- and welfare-related goals can be realised at scale. For Islamic financial institutions, the analysis indicates that credibility on sustainability will increasingly depend on demonstrable developmental and environmental impact rather than formal compliance alone, and that maqāṣid-informed disclosure, of the kind emerging in the ESG domain, can help close the gap between aspiration and practice. For social-finance and development bodies, the prominence of the social-finance and inclusion themes highlights the practical payoff of Shariʿah-compliant instruments designed for underserved populations. Several limitations qualify the findings. First, identification relied on a single database, Scopus; although Scopus offers extensive and quality-controlled coverage, the exclusion of other databases and of grey literature may have omitted relevant contributions. Second, the review was confined to English-language publications, which excluded three non-English records at screening and may under-represent scholarship published in Arabic, Indonesian, Malay, and other languages central to the field. Third, the boundaries of the search string, while deliberately constructed, inevitably shape the corpus, and alternative term combinations might surface additional studies. Fourth, the classification of studies by method and by thematic domain, though systematically applied, involves an element of interpretive judgement. These limitations are typical of systematic reviews and do not undermine the transparency or reproducibility of the process.

Building on the gaps identified under RQ3, future research should pursue four priorities. It should, first, expand the empirical base through large-sample, longitudinal, and impact-evaluation designs that quantify the sustainability contribution of specific Islamic economic instruments. It should, second, develop and validate operational maqāṣid-based frameworks and indicators that render the maqāṣid–SDG correspondence measurable. It should, third, broaden the geographical scope of inquiry through comparative studies encompassing Muslim-minority, African, Central Asian, and lower-income contexts. It should, fourth, redress the field's thematic imbalance by strengthening the under-developed domains of financial inclusion and ESG reporting and by integrating the currently siloed strands into a coherent and cumulative research programme. Methodologically, subsequent reviews might extend the corpus to additional databases and languages and incorporate quantitative bibliometric techniques such as co-citation and keyword co-occurrence analysis to complement the thematic synthesis undertaken here.

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