Integrating Classical Islamic Scholarship with the Sustainable Development Goals: A Narrative and Thematic Review

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Abstract

This investigation examines the Sustainable Development Goals and their alignment with classical Muslim scholarship, like Ibn Khaldun, Al-Farabi, Al-Ghazali, and Ibn Sina. The contemporary academic discourse is largely secular, with strands focusing decades on Islamic finance, for example, or maqāsid al-sharīʿah. However, the literature on Islamic classical thought and modern development is very rare. Using the narrative review, the author has engaged in primary and secondary social justice, human development, economic and finance ethics, governance, and the environment from the classical manuscripts and from Scopus and Google Scholar, to social justice, human development, and the environment that is secondary in the literature. The results of classical social scholars in their discourse have emphasized the social development goals of justice, equity, education, public welfare, balanced governance, and environmental moral governance. Ibn Khaldun's concepts of 'umran and 'asabiyyah, Al-Farabi's vision of the virtuous city, political theodemocracy of Al-Ghazali, ethical economics, and holistic health of Ibn Sina with the environment offer an ethical vision for inclusive and sustainable development. The mapping of these themes has signified that classical Islamic thought is congruent with the contemporary development of public policies in the rest of the Muslim world, especially with those pillars of social development. This research enhances the conversation regarding development by detailing the historical perspectives of Islam and distilling actionable lessons for modern governance, education, social welfare, and sustainability.

Keywords: Classical Muslim Scholars; SDG; Social Justice; Environmental Ethics

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji Tujuan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan (Sustainable Development Goals/SDGs), pemikiran para ulama muslim klasik seperti Ibn Khaldun, Al-Farabi, Al-Ghazali, dan Ibn Sina, serta keterkaitannya dengan tradisi keilmuan Islam klasik. Diskursus akademik kontemporer cenderung bersifat sekuler, dengan sebagian kajian yang selama beberapa dekade berfokus pada keuangan Islam atau maqāṣid al-sharīʿah. Namun, literatur yang menghubungkan pemikiran Islam klasik dengan pembangunan modern masih sangat terbatas. Melalui metode narrative review, penulis menelaah sumber primer dan sekunder mengenai keadilan sosial, pembangunan manusia, etika ekonomi dan keuangan, tata kelola, serta lingkungan, baik dari manuskrip klasik maupun dari publikasi di Scopus dan Google Scholar, untuk memetakan tema-tema keadilan sosial, pembangunan manusia, dan lingkungan yang dibahas dalam literatur sekunder. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa para sarjana sosial klasik telah menekankan tujuan pembangunan sosial seperti keadilan, kesetaraan, pendidikan, kesejahteraan publik, tata kelola yang seimbang, dan etika lingkungan. Konsep 'umran dan asabiyyah Ibn Khaldun, visi al-madīnah al-fāḍilah Al-Farabi, gagasan teodemokrasi politik dan etika ekonomi Al-Ghazali, serta pandangan holistik Ibn Sina tentang kesehatan dan lingkungan menawarkan kerangka etis bagi pembangunan yang inklusif dan berkelanjutan. Pemetaan tema-tema tersebut menunjukkan bahwa pemikiran Islam klasik selaras dengan perkembangan kebijakan publik kontemporer di dunia Muslim, khususnya dalam pilar-pilar pembangunan sosial. Penelitian ini memperkaya diskusi mengenai pembangunan dengan menguraikan perspektif historis Islam dan merumuskan pelajaran aplikatif bagi tata kelola modern, pendidikan, kesejahteraan sosial, dan keberlanjutan

Kata Kunci: *Ulama Muslim Klasik; SDG; Keadilan Sosial; Etika Lingkungan*

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) embody a collective worldwide vision towards achieving social equity and sustainability. In 2015, 193 member countries of the United Nations agreed upon the SDGs and targeted 17 interrelated goals, hinging the global agenda on a 2030 deadline. Goals and targets cover crucial focus areas of global concern, such as poverty, hunger, health, education, equity, clean and affordable energy, climate change, and essential strong global partnerships (Jones et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2016). The SDGs aim to all tiers of social constituencies, from the individual and local community to the global and transnational social units, and to all social states, both developing and developed. The goals and targets of the SDGs are to foster and champion a blueprint of multi-tier social cohesion and integrated frameworks of economic, social, and environmental sustainability (Helvacıoğlu et al., 2021; Raimi et al., 2019).

These goals have been pursued at multiple levels. Government-targeted goals, aligned organizational efforts, and research by scholars have all been directed toward their

implementation. (Fallah Shayan et al., 2022). As Purvis et al. (2019) outline strategies through which countries can incorporate the goals of the SDGs into their domestic policies and plans.

Among the most important priorities outlined in the SDGs are the elimination of all forms of poverty, the achievement of zero hunger, the reduction of inequalities, and the improvement of overall health. The economic objectives are aimed at inclusive and sustained economic growth, the attainment of decent work and employment, and the development of sustainable industrialization, inclusive innovation, and resilient infrastructures. These are developments that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Barrier, 2017). Of equal importance are the goals that focus on the provision of clean water and sanitation, the sustainable use and management of renewable energy, responsible consumption and production, and the preservation of life on land and in the water (Arora & Mishra, 2019). These are particularly the areas where little progress has been made.

The SDGs principles, including health, education, inequality, and opportunity deprivation alleviation, and *maqāsid al-sharīʿah* of Islam, which alleviates sufferings and ensures the integrity of life, are the same (Abdullah, 2018). *Maqāsid al-sharīʿah* and SDGs promote wellbeing through a values system based on justice and sustainable development. These frameworks also protect nature, provide positive social development, inclusive and safe urban systems, and promote sustainable ways of consumption and cooperation at the global level (Rohim & Yetty, 2025). These frameworks are focused on inclusive development. Hence, equal access to resources, including opportunities, is crucial to upholding one's dignity and to attaining comprehensive development. SDGs can harmonize with the Divine principles of Islam if human needs are placed at the forefront, the practical means of execution respect the divine boundaries, the outcomes foster moral and spiritual development, and hence, ethical and holistic development is ensured (Helvacıoğlu et al., 2021).

Thus, this global agenda is of great interest to scholars, as multiple angles can be pursued. For example, in their research, Tahir et al., (2024) indicated that the management can attain a high level of environmental performance via integrating eco-centric training and motivation, and employee engagement in green HR practices.Implementing such techniques assists in obtaining and maintaining eco-friendly staff members and cultivating proactive actions within a company that champions goals in sustainability. Accessible credit, which is essential for the attainment of SDGs, will improve as a function of education and financial literacy (Kara et al., 2021). On the other hand, marginalized communities encounter exclusion from these formal finance endeavors, which drives communities to more expensive options, exacerbating inequitable financial vulnerability. Conjunctural studies that centre around Islam have been completed, the majority focusing

on the doctrines of Islamic finance (Harahap et al., 2023; Nisar & Farooq, 2021; Shahid et al., 2023).

Efforts to examine the alignment of SDGs with Islam more holistically remain limited. Such efforts have generally centered around the *maqāsid al-sharīʿah* (objectives of Islamic law) framework (Abdullah, 2018) or employed a multidimensional approach developed by a German scholar (Khan & Haneef, 2022). To date, there has been little to no attempt to connect the thoughts and ideas of classical Muslim scholars with the SDGs.

This study aims to fill that gap by demonstrating how the works of classical Muslim scholars support the SDGs. This study aims to answer several research questions as follows: 1) What are core ideas of Ibn Khaldun, Al-Farabi, Al-Ghazali, and Ibn Sina, 2) How is the thematic SDG-based classification of these ideas? 3) What are the extracted lessons for Muslim countries based on these ideas?

This study advances the discourse on development from an Islamic standpoint, which opens new avenues for scholars and practitioners alike. For scholars, the contribution is twofold. First, the study curates and analyzes existing literature and expands on it by placing an authentic and historical Islamic perspective, thus contributing towards the decolonization of knowledge by considering Islamic thought a core pillar of discourse in development. Second, this study will generate interest for collaborative and interdisciplinary work in Islamic studies, ethics, and public policy. It will spur interaction of traditional and contemporary thought systems, and development in the scope of development studies and the imposition of a Western lens. On the study's contribution to practitioners, namely, governments, NGOs, and community leaders, it details the process of designing development programs for Muslim communities. It illustrates the congruence of Islamic values with the ideals of the Sustainable Development Goals.

This study utilizes the theoretical and practical aspects of the literature to offer a theoretical and practical model grounded in cultural identity with the potential to meet the challenges of the sustainable and inclusive development goals.

RESEARCH METHODS
Data and Article Selection
The present study analyzes the thoughts of classical Muslim scholars relevant to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), contemplating theories and reviewing documents such as books, original texts, writings, and conference presentations, sourced from key platforms. Scopus was the primary source of documents to inform the reviews, as it provides access to reputable publications. In contrast to Scopus, Google Scholar was useful to deliver pieces of literature that complemented the Scopus articles. Other platforms were also consulted, particularly those that host original texts or writings of classical Muslim scholars.

Document selection in Scopus was conducted through a systematic application of the relevant keywords corresponding to the disciple's names and principal ideas, such as (i) "Ibn Khaldun" AND ("asabiyyah" OR "umran"): 44 documents; (ii) "Al-Farabi" AND "city" 40 documents; (iii) ("Ibn Rushd" OR "Averroes") AND ("social" OR "ethic" OR "moral"): 91 documents; (iv) "Ghazali" AND ("social" OR "ethic" OR "politics" OR "ihya") 58 documents; and (v) ("Ibn Sina" OR "Avicenna") AND ("econom" OR "social" OR "environment"): 51 documents.

A post-analysis on the relevance of the records to the objective research in the specific area was performed. This made certain that the records were not only reliable scholarly sources but also provided pertinent intersection analysis of classical Islamic thought and contemporary development.

Analysis Strategy

To comprehend the values reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the works of classical Muslim scholars, we focused on the approach of Mantzari et al. (2025). This approach did not anchor us to a rigid and narrowly researched question, as it allowed us to review a plethora of writings and historical documents. Snyder (2019) states that narrative reviews are ideal for analyses that need to integrate a great deal of material, such as lessons from centuries of ethical pondering and today's global development goals. This approach does not call for a detailed assessment of each of the works, but rather a focus on several primary ideas and themes found in the body of literature. We attempt to demonstrate the values, such as justice, social welfare, care for the environment, and human dignity, which are central to the SDGs, and are also noteworthy in the writings of scholars such as Ibn Khaldun, Al-Ghazali, and Ibn Sina. While there are surely subjective elements to the interpretation, the review presents evidence to initiate further dialogue between the past and the present (Grant & Booth, 2009).

Following that evaluative phase, and in further detailed analysis akin to (Narayan & Phan, 2019), additional lessons are identified that can be further adopted by Muslim-majority countries, as well as the additional gaps in the literature that need to be researched. This two-step approach aids in assessing compatibility, retrieval, and extracting practical information and guidance for future research endeavors.

PROMINENT IDEAS OF CLASSICAL MUSLIM SCHOLARS

Ibn Khaldun

The scholarly contributions of Khaldun provide an interdisciplinary outlook on human progress that incorporates the essence of the economy, sociology, politics, and the spirit. A core idea on this is *umran al-'Alam,* the cultivation and sustenance of civilization, where people are regarded as stewards and guardians of the earth. As Mafrudlo et al. (2024) view,

this idea illustrates that development is not only the improvement of economies but also the construction of an equitable and harmonized populace. Thus, the improvement of economies has to be achieved with social justice and the common good as the priorities. According to Razak et al. (2020), human development is only possible with the harmonious existence of the people and the environment, as well as religious principles. This is also aligned with the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals).

Out of Khaldun's many ideas, the most single most outstanding one was called 'asabiyyah, which meant group solidarity. This was because of the way Khaldun perceived people as being comprised of only simple relations. As Wazir et al. (2022) explain, in the case of the big empires, the Mughals, it was the sense of belonging, be it from kin or religion, that aided the rise of many great empires to which Khaldun's perceptual thinking was most influential. However, in the modern sense, the lack of this solidarity is visible due to social fragmentation, moral decline, and conflicts, as Halim et al. (2012) have noted. Because of this, as Mulia (2019) mentions, the fact that Khaldun's *asabiyyah* cannot be classified simply as negative, for there is potential for it to be for the greater good in the name of cooperation and unity from ethical and religious sides, is one that is of great importance. Within all of this, Islam's standpoint also strongly advocates the group solidarity or Asabiyyah as long as it is within the perimeter of justice from peace.

Khaldun's way of understanding and perceiving society was from the angle of data and spirituality combined. Pribadi (2014) calls this approach to Khaldun's perception of society as *'ilm al-'umran,* for it was a complete one and it encompassed many aspects of systematization, observance, and religion. Khaldun noted down the stages that revolved around a society's intellectual development, and from the stages he was able to tell the most basic from the more advanced, and that was in the manner of simple awareness and knowledge, the experiential knowledge, and the theoretical knowledge. As noted by El-Kholei (2019), there is a lot that can be provided to social policy and urban planning from Khaldun's thinking and as relevant as it is, there is still a lot of misinterpretation going around due to inaccurate translations, especially within the Arab world.

Modern theories share parallels with Khaldun's ideas. Khalid (2015) notes the resemblance between Khaldun's perception of the evolution of society from a nomadic settlement to a fully-fledged civilization and North's theory of institutional change. Both theorists argue that the fundamental prerequisites of fully developed societies are healthy, cohesive social structures and robust institutions, and not merely the availability of economic resources. On the other hand, Rusli et al. (2025) draws a parallel between the political thoughts of Khaldun and Al-Ghazali, both of whom underscore the importance of justice in governance, but differ regarding the preferred system of government. Al-Ghazali supports a monarchy, while Khaldun advocates for a flexible system, so long as justice prevails.

Khaldun's remarkable ability to integrate religion, social science, economics, and philosophy into a unique system is exemplary. Amri (2008) and Chabane (2008) propose that his work challenges us not only to engage in scholarship but also to live the life he espoused. Khaldun's thoughts on civilization, ethics, and social development are still relevant and continue to evoke inspiration.

Al-Farabi

One of the most notable achievements of Al-Farabi is the integration of Greek philosophies with Islamic focuses in the formation of the "Virtuous City", which is the concept of an ideal state. In his view, the ideal state is led by just and wise guides, and the citizens can achieve true happiness by working together and acquiring happiness through the knowledge of morality and justice (Suleimenov, 2019). According to Al-Farabi, the happiness of the citizens in the state is a political goal, and it is only possible to achieve this in a stable society. This also shows how morality is significant in his political philosophies. A society with high moral and intellectual standards is able to retain a stable society and humanity (Kurmangaliyeva & Azerbayev, 2016). Civil harmony is the basis of a social-political goal which he refers to as the ideal state (Azerbayev & Nurmanbetova, 2016). Al-Farabi's ideas also contemplate a global civil society which he refers to as the "Great Society".

Doskozhanova et al. (2016) also analyze Al-Farabi and Plato and note the similarities in the discussions around ideal societies, specifically in hierarchy, moral education, justice, and the role of law. Al-Farabi and Plato shared an ideal society; Al-Farabi argued against a philosopher King as Plato did, and instead suggested a religious and spiritually oriented philosopher to lead. His ideas have a significant impact and are still applicable in the formation of just, modern, political, and social systems.

Al-Ghazali

Al-Ghazali's political thought can be viewed as a theodemocracy where the leadership must have the support of the people, and is also directed by Islamic principles. Al-Ghazali does not strictly adhere to either the Sunni or the Shia leadership styles, but instead combines elements from both (Sahri, 2021).

Al-Ghazali's ethical economic philosophy is well documented. Alshorman & Albasal (2021) discuss how Al-Ghazali, in his work *Al-Kasb*, presents an unparalleled ethical foundation for regulating the market in the principles of ethics and in market justice, accommodation, and deening (god) and sincere advising (*naseehah*). Al-Ghazali's ethical model of the market encourages and cultivates greater social value than market competition. According to Ariffin (2024), Al-Ghazali's ethical framework of classical economics is similar in the emphasis on adab (etiquette, civility, or good behavior) to

proper conduct and civility in the contemplation and the exercise of adab. For Al-Ghazali, the overriding perspective on economic activity is the achievement of spiritual contentment and the ultimate happiness of the soul, and not the material profit. Accordingly, the economically inactive, and in the market system, the economically inactive must, economically and in class, attain the moral and the spiritual on the higher and the primary (beyond the immanent).

Rusli et al. (2025) observe the parallels between Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun in the integration of religion and politics and the importance of the state's role in maintaining justice and security. Concerning the ideal government, however, the two differ: Al-Ghazali is pro-Government de Monarque, Ibn Khaldun is pro-flexible (as to the system) sovereignty based on justice. (Possumah, 2024) adds that both Al-Ghazali and Al-Shaybani see livelihood not only as an economic right but a social duty that interrelates religion, law, ethics, politics, and economy as an integrated whole.

Ibn Sina (Avicenna)

Avicenna made great contributions to the studies of the health sciences, philosophy, and sustainability. Arroisi et al. (2024) elucidate the biopsychosocial health theory and the unique I'tidal (balance) component, which takes into consideration life balance, diet, lifestyle, bodily humors, and mental health. This theory is fundamental to the union of the art and science of medicine under the biological and psychological umbrellas.

Forouzian et al. (2021) discuss the paradoxical perspectives of Avicenna and Kant on poverty. For Kant, poverty revolves around a lack of material wealth and work ethic in society and is the root cause of moral degradation. On the other hand, Avicenna's perspective is poverty metaphysical, where the void of material wealth is balanced by intellectual and transcendent pleasures that alleviate the psychological poverty. Saffari (2012) highlights deficiencies in public health and hygiene and praises the subliminal teachings on health discrimination in Avicenna's great work, Cannon of Medicine, arguing that health is equilibrium and thus, disease is imbalance. This correlates with reproductive health, where the health of the mother and father is reflected in the health of the offspring, aligning with Avicenna's 6 health principles: nutrition, physical activity, sleep, emotional balance, waste, air, and quality of life (Ansaripour et al., 2019). Avicenna's principles of the health of the body and health of the mind also harmonize with the reproductive health principles.

Avicenna is also recognized by Amrollahi-Sharifabadi et al. (2024) for having proposed some of the earliest techniques for natural pest control with the identification of 42 types of medicinal plants, as well as techniques such as burning and other forms of fumigation that are similar to the use of modern pesticides. Regarding the attention taken by Avicenna, the air disorders as well as the stagnation of air, the impacts of which are

considered and classified on the heart, mind, and digestion, air pollution, and so on, clean air, as well as other supportive nutrition that is preventive, are also recommended (Babaeian et al., 2016).

Incorporation of philosophy, medicine, and environmental science in his work is why Avicenna is considered to have had a holistic approach, and that is why he is regarded as a pioneer in that aspect.

Sdgs Thematic Analysis Of Classical Muslim Scholars Thought
In this phase, the views of classical Muslim multicultural scholars are divided into different dimensions of the SDGS as classified by Khan & Haneef (2022). The summary of the thematic analysis of the scholars' thoughts on the SDGs is presented in Table 1.

Social Development (SDG-1, 2, 5, 10)
Social justice and equity for the overall well-being of society, according to the classical Muslim scholars, is a salient feature. Development of the society in the view of Ibn Khaldun is not only in the economic dimensions, but also in building a just society that supports the impoverished and the neglected (Mafrudlo et al., 2024). Al-Ghazali also views the economic dimension as not only for livelihood but also a moral responsibility to ensure equity and cooperation in the distribution of resources, and to not just work for economic gain (Alshorman & Albasal, 2021; Possumah, 2024). Although gender equality was not explicitly discussed in their works, the emphasis on justice as a social responsibility supports the idea of a more inclusive social order.

Ibn Sina's metaphysical discourse on poverty recognized the psychological and intellectual facets of poverty and its effects, hence broadening the discourse on poverty to include aspects beyond the mere lack of material possessions (Forouzian et al., 2021). These visions present an ethical paradigm to address the problems of poverty, hunger, and social inequality with a holistic approach grounded in social justice.

Human Capital Development (SDG-3, 4)
The combination of the physical and the intellectual development of an individual was the bedrock of the classical Islamic tradition. Ibn Sina was the first to develop an integrated health system on the biopsychosocial model with an emphasis on the triad of body, mind, and surrounding environment (Arroisi et al., 2024; Saffari, 2012). His contribution to the field of medicine and public hygiene is still a vital resource for contemporary healthcare and preventive medicine. Concerning education, Ibn Khaldun, Al-Farabi, and Al-Ghazali were great scholars who acknowledged the importance of the human development process being knowledge-based and of a moral character. Ibn Khaldun's intellectual evolution theory described a progressive education system, where education was supposed to transit

from the empirical to the theoretical (Pribadi, 2014). Al-Farabi believed the promotion of moral and intellectual virtues was vital for achieving social harmony and happiness (Kurmangaliyeva & Azerbayev, 2016). Al-Ghazali illustrated that the aim of education should be the cultivation of ethical behavior (*adab*), paired with a sincere intention (*naseehah*), towards knowledge so that it could be applied for the benefit of society (Ariffin, 2024). Together, these scholars provide a rich contribution towards the conceptualization of a healthy, educated, and ethical society.

Economic Development (SDG 8, 9)

Growth, Equity, Institutional Development, and Ethical Productivity have all been focal points of Islamic Economic Thought. Sustainable Development, according to Khaldun, stems from social cohesion and strong institutions, in addition to natural resources (Khalid, 2015). Al-Ghazali, economically motivated, framed a morality for economic activities and promoted a spiritual, cooperative cause against the unscrupulous, competitive behavior (Alshorman & Albasal, 2021). Al-Farabi equated the economic contribution of one's labor to a civic responsibility, emphasizing that meaningful employment is work that is ultimately towards the happiness and justice of the collective (Suleimenov, 2019). These perspectives nourish modern discussions on Responsible Capitalism, Inclusive Growth, and Societal Innovation.

Sustainable Lifestyle Development (SDG 6, 7, 11, 12)

Sustainable living, as advocated by classical scholars, included the promotion of Environmental Awareness, Public Health, and Ethical Consumption. Ibn Sina has contemporary parallels in his strategies to Public Health that advocated sanitation, clean air, and preventive health (Babaeian et al., 2016; Saffari, 2012). He also laid the groundwork for Environmentally Sustainable Consumption by advocating Natural Pest Control and Sustainable Agriculture (Amrollahi-Sharifabadi et al., 2024). In terms of Urban Development, a synergistic perspective was offered by Ibn Khaldun and Al-Farabi.

To Khaldun, *asabiyya* ultimately meant the value of bound, ethically and socially cohesive communities, whereas Al-Farabi depicted the structural morality and intellect necessary to nurture balanced urban coexistence in the Virtuous City (Azerbayev & Nurmanbetova, 2016; Wazir et al., 2022). Al-Ghazali further advanced the disciplined market consumption of individuals through religion and ethics (Alshorman & Albasal, 2021). These concepts advocate a lifestyle within which the individual can simultaneously experience well-being, social peace, and ecological balance interconnectedly.

Institutional Development (SDG-16, 17)

Justice, good governance, and cooperation shaped the political philosophies of Ibn Khaldun, Al-Farabi, and Al-Ghazali. Khaldun claimed that just and ethical institutions are necessary for the rise and maintenance of a civilization, while he asserted, injustice is the downfall (Rusli et al., 2025). Envisaging civic virtue and republican ethics, Al-Farabi pictured a society ruled by a morally just and wise philosopher-king with an emphasis on public good and civic partnership (Suleimenov, 2019). Al-Ghazali offered a democratic theosophical political vision in which the leadership is socially legitimate and morally accountable (Sahri, 2021). Beyond state institutions, all of them advocated for social solidarity (*Asabiyya*) and communities of free partnership bound by shared responsibilities and mutual trust (Doskozhanova et al., 2016; Mulia, 2019). Their work provides a vision for the creation of transparent, just, and cooperative institutions.

Environmental Development (SDG 13, 14, 15)

Environmental awareness is of utmost primary importance to Islamic scholarship, particularly concerning Ibn Khaldun. Among other aspects, Abu Ihsan al-Balkhi is the first to discuss the health impacts of air pollution, and is recognized as the first climate health specialist and climate ethicist (Babaeian et al., 2016). His writings on agriculture particularly advocated sustainable land utilization and the biodiversity preservation gained from the use of herbal medicines and the bio-control of pests (Amrollahi-Sharifabadi et al., 2024). Khaldun, on the other hand, spoke of the harmonious relation of progression and nature (Razak et al., 2020). While the oceans (life below water (SDG 14)) in and of themselves were not particularized, their general ethic towards the environment and all-encompassing doctrinal view advocates for the preservation of all ecosystems in nature. The fusion of these aspects provides the basis for contemporary stewardship and responsibility for the environment.

Table 1
Summary of thematic analysis results on the classical muslim scholars thoughts of SDGs

Thematic Cluster	Relevant SDGs	SDG-related Views of Classical Muslim Scholars
Social Development	SDG 1, 2, 5, 10	▪ Ibn Khaldun: Justice-oriented development, focus on collective welfare (**SDG 1**, **SDG 10** (Mafrudho, 2024) ▪ Al-Ghazali: Ethical economics and fair distribution (**SDG 1**, **SDG 2**, **SDG 10**) (Alshorman, 2021)

Human Capital Development	SDG 3, 4	▪ Ibn Sina: Psychological and intellectual resilience against poverty (**SDG 1**, **SDG 10**) (Farouzian, 2022)
		▪ Ibn Sina: Introduced a biopsychosocial health model, stressing public hygiene and well-being (**SDG 3**) (Saffari, 2012; Arroisi, 2024)
		▪ Ibn Khaldun: Educational stages of intellectual development (**SDG 4**) (Pribadi, 2014)
		▪ Al-Farabi & Al-Ghazali: Moral and spiritual education for societal stability (**SDG 4**)
Economic Development	SDG 8, 9	▪ Ibn Khaldun: Strong institutions over resource dependency (**SDG 8, 9**) (Kholid, 2015)
		▪ Al-Ghazali: Encouraged spiritually guided economic activities and ethical competition (**SDG 8**) (Arrifin, 2024)
		▪ Al-Farabi: Linked economic productivity to virtue and social responsibility (**SDG 8**) (Suleimenov, 2019)
Sustainable Lifestyle Development	SDG 6, 7, 11, 12	▪ Ibn Sina: Clean air, sanitation, natural pest control (**SDG 6**, **SDG 12**) (Saffari, 2012; Babaeian, 2016; Amrrolahi-Sharifabadi, 2024)
		▪ Al-Farabi: Developed the concept of the "Virtuous City" for sustainable urban life (**SDG 11**) (Suleimenov, 2019)
		▪ Ibn Khaldun: Promoted ethical urban society through *'Asabiyyah* (**SDG 11**, **SDG 12**) (Wazir, 2022)
Institutional Development	SDG 16, 17	▪ Ibn Khaldun: Justice and institutional stability (**SDG 16**) (Rusli, 2025)

		▪ Al-Farabi: Philosopher-rulers and civic virtue (**SDG 16, 17**) (Suleimenov, 2019)
		▪ Al-Ghazali: Theodemocracy and accountable governance (**SDG 16**) (Sahri, 2021)
Environmental Development	SDG 13, 14, 15	▪ Ibn Sina: Air quality, ecological health, herbal medicine (**SDG 13**, **SDG 15**) (Babaeian, 2016)
		▪ Ibn Khaldun: Stewardship of the earth and nature-based ethics (**SDG 13**, **SDG 15**) (Razak, 2019)

Source: authors' work

Lessons For Muslim Countries In Advancing The Sdgs: Insights From Classical Muslim Scholars

Empirical data on financing, along with the foundational ethical principles from classical Muslim scholars, provide us with clear, actionable steps for Muslim majority countries striving for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These steps center on social justice, equity, and the intrinsic value of humanity and reflect the Islamic traditions and the SDGs' core aspirations.

Promote Inclusive Social Development

Ibn Khaldun and Al-Ghazali have always stated the absolute necessity of a just society and that the poor and marginalized must be supported and uplifted. Furthermore, such a society should not focus solely on economic growth (Alshorman & Albasal, 2021; Mafrudlo et al., 2024). Current research indicates that marginalized and vulnerable populations, most notably women, ethnically diverse persons, immigrants, and the disabled (Forouzian et al., 2021), are completely locked out of the formal credit system and are forced to rely on exploitative, predatory fringe lenders, high-risk. Such realities violate both the Islamic equity imperative and that of the SDGs.

Based on this view, Muslim countries need to establish Islamic social justice-influenced, inclusive financial systems that extend credit to the previously unbanked and underbanked. This entails the provision of ethical microfinance and credit systems that recognize the dignity of the borrower, regardless of gender or background.

Invest in Human Capital through Education and Health

Education and financial literacy improve access to credit. Classical economics incorporated both bodily and mental development. Ibn Sina's biopsychosocial model of health, Al-Farabi's moral and intellectual education, and Al-Ghazali's association of knowledge with moral conduct all demonstrate an integrated vision of human flourishing (Saffari, 2012; Arroisi, 2024; Kurmalagiyeva, 2016).

Accordingly, Muslim countries should improve their education systems to incorporate financial literacy, ethical reasoning, and social responsibility. In public health, holistic preventive approaches should be used to provide well-being, which, as Ibn Sina points out, is essential for sustainable development.

Build Ethical and Equitable Economies

The ethical dimensions of classical economic thought, in which Ibn Khaldun spoke about institutions and solidarity, and Al-Ghazali about fairness and a spiritual purpose, correspond to the contemporary need for inclusive economic growth (Kholid, 2015; Alshorman, 2021). The existing inequality in access to credit is a testimony to the fact that contemporary financial systems are inequitable.

Therefore, development policies of Muslim countries must have an ethical foundation and be socially inclusive. Suppose Islamic finance principles are implemented to promote ethical trade, fair employment, and ethical entrepreneurship. In that case, it will respond to trade and employment needs while incorporating the values of the relevant SDG.

Sustainable Lifestyles and Responsible Consumption

Ibn Sina and Al-Ghazali encouraged clean lifestyles, ethical consumption, and ecological harmony. His views on the quality of the atmosphere and preventive medicine as well as sustainable agriculture, are still relevant today (Babaeian, 2016; Amrrolahi-Sharifabadi, 2024). Currently, many low-income households are facing consumption pressures and are poor, financially poor. This leads them to high-interest fringe lenders to finance their resource-scarce households.

This Muslim countries can advocate responsible consumption and eco-friendly practices by publicizing Islamic teachings on moderation (*wasatiyyah*), cleanliness, and community wellbeing. Sustainable educational lifestyles must also encompass responsible financial practices and resource stewardship.

Strengthening Justice-Oriented Institutions

A significant social contract in a civilization hinges on just, moral, and participatory institutions. For instance, in Khaldun's views, there could be no civilization and social

order in disregard of justice. Almost all classical Muslim moral philosophers, including Al-Farabi and Al-Ghazali, described ethical leadership as accountability to God and the people (Rusli et al., 2025; Sahri, 2021; Suleimenov, 2019). Modern studies on access to credit underscore the cost of institutional failure: numerous groups are systematically excluded and/or exploited by the formal financial system.

Lesson: Muslim countries need to reform their institutions to ensure transparency, justice, and inclusive. This entails the appropriate design of policies to track exclusionary discrimination and to expand the accessibility of affordable credit and the collaboration of governments, civil society, and the faith community.

Integrating Environmental Ethics in Development
The Islamic tradition and teachings espouse a strong sense of responsibility towards the environment. For instance, the works of Ibn Sina and Khaldun on the environment promote caring for the environment as a spiritual and practical responsibility (Razak, 2019; Babaeian, 2016). Although having access to credit forms a significant part of economic and financial sustainability, it also poses a risk of economically unsustainable practices, particularly to the vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Lesson: Muslim countries need to formulate development strategies that consider economic equity and environmental sustainability at the same time. Green microfinance and environmental education, and sustainable agriculture programs based on Islamic teachings, can simultaneously contribute to the twin goals of SDGs and Islamic values.

CONCLUSION
The current study realizes the overlapping features of the Sustainable Development Goals and the ethical/social/environmental dimensions of the writings of the foundational Muslim scholars. The study thematically analyzes some of these scholars' works pertaining to social equity and human capital, economic ethics and sustainable practices, and the institutional and environmental dimensions, and puts them in discourse with contemporary SDGs to show the relevance of some Muslim intellectual heritage in the contemporary multidisciplinary discourse on development.

The classical Muslim scholars, such as Ibn Khaldun, Al-Ghazali, Al-Farabi, and Ibn Sina, have depicted the SDG values to some extent as they articulate some fundamental notions like justice, equilibrium, ethical governance, and collective welfare. The vision of these scholars is a society that embodies moral values and an ethical intellectual development with an ecological concern. For the Muslim-majority countries, these values provide an ethical and culturally plausible pathway in achieving the SDGs respecting spiritual values while also meeting the global development needs.

The analysis highlights the need for inclusive financial systems, the moral aspect of education and economic activity, the need for the integration of ecological awareness into systems and public administration, and the lessons that are not only theoretical, but rather, are useful for systemic actors and civic leaders to practically promote a form of ethically oriented development that is sustainable and equitable.

This study also has limitations. First and foremost, the analysis has focused on a small number of classical scholars. This, while representative, would still not encompass the entire scope of Islamic intellectual tradition. In future scholarship, this review may be diversified to include other scholars like Al-Shatibi, Ibn Rushd, or even contemporary Islamic scholars, towards a more substantive review. Secondly, the study employed a narrative review approach, which prioritizes empirics that are rather general. This could bring richness to the analysis of the context, but also bring a degree of subjectivity in choosing and in thematizing. For these classical principles to be employed, real empirical studies would be useful in determining the extent to which they are still relevant and to what degree they could be incorporated into contemporary SDG initiatives in Muslim-majority countries. Third, research works and translated secondary literature sources are somewhat limited when analyzing relevant literature. Numerous classical works are still inaccessible, and translated works lose some important details. Cooperation in research with Islamic scholars and institutions holding classical works may help mitigate this issue while achieving greater accuracy in text and more awareness of sensitivity.

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