In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate the Merciful

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Religion, Management & Governance

Contents

Designing a Participatory Decision-Making Framework with an Islamic Approach

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Abstract

Background: Human decisions are influenced not only by rational elements but also by circumstances, feelings, and beliefs. Understanding these factors is crucial for effective decision-making.

Objective: This study aims to design a participatory decision-making framework based on an Islamic approach.

Methods: Data were collected using library resources and interviews with 48 experts. The Grounded Theory method was employed for analysis.

Results and Conclusion: The study identified key dimensions of Islamic participatory decision-making, including effective factors (Consultation, Islamic brotherhood/sisterhood, beautiful patience, Self-Knowledge), contextual variables (Stress-Free Beliefs, Moderation, Divine precepts, DIKW pyramid), deterrent factors (Poor Culture, Arrogant Leadership, Fear of Mistakes, Parochialism), and outcomes (Facilitate Decision Implementation, Employee Growth, Culturalization, Al-Falah). A central concept of Optimal Distance was introduced, encompassing 12 types of distance across three axes and practical criteria for measurement. Attention to optimal distance can enhance participatory decision-making in various situations.

Keywords

Participatory decision-making, Islamic decision-making, Optimal Distance, Group decision-making, Grounded Theory.

Introduction

Nowadays, participatory decision-making has become increasingly popular (Turskis et al., 2019), and in the commercial, industrial (Murshid, 2018), political, and governmental arenas (Mancilla and Bodin, 2019), many decisions are made in a collaborative manner (Zhang, 2002). Participatory decision-making can be defined as an open, creative, and continuous process (Baudry et al., 2018), which strives to provide an opportunity for every stakeholder to participate in the discussion and find effective options that everyone can live with (see Taket and White, 2000). However, it should be noted that, as there are different definitions of decision making (Simon, 1987; Luan and Gigerenzer, 2019; Nicholls et al., 2020), there are different perspectives on participatory decision making.

There are various theories developed for participatory decision-making. The techniques range from the most philosophical approaches (for example, see PANDA by Taket and White 2000) to the most instrumental techniques (Halbe et al., 2018). It is necessary to create conceptual frameworks that enable the application of participatory decision-making to decision-makers of different schools of thought and religion. Reviewing most of the provided tools reveals the vital role of intellectual traits, beliefs, and personality characteristics of the decision-makers in participatory decision-making (Camilleri, 2020).

In general, the beliefs of decision-makers (DMs) - like or even more than their other characteristics - influence their decisions (Chang, 2017). Every decision is made based on the decision maker's thoughts, worldview, and beliefs, even when it is made on issues such as economic (Becker and Woessmann, 2020), cultural (Horndeski and Koontz, 2020), and social issues (Khandan, 2013). This is much more accurate for participatory and group decision-making (Hylland and Zeckhauser, 1979). Through participatory decision-making, the beliefs and worldviews of each DM, directly and indirectly, affect the final decisions (Belfield et al., 2020). More importantly, in many cases, this effect occurs subconsciously (Cuillier, 2012).

Accordingly, recognizing and systematizing the impact of worldviews and beliefs on decision-making can significantly improve the quality of decisions, as well as other irrational elements, including the role of emotions in decision-making (Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura, 2014). In line with this, recognizing the impact of Islamic beliefs and worldviews on decision-making is necessary for Muslim communities and organizations. Considering the high frequency of participatory decision-making in Islamic

organizations and communities (Menchik, 2016), clarifies the importance of this issue for participatory decision-making.

Besides, given the vastness and population of the Islamic community and the widespread presence of Muslims in other communities and organizations (Ummulkhayr et al., 2017), and the subconscious influence of each DM's beliefs and worldview on decisions (Cuillier, 2012), this issue is also vital for the whole world societies and Organizations (With a non-Muslim majority).

More importantly, methodical attention to participatory decision-making with an Islamic approach can also play an important role in the development and promotion of modern decision-making knowledge and communities with a non-Muslim majority.

According to the principles of multiculturalism, addressing applied areas in different value-cultural contexts is the most substantial source of diversity, creativity, composition, and finding new perspectives for these applied areas (Stevens et al., 2008). Therefore, the teachings of Islamic culture, derived from the experience of dozens of nations over fourteen centuries, are a powerful resource that can illuminate the multicultural engine of decision-making knowledge. In addition, it helps to overcome the lack of integration in multicultural communities and organizations (Singh, 2010).

On the other hand, attention to Islamic spirituality has been introduced in many management fields as an important development and improvement in that field (Egel and Fry, 2017)[1]. Recent research has shown that new perspectives on management knowledge and decision-making, derived from different cultures and ontologies, can play a significant role in major crises, such as the COVID-19 crisis. According to these studies, if management knowledge and decision-making use these new resources, it can provide timelier and richer responses to these crises (Azar and Azizi, 2022). Consequently, the paper aims to recognize, explain, and address the effects of Islamic beliefs and worldviews on participatory decision-making.

However, it should be noted that this issue is also theoretically necessary. Participatory decision-making with an Islamic approach addresses a significant gap in the scientific literature on Islamic decision-making (Alavi et al., 2020).

Islamic decision-making[2] is an important field in the scientific literature of Islamic management, which has been studied so far by many researchers.

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1. It is clear that paying attention to other religions can be instructive in its turn (Kriger et al, 2005), but due to the detailed discussion, it is not within the scope of this article.
2. Islamic decision-making differs in three main ways from the usual decision-making patterns: in Foundational theories, for example, in Islamic decision-making

It has been studied in organizational, cultural (Alavi et al., 2020), political (Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu, 2007), financial (Salehi et al., 2020), accountancy (Abdul-Baki et al., 2013), economics (Wanke et al., 2016), industrial, moral (Naghi Pourfar and Bakhshi, 2015), and philosophical (Choudhury & Hoque, 2006) aspects. Furthermore, considerable research has been conducted on executive-managerial approaches in this field (Hamzehpour et al., 2018).

Although these studies have formed a theoretical framework for Islamic decision-making, however, participatory decision-making in the Islamic approach has not received as much attention as necessary (Lawal and Yusuf, 2014). We have already shown that addressing participatory Islamic decision-making is vital for both Islamic and non-Islamic communities. However, not much attention has been paid to this area. Therefore, in addition to the executive gap, there is a real gap in the theory of dealing with participatory decision-making with an Islamic approach. As we can see, although there has been plenty of research in both areas of participatory decision-making and Islamic decision-making separately, minimal effort has been made to combine these two essential areas.

Accordingly, this study scrutinizes how Islamic teachings influence participatory decision-making.

Due to the complexity of the issue and the need for widespread use of the opinions of Islamic thinkers and experts, by using the Grounded Theory, we attempted to provide a framework for Participatory decision-making with the Islamic approach. In this regard, the paper tried to make full use of the views of Islamic management scholars so that the resulting framework can be used as the basis for applied research in this field. Accordingly, the main questions of this research are as follows: 1- What are the Islamic teachings that influence participatory decision-making? 2- What are the results and

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instead of the utilitarianism basis, which is a common basis in Western decision-making, the principles of Islamic growth are introduced. The second arena is in goals. In Islamic decision-making, worldly and otherworldly goals are seen in parallel and pursued at the same time. In this view, the world and the Hereafter are not separate. Instead, the world is the farm of the Hereafter. The third area is in the methods and some details. For example, some researchers have suggested the doctrine of benevolence (al-maslahah) instead of social responsibility in Islamic decision-making (Azizi et al. 2017). As mentioned, each of these areas of difference can be the source of new ideas and answers to new decision-making issues, so thinkers in the field of decision-making from all cultures and paradigms must pay attention to this decision-making approach.

consequences of Islamic participatory decision-making on two material and spiritual levels?

It is clear that the answers to the first question are more effective in compensating for the mentioned theoretical gap, and the answer to the second question can be a step to fill the practical gap in this area.

1. Research methodology

This study enjoys library resources and interviews with experts to gather data. The study of library resources has been done in three categories of library resources, namely, sources of participatory decision-making in the common management paradigm, sources related to decision-making in the Islamic management paradigm, and sources related to the teachings of Islamic culture. In this regard, the intermediate steps of the meta-synthesis method (the third and fourth steps of the Sandelowski & Barroso (2007) model in meta-synthesis) have been used to examine the resources (Walsh and Downe, 2005). Accordingly, for each of the two areas of participatory decision-making and Islamic decision-making, a more general area was selected to obtain maximum coverage of works related to each area. For this purpose, the title "Islamic Management" was chosen to cover Islamic decision-making, and the title "Group Decision Making" was chosen to complete the topic of participatory decision-making. This helped us to find works related to our subject on a broader range and better understand the roots of both our subject areas. Also, this action helped us to examine many of the original Islamic works and sources from the perspective of the present study. Library resources were used in the following steps: In the first step, the literature on participatory decision-making and Islamic decision-making was examined. This vital issue clarified the gap in this field for the authors. The second use of library resources was a comprehensive review of the literature on Islamic management and Islamic decision-making as a preliminary step to identify necessary features for experts in the field of participatory decision-making with an Islamic approach. The third use was when analyzing the codes obtained from the interviews, which helped us to compare the findings related to participatory Islamic decision-making with the existing literature on participatory decision-making in other schools and other types of decision-making in the Islamic management school.

We used semi-structured interviews in conducting the interviews. Asking main research questions formed the structure of the interviews, but supplementary questions were considered for the interviewee to share as much as possible. Each interviewee was interviewed in at least three different sessions. The first session is an introductory talk on participatory

decision-making and Islamic decision-making. The second session, which formed the basis of the interview, lasted an average of 100 minutes (in some cases longer, held in two separate sessions). In the third session, the output of the previous interview session and the points extracted from it were delivered to the interviewees. It also lasted an average of 60 minutes. In the interview sessions, the interview process was semi-structured in such a way that the questions that were actively asked of the interviewees were the main research questions, but during the discussion, and according to the subject, other questions were asked for further explanation and clarification by the interviewers. Of course, in all interview sessions, the interviewers made sure that the questions were not posed in such a way as to direct the interviews in a particular direction (for example, using words or body language in a way that indicates a desire or reluctance to a particular subject)[1].

Interviewees were selected by theoretical sampling. To validate the theoretical sampling process, after consulting with experts, three essential criteria were considered for selecting the interviewees: a) Specialization in Islamic sciences. B) Expertise in management knowledge and decision-making. C) Having managerial work experience. Snowball sampling was also used to complete the interviewees. The average age of the interviewees was 50 years.[2] All interviewees had a Ph.D. (in various fields of management and decision-making) and had a seminary education (in special schools of Islamic education). Respondents also had a managerial background and management experience of at least ten years.[3]

After the 38th interview, the researchers reached a theoretical saturation - conditions where new interviews had no new data and did not change the relationships between the data (OmidiKia et al., 2012)[4]. However, to ensure theoretical saturation, the interviews continued, and in general, 48 experts with all three characteristics were interviewed. Communication with interviewees was not limited to one interview but continued as a process of

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1. The interviews were conducted simultaneously by two interviewers, and one of the interviewers was focused on monitoring the non-bias of the questions asked.
2. 12 people between 30-40, 14 people between 41-50, 12 people between 51-60, 9 people between 61-70, and one person over eighty years old.
3. 17 people with less than 15 years of experience and 24 people with 15 to 30 years of experience and 7 people with more than 30 years of managerial experience.
4. We have to honestly admit that between the 11th and 13th interviews we doubted that we might have reached a theoretical richness, but fortunately, the research team decided to continue the interviews, and it soon became clear that this assumption was incorrect. Accordingly, after the 38th interview, ten more three-step interviews were conducted to ensure the theoretical richness.

discussion and consultation. Furthermore, the final model of the research was shared with all 48 experts. In fact, at this stage, the interviewees were used as consultants.

We also used the Grounded Theory method for analysis. Participatory decision-making is an emerging topic in the field of Islamic management and Islamic decision-making; therefore, the Grounded Theory is a proper tool to extract Islamic teachings through the experts' opinions. It is a research method that has been appropriated within a variety of research paradigms (Hense and McFerran, 2016: 405). Using this methodology contributes to the acceptance of the final framework of this paper among various decision-making studies (Haig, 1995). In this regard, among the various versions of this method, we used the Paradigm Model of the Grounded Theory, which has a special place in Islamic management research (Mehrabi et al., 2011) and in the analysis of interviews (Pieterse, 2020). The Grounded Theory process of the study was inspired by the original version of the grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

The initial codings were done in two separate cycles. The matching rate of the codings was 0.889 based on Holsti's coefficient of reliability, which is in the completely acceptable range of this index. To develop components based on concepts, focus groups were held with the presence of authors and some interviewees

2. Data Analysis

As we saw in the previous section, the three steps of open, axial, and selective coding are the main steps in the analysis of the Grounded Theory method. In this section, we describe how we went through these steps and came up with a model.

3. Open Coding

The process that leads to the understanding of concepts is called "open coding" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998: 71). At this point, the researchers document all the resulting codes without removing duplicates or any selections. At this stage, the research yielded five hundred and thirty-seven codes (considering duplicates). Table 1, which is part of the result of the second interview, provides an example of an open coding process depicted in table 1.

Table 1: Open coding of the second interview

ID:IP02	Interview sentences (data)	Concept (code)
IP0201	In challenging circumstances, nothing is more important than trusting in God.	Trust in God[1]
IP0202	… Amiability in management and everything related to other people, especially in participatory decision-making, is so necessary.	Amiability
IP0203	In discussions and decision-making sessions, due to the sensitivity of the subject, people sometimes lose control and insult their colleagues. If we are unintentionally offended, according to Quranic culture, we should ignore these cases.	Ignore the insult
IP0204	Humor is also one of the Islamic moral characteristics that are commanded explicitly under challenging situations, including in the participatory decision-making process.	Humor
IP0205	I should note that decision-making techniques are also crucial from an Islamic perspective. Islam has advised its followers to develop and use creative techniques that are in line with the principles of this religion.	Using decision-making techniques
IP0206	You see, when we put aside pride and self-determination in Islamic decision-making, in practice, we acquire some essential managerial characteristics, including flexibility. This flexibility is also present in Islamic rules and regulations. You can see this in different verses of the Qur'an.	Flexibility
IP0207	... The issue of Generosity is also significant. Generosity has a special place in decision-making, especially in participatory decision-making.	Generosity
IP0208	One of the issues that destroys the culture of a society or organization is Favoritism. When Favoritism comes up, healthy competition and meritocracy will disappear.	Favoritism/nepotism
IP0209	So how do we put all these essential Islamic teachings together? The answer is Insight. Insight is something that is achieved as a result of piety and seeking knowledge and observing ethics, and	Insight[2]

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1. Relying on God in Islam means believing in practice that everything is in the hands of God, and if we act under the laws that God has set, we will achieve results (Moghimi, 2018).
2. Insight in Islam means correct, comprehensive, timely, and in harmony with religious teachings of phenomena and concepts (Stefon 2009). According to Islamic thought, Insight can be regarded as the highest rank and degree of wisdom (Ansari 2012: 15).

ID:IP02	Interview sentences (data)	Concept (code)
	paying attention to society.	
IP0210	The believer who considers the world of the hereafter, like the astronaut who walked on the moon, finds a broader and more comprehensive view.	overview effect

As you can see in Table 1, the sentences of the interviewees are mentioned first. After that, the concepts extracted from each of the sentences are listed. These concepts were further discussed with the interviewees in the third interview session.

Other interview tables are not mentioned here for the sake of brevity and a more straightforward explanation of the grounded theory process. Instead, we will look at more complete tables obtained after aggregating the results of all interviews with each other. In the next section, these tables are presented based on the four main sections of the research model in the paradigm version of the Grounded Theory.

4. Axial and Selective Coding

After defining concepts based on open coding, it is time for axial coding. At this stage, the concepts and topics extracted from the interviews are compared and categorized (Mehrabi et al., 2011). The result of this phase of the study is the formation of components. Components are more general than concepts – and one step closer to constructing a theory (Pieterse, 2020).

According to the Grounded Theory method, after axial coding comes selective coding. At this stage of coding, the theorist creates a theory of the relationships among the components contained in the axial coding (DanaeiFard and Emami, 2007). In the paradigm model of Grounded Theory, selective coding is formed in four areas: Influencing Factors, Contextual Variables, Deterrent Variables, and Results (Glaser et al., 2013).

Table 2 presents three coding steps (open, axial, and selective) for the influencing factors in the final model of this study. The influential factors section shows the dimensions that directly affect the subject of research - Islamic participatory decision making. The four dimensions you can see in the Table below actually have the most significant impact on shaping Islamic participatory decision-making.

Table 2: Three coding steps (open, axial, and selective) for the Influencing Factors

Concepts	Components	Dimensions
Notice the opposite view + Lack of emotional response to dissent + Patience versus Opposition + Patience in front of everyone, not just in front of powerful people + Patience as a duty, not an optional favor.	Patience in the face of opposition	Beautiful Patience[1]
Good response to insult + Patience in the face of insult	Patience in the face of insult	
Bearing the Pressure of Discussion Meetings + Bearing the Pressure of Necessary rework + Tolerating necessary stops in the discussion process (for all voices to be heard)	Patience in the Difficulty of the Participatory Decision-Making Process	
Sympathy + Sympathy as a duty, not an optional favor + participation + partnership	Cooperativity	Al-Okhovah (Islamic Brotherhood/ Sisterhood)[2]
Humor + kindness + Philanthropy + Philanthropy as a duty, not an optional favor + intimacy	Intimacy	
Consider the weaknesses of ourselves + Humility + Pay attention to the strengths of others + Considering that our strengths are not made by ourselves alone.	Humility	
Responsibility + Paying attention to individual and collective responsibility synchronically	Responsibility	
No skepticism + no obsession + no Pessimism + trusting colleagues	Mutual Trust	
Refer to subject specialists + Refer to	Refer to the experts	Consultation

1. Beautiful Patience (al-sabr al-Jameel) is a concept in Islamic ethics that means enduring hardships with the best possible reaction to them without any side effects and with divine intention (Rice, 1999).
2. According to Islamic law, believers are brothers and have a duty to treat each other like brothers (Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 10). Accordingly, equality, kindness, peace, and many other concepts are the duties of believers towards each other (Cruise, 1971).

Concepts	Components	Dimensions
Religious Scholars (in related cases)		
use confidential consultants + Hold public consultation meetings + use trustworthy Consultants + use experienced consultants + Pay attention to consultation times	Consult	
Using staff feedback + Using customer/client feedback	Pay attention to feedback.	
Recognize personal interests + Recognize favorite hobbies + Recognize favorite modes + Recognize favorite behaviors + Recognize favorite characters + Recognize favorite personality traits.	Recognize personal interests	
Recognizing needs + comparing needs with wants + recognizing false needs	Recognize real needs	
Recognize personality traits that align with goals + Recognize personality traits + compare personality traits with goals + Recognize personality traits that conflict with goals.	Recognize personality traits	Self-Knowledge
Distinguish between personal core and sub-values + identify core values, + compare values with interests.	Recognize core personal values	
Writing goals + categorizing goals + separating goals from aspirations	Recognize personal goals	
Control the subconscious part of the reactions + Control the subconscious part of emotions + Recognize the subconscious part of emotions +	Control the unconscious part	

As you can see in Table 2, the first column presents the concepts from open coding. In each row, the concepts are put together in the axial coding process to form a component. In the second column, the components resulting from axial coding are presented. Therefore, the comparison of the first column and the second column shows that the components are more comprehensive and general in comparison with the concepts.

The third column shows the dimensions. Like the concepts, the dimensions were also formed in the focus group sessions.[1] In each row of the third column, we see a dimension, and we can see which concepts and components have led to this dimension. A comparison of each dimension with the concepts and components that make it up makes it clear that, at this stage, something more than summarizing and categorizing has been done. By selective coding at this stage, a kind of theorizing has led to the formation of dimensions.

As the table above shows, according to experts, Beautiful Patience is one of the most important factors influencing participatory decision making. Beautiful Patience means Patience with sincerity and devoid of any negligence (Tusi, 1993: 125). Here (in the Islamic paradigm), contrary to the usual position, Beautiful Patience is a duty for the decision-maker and not an optional favor.

Al-Okhovah (Islamic Brotherhood/ Sisterhood) is another important feature that maximizes participation and cooperation among decision-makers. Cooperativity should be demonstrated in meetings when dividing tasks. Intimacy and humility should be demonstrated through behaviors and discussions within participatory decision-making sessions. Mutual trust and Responsibility are directly effective in management action (Elfakhani and Ahmed, 2013) and should be demonstrated in feedback on the positions of others and meeting results.

The consultation also emphasizes the various aspects of this issue, from how to use a consultant to the characteristics of consultants. Finally, self-knowledge is one of the deep concepts that the more it is researched, the more its special role in human behavior and decisions becomes known (Wilson et al, 2004). Although self-knowledge may seem like a personal matter, it plays an irreplaceable role in human behavior towards others (Castañeda, 1968). As the table above shows, in this work, self-knowledge covers the recognition of personal interests, characteristics, aspirations, goals, and values.

Table 3 is the same as Table 2. It shows the more basic elements that usually indirectly have a positive effect on Islamic decision-making and its influencing factors. According to the paradigm model of the Grounded Theory, these elements are classified as Contextual Variables.

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1. As far as the time schedule of the interviewees allowed, we tried to have the people who brought up the initial concepts of each dimension in the interviews to be present in the meeting when making the final decision for that dimension.

Table 3: three coding steps (open, axial, and selective) for the Contextual Variables

Concepts	Components	Dimensions
asking for help from God + trust in God	Trust in God	Stress-Free Beliefs
Hope for the future of humanity + Hope for the grace of God	Hope in God	
A belief that God is omnipotent + paying attention to verbal monotheism	paying attention to monotheism	
Economic savings + Generosity	Economic Moderation	Moderation
Decisiveness + Flexibility	Behavioral Moderation	
Realism + Idealism	Moderation in targeting	
Mandatory precepts + recommended precepts (Mustahabb) + Pay attention to the afterlife +	Divine precepts	Divine precepts and traditions
Having religious information + Understanding the purposes of religion + Recognizing appearances from the inside of religion + Insight into religion	Insight into religion	
Developmental traditions (Takvini) + Legislative traditions	Divine traditions	
Use techniques for useful discussion + Using decision-making techniques	Using decision-making techniques	DIKW[1] pyramid
Paying attention to knowledge related to the topic + Paying attention to knowledge related to the environmental conditions	Attention to science and Knowledge	
Considering direct objective evidence + Pay attention to each word of the participants + Pay attention to the data	attention to Data	
Paying attention to statistics + Paying attention to past trends + Paying attention to qualitative analysis	attention to Information	
Paying attention to the theoretical foundations of knowledge + Paying attention to the appropriate conditions for the application of theories + Insight	attention to Wisdom	

1. Data, Information, Knowledge, and Wisdom

Stress-free beliefs are explained in the table above according to Islamic thought. Hope and trust in God and knowledge about God are Stress-free beliefs according to Islamic thought. However, we suggest that the audience of this article from other religions find such beliefs in their own religions.

Moderation has been considered a general principle in all public behaviors (Stajkovic et al., 2003). The table above shows that experts consider the culture of moderation in the economic, behavioral, and targeting fields to be essential when making participatory decisions.

A large number of Islamic concepts and teachings are included below the Divine precepts and traditions dimension. According to the interviewees, these beliefs are very common and can be found in other divine religions with some modifications.

Data, Information, Knowledge, and Wisdom each, in turn, play a role in participatory decision making. Wisdom, meanwhile, has always been a more difficult concept (Ackoff, 1989). As the table above shows, here the meaning of wisdom is to understand the theoretical-philosophical foundations of knowledge and to understand the practical position of each theory and how to use knowledge.

Table 4 is also devoted to more profound teachings. The concepts presented in this Table constitute the dimensions that prevent the implementation of participatory decision-making with the Islamic approach by harming the effective factors or contextual variables and even the core dimension of the Islamic participatory decision-making.

Table 4: three coding steps (open, axial, and selective) for the Deterrent Variables

Concepts	Components	Dimensions
Extreme individualism + Isolationism	Isolationism	Poor Culture
Money worship + hedonism + Superstitions + the Poor culture of society + Materialism + Limited view of religion	The poor culture of society	
Favoritism + Flattery + Nepotism	The poor culture of the organization	
Racism + belief in Racial superiority	Racism	

Concepts	Components	Dimensions
hypocrisy + being two-faced + pretense + lack of Sincerity [1]	Hypocrisy	
Religious discrimination + Ignorance of the right to religious freedom	Religious discrimination	
Extremist feminism + Anti-woman movements + gender discrimination	gender discrimination	
Individual decision making + power concentration	Power Concentration	Arrogant Leadership
arrogant leadership + arrogance	Arrogant Leadership	
employee exploitation + social gap in an organization	Social Gap	
Lack of appreciation for the efforts, + Pay attention only to the results, + Extreme standardization of processes, + Ignoring the process	Ignoring the process	
Mistake as identifying a failed solution + Make a mistake as a valuable experience + Repent of deliberate mistake + Make mistakes as a prerequisite for creativity	Ignoring the benefits of making mistakes	Fear of Making Mistakes
Fear of trying new ways + Fear of being blamed + Fear of participation + Ignoring Forgiveness + Ignoring Repentance	Blame for mistakes	
Ignoring the long-term effects + Ignoring the relatively distant future + Ignoring people's efforts	Excessively short-term perspective	
Provincialism + Parochialism	Parochialism	Parochialism
Ignoring the feedback + Ignoring the delay + Ignoring the side effects	Unsystematic attitude	

Poor culture is a broad concept. There are specific sub-categories for this broad concept. However, each of these Concepts, from gender and racial discrimination to Favoritism, according to experts, prevented the implementation of participatory decision-making with an Islamic approach.

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1. Purification from evil intentions and doing things and making decisions with divine intention (Ragheb 1992: 292). In the religious literature, sincerity is to do things with divine will and for God (Surah Zomar verse 3)

Arrogant leadership is a more detailed concept that is a serious obstacle to the implementation of Islamic participatory decision-making. Power concentration and Social Gap, which are the prelude to arrogant leadership, have been so closely intertwined with it, according to experts, that they have been considered a part of arrogant leadership.

Fear of Making Mistakes and Parochialism have been considered as two attitude errors that seriously hinder the implementation of participatory Islamic decision-making.

Table 5 shows the three-step coding process for the results and consequences section of participatory decision-making with an Islamic approach. As mentioned earlier, one of the research questions was dedicated to this topic. Therefore, the dimensions of this section were easily distinguishable from other items.

Table 5: three coding steps (open, axial, and selective) for the Results and Consequences

Concepts	Components	Dimensions
Popularity among employees + Acceptability among employees	Popularity among employees	Facilitate Decision Implementation
Improving decision process knowledge + decision process transparency + transparency of decision reasons + transparency of decision constraints + Reducing the challenge of ambiguity	Decision transparency	
Being recognized as a result of collective work	result of collective work	
Popularity among participants + Acceptability among participants	Popularity among participants	
Enhance employee capabilities through discussion	Employee Capability	Provide Employee Growth
Motivation through participation + Motivation through sincere behavior + Motivation through intimate behavior + Motivation due to freedom	Employee motivation	
provide Financial prosperity for employees + provide employee well-being	Provide employee well-being	
provide employee growth + provide employee progress	Provide employee growth	
Respect for humanity values + Respect for employee dignity + Respect for employee	Employee dignity	

Concepts	Components	Dimensions
self-esteem		
Eliminate underemployment + Flexibility of bureaucracy + Create a spirit of empathy	Reforming organizational procedures	Culturalization
Decrease Boasting + Decrease Jealousy + reforming interpersonal relationships	Reforming interpersonal relationships	
Increase shared understanding + Improvement of communication process + Improvement of ambiguity tolerance + Improvement of dispute tolerance	Cultural integration	
Recognize Freedom of speech + Appreciate Freedom of speech + oppose self-censorship[1]	Promote Freedom of speech	
pay attention to Performance + pay attention to Effectiveness + pay attention to Profitability + Flexibility + Variety of opinions	Practical results	Al-Falah
Results in Afterlife	Results in Afterlife	
Salvation + Redemption	Salvation	
Pretending to prioritize religious values	Pretending	Deception by Concealment
Self-censorship for religious values + Hiding selfish goals	Concealment	

Facilitate Decision Implementation is the most important outcome of participatory decision making. Transparency and popularity, on the one hand, and the sense of belonging that participants have to this method of decision-making, which is the result of collective action, on the other hand, have facilitated the implementation of Islamic decision-making.

Growth is a rich concept in Islamic thought, which is also highly regarded in Islamic management and has been introduced as one of the main principles of Islamic management (Azizi et al., 2017). In Islamic thought, growth is a broad concept that, in addition to the development and promotion of capabilities and talents, also includes the spiritual and moral realms (Motahari, 2000).

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1. This type of self-censorship should not be confused with self-censorship of culture and values. What is meant here is that there is no self-censorship out of fear of powerful people, and this is different from self-censorship due to religious values, although both are not desirable.

Culturalization here also means increasing cultural integration. It also covers areas such as freedom of speech and interpersonal relationships.

Al-Falah is a concept that encompasses both managerial criteria of success and the standards of Islamic beliefs (Wahab et al., 2014). Because in Islamic beliefs, the happiness of the hereafter is not separate from worldly life, and according to Islamic beliefs, the world is the farm of the hereafter (Surah Ash-Shuraa - verse 20). Audiences from other religions need to find alternatives to Al-Falah. For example, salvation according to their own religious culture or success in moral and human affairs for materialistic cultures may be possible options.

Deception by Concealment, unlike the above cases, is one of the consequences of Islamic participatory decision-making. Although according to the opinion of experts, this malfunction is not in the essence of applying Islamic principles in decision-making, it is due to the wrong way of implementation, but it exists in a serious way in practice. In Islamic decision-making, spiritual values are important, but these values are not the only thing that is important. Rational principles, functional criteria, emotions, and feelings each have their role. If these issues are not paid enough attention to, this malfunction of Islamic decision-making will occur.

Table 6 shows the three-step coding process for the Core dimension: Optimal Distance. The importance of this concept has made it necessary to address it in a separate table.

Table 6: three coding steps (open, axial, and selective) for the Core dimension

Concepts	Components	Dimensions
Decrease Construal level differences + Overview effect + Decrease mental distance + Decrease intellectual distance + Decrease hypothetical distance + Decrease analytical distance	Optimal distance from the Prospect	
Specialized attitude + Direct connection to the issue + Decrease informational distance + Decrease temporal distance + Decrease spatial distance + Decrease organizational level distance	Optimal distance from the Issue	Optimal Distance
Direct knowledge of people + Recognition of new generations of society + Insight into Environment + Grounded cognition + physical distance + social distance + emotional distance + economic distance	Optimal distance with the Stakeholders / Contributors	

The optimal distance here means a different and relatively new concept. To explain this concept, we must first define what is meant by distance. The meaning of distance here is more comprehensive than psychological distance and can be mental, intellectual, hypothetical, analytical, informational, temporal (future or current), spatial, organizational level, physical, social, emotional, and economic. The first four are criteria of distance from perspective, the next four are criteria of distance from Issue, and the last four are criteria of distance from stakeholders. Accordingly, mental, intellectual, hypothetical, and analytical distance means the degree of difference and distance that the decision-maker in these areas has with the perspective and macro dimensions of the subject of the decision. Informational, temporal, spatial, and organizational level means the degree of difference and distance that the decision-maker in these areas has with the technical, executive, and specialized aspects of the subject.

The degree to which the decision-maker differs from the stakeholders and participants in terms of economic and social status indicates the distance between the decision-maker and them. For example, a decision-maker who has a very luxurious lifestyle cannot make participatory decisions on issues that affect the lives of very poor people (Al-Kulayni, 1987: 227). In addition, the greater the direct and face-to-face communication between the decision-maker and the other participants, the narrower the physical distance[1].

In the following, after explaining the research model, we will continue with a further discussion about this component.

5. Model Description

As introduced by many scholars of the Grounded Theory method, the modeling step is the natural achievement of selective coding. However, experience has shown that the nature of this stage is distinct from the previous stages. Modeling is a stage that requires thinking, ingenuity, creativity, and expertise (Mehrabi et al., 2011: 23).

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1. Perhaps we can strictly replace physical distance with optimal eye-to-eye distance, which is a distance of 20 to 30 cm (Deza 2018: 509). According to the interviewees, this close physical distance has many emotional and mental effects on the participants.

Using the three-step coding process presented in the previous section, at this stage, with detailed consultations with experts, we have developed the final model of participatory decision-making with the Islamic approach. However, the way we presented the three-step coding process of this research has helped us to become familiar with most parts of the research model right now. This model has been shared with the majority of interviewees and was modified according to their views in several stages so that the majority of experts confirmed the final model.
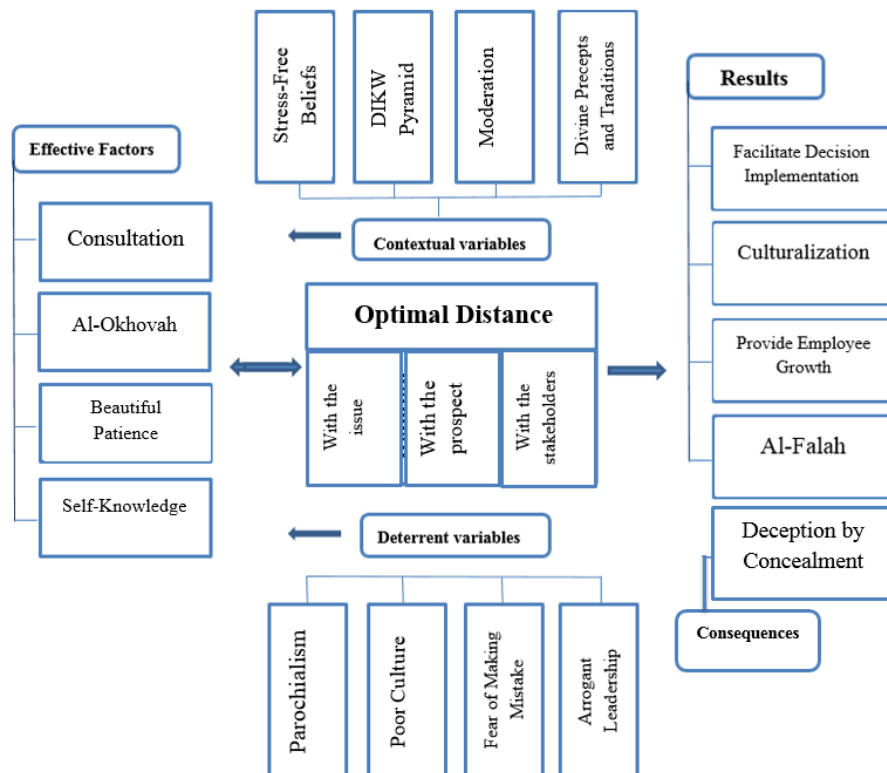
Figure 1: participatory decision-making framework with the Islamic approach

Fig. 1 shows the model derived from the Grounded Theory. This qualitative model shows the effective factors, contextual variables, Deterrent variables, outcomes, and consequences, and most importantly, the central variable of participatory decision making with the Islamic approach, and therefore presents as the participatory Framework of decision making with the Islamic approach.

Since this framework includes inputs (effective factors), outputs (Results), processes (Core Dimension), contexts (Contextual and Deterrent Variables), feedback, and relationships to the environment (relationship between model components), it can be considered a conceptual Framework of participatory decision making.

It should be emphasized that the target audience of this model is not only Muslim decision-makers and researchers. All audiences in this scientific field from non-Islamic cultures are invited to study and use this model according to their own needs. The principles of multiculturalism and the added value that it creates in various areas of decision-making (Ali et al, 2008), can be the main factors that encourage non-Muslim audiences to pay attention to this model (Stevens et al., 2008).

The main application of this model is to create a cornerstone for building practical and specialized techniques of participatory decision-making with an Islamic approach. However, intelligent managers (in Islamic or non-Islamic cultures) can use this model in practice by considering some points. First, recognize each element of the model simply and practically. Second, assess the participants' familiarity with the model and their willingness to use it. Third, examine the conditions of the decision in terms of the availability of contextual variables and the absence of deterrent variables.

To achieve these points, describing each dimension of the model is necessary. To that end, let us start with the core dimension of Islamic participatory decision-making.

6. The Core dimension of Islamic participatory decision making

The research process identified "Optimal Distance" as the Core dimension of the participatory decision-making framework with the Islamic approach. In addition to the affirmations of the interviewees, the authors had other reasons to choose Optimal Distance as the core dimension of Islamic participatory decision-making. The most important reason is that the application and implementation of all other components and teachings depend on this central factor. Based on the Grounded Theory process, the central dimension of our model consists of three main components.

Optimal distance with the Prospect: The place of perspective in decision making is so important that many theorists have emphasized that small, ordinary decisions made with regard to perspective are more effective in the ultimate success of the organization than excellent decisions made without

regard to perspective (Mintzberg, 2007). This critical doctrine has been emphasized in Islamic thought and is essential for achieving the desired result (Kulayni, 1987: 99).

Optimal distance with the issue: Thinkers from Albert Einstein to Peter Drucker have emphasized the importance of correctly diagnosing problems (Wedell-Wedellsborg, 2017). Optimal distance from the issue is the Islamic decision-making prescription for this important subject. Understanding the priorities and dimensions of the issues is one of the key points underlying this factor.

Optimal distance with the Stakeholders / Contributors: Understanding the Stakeholders and Contributors is essential for any participatory decision-making, especially for managerial decisions (Zhuang et al., 2019). One of the essential concepts of this component is to identify the participants, their needs, and the necessity of effective communication with them. More importantly, this cognition must be obtained directly and face-to-face, to provide the necessary empathy for participatory decision-making in addition to the deeper cognition.

So far, we have explained 12 types of distances on three different axes and explained what each of them means. We also examined the role that each plays in decision-making.

But since we are talking about the optimal distance and the decision-makers do not have unlimited time and resources, it is not enough to just emphasize reducing the distance with the Issue, Stakeholders, and Prospect, and it is necessary to provide criteria for optimality. We designed this criterion using the opinions of the interviewees, and part of it was inspired by Simon's theory of Bounded Rationality (Simon, 1990).

Before presenting this criterion, it is necessary to talk about the priority of each of these three distances in different decision-making situations. The table below, presented after lengthy consultations with experts, shows these priorities based on the decision-maker's situation and general decision-making conditions with a compensatory approach.

Table 7: Priorities of optimal distances based on decision-making situation

	Middle-level and Frontline Managers	Top-level Managers
Major decisions:	Optimal distance from the Prospect Optimal distance from the Stakeholders / Contributors Optimal distance from the issue	Optimal distance from the Stakeholders / Contributors Optimal distance from the issue Optimal distance from the Prospect
Minor decisions:	Optimal distance from the Stakeholders / Contributors Optimal distance from the Prospect Optimal distance from the issue	Optimal distance from the issue Optimal distance from the Stakeholders / Contributors Optimal distance from the Prospect

In line with the above priorities, the fact that it is not possible to reach the minimum distance on all three axes at the same time in the real conditions of the decision is taken into account, and therefore, a practical criterion for this issue is presented. Based on the satisficing strategy that is most suitable for real-world decision-making situations (Simon, 1990), the optimality criteria for each of the three distance axes are as follows.

The criterion of optimality in the first axis (Optimal distance from the Prospect) is to reach a stage of satisfaction for the decision-maker and her top managers. In cases where the decision-maker is the CEO of the organization, the board of directors, or the board of trustees, and in cases where there is no such thing, consultants who always have a general and long-term view are replaced.

The criterion of optimality in the second axis (Optimal distance from the issue) is to achieve satisfaction for the decision-maker and her lower managers. In cases where the decision-maker himself is at the lowest management level of the organization, the satisfaction of experienced and specialized employees will be replaced. The satisfaction of these people, who have direct knowledge of the subject through experience, is the best measure to reduce the distance from the problem as much as possible.

The criterion of optimality in the third axis (Optimal distance from the Stakeholders / Contributors) is that the decision-maker and the Stakeholders reach a satisfactory stage. Complete recording and sharing of actions taken to reduce this distance, including a detailed and complete description of the process of discussions with participants, is essential to reach a satisfactory stage in this area.

Providing satisficing criteria for distance optimality is the result of synchronous use of the optimization and satisfaction paradigms, which have already been recognized in both the conventional management paradigm and the Islamic management paradigm (Bakhtiari et al., 2018).

7. Effective Factors

The role of consultation in participatory decision-making is unique. In Islamic thought, all decision-makers, even the messenger of God, need to consult (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Imran, verse 159). This Islamic view of consulting solves many managerial problems in consulting. Leaders often would rather fail than admit their dependence on someone else, so in many cases, they do not consult enough, as if it is a sign of their weakness (Taylor, 2018). But the Qur'an's advice to the Prophet of Islam (who is the highest man in all fields according to Islamic beliefs) to consult eliminates this misconception.

Another critical factor is the doctrine of Al-Okhovah (Islamic brotherhood/sisterhood). Al-Okhovah shapes the spirit of participation and cooperation in Islamic participatory decision-making and can reduce many Deterrent Variables of our model, including Fear of Making Mistakes and Arrogant Leadership.

While the Consultation and Al-Okhovah are at the interpersonal level and regulate relationships between decision-makers, the third factor deals with one's relationship with God and himself/herself.

One of the components of beautiful Patience that most of all shows its application in participatory decision-making is Patience in the Difficulty of the Participatory Decision-Making Process. This Islamic doctrine saves participatory decision-making from the trap of premature and hasty decision-making. Hasty decision-making has two main reasons, both of which are due to impatience: the reluctance of the participants in the decision (due to impatience) or the group thinking. Group thinking is also often caused by the fear of creating a crisis in the group and avoiding opposition, which is due to the impatience of the group members against the dissenting opinion (Garvin et al., 2017).

The last but not the least influential factor in participatory decision-making with the Islamic approach is self-knowledge. Many experts believe that self-knowledge is the most critical knowledge in the world. Self-knowledge is the prelude to effective communication with others (Mahjoub, 2015), and effective communication with others is the main prerequisite for any participatory decision (Luo et al., 2006).

We should add that each of these dimensions is related to Optimal Distance (the central factor of this research). As an example, Optimal Distance is complete when the decision-maker does not rely solely on his / her thinking and uses others' views and knowledge, and these are the consulting dimensions.

8. Contextual variables

Stress-Free Beliefs, Moderation, Divine precepts and traditions, DIKW pyramid are four dimensions that form the 'contextual variables' of our model. Each of these four dimensions has a vital place in decision-making, but as we focus on participatory decision-making in this research, we have to consider the role of these dimensions indirectly. Having these features is not enough just for the final decision-maker.

The first dimension in contextual variables is Stress-Free Beliefs, which is one of the most important Islamic teachings in decision-making. Religious sources have repeatedly recommended Trust in God and Hope for the grace of God in decision-making, especially in the final stages of the decision-making process (Surah Al-Imran, verse 159). It should be noted that reflection on empirical research can also show the vital role of Stress-Free Beliefs in improving decisions. Some empirical research has shown that the main reason poor people make bad decisions is that their minds are always worried about basic needs such as food and shelter. Similarly, managers and decision-makers who face major challenges in their organization are more likely to make bad decisions when making collaborative decisions because their minds are concerned about those challenges, and there is no space for deep reflection on the issue of decision-making and participation. In fact, constant stress has a devastating effect on decisions (Bergman 2016). This is where the doctrine of Stress-Free Beliefs shows its place in Islamic decision-making.

The second contextual dimension is Moderation. It is recognized as an underlying principle of true Islam that separates this religion from the extremist and fanatical sects. Many empirical studies have emphasized the role of moderation in teamwork and group decision-making (Kirkman, 2016). The Prophet of Islam instructed Muslims to be moderate in all matters, including family (Delshad, 2005: 164), social (Maverdi, 1989: 229), and economic issues (Rey-shahri, 2008, Vol. 13: 353). This, like a regular exercise, can make moderation easier when working as a team and making group decisions.

The important thing about Divine precepts and traditions is that they are in line with the Muslim decision makers' needs. Coordination between

beliefs and practices is an important need of decision-makers (Hall, 2008). Therefore, the audience of this decision-making Framework from other religions must plan to achieve this coordination. This dimension strengthens effective factors such as Al-Okhovah and beautiful patience.

The behavior of the Prophet of Islam shows that he had a special place in statistics and information in his decisions (Moqarrizi, 1999: 346). Therefore, paying attention to data, information, and knowledge in Islamic culture has a history of more than a thousand years. This contributes to the coherence of the Islamic participatory decision-making framework presented in this work.

9. Deterrent Variables

Poor Culture, Arrogant Leadership, Fear of Making Mistakes, and Parochialism are four deterrent variables of our model. Culture is the broadest factor influencing participatory decision-making (Zhang et al., 2007). Racial, religious, and gender discrimination are the three main components of Poor Culture. Islam not only forbids and denounces any discrimination but also considers it the duty of all Muslims to oppose discrimination (Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 13) (Sadeghi 2014). According to the interviewees, discrimination destroys the motivation for participation and Al-Okhovah.

Empirical research shows the negative effect of arrogant leadership on commitment and work motivation (Sim et al. 2020). From Islam's point of view, arrogance is reprehensible in everything, especially in leadership (Surah al-Araf, verse 146). This dimension, with its adverse effects on various Islamic decision-making factors, including consultation and brotherhood, is a strong deterrent to Islamic participatory decision-making.

Fear of making mistakes leads to the biggest trap of participatory decision-making, namely group thinking (Janis 1983). Fear of making mistakes also eliminates the positive effects of Stress-Free Beliefs.

Regarding Parochialism, it should be said that the participatory decision-making process, which requires a lot of patience and care, according to the interviewees, cannot be reconciled with short-sighted views and unsystematic attitudes resulting from Parochialism.

10. Results and Consequences of Islamic Participatory Decision Making

Now that we have explained the Effective Factors, Contextual Variables, and Deterrent Variables of our model, it is time for the results of Islamic participatory decision-making. We have to note that this part of the model has been formulated using the experts' opinions and interviews. We must

emphasize that those religious beliefs are not the reason for mentioning any element in the model (including in the results section). All elements of the model are the result of lengthy interviews with experienced experts. The reference to religious sources is only to show that these concepts are Islamic.

This research has shown that participatory decision-making with the Islamic approach has four main results: Facilitate Decision Implementation, Provide Employee Growth, Culturalization, and Al-Falah.

The first of these results, Facilitate Decision Implementation, is most of all from the nature of Al-okhovah and beautiful Patience in Islamic decision-making. One of the most important components of this dimension is the transparency of the decision-making process. According to experts, the optimal distance between participants/stakeholders plays the main role in creating transparency in the decision-making process.

While the first dimension represented the outcome of Islamic decision-making at the organizational level, Provide Employee Growth considers the results of participatory decision-making at the personal level. According to experts, this output is the result of self-knowledge, moderation, and attention to the knowledge pyramid in the Islamic participatory decision-making framework.

Culturalization is the most common output of the Islamic decision-making framework. Cultural integration, which is one of the most important components of this dimension and is very important for participation and cooperation in organizations (Riad, 2005), has a very brilliant history in Islamic culture (Al-Sharif al-Razi, 2010: 565). In the decision-making framework presented in this article, this output is the result of opposition to all forms of discrimination in Islamic participatory decision-making.

Al-Falah represents the characteristics of participatory decision-making with the Islamic approach at the organizational level. Pay attention to Performance and Effectiveness are the most important features of a decision-making system in the managerial paradigm (Hendry, 2013), and the research process showed this feature for participatory decision-making with the Islamic approach. The result in the afterlife is also an essential feature of any approach in the Islamic paradigm. The factors of consultation and attention to the knowledge pyramid have been instrumental in generating Profitability and Al-Falah. Moreover, attention to divine traditions has been effective in producing the result in the afterlife.

As a summary of this section, it is necessary to mention once again the relationship between some of the different parts of the model. Optimal Distance: All the contextual variables play a role in strengthening it; it

strengthens all the effective factors, and some effective factors also play a role in strengthening it. Results: Only by providing all effective factors and core dimensions are obtained. Deterrent variables: They do not directly impede Optimal Distance, but they can severely impair other effective factors.

11. Conclusions

This study presented a framework for participatory decision-making with the Islamic approach by introducing five parts: effective factors, contextual variables, deterrent variables, results, and finally, Optimal Distance as the core dimension. As previously described, the research process showed that the use of participatory decision-making with the Islamic approach would result in Facilitated Decision Implementation, Provide Employee Growth, Culturalization, and Al-Falah. Further examination showed that these results could make our decision-making framework acceptable in both the Islamic and modern paradigms. Accordingly, organizations in Muslim and other societies can choose this framework as the basis of their decision-making processes because it has provided the desirable values of both types of these organizations.[1] Additionally, this framework has not only identified the concepts that influence Islamic participatory decision-making but also indicates the relationship status, importance level, and priority of each component. Therefore, researchers in this field can base their practical research on this work. Besides, managers, in Islamic and non-Islamic organizations, can make more effective decisions by considering the provided framework.

Whether in decisions that are in line with the main goals of organizations and are usually made collaboratively within the organization, such as decisions such as changing the target market or in decisions that require participation outside the organization (such as helping an indigenous tribe), capable managers can use this model after examining the attitude and familiarity of participants towards the model and also examining the contextual and deterrent conditions.

Many of the concepts discussed below, the dimensions of the model, can be considered as a direct recommendation to managers. In the meantime, some recommendations have been less considered in the Islamic management paradigm, for example, recommendations such as paying attention to decision-making techniques, the importance of humor in

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1. Users of this decision-making system from non-Islamic cultures need to make adjustments to it, which were mentioned and explained throughout the article.

participatory decision-making, and avoiding religious discrimination. Each of these new recommendations can be a source of valuable results in managers' decisions.

More importantly, the priority and relevance of these recommendations are illustrated by the modeling of this study. Clarifying issues such as which advice is most important, which recommendations have direct Effectiveness, which ones are indirectly effective, etc., makes it easy for managers to apply these recommendations.

The results of this study have significantly converged with the valid works in this field. For example, Adobor (2006: 480), in convergence with the findings of this study, emphasizes the impact of personal relationships and intimacy on improving the quality of organizational decision-making. Moreover, the role of humility in decision-making has also been mentioned in many studies (Nockur and Pfattheicher, 2020). In this study, the Islamic brotherhood/sisterhood dimension has been proposed as convergent with these findings. Of course, as we have seen, Islamic brotherhood/ sisterhood is not limited to personal relationships and humility, which can be referred to as research contribution and divergence of findings in this field.

Among Islamic management and decision-making articles, scholars have mentioned elements such as consultation (Javadi Amoli 1993), Trust in God (Alavi et al. 2020), and teachings of Islamic ethics (Kashi et al. 2017) that indicate their convergence with the present study. Research has also shown the increasing importance of the role of spirituality and ethics in crisis decision-making by examining the COVID-19 crisis (Azizi et al. 2021), and this issue can clarify new dimensions of the importance of the Islamic framework presented in this study in contemporary situations.

It should be emphasized that, in addition to the focus of this work on participatory decision making, there are other aspects of differentiation with the mentioned works, which are signs of the contribution of the present work. As an example, we can mention the beautiful Patience among the effective factors and popularity in the results section of the model.

We should also note that the paper has considerable convergence with executive and credible management research. For example, the findings of this study are closely related to Mintzberg's findings in the "Bedtime Stories for Managers" book. Throughout this book, he has focused on the role of being in the middle of the field and avoiding Lofty leadership (Mintzberg, 2019). This article also considers the dimension of "arrogant leadership" as one of the deterrent variables of Islamic participatory decision-making. Another example is Bob Iger's remarks about the tremendous effect of trust

and attention on employees in the quality of decision-making (Iger, 2019). This point is also present in the components related to the dimension of Islamic brotherhood in our model.

So far, we have dealt in detail with the convergence of the results of this research with other research in participatory decision-making, Islamic decision-making, and executive decision-making, and we have mentioned only small parts of the divergences of this research. Accordingly, it is necessary to point out here the most important divergences of this article. The most important area of divergence and innovation is the central component of the Islamic participatory decision-making framework - the optimal distance. The optimal distance in our Islamic decision-making framework has a completely different meaning from other works (For example, refer to Akerlof, 1997, and Bobonis et al., 2009). Here, optimal distance is introduced as a new concept that is much broader and different from psychological distance and includes twelve different types of distance. In addition, the introduction of three axes of distance is an area of innovation and divergence of this article from previous works. More importantly, providing optimality criteria, inspired by the satisficing paradigm, is an area of divergence. On the one hand, in previous works, satisficing criteria have been introduced not for the optimal distance but for the amount of analysis (Brown, 2004). On the other hand, in most of the previous works, the practical application of the concepts of optimality and satisfaction has not been considered in a hybrid form. In addition, satisficing strategy is considered necessary not only for the decision-maker but also for a combination of people involved in the issue (depending on the type of the decision), which is another area of divergence in this study.

Since the present study has findings in both theoretical and practical sections, we can also make suggestions for each of these two sections. Therefore, we suggest that researchers try to develop practical and specialized participatory decision-making techniques with the Islamic approach, using this framework. The framework presented in this article provides the foundations and prerequisites for such studies. Researchers can produce Islamic versions of decision-making techniques by comparing the criteria and elements governing the existing techniques with the criteria of the Islamic participatory decision-making framework, which are presented in the findings of this article.

We also suggest that field researchers measure the effects and outcomes of this framework in real, practical cases of organizations. In this regard, each of the dimensions discussed in the Effective Factors of the model of this article can be selected as the subject of separate research.

In the implementation section, we suggest considering the priority table of optimal distance from the three axes and then establishing full coordination from the beginning of the decision-making process with the team, which, according to the model of this article, each part of the decision is in the satisficing range, and the participatory decision-making process begins.

12. Statements and Declarations

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Motivation in Islamic Thought: A Thematic Analysis of Javadi Amoli's Perspective

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore and develop a comprehensive Islamic framework for understanding human motivation, drawing from the works of Grand Ayatollah Javadi Amoli. By conducting a thematic analysis of his writings, this research aims to fill gaps in Islamic management literature by identifying core principles of motivation that incorporate spiritual and practical dimensions. The study seeks to provide insights into how Islamic thought can inform motivation in both personal development and organizational settings, contributing to the broader field of Islamic management and its application in contemporary organizational contexts.

Design/methodology/approach: This study employs a thematic analysis based on the framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The research focuses on analyzing the extensive works of Grand Ayatollah Javadi Amoli, particularly his views on human motivation. Approximately 40,000 pages of his writings were reviewed to extract relevant themes. The research followed a step-by-step thematic analysis process, including familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, and identifying overarching themes. These themes were then refined to build a comprehensive Islamic motivational model that addresses spiritual, ethical, and practical dimensions of human behavior and management.

Findings: The study identified three major themes in the Islamic conceptualization of motivation: the flourishing, regulation, and adjustment of motivations. These themes highlight the balance between spiritual and worldly motivations within Islamic teachings. The role of practical intellect (aql 'amali) was found to be central in managing human desires, harmonizing internal conflicts, and guiding actions toward ethical outcomes. The findings suggest that Islamic motivational frameworks offer holistic approaches that integrate spiritual awareness with practical organizational strategies, making them applicable in modern management contexts while fostering personal growth.

Originality/value: This study offers a novel contribution by developing a comprehensive Islamic motivational framework based on the in-depth thematic analysis of Grand Ayatollah Javadi Amoli's works. While existing literature on Islamic motivation focuses predominantly on needs-based models, this research goes beyond by incorporating spiritual, ethical, and practical dimensions into the understanding of motivation. It introduces the concept of practical intellect ('aql 'amali) as a central element in managing human desires, providing a more holistic view of motivation that integrates both personal and organizational development, making it applicable to contemporary Islamic management practices.

Keywords

Motivation, Islamic Management, Grand Ayatollah Javadi Amoli.

Introduction

Motivation has long been a central topic in managerial literature, recognized for its pivotal role in enhancing productivity, engagement, and performance across organizational contexts (Howard et al., 2021; Hoxha & Ramadani, 2024). Traditionally explored through psychological and behavioral lenses, motivation is increasingly understood as a multidimensional construct that intersects with cultural and spiritual domains. This broader perspective has prompted scholars to extend their inquiry into the realm of Islamic human sciences, where motivation is regarded not only as a psychological mechanism but also as a deeply ethical and theological concern.

The Islamic worldview provides a rich epistemological foundation for understanding human motivation. Rooted in divine purpose and moral accountability, Islamic teachings emphasize perseverance, sincerity (ikhlāṣ), and the pursuit of excellence (iḥsān) as motivational ideals. Spiritual practices such as prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage are imbued with motivational significance, serving as both personal disciplines and communal reinforcements of purposeful behavior (Fatima et al., 2017). An expanding body of research on Muslim learners and professionals indicates that Islamic religiosity positively predicts academic and occupational engagement, with intrinsic religious beliefs often enhancing focus, resilience, and long-term commitment (Khalid et al., 2020; Selim & Abdalla, 2022).

Notably, studies demonstrate that integrating faith-based values into educational and organizational settings can deepen individuals' sense of purpose and motivation (Ito & Umemoto, 2022). These findings suggest that Islamic spiritual frameworks not only complement but also enrich existing motivational theories by offering a holistic understanding of human will—one that binds personal aspiration to divine intention. Thus, the exploration of motivation within Islamic contexts is not merely a cultural adaptation of Western theories, but a fundamentally distinct paradigm that warrants independent scholarly investigation.

For example, religious experiences like the Arbaeen pilgrimage exemplify a deeply rooted, spiritually driven motivational framework. Participants in this pilgrimage act within a narrative grounded in Shia Islamic themes of sacrifice, justice, and communal solidarity (Husein, 2018). Such expressions of faith-based motivation demonstrate the power of religious conviction to sustain extraordinary levels of commitment and endurance—traits that are highly valued in both personal development and organizational performance.

Despite the evident compatibility between Islamic teachings and motivational theory, a comprehensive model grounded in Islamic thought remains underdeveloped. Scholars face a wide range of interpretive approaches and methodological challenges, particularly when analyzing motivation through specific theological lenses, such as that of the Twelver Shia tradition. This school of thought emphasizes divine justice, spiritual accountability, and the cultivation of moral virtues, all of which point to unique motivational pathways.

Furthermore, findings from contemporary psychological research add additional layers of complexity. While meta-analyses affirm that intrinsic motivation is closely linked to positive learning outcomes (Howard et al., 2021; Toste et al., 2020), applying these findings to faith-based contexts requires accounting for other variables—such as religious identity, communal expectations, and eschatological beliefs (Alzaareer & Abdalla, 2023). For instance, Islamic schools frequently integrate spiritual and academic goals, reflecting a more comprehensive view of motivation that transcends standard educational paradigms.

In light of these complexities, simplistic applications of Western motivational theories to Islamic contexts risk yielding superficial or culturally incongruent results. There is, therefore, an urgent need to construct nuanced, theologically grounded models that resonate with the lived experiences of Muslim individuals and communities. This study seeks to contribute to that effort by examining motivation through the lens of the Twelver Shia school of thought, specifically focusing on the perspective of Ayatollah Javadi Amoli—a prominent faqih and interpreter of the Qur'an within this tradition. It aims to illuminate how the core beliefs and practices articulated in his thought can inform a distinct and coherent motivational paradigm.

The following assumptions are considered in the research:

- Given the impossibility of exhaustively studying the views of all Shia scholars, this research focuses on the opinions of Grand Ayatollah Abdullah Javadi Amoli.

- The objective of this research is to identify the motivational mechanisms endorsed by Islam and comprehend Islam's approach to motivation. This study is not limited to the methods of preaching and religious exhortation aimed at human spiritual development but seeks to identify a broader discourse on motivation applicable in diverse domains.

The study begins with a review of the existing theoretical literature on motivation in Western thinking and Islam, followed by an examination of the research methodology employed. Subsequently, through content analysis of the works and themes extracted, the primary approaches of Islam toward motivation are discussed.

1. Motivation Theories in Western Scholarship

Motivation is a critical concept in social science literature, influencing a wide range of human behaviors and outcomes. It plays an essential role in understanding goal-directed activities, work performance, learning processes, and creative endeavors. Scholars from various disciplines have contributed to the theoretical development and practical understanding of motivation, resulting in a rich and multifaceted body of knowledge. Foundational theories include social cognitive theory, which emphasizes internal influences like self-efficacy and goals (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020), as well as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, self-determination theory, and expectancy-value theory, each of which highlights distinct psychological drivers. In work and organizational contexts, motivation is shaped by personal motives, traits, and environmental conditions. Social dynamics such as collaboration and competition also play influential roles. Meta-analytic studies confirm a moderate positive relationship between motivation and academic performance (Hur, 2018; Alrawahi et al., 2020).

One of the earliest and most influential perspectives on motivation in the Western tradition is that of Max Weber. His framework centers on a typology of rationality—practical, theoretical, formal, and substantive—which he used to analyze human action and social organization. Weber's typology provides insight into how individuals balance economic goals with value-driven objectives, especially in contexts like social entrepreneurship and tourism development (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017; Mody et al., 2016). Furthermore, his concept of charisma explores the social and temporal dimensions of leadership and motivation, emphasizing the role of collective expectations in shaping human behavior (Barisione, 2023).

Skinner's behaviorist approach to motivation emphasizes the role of external stimuli and reinforcement in shaping behavior. Rather than viewing motivation as an internal drive, Skinner argued that behavior is influenced by the consequences it produces. Positive reinforcement, such as rewards or praise, increases the likelihood of repeated behavior, while punishment or the absence of reinforcement diminishes it. This view has had a lasting impact on education and training, particularly in behavior management and classroom engagement strategies (Barber et al., 2017).

Abraham Maslow introduced the hierarchy of needs, a motivational model proposing that individuals are driven by the need to satisfy a progression of needs—from basic physiological survival to self-actualization (Healy, 2016; Bridgman et al., 2019; Kaufman, 2018). Despite its enduring influence, Maslow's model has been critiqued for its individualism, linear structure, and cultural limitations (Acevedo, 2018; Yu, 2022). Still, it remains foundational in management, education, and psychology, offering a structured lens through which to view personal development and well-being (Montag et al., 2020).

David McClelland expanded on Maslow's ideas by proposing the Need Theory, which identifies three dominant motivational drives: achievement, affiliation, and power. McClelland emphasized that individuals vary in the strength of these needs and that motivation can be optimized by aligning tasks and rewards with a person's dominant need. Recent neuroscience research supports the theory, indicating that targeted rewards stimulate specific brain regions related to motivation, further validating a tailored approach in organizational settings (Rybnicek et al., 2019).

Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory differentiates between motivators and hygiene factors. While motivators like achievement and recognition drive satisfaction, hygiene factors such as salary and job security prevent dissatisfaction but do not actively motivate. Herzberg's framework underscores the dual pathways to improving employee satisfaction and has been widely applied in sectors like healthcare and hospitality to inform motivation and retention strategies (Ser & Webber, 2024; Hur, 2018; Alrawahi et al., 2020).

Victor Vroom contributed Expectancy Theory, which suggests that motivation is a function of three variables: expectancy (belief that effort leads to performance), instrumentality (belief that performance leads to outcome), and valence (value placed on the outcome). His model has been effectively applied to diverse fields, including leadership, addiction recovery, and entrepreneurship, showing how perceived contingencies influence goal-directed behavior (Yoes & Silverman, 2020; Barba-Sánchez & Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2017).

Albert Bandura's advanced social cognitive theory emphasizes self-efficacy, the belief in one's capacity to succeed, as a critical factor in motivation. Bandura's model highlights reciprocal determinism, the dynamic interaction between personal, behavioral, and environmental influences. Outcome expectancy, or the belief that a certain behavior will lead to a

specific outcome, further shapes motivational persistence and resilience (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020; Shell, 2023).

Richard Ryan and Edward Deci's Self-Determination Theory focuses on the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Their distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation underscores the importance of internal satisfaction for long-term engagement and well-being. SDT has been widely applied in education, healthcare, and organizational behavior, offering a robust framework for nurturing motivation through supportive environments (Hope et al., 2018; McEown & Oga-Baldwin, 2019).

2. Foundations of Islamic Perspectives on Motivation

Islamic theories of motivation offer a distinct paradigm that merges spiritual beliefs with psychological and organizational principles, providing a rich alternative to conventional Western models. Rooted in the Qur'an, Hadith, and centuries of Islamic scholarship, this perspective emphasizes the spiritual, moral, and communal dimensions of human behavior. Much of the existing literature in this area has emerged from Sunni scholarly traditions, which have predominantly shaped the discourse on Islamic motivation theory to date. This presents an opportunity to further broaden the conversation by incorporating perspectives from other Islamic traditions, such as Twelver Shi'ism.

A central tenet of Islamic motivation theory is its emphasis on the inner state of the *nafs* (self), which plays a crucial role in determining a person's moral and motivational orientation. The Qur'an describes three primary states of the *nafs*: *al-nafs al-muṭmaʾinnah* (the tranquil soul), *al-nafs al-lawwāmah* (the self-reproaching soul), and *al-nafs al-ammārah bi-al-sūʾ* (the soul inclined to evil). Each state represents a different level of moral and spiritual development, which directly influences motivation. Optimal motivation, according to Islamic theory, is achieved when the soul reaches a tranquil state through sincerity, self-discipline, and alignment with divine guidance (Cader, 2016).

Underlying this framework are the concepts of *tawḥīd* (monotheism) and *īmān* (faith), which serve as the foundation of a believer's motivational orientation. The drive to perform good deeds, seek knowledge, and pursue excellence is deeply tied to the individual's relationship with God. Motivation, in this view, is not simply a psychological impulse but a manifestation of one's faith and spiritual commitment. Moderating factors such as sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*), patience (*ṣabr*), trust in God (*tawakkul*), and

adherence to prophetic traditions (*sunnah*) shape the consistency and quality of this motivation (Cader, 2016).

In comparative terms, some scholars have attempted to align Islamic motivation theory with Western frameworks, particularly Maslow's hierarchy of needs. While there are surface-level parallels—such as the progression toward self-actualization—Islamic theory introduces a fundamentally different logic. It prioritizes spiritual fulfillment and divine accountability over individualistic self-enhancement. For example, in contrast to Maslow's top-tier goal of self-actualization, Islamic motivation centers on *taqwa* (God-consciousness) and moral excellence as ultimate aims (Rasli et al., 2022).

This spiritually integrated model also has practical implications in the field of human resource development (HRD). Researchers have argued that Islamic principles offer a valuable framework for holistic employee development, promoting motivation through ethical leadership, community orientation, and meaningful work. By embedding values such as justice, integrity, and collective welfare into HR practices, organizations can foster intrinsic motivation and long-term engagement (Khan & Sheikh, 2012).

A particularly innovative contribution to this field is the concept of the Islamic Locus of Control (ILoC), which reinterprets traditional psychological theories through an Islamic lens. ILoC posits that individuals believe they are accountable for their actions while simultaneously recognizing divine will. This duality cultivates a sense of personal responsibility and resilience, helping individuals maintain motivation even in the face of setbacks, as they view both effort and outcome as intertwined with divine wisdom (Zakiy et al., 2024).

Knowledge sharing within academic and professional settings has also been examined through the lens of Islamic motivation. Studies have shown that intrinsic drivers, such as the pursuit of *ikhlāṣ* (sincerity) and the value of brotherhood, motivate individuals to share knowledge freely. These findings underscore how Islamic teachings encourage behaviors that contribute not only to personal growth but also to communal enrichment (Mansor & Jaharuddin, 2021).

3. An Exploration of Motivation from an Islamic Perspective: A Blended Approach

A review of scholarly literature on motivation from an Islamic perspective reveals a rich tapestry of ideas and interpretations developed over centuries. Despite the depth and breadth of these contributions, they have not received

sufficient attention in broader academic discourse. This essay synthesizes the perspectives of experts and researchers from both Sunni and Twelver Shia traditions, blending their insights to present a cohesive understanding of Islamic motivation. The discussion highlights shared themes, unique contributions, and practical applications derived from Islamic teachings.

3-1. The Spiritual Foundation of Motivation

One of the most prominent themes in Islamic motivational theory is the spiritual dimension of human existence. Scholars across traditions emphasize that Islam offers a robust framework for motivation by integrating material and spiritual needs. For instance, Muhammad Fathi al-Sayyid Qasim (1995), a Sunni scholar, argues that work in Islam is considered a form of worship (ibadah), fostering intrinsic motivation rooted in devotion to God. Similarly, Aghapiroz (2003), from the Twelver Shia tradition, identifies religious beliefs as key motivators, asserting that Islamic principles introduce unique variables that shape human behavior. Both perspectives underscore the centrality of faith in driving motivation, whether through the concept of "work as worship" or the pursuit of divine proximity.

This spiritual foundation is further reinforced by Alawneh (1998), who posits that motivation in Islam stems from knowledge of God, self-awareness, and one's relationship with the world. His Sunni-inspired analysis aligns with Bakhshi's (2001) Twelver Shia emphasis on the role of the afterlife in decision-making, highlighting how long-term spiritual goals influence short-term actions. Together, these scholars illustrate how Islamic teachings encourage individuals to prioritize eternal rewards over temporary gains.

3-2. Ethical Conduct and Moral Behavior

Another shared theme is the inseparable link between motivation and ethical conduct. Kaviani and Karimi (2011), drawing from the Twelver Shia tradition, explore the relationship between needs and ethics in their comparative study of Allamah Tabatabaei and Maslow. They argue that moral behavior is a significant source of motivation in Islam, reflecting the integration of spiritual and ethical dimensions. This perspective resonates with Mubarak's (as cited in Branine, 2011) Sunni-inspired observation that classical Islamic scholars like Ibn Khaldun and al-Ghazali emphasized similar principles centuries ago.

Furthermore, Allamah Ja'fari (Javadi Amoli, 1992) raises a critical question often overlooked in discussions of motivation: who is qualified to motivate others? His inquiry invites reflection on the ethical and spiritual prerequisites for effective leadership and mentorship, a theme echoed by

Hosseini (2011), who discusses the interconnectedness of human forces and the importance of harmonizing individual and collective motivations. These insights highlight the ethical responsibility of leaders to inspire and guide others in alignment with Islamic principles.

3-3. Material and Spiritual Needs

Islamic motivational theories also emphasize the dual fulfillment of material and spiritual needs. Ramzgoyan and Shabani (2003), from the Twelver Shia tradition, propose that fulfilling material needs prepares individuals for better work performance, while addressing spiritual needs enhances motivation and satisfaction. Their work complements Sulaiman et al.'s (2014) Sunni-inspired identification of key Islamic concepts such as worship, knowledge, free will, faith, piety, trust, and righteous deeds, which collectively define motivation from an Islamic perspective.

Similarly, Shojaei (2007) critiques Maslow's hierarchy of needs, arguing that it overlooks spiritual dimensions. He designs an alternative hierarchy tailored to Islamic spiritual needs, emphasizing the centrality of faith and divine proximity. This critique aligns with Ahmadnia Alashti et al.'s (2013) Quranic model of motivation, which provides a comprehensive framework for understanding motivation within an Islamic organizational context. Both approaches underscore the importance of balancing worldly responsibilities with spiritual aspirations.

3-4. Practical Strategies for Motivation

Scholars from both traditions offer practical strategies for enhancing motivation within Islamic frameworks. Al-Sayyid Qasim (1995) recommends strengthening religious beliefs through early education, promoting the idea of "work as worship," and fostering loving and just relationships between superiors and subordinates. These strategies are echoed by Sabbaghian (2001), who examines mechanisms for employee motivation in Nahj al-Balagha, identifying specific practices derived from this seminal text.

Orayi-Yazdani (1993) bridges Islamic and Western motivational theories, proposing modifications to align them with Islamic principles. His work complements Khalili Tirtaschi's (2003) critique of false needs, advocating for the fulfillment of true needs as defined by Islamic teachings. Together, these scholars provide actionable insights for leaders and managers seeking to inspire and motivate others within an Islamic framework.

3-5. Reflections on the Literature: Gaps and Future Directions in Islamic Motivation Studies

Although this review does not explicitly aim to criticize prior works, the act of reviewing literature inevitably involves assessing the current state of the field. Such evaluations are essential for identifying research gaps, informing future directions, and uncovering conceptual or methodological limitations (Torraco, 2005). Several key observations have emerged from this analysis.

Despite the broad conceptual range of motivation studies, research in Islamic contexts has disproportionately centered on the concept of "need." Other related aspects, such as goal orientation, cognitive processes, or environmental factors, have received comparatively less scholarly attention. This emphasis appears to stem from two sources: the widespread influence of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the sheer volume of literature on needs-based frameworks. Notably, Islamic motivational studies frequently engage with Maslow's theory, often juxtaposing it with Islamic teachings. A more systematic investigation into this trend may yield valuable cross-cultural insights.

This focus on needs also explains why content theories dominate Islamic motivational literature, whereas process theories remain largely underexplored. Beyond cursory references, few studies investigate the mechanisms and dynamics underlying motivation from an Islamic perspective. As a result, the field remains in need of deeper, process-oriented frameworks that can explain how motivation unfolds over time and across contexts.

Another recurring challenge in Islamic management literature is the lack of attention to organizational realities. Two general schools of thought can be identified. The first, represented by scholars such as al-Sayyid Qasim (1995), argues that Islam provides a more comprehensive motivational system than contemporary theories. He asserts that religious frameworks offer enhanced potential for inspiring employees, for example, by regarding work as worship. However, as Alizi and Muhammad Zaki (2005) note, the efficacy of such religious motivators depends heavily on an individual's level of faith. None of the theories reviewed, however, addresses the organizational responsibility to nurture or enhance this faith, nor do they offer mechanisms to support motivation through spiritual development.

The second group, including Ahmadnia Alashti et al. (2012), views faith itself as a causal factor in motivation. Yet this perspective raises practical and philosophical questions. If spiritual awareness is assumed to directly enhance motivation, does it imply that organizations should actively work to

elevate employees' spiritual states? And would such practices be universally acceptable across diverse professional environments? These issues warrant closer scrutiny, particularly in current organizational settings.

This tension reflects a deeper epistemological model underpinning Islamic management literature, one that emphasizes the human-divine relationship and the primacy of piety and spiritual alignment. While valuable for personal and ethical development, such models may fall short in addressing the practical needs of managers operating in worldly, results-oriented contexts. For instance, motivating individuals to engage in civic service or community defense cannot always be framed exclusively in terms of piety or remembrance of God. If Islamic management is viewed solely as a spiritual guide, comparisons with Western theories become irrelevant. However, if the goal is to provide actionable tools for managing people and organizations, a balance must be struck between spiritual ideals and pragmatic strategies.

To advance the discipline, Islamic motivation studies must move beyond abstraction and engage more deeply with the lived experiences of individuals and institutions. This involves developing models that integrate spiritual values with empirical insights, offering a holistic understanding of human motivation that encompasses both moral aspiration and worldly responsibility. Such an approach can respect human dignity while also enhancing effectiveness and engagement.

Another issue in the literature is the insufficient distinction between Islamic perspectives and dominant Western models. Many scholars assert that human needs in Islamic thought closely mirror those in secular theories, with the addition of certain religious dimensions. However, these additional elements often lack operational frameworks or practical application. In many cases, scholars merely classify needs into numerous categories without explaining their implications. For example, Bakhshi (2001) identifies ten categories of human needs and later adds an eleventh, but without critical analysis or justification. A more rigorous interrogation of these classifications could significantly enhance scholarly discourse.

Only one study—by Mohammadi and Mazrouei (2006)—has systematically reviewed motivation theories in Islamic management. While useful, it lacks the depth of critical analysis needed to meaningfully evaluate the field. Consequently, Islamic motivation theory remains underdeveloped and fragmented.

Using Sandberg and Alvesson's (2011) typology of research gaps—consisting of lack of consensus, blind spots (unexplored areas), and

application-based extensions—Islamic motivation studies appear most affected by the second category: blind spots. This study aims to address these underexplored areas by re-examining and expanding the theoretical and practical dimensions of motivation within the Islamic human sciences.

4. Research Methodology

The starting point for this section concerns the researcher's methodological approach to developing an Islamic model of motivation. In adherence to foundational Islamic principles—particularly the religious injunction that only those with scholarly qualifications may interpret sacred texts—researchers working within Islamic humanities must either possess the requisite religious expertise themselves or rely on the authority of a recognized scholar. The former path requires progression through the rigorous stages of *ijtihād*, along with specialization in the Islamic sciences. The latter involves the use of secondary data and presumes the scholar's legitimacy and depth of knowledge in the field.

Given the complexity and depth required to interpret primary Islamic sources, this study adopts the second approach. It draws upon the scholarship of Grand Ayatollah Abdullah Javadi Amoli, a distinguished contemporary figure in Islamic thought. Born in 1933, Grand Ayatollah Javadi Amoli is an eminent Iranian faqih, theologian, philosopher, and interpreter of the Qur'an. His intellectual legacy spans various domains, including philosophy, theology, feqh, and *'irfān*. Renowned for his comprehensive command of both transmitted (*naqli*) and rational (*'aqli*) sciences, his work continues to shape modern Islamic discourse. Given his extensive contributions and scholarly authority, his corpus provides a robust and credible foundation for this research.

This study applies thematic analysis as outlined in the Braun and Clarke (2006) model, which is widely recognized in qualitative research for its structured yet flexible approach. The analytic process followed these six key stages:

Familiarization with the Data: In the initial phase, the researcher engaged in an extensive reading of the selected texts to gain a holistic understanding of their content, structure, and underlying concepts. For this study, 93 volumes of Grand Ayatollah Javadi Amoli's published works were reviewed, amounting to approximately 40,000 pages of material. This phase established the groundwork for identifying meaningful patterns.

Generating Initial Codes: Relevant segments of the text were systematically identified and assigned descriptive codes. These codes captured recurring ideas, concepts, and arguments within the source material.

Searching for Themes: The resulting codes were then organized into broader thematic categories. These preliminary themes represent recurring motifs or conceptual groupings that emerged from the data. A selection of these initial themes is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: preliminary Themes and Associated initial Codes Identified in Javadi Amoli's Works

Theme	Codes Employed
Nature	- Multiplicity
	- Diversity
	- Empiricism
Flourishing	- Awakening
	- Self-Knowledge
	- Insight
	- Affirmation
Human Self	- Nature
	- Innate Disposition

Theme Review: This phase involves the examination of various themes. After refinement and editing, the primary themes and their interrelationships are established. Within this model, the principal themes serve as the foundation for the final narrative, while sub-themes are utilized to elucidate the narratives associated with each main theme. Table 2 presents the primary and secondary themes of the research.

Table 2: Primary and Secondary Themes of the Research

Primary Themes	Secondary Themes
Flourishing of Motivations	- Confirmatory Knowledge
	- Complementary Knowledge
	- Immorality (Fujūr)
	- Piety (Taqwa)
Regulation of Motivations	- Multiplicity of Desires
	- Human Unity-Oriented Identity
	- Disorder of Will
	- Practical Reason
Adjustment of Motivations	- Self-Discipline
	- Prescriptions (Aḥkām)
	- Ethics

Establishing and Identifying Themes: At this stage, the developed themes are finalized, and their definitions are established. The subsequent section of the article undertakes the task of elucidating the final themes.

5. Exploring Human Motivation from an Islamic Perspective: Insights from Grand Ayatollah Javadi Amoli

At the culmination of the research process, several core questions emerged, each reflecting a principal theme in the discourse on human motivation from an Islamic perspective. To address these inquiries meaningfully, it is essential to first present key foundational concepts derived from the thought of Grand Ayatollah Javadi Amoli.

5-1. Components of the Human Soul

According to a specific classification drawn from Islamic philosophical anthropology, the human soul is composed of three essential faculties: cognition, volition, and action. In addition, *fitrah* (innate disposition) and nature (*ṭabīʿah*) are understood as two internal capacities within the soul.

Grand Ayatollah Javadi Amoli (2005a) explains the relationship between these elements as follows:

"Fitrah and nature are both spiritual faculties of humans; however, *fitrah* represents the exalted mode of existence of the human soul and holds a higher ontological rank compared to nature. Nature encompasses the administrative forces of the human soul responsible for the natural affairs of the material body—not merely the physical mass and material body that do not persist after death... The human soul, endowed with the selection power granted by God, can either make *fitrah* or nature dominant in various dimensions of its existence (i.e., cognition, volition, and action). Undoubtedly, the dominance of *fitrah*, due to its alignment and harmony with the Divine spirit and the celestial trust bestowed upon humans, renders one's character divine. Conversely, if nature—which is connected to the material body and the earthly realm—dominates a person, it inverts and reverses them toward the world of matter and nature."

Thus, while *fitrah* is associated with nobility and alignment with divine purpose, nature is often linked to traits such as greed (*manūʿ*) and impatience (*jazūʿ*).

5-2. Human Propensities

Human beings, like all other creatures, possess propensities structured around attraction and repulsion. Javadi Amoli (2005a, p. 196) notes that:

"Attraction and repulsion exist in all types of beings; however, the more perfect a being is, the more refined its attraction and repulsion become, acquiring subtler names."

He delineates levels of these propensities ranging from base desires to ethical and spiritual forms—such as love and hatred, and ultimately, allegiance (*tawallī*) and disavowal (*tabarrī*). These faculties of attraction and repulsion not only shape behavior but also represent the underlying motivational forces behind both engagement and avoidance.

5-3. Volition and Human Action

Another crucial aspect of human motivation is volition (*irādah*). Javadi Amoli (2005a, p. 196) emphasizes that humans act not merely out of inclination (*mayl*) but through deliberate volition. This observation underscores the importance of analyzing how volition is formed and how it influences behavioral outcomes.

5-4. Nonlinear Relationships in Motivation

Motivational variables in Islamic thought often resist simple causal or linear modeling. For example, piety (*taqwā*) may serve both as a cause and a result of righteous motivation. As Javadi Amoli (2003, p. 13) explains:

"A person attains *taqwā* primarily through sound thinking and righteous motivation."

Thus, piety is not merely a motivational outcome but also a condition through which true motivation is cultivated.

6. The Enhancement of Motivations

Islam recognizes human vulnerability to error and ignorance. Consequently, one of the primary purposes of divine revelation is to awaken and guide the human soul toward sound motivations that might otherwise remain dormant or misdirected. Divine revelation plays a dual role in enhancing human intellect and motivation: through confirmation and development.

6-1. Confirmation of the Intellect

Divine revelation confirms truths that intellect can, in theory, grasp independently. However, due to human susceptibility to error, such confirmation serves as a safeguard against misjudgment and fragmentation of thought. While pure intellect does not err, human intellect is often compromised by external influences. In this context, Divine revelation offers epistemological clarity and consistency.

6-2. Development and Guidance of Intellect

Beyond confirmation, Divine revelation also extends and enhances the intellect by offering detailed guidance on matters beyond its reach. These include theological knowledge, rituals (e.g., prayer, fasting, pilgrimage), and socio-political rulings such as penal codes, commercial ethics, governance, and civic responsibilities. Divine revelation thus not only complements reason but also fills its epistemic gap, leading to a more comprehensive motivational framework grounded in both divine wisdom and rational reflection.

7. The Regulation of Motivations

In addition to stimulating motivation, Islamic teachings provide mechanisms for regulating and harmonizing motivational drives. The multiplicity of desires and faculties within the human being can lead to internal conflict and disintegration if left unchecked. Javadi Amoli describes this danger vividly:

"The human being is composed of a factor of 'multiplicity,' called nature, and a factor of 'unity,' called the supernatural soul. If one amplifies their natural aspect, they will find nothing but discord and conflict." (Javadi Amoli, 2001, p. 23)

"Inclination towards the world of multiplicity is the foundation of all discord... Love for [the world] is considered the root of all sins." (Javadi Amoli, 1999, pp. 3–392)

"They forgot Allah, so He made them forget themselves" (Qur'an 59:19) is understood as a warning that neglect of the divine results in a fragmented, disoriented identity. (Javadi Amoli, 2005a, p. 228)

Regulation of internal drives is essential to preserve unity of purpose and strengthen willpower, which is central to moral action. A dispersed will weakens resolve and results in the failure to actualize higher aims:

"Humans do not have two axes of will... Therefore, if someone combines several desired objectives within the domain of their will, that combination is broken, not sound." (Javadi Amoli, 2009, p. 153)

8. Adjustment of Motivations

Islamic teachings do not seek the suppression of all desires, but rather their proper regulation and refinement. Certain motivations are seen as misaligned with human dignity and divine purpose, and these are subject to transformation through *tazkiyah* (spiritual purification) and ethical training.

8-1. As Javadi Amoli (2011, p. 95) notes:

"The source of human perfections... is abandoning carnal inclinations; and the origin of human deficiencies is the liberation of the soul in the path of satanic desires."

Desires, when regulated by the *fitrah*, serve human flourishing rather than detracting from it:

"The purpose of the Shariah is the adjustment of instincts and carnal desires, not their suspension." (Javadi Amoli, 2005b, p. 219)

Ultimately, the *'aql-i-'amali* (practical intellect) plays a critical role in managing internal faculties, guiding human beings toward the actualization of their true potential within a divine framework.

Table 3: General Framework of Motivation in Islam

Main Theme	Issue of Concern	Functions	Tools
Flourishing of Motivations	Scientific ignorance regarding good and evil; weakness in individuals' existing motivations	Assisting in activating correct motivations; helping eliminate incorrect motivations	Education; use of motivational tools such as glad tidings (tabshīr), warnings (indhār), admonition (maw'iza), testing (imtihān), invitation (da'wah), etc.
Adjustment of Motivations	Presence of incorrect motivations; need to strengthen correct motivations	Weakening or eliminating incorrect desires; strengthening correct motivations	Legal rulings (ahkām); ethics (akhlaq)
Regulation of Motivations	Multiplicity of desires; lack of harmony between desires	Strengthening the will; enhancing decision-making ability	Strengthening and cultivating practical intellect ('aql 'amali)

9. Discussion: Comparing Javadi Amoli's Perspective with Western and Islamic Motivation Theories

9-1. Comparison with Western Theories of Motivation

Javadi Amoli's perspective introduces a theocentric and ethical foundation to human motivation that contrasts significantly with the psychocentric and individualistic orientation of Western models. While both paradigms seek to

explain human behavior and performance, their underlying assumptions, goals, and mechanisms differ.

Points of Convergence:

- Like Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan), Javadi Amoli emphasizes internal motivation, but this is framed as alignment with fitrah and divine purpose, rather than psychological autonomy or personal satisfaction.

- The notion of goal-directed behavior and will-power regulation echoes Bandura's concept of self-regulation and self-efficacy— though in Javadi's view, volition is deeply moral and spiritually accountable.

- Maslow's self-actualization loosely parallels the flourishing of the soul (nafs al-muṭmaʾinnah) in Islamic thought; however, where Maslow ends with human potential, Islam transcends it with divine proximity (qurb ila-allah).

Points of Divergence:

- Western theories largely separate motivation from morality; in contrast, Javadi Amoli asserts that ethical orientation is intrinsic to any valid motivation.

- Linear models like Maslow's hierarchy or Vroom's expectancy theory are inadequate for the nonlinear spiritual dynamics in Javadi Amoli's thought, where cause and effect can be reciprocal (e.g., taqwā both causes and results from righteous motivation).

- Most Western models lack a concept of Divine revelation as a source of motivational enhancement. In Islamic thought, divine guidance confirms and corrects human tendencies.

9-2. Comparison with Other Islamic Scholars

Javadi Amoli's perspective stands out even within Islamic scholarship due to its depth of metaphysical, philosophical, and exegetical reasoning. While other Islamic scholars address motivation from ethical or theological perspectives, his model synthesizes them into a structured, tripartite system: flourishing, regulation, and adjustment.

Common Ground with Sunni Scholars:

- Both traditions agree on the centrality of taqwā, ikhlāṣ, and divine accountability.

- Scholars like Alawneh (1998) and al-Seyyed Qasim (1995) emphasize work as worship (ʿibādah), aligning with Javadi Amoli's view of purposeful, ethical action.
- Like Bakhshi (2001), Javadi critiques Western models for ignoring the afterlife and spiritual consequences of action.

Distinct Contributions from Javadi Amoli:

- His use of 'aql 'amali (practical intellect) as the regulatory mechanism of motivation is relatively absent in literature, which tends to prioritize nafs, qalb, and taqwā without a systematic role for rational ethics.
- While many scholars critique Maslow (e.g., Shojaei, Alashti), few offer a reconstructed hierarchy or framework grounded in Islamic metaphysics as robustly as Javadi Amoli.
- Javadi brings in the concept of unity vs. multiplicity—suggesting that fragmented motivation reflects a deeper ontological disorder caused by the dominance of ṭabīʿah (nature) over fitrah (divine disposition).

Ultimately, Javadi Amoli's Perspective offers the following distinct advantages

- Holistic Integration: Combines spirituality, ethics, cognition, and behavior in a unified structure.
- Nonlinear Dynamics: Reflects real human experience—where growth is cyclical, and moral states feed into motivation.
- Applicability: Offers practical tools while remaining grounded in theological depth.

Javadi Amoli's perspective represents a paradigm shift in understanding motivation—not merely as a set of impulses to be managed or needs to be satisfied, but as a sacred human capacity that must be guided, purified, and aligned with divine purpose. In doing so, it complements, critiques, and expands both Western and Islamic models. This framework challenges modern organizations, especially in Muslim societies, to rethink how they inspire action—not just for efficiency or success, but for ethical flourishing and spiritual development.

10. Conclusion

Despite the significance of motivation in shaping the foundations of Islamic management, further research is necessary in this field. A review of the

literature reveals that while there are a notable number of published articles on this topic (compared to other aspects of Islamic management), a definitive understanding of how to approach motivation from an Islamic perspective remains elusive.

This paper presents an attempt to establish a comprehensive framework for addressing the issue of motivation from an Islamic viewpoint, drawing upon the works and insights of Grand Ayatollah Javadi Amoli. The key findings of this study are as follows:

The Islamic perspective on motivation encompasses three primary themes: the flourishing of human motivations, the regulation of motivations, and the adjustment of motivations. Focusing solely on one of these areas cannot adequately represent the holistic view of motivation offered by Islam.

Practical intellect ('aql 'amali), a fundamental faculty of human existence, plays a pivotal role in managing and guiding human motivations. A more precise understanding of Islam's view in this regard requires a thorough study of practical intellect and its characteristics.

Religious thought distinguishes between the faculties of attraction and repulsion. The faculty that generates motivation and desire for something is distinct from the one that causes detachment and aversion.

Just as it is essential to study the factors that drive motivation in Islam, it is equally important to explore the factors that lead to demotivation or loss of motivation.

The framework proposed in this paper provides a valuable foundation for advancing the discourse on motivation from an Islamic perspective. To do so, focused research efforts are required, and a holistic approach to the entire issue of motivation within the context of Islamic thought is necessary.

Data availability :The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to identify the Iranian-Islamic indices of accreditation in the management discipline. While accreditation models are widely used as effective evaluation frameworks in academic contexts, their development must reflect cultural differences across countries and the specific characteristics of each discipline. This research seeks to determine the accreditation indices appropriate for management programs in Iran based on existing accreditation models and the Iranian-Islamic perspective.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Conducted within the interpretivist paradigm, the study uses a multiple qualitative methodology. The research setting is library-based. In the first stage, thematic analysis was applied to 15 accreditation models in the management discipline in order to extract accreditation indices relevant to the field. In the second stage, Imam Khomeini's collected works (Sahifeh-ye Imam) were thematically analyzed to identify university evaluation indicators from his viewpoint. The findings of the two analyses were then subjected to comparative analysis to integrate and align them within a unified Iranian-Islamic accreditation framework.

Findings: From the examination of the 15 management accreditation models, the study identified 7 factors, 182 criteria, and 424 indicators. The thematic analysis of the Sahifeh-ye Imam produced 859 initial codes and 80 basic themes related to university evaluation. Following comparative analysis and integration of the results from the two sources, the final Iranian-Islamic model of accreditation for the management discipline was formulated, consisting of 7 factors, 195 criteria, and 496 indicators. These integrated indices reflect both international accreditation requirements and the Iranian-Islamic value system.

Practical Implications: Using these Iranian-Islamic accreditation indices in management program evaluation provides a culturally grounded and value-based framework for ensuring academic quality. It can guide universities in designing, implementing, and improving management programs that cultivate competencies aligned with Iranian-Islamic principles.

Originality/Value: This study is the first to synthesize existing management accreditation models with indicators derived from Imam Khomeini's educational thought to produce an integrated Iranian-Islamic accreditation framework. By presenting a comprehensive set of discipline-specific indices, the research contributes to localized accreditation studies and supports the development of culturally relevant, value-based management education in Iran.

Introduction

Globalization is a phenomenon that has been rapidly advancing in recent decades, revealing both positive and negative impacts on human systems. This phenomenon has also influenced higher education, leading to the emergence and spread of international university evaluation models. The positive effect of globalization in higher education has been the improvement of university quality through the adoption of international evaluation systems (Abbasi, Farasatkhah, & Moazzami, 2022). However, its negative effect has been the formation of a unified hierarchical system of universities worldwide, headed by a vast array of American evaluation and accreditation systems (Ramírez, 2015). The long-standing history and extensive experience of the United States in university evaluation and accreditation have led to the recognition of universities in various countries and regions, such as Latin America, being conducted directly by American accreditation bodies (Rosano, Bonilla, & Ortiz, 2017).

The dominance of American universities in global research output and their consistent placement at the top of world rankings (Marginson, 2016), along with the establishment of English as the primary language of scientific research, have further reinforced the central role of the United States in global higher education (Mitic, 2015). Some scholars even regard this centrality as a form of American neocolonialism over other countries—particularly in Africa—arguing that the imposition of U.S. and European standards cannot help address the unique challenges faced by these nations (Darley & Luethge, 2019). Given that the Islamic Republic of Iran possesses its own unique cultural characteristics (Abbaspoor, Mojtabazadeh, Maleki, & Farasatkhah, 2015) and that there are fundamental differences between the value system of the Islamic Revolution and the underlying values of Western indicators (Boostani, Baneshi, & Shakeri, 2017), the development of a native evaluation model is essential. One evaluation model whose positive impact on improving university quality has been demonstrated in multiple studies is accreditation (Ulker & Bakioglu, 2019). By nature, accreditation evaluates each discipline according to its own specific indices (Oudshoorn, Raj, Thomas, & Parrish, 2018), and fundamentally, different disciplines—due to their distinct nature—require their own tailored evaluation models (Rezaei, 2017). In light of the above, the present study seeks to identify the Iranian-Islamic indices of accreditation in the field of management.

1. Background Review

Numerous definitions have been proposed for the concept of accreditation, particularly in the databases of accreditation bodies; however, providing a

definitive definition of this concept remains challenging (Collins, 2015). Accreditation is a quality evaluation model carried out by an external body, based on specific criteria and standards, to assess institutions and curricula (Kayode & Hashim, 2014). It is considered one of the most developed institutionalized forms of the accountability concept in higher education (Lubinescu, Ratcliff, & Gaffney, 2001) and also one of the most effective educational evaluation models. Accreditation emphasizes both the attainment of minimum quality standards and the preservation and assurance of quality (Abbaspoor, Mojtabazadeh, Maleki, & Farasatkhah, 2015). The evaluation process in accreditation is formative in nature, its audience consists primarily of the academic community, and its reports are technical and detailed; as a result, an institution's license may be renewed or revoked (Rajaei, Yamani, Khorasani, & Rezaeizadeh, 2022).

From the perspective of the evaluation scope, accreditation is classified into two types. The first is institutional accreditation, which evaluates higher education institutions as a whole (Hou, 2011), such as the Association of African Business Schools. The second is program accreditation, which focuses solely on evaluating the curricula of a specific academic field (Makhoul, 2019), such as the European Association for Public Administration Accreditation. Another classification of accreditation systems is based on the geographical scope of evaluation, comprising three levels: national—such as the National Business Education Accreditation Council in Pakistan; regional—such as the Asia-Pacific Society for Public Affairs; and international—such as the Association for Behavioral Analysis International (Sanyal & Martin, 2007). A further type of accreditation is faith-related accreditation, which focuses on evaluating institutions affiliated with or related to a particular religion (Bañuelos, 2021), such as the Association of Christian Schools International.

Several elements are typically present in all accreditation models, including: (1) the accreditation process—comprising application for evaluation, self-assessment, site visit, and the decision to approve or deny accreditation (Omara & Oyarekhua, 2022); (2) eligibility criteria—preconditions for entering the accreditation process; (3) evaluation indices—such as factors, criteria, and indicators for program evaluation (Bazargan & Farasatkhah, 2017); and (4) scope of accreditation—such as the academic disciplines, degree levels, and types of accreditation covered. The present study focuses exclusively on evaluation Indices.

Accreditation has been associated with numerous effects. It is generally a process that determines the quality status of institutions and assures stakeholders that they are engaged with an institution that meets desirable

quality standards and is committed to continuous improvement (Conrad, 2020). Moreover, accreditation can guarantee the quality of education globally, address quality concerns arising from internationalization (Zammuto, 2008), regulate and control university behavior (Al Shobaki, Abu-Naser, Salama, AlFerjany, & Amuna, 2018), and hold administrators accountable for their performance (Choiriyah & Kartowagiran, 2018).

Regarding accreditation in the higher education systems of I.R. Iran and other countries, numerous studies have been conducted. Abbaspoor and Mojtabazadeh (2022) designed an accreditation model for Iran's higher education system using a mixed-method approach with an exploratory tool-development design. Abbasi, Farasatkhah, and Moazzami (2022), using grounded theory and in-depth interviews with academic experts, proposed a university accreditation model aimed at internationalizing Iran's higher education system. Abili, Mostafavi, Narenji-thani, and Shah-Hosseini (2021) developed accreditation components for e-learning in higher education institutions through a systematic review of research indexed in academic databases.

Vasudevan & Muthu (2020) examined accreditation models in India and sought to extract their common components. Amin-Bidokhti, Mohammadi, and Rahimi (2018) designed a model for accrediting entrepreneurial universities in Iran's academic system, using interviews with national entrepreneurship experts and qualitative content analysis. Zafaripoor, Mohammadi, and Khodaei (2017) conducted a comparative study of evaluation, accreditation, and quality assurance systems in traditional and modern higher education, identifying their similarities and differences through qualitative document analysis and comparative methods.

Nguyen, Evers & Marshall (2017) studied the higher education system in Vietnam and extracted its accreditation model. Kelchen (2017) sought to identify the core standards of accreditation through a review of various accreditation models. Shams and Ma'arefvand (2015) developed an accreditation model for master's programs in educational management using a mixed-method approach. Sywelem & Witte (2009), in their study of Egypt's higher education, attempted to identify the elements and components of that country's accreditation model.

2. Materials & Methods

Based on Saunders' research onion (2019), the research philosophy is situated within the interpretivist paradigm. The methodological choice involves multiple qualitative methods, and the research strategy involves thematic analysis and comparative analysis. In the first step, to draw upon global

experiences in the accreditation of management discipline, 15 program accreditation models in the field of management were identified, and their evaluation indices were subjected to thematic analysis. From the analysis of the identified indicators by using Attride-Stirling's thematic network model (2001), 589 initial codes were extracted. Subsequently, the relationships among these initial codes were examined, and after categorization, 424 basic themes were generated. In the next stage, by clustering related basic themes, 182 organizing themes were derived, which were then grouped into 7 overarching themes. In line with the terminology used in accreditation models, the overarching themes were defined as factors, the organizing themes as criteria, and the basic themes as indicators.

In the second step, with the intention of identifying Iranian-Islamic values regarding the appropriate indices for evaluating an ideal university, the 21-volume collection of *Sahifeh-ye Imam*—comprising speeches, letters, and messages of Imam Khomeini from 1933 to 1989—was also thematically analyzed, and the indices for evaluating universities based on Imam Khomeini's thought were extracted. For this purpose, all volumes were thoroughly reviewed, and phrases related to the concept of the university were extracted. These phrases were then transformed into initial codes, resulting in 859 codes. By clustering the related codes, 80 basic themes were ultimately identified, organized under 7 organizing themes, which corresponded to the factors identified in the previous step.

In the final step, the findings from the two preceding steps were compared using Brady's four-step model for conducting comparative studies (1969). In the first step (Description), a detailed account of the indices from each section was provided. In the second step (Interpretation), the gathered and described information was interpreted. The third step (Juxtaposition) involved identifying comparable elements, and finally, in the fourth step (Comparison), the similarities and differences between the two sections were determined, leading to the integration of the two models. By integrating the two models, a desired framework encompassing Iranian-Islamic indices for the accreditation of management discipline was developed.

3. Research Findings

First, accreditation models in the field of management were identified, and their evaluation components were examined and analyzed. In total, 15 accreditation models related to management were identified, namely:

1) Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB, 2024)

2) International Accreditation Council for Business Education (IACBE, 2024)

3) Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP, 2024)

4) Association of MBAs (AMBA, 2024)

5) Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI, 2024)

6) Association of Technology, Management, and Applied Engineering (ATMAE, 2024)

7) European Association for Public Administration Accreditation (EAPAA, 2024)

8) International Commission on Accreditation of Public Administration and Curricula (ICAPA, 2024)

9) Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA, 2024)

10) Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA)

11) European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD, 2024)

12) Canadian Association of Programs in Public Administration (CAPPA, 2024)

13) National Business Education Accreditation Council (NBEAC, 2024)

14) Asia-Pacific Society for Public Affairs (APSPA, 2024)

15) European Council for Business Education (ECBE, 2024)

In the next stage, the indicators of each of the above accreditation models were extracted and selected as basic themes. These indicators were grouped into criteria (organizing themes), and in turn, the criteria were grouped into factors (global themes). The seven extracted factors were: curriculum content, curriculum management, faculty members, students, alumni, services and support, and research & scientific and practical interactions.

In the following step, from the 21-volume *Sahifeh-ye Imam* collection, 187 speeches, letters, or messages were identified as relevant. From these, 859 initial codes and 80 basic themes were extracted. The categorization of themes was carried out using the seven factors identified from the thematic analysis of management program accreditation models; in this sense, the seven factors served as the organizing themes, and the global theme was determined as "university evaluation".

From comparative analysis of the management program accreditation indices and the university evaluation indicators from Imam Khomeini's perspective revealed three cases:

a) **Similarity** between eight evaluation components from Imam Khomeini's perspective and the indicators of management program accreditation—in this case, the similar items were merged.

b) **Thematic relation** between 36 evaluation components from Imam Khomeini's perspective and the criteria of management program accreditation—in this case, 36 new indicators were defined for the existing criteria.

c) **No similarity or thematic relation** between Imam Khomeini's evaluation components and the existing criteria and indicators—in this case, 13 new criteria and 36 new indicators were added to the list of indices. The following table presents the number of indices.

Table 1. Number of Criteria and Indicators in Each Model

Factors	Criteria			Indicators		
	Integrated Management Model	Imam Khomeini's Perspective	Desired Model	Integrated Management Model	Imam Khomeini's Perspective	Desired Model
Curriculum Content and Educational Program	44	3	47	113	12	125
Services and Support	22	4	26	54	10	64
Research and Scientific & Practical Interactions	24	0	24	53	8	61
Alumni	11	1	12	22	7	29
Students	22	2	24	48	13	61
Curriculum Management	39	1	40	86	13	99
Faculty Members	20	2	22	48	9	57
Total	182	13	195	424	72	496

As a result of the conducted comparative analysis, the desired model comprised a total of 7 factors, 195 criteria, and 496 indicators. In the following section, the criteria and indicators of each factor will be presented in separate

tables. The criteria and indicators highlighted in a different color are those derived from the perspective of Imam Khomeini (RA).

Table 2. Criteria and Indicators of "Student" Factor

Criteria	Indicators
Student Performance Evaluation	- Evaluation of students' academic progress - Process for identifying key student performance indicators - Overall evaluation of student performance - Providing evaluation results to students
Student Feedback and Satisfaction with Curriculum	- Collecting student feedback to improve the curriculum - Student satisfaction with teaching quality - Student satisfaction with curriculum content
Utilization of Trained Recruitment Staff	- Use of trained personnel in the student recruitment office
Encouragement and Motivation of Students	- Use of incentives to encourage greater student learning - Awarding prizes for student achievements - Identifying and supporting students with future potential - Level of students' interest in learning
Student Sense of Belonging	- Student attachment and commitment to the program's mission - Faith in the internal capacities of the country
Alignment of Student Admission System with Program Mission	- Matching admission goals with program mission - Aligning admission policies with program mission - Aligning admission processes with program mission
Geographical Diversity of Students	- International composition of students - Ratio of local to non-local students
Demographic Diversity (Gender and Other Criteria)	- Efforts to ensure demographic diversity in student recruitment - Gender balance in student recruitment based on equality principles
Consideration of Practical Experience in Admission	- Admission of students active in practical fields - Considering professional experience for graduate admissions
Student Success in Life	- Acquiring necessary knowledge for lifelong success - Acquiring necessary skills for lifelong success

Criteria	Indicators
Academic Guidance and Counseling	- Availability of academic advising and counseling
Handling Student Complaints	- Proper procedures for handling student complaints
Comprehensive Student Development	- Gaining practical experience alongside theoretical education - Developing policies and procedures for academic progress - Attention to personal development and holistic student growth - Integration of knowledge acquisition and ethical self-cultivation
Student Satisfaction with Institution Staff	- Student satisfaction with faculty members - Student satisfaction with support services
Student Organizations	- Quantity and quality of student activities in organizations - Implementation of Islamic principles in student organizations - Strengthening student Basij
Student Admission and Selection Criteria	- Considering foreign language proficiency in selection - Selecting students with appropriate academic qualifications - Selecting students with adequate skills - Preventing admission of students affiliated with foreign (East/West) influences
Student Registration Criteria	- Effectiveness of the student registration process - Considering classroom capacity during registration - Transparency of the registration process
Academic Success or Failure of Students	- Timely completion of academic programs - Student dropout and retention rates - Student success rates in completing courses - Avoiding distractions and neglecting important matters - Sincerity in acquiring knowledge
Student Role in Program Improvement	- Student participation in collecting and analyzing program data
Student Retention or Transfer	- Effectiveness of student retention processes - Preparation of guidelines for student transfers
Characteristics of Student Recruitment and Admission	- Effectiveness of the recruitment process - Transparency and accuracy of recruitment and

Criteria	Indicators
Process	admission processes - Fairness of the admission process
Characteristics of Admission Criteria	- Effectiveness and accuracy of admission criteria
Students' Knowledge of Islam and Adherence to Its Rules	- Following Islamic rules and awareness of God and the unseen world - Knowledge of the fundamental principles of true Islam
Students' Activism in Achieving National Ideals	- Efforts to defend Islam and the country - Efforts to establish justice - Exposure of fabricated and deviant Islam - Fighting against deviations and causes of national backwardness

Table 3. Criteria and Indicators of "Curriculum Content and Educational Program" Factor

Criteria	Indicators
Balanced integration of theory and practice	- Integration of theory and practice in curriculum design - Coherence and balance between skill and knowledge in the curriculum - Balance of theory and practice in mission formulation
Use of modern technologies in teaching	- Innovation and use of modern technologies in teaching
Curriculum design requirements	- Attention to educational goals and philosophy in curriculum design - Attention to prerequisites and requirements - Considering the curriculum's place in the educational environment - Observing the minimum number of core courses - Compliance with external guidelines in curriculum design - Respecting freedom and intellectual independence in curriculum design
Modeling after successful national and global businesses	- Focus on the global business environment in curriculum design - Considering professional standards of the job market in curriculum design
Selection of teaching and	- Use of scientific methods and approaches in

Criteria	Indicators
learning methods based on global scientific models	teaching - Teaching based on international standards
Planning for out-of-class learning	- Balancing the volume of learning inside and outside class - Considering extracurricular and tutorial activities
Alignment of curriculum with the institution's mission	- Curriculum alignment with institutional mission
Curriculum development and revision	- Defining procedures for curriculum development and revision
Training role-players in the public sector	- Training potential international managers - Focusing on training competent government employees
Quality assurance of practical work	- Setting standards for practical work
Quality assurance of teaching content	- Improving quality of instructional content - Preparing learning and teaching regulations
Matching learning outcomes with standards	- Matching outcomes with characteristics of international degree-oriented programs
Defining learning outcomes	- Precisely defining intended learning outcomes - Linking learning outcomes to current needs
Appropriateness of content to the academic level	- Curriculum suitability to academic level
Appropriateness of content to the discipline	- Compatibility of content with the theoretical foundations of the discipline
Diversity in curriculum delivery	- Offering non-degree programs - Offering degree programs - Offering short-term learning courses
Attention to ethical principles in curriculum design	- Commitment to ethical principles and values in curriculum design - Attention to general values - Degree of ethical principles reflection in the program mission
Attention to disciplinary characteristics	- Attention to the essence and substantial features of the discipline in curriculum design - Attention to the scope of discipline in curriculum design
Attention to the practical	- Offering non-degree practical courses

Criteria	Indicators
field in curriculum design	- Identifying the curriculum impact point in practice
Producing applicable content in regional and international contexts	- Adapting course content to current regional issues - Considering international demand in curriculum design
Producing applicable content in the national context	- Providing content appropriate to the national context - Responsiveness of content to company needs - Adjusting curriculum according to societal needs
Operating at the frontiers of knowledge	- Designing curriculum aligned with science and technology advances - Monitoring scientific developments for curriculum updates
Reputation and acceptance of the curriculum	- Curriculum recognition internationally - Curriculum recognition nationally - Offering degrees with equivalency
Curriculum structure and framework design	- Precise structuring and sequencing of courses - Modular curriculum structure - Designing optimal curriculum structure
Making content practical	- Creating opportunities for student engagement with real-world problems - Considering curriculum applicability - Considering student needs in curriculum design
Application of the lifelong learning approach	- Using a lifelong learning perspective in mission determination - Considering lifelong learning in curriculum design
Quality of curriculum content	- Forward-looking curriculum - Updated curriculum content - Desirable quality of the designed curriculum
Enhancing the quality of the final assessment	- Modeling standard exams - Monitoring exam processes and ensuring grading quality - Diversifying assessment methods
Quality of teaching content and delivery	- Teaching appropriate multidisciplinary competencies and skills - Teaching global competencies of the curriculum - Teaching required competencies based on the program mission - Teaching soft skills such as critical thinking and analytical ability - Familiarity with the country's history and current

Criteria	Indicators
	capacities
Stakeholder participation in curriculum revision and development	- Designing revision and development processes with stakeholder participation - Revising and developing curriculum with active stakeholder roles
Stakeholder participation in curriculum formulation and mission setting	- Using stakeholder opinions in curriculum design - Considering stakeholder needs in setting the curriculum mission
Curriculum alignment with mission	- Matching program duration with goals and mission - Curriculum alignment with program mission - Designing curriculum based on strategic plan - Content and volume compatibility with mission and course objectives
Role of learning outcomes in curriculum design	- Basing curriculum on intended learning outcomes
International perspective in course content delivery	- Delivering course content in a foreign language - Modeling after international course content
International perspective in curriculum design	- Considering international and intercultural aspects in curriculum design - Defining the curriculum's international standing
Interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach	- Designing curriculum with interdisciplinary thinking - Designing curriculum with a multidisciplinary approach - Designing multidisciplinary study programs
Characteristics of curriculum structure and format	- Offering a time-bound and specific curriculum - Structural coherence of curriculum - Clear and defined curriculum components
Characteristics of teaching and learning methods	- Student-centered and engaging teaching methods - Up-to-date teaching methods
Content quality of teaching and learning	- Content coherence in teaching - Preparing rich content for instruction
Curriculum alignment with the institution	- Alignment of curriculum mission with institution's mission - Curriculum suitability with institutional activities - Alignment of learning outcomes with institutional mission
Teaching skills necessary for public sector entry	- Tools and techniques for stakeholder engagement in policy processes

Criteria	Indicators
	- Flexibility - Tolerance of uncertainties and ambiguities - Analytical and critical thinking regarding public sector challenges - Ability to lead and manage public institutions to protect public interest - Effective communication skills considering cultural diversity - Ability to advance public service perspectives - Ability to analyze public sector challenges - Problem-solving and evidence-based decision-making skills - Scientific participation and innovation in policymaking - Appropriate political role-playing
Teaching the essential characteristics of the public sector	- Internationalization and globalization - Balance between centralization and decentralization - Participatory governance and effects of multinational organizations and agreements
Teaching public sector norms	- Social and cultural diversity - Sustainable development - Democracy and popular sovereignty - Transparency - Accountability
Conceptual integration of curriculum	- Comprehensiveness and conceptual integration of the curriculum - Coverage of related main disciplines - Complete coverage of course goals and mission
Creating and strengthening a revolutionary and transformative spirit	- Recognizing divine and national duties and avoiding deviation - Avoiding submission to oppression and colonial culture - Recognizing and striving to achieve revolutionary goals - Creating and maintaining a transformative spirit
Attention to educational aspects in curriculum design	- Necessity of simultaneous acquisition of knowledge and ethics - Strengthening faith and spiritual aspects
Teaching Islamic thought and knowledge	- Teaching Islamic knowledge based on Quranic logic

Criteria	Indicators
	- Training missionaries to introduce Islam to human societies - Learning the thought of Shahid Motahari - Utilizing the Quran in curriculum content

Table 4. Criteria and Indicators of "Services and Support" Factor

Criteria	Indicators
Providing services to faculty members	- Administrative support for faculty affairs - Providing non-financial incentives for faculty - Providing financial incentives for faculty
Providing career counseling services	- Offering job placement services - Creating internship opportunities - Establishing an industrial advisory committee
Supporting the curriculum	- Administrative support for the curriculum - Systematic operational support for education - Support for developmental activities
Supporting students	- Administrative support for student affairs - Systematic support for students' academic progress
Adequate financial provision for the curriculum	- Providing sufficient financial resources aligned with the program mission - Diversity of financial resources
Preparing necessary library resources	- Establishing an up-to-date library - Creating a well-equipped and diverse library - Accessibility to library and informational resources
Efforts to increase capital	- Developing clear policies for capital increase - Securing financial support from investors
Alignment of resources and facilities with missions	- Alignment of administrative resources with program mission - Alignment of resources and facilities with curriculum requirements - Alignment of resources and facilities with the institution's mission
Attention to different areas of student guidance	- Guidance in students' livelihood matters - Guidance on psychological issues - Guidance on social issues
Characteristics of academic counseling services	- Providing sufficient academic counseling services to students - Accessibility of academic counseling services
Provision of non-	- Suitable spaces and infrastructure for

Criteria	Indicators
educational spaces and infrastructure	extracurricular activities - Adequacy of accommodation services
Observance of budgeting considerations	- Establishment of a performance-based budgeting system - Preparation of curriculum budget based on program objectives - Adequacy of R&D budget
Features of spaces related to the curriculum	- Creating calm and secure spaces for program delivery - Accessibility of student spaces
Quality competence of human capital	- Commitment and dedication to the mission among staff - Attention to staff personal development - Professional qualifications of administrative staff - Scientific qualifications of administrative staff
Providing media and IT equipment	- Sufficient quantity of media and IT equipment - Appropriate quality of media and IT equipment
Adequacy of human capital (quantitative)	- Sufficient number of full-time employees - Sufficient administrative support staff - Adequate number of professional staff - Adequate human resources to fulfill the program's mission
Adequacy of educational spaces and infrastructure	- Sufficient number of classrooms with appropriate equipment - Suitable infrastructure for holding various exams - Adequate educational infrastructure to fulfill the mission
Adequacy of educational resources	- Sufficient and appropriate educational resources to fulfill the mission
Adequacy of financial resources	- Adequate financial resources to fulfill the program mission
Adequacy of physical resources and equipment	- Adequate physical equipment and facilities required by the program
Providing necessary digital and electronic resources	- Preparing necessary electronic infrastructure - Accessibility of suitable computer equipment - Adequate digital resources to fulfill program strategy
Suitable financial status of the institution	- Adequate resources available to the institution to achieve its goals - Financial sustainability and endurance of the

Criteria	Indicators
	institution
Supporting societal values	- Strengthening Islamic culture in the university - Enhancing resilience and perseverance against adversaries - Promoting a culture of sacrifice and martyrdom
Supporting the deprived and oppressed and claiming their rights	- Supporting the rightful demands of the deprived - Supporting the oppressed and oppressed people
Supporting national capability and production	- Supporting national production - Utilizing internal capabilities, even if weak
Combating corruption inside the university	- Preventing freedom for corrupt pens - Identifying corruption factors within the university - Cleansing the university environment of corrupt elements

Table 5. Criteria and Indicators of "Research and Scientific & Practical Interactions" Factor

Criteria	Indicators
Communication with Employer for External Evaluation	- External evaluation of the curriculum by employers
Public Disclosure of Curriculum Details	- Public notification of curriculum updates - Public release of information about program activities and components - Public access to information about the mission
Public Disclosure of Learning Outcomes	- Providing information about outcome evaluation criteria - Public announcement of student achievements and outcomes
Public Disclosure of Financial Affairs	- Proper disclosure of financial commitments - Accessibility of institutional financial performance information
Public Disclosure of Student Admission Regulations	- Providing information on student admission criteria - Public release of student admission standards
Public Disclosure of Program Evaluation Results	- Making qualitative curriculum evaluation results publicly available
Requirements for	- Aligning communication and interaction policies

Criteria	Indicators
External Interactions	with the program's mission - Faculty interaction with the field of practice - Avoiding conflicts with intellectual opponents and fostering dialogue - Political role based on values - Disassociation from non-Islamic regimes - Loyalty to the Islamic justice government
Research Activity Requirements	- Conducting research aligned with the program mission - Sufficient production of research outputs
Social Responsibility	- Providing social services based on the program's mission - Pursuing social values and responsibilities - Developing policies for collective services and social responsibility - Efforts to achieve social impact
Feedback from Stakeholders	- Establishing mechanisms for feedback from external stakeholders - Measuring stakeholder satisfaction with institutional performance
Communication with Social Institutions	- Establishing institutional relations with social institutions - Faculty participation in social institutions - Global mobilization against oppression
Stakeholder Interaction to Advance Program	- Engaging external stakeholders in program governance - Gaining positive feedback from stakeholders about strategic plans
Interaction with Businesses and Companies	- Establishing job placement offices and experiential learning platforms - Contracting cooperation with related businesses and companies
Scientific Interaction with Academic Institutions	- Observing ethical principles in scientific and research interactions - Collaboration with educational institutions and university networks - Unity and proper relations between religious seminaries and universities
External and National Interactions	- Consulting with target communities to address their needs - Signing cooperation agreements with national

Criteria	Indicators
	institutions - Creating capacity for constructive interaction with diverse citizens
Internal Institutional Interactions	- Shared research concerns between faculty and staff - Proper communication among students - Appropriate faculty-student interactions - Interaction among curriculum-related faculty members - Organizing communication systems among those involved in the program - Maintaining unity and avoiding division - Collective practice of Islamic instructions and religious promotion
Strengthening Public Information Platforms	- Effective use of the official curriculum website
Research Outputs and Achievements of Faculty	- Faculty research achievements - Influential intellectual contributions of faculty - Articles produced by official faculty members
Receiving National or International Research Awards	- Receiving international awards by students or professors - Receiving national awards by students or professors
Promoting Research and Development	- Developing research and development policies for knowledge production and dissemination - Research and development contribution to course content
Facilitating Scientific Innovation	- Improving scientific quality and innovation - Creating infrastructure for scientific innovation - Promoting scientific innovation
Quality of Research Outputs and Achievements	- Efforts to produce high-quality research outputs - Scientific articles indexed in citation databases
International Educational Collaborations	- Agreements with international universities for faculty and student exchange
International Research Collaborations	- Contracting cooperation with renowned international institutions - Interaction with foreign professional associations

Table 6. Criteria and Indicators of "Alumni" Factor

Criteria	Indicators
Evaluation and Improvement of Graduate Quality	- Evaluation of graduate quality and efforts to improve it - Clear definition of desirable graduate characteristics
Direct Role of Graduates	- Facilitating graduates' activities in the institution - Graduates' participation in supporting the curriculum
Readiness for Employment	- Learning employability skills - Graduates' sufficient ability to work in the executive field - Strengthening individual skills as the country's human resources - Preparedness to take on managerial responsibilities
Graduates' Feedback on the Program	- Graduates' satisfaction with the curriculum
Career Development and Differentiation of Graduates	- Creating differentiation for graduates in the job market - Supporting graduates' career development - Encouraging initiative-taking
Graduates' Achievements and Success	- Necessary academic qualifications for graduates' success - Graduates' achievements and success - Alignment of graduates' achievements with learning outcomes - Obtaining qualifications needed for nation-building
Employer Satisfaction with Graduates	- Employers' satisfaction with graduates' quality
Graduate Networking	- Establishing and supporting alumni associations - Recording graduates' information and activities - Creating communication networks among graduates - No connection with graduates trained in Eastern and Western schools
Graduate Employment Placement	- Establishing a job placement office for graduates - Marketing graduates' abilities
Graduates' Participation in Program Evaluation and Improvement	- Graduates' contribution to curriculum improvement - Graduates' participation in curriculum evaluation
Characteristics of Career Counseling Services	- Availability of career counseling services - Adequacy of career counseling services
Acquired Characteristics of Graduates	- Maintaining expertise and commitment to the revolution - Independent personality, not dependent on foreigners

Table 7. Criteria and Indicators of "Curriculum Management" Factor

Criteria	Indicators
Effectiveness of Curriculum Evaluation	- Reviewing the effectiveness of curriculum evaluation procedures
Evaluation of Learning Outcomes	- Proper implementation of student learning outcomes evaluation - Creating a systematic evaluation process for learning outcomes
Performance Evaluation of Individuals	- Establishing a performance evaluation system for faculty members - Preparing evaluation guidelines for staff, professors, and students
Evaluation of Curriculum Quality and Success	- Evaluating the effectiveness and quality of the curriculum - Regular monitoring of achieving curriculum goals
Evaluation of Content Delivery	- Evaluating the effectiveness of instructional content delivery - Evaluating the method of curriculum delivery
Use of Distinguished Professors	- Inviting prominent international professors - Inviting prominent national professors
Establishment of Internal Quality Assurance System	- Validation and quality assurance of curricula - Availability of an internal quality assurance system
Curriculum Independence	- Maintaining administrative independence of the curriculum - Maintaining academic independence - Maintaining financial independence of the curriculum
Curriculum Credibility and Legitimacy	- Recognition of academic credentials obtained domestically and internationally - Approval of curriculum by national regulatory bodies - Approval by university legal bodies
Requirements for Performance Evaluation of Individuals	- Establishing a performance measurement system based on program goals - Effective implementation of the management and performance evaluation system
Curriculum Governance Requirements	- Using the contingency management model in curriculum administration - Establishing a strategic outlook in curriculum governance

Criteria	Indicators
	- Preparing implementation guidelines for the curriculum - Organizing curriculum processes
Creating Competitive Advantage Compared to Competitors	- Creating distinguishing features compared to competing programs - Benchmarking the curriculum with related programs
Curriculum Marketing	- Marketing and promoting the curriculum internationally - Marketing and promoting the curriculum nationally
Reviewing and Enhancing the Strategic Plan	- Establishing a systematic process for strategic plan development - Defining a method to review the curriculum mission
Strategic Planning of Curriculum	- Balancing theory and practice in strategic planning - Strategic planning process adapted to the curriculum
Facilitating Equal Learning Opportunities	- Creating equal learning opportunities for all - Providing equal opportunities for diverse students
Commitment to Public Values	- Efforts to realize public values such as transparency - Observing ethical and value norms in various curriculum aspects - Adherence to Iranian-Islamic culture - Efforts to realize national freedom and independence - Efforts to achieve the objectives of martyrs
Realization of Strategic Plan	- Accountability for achieving curriculum goals - Continuous monitoring and supervision of strategic plan implementation - Efforts to fulfill the curriculum mission
Defining Curriculum Mission	- Precise and relevant mission formulation - Defining stakeholder participation in mission formulation
Defining Curriculum Goals	- Defining long-term goals - Defining short-term goals
Defining Organizational Rules	- Establishing a fair, unbiased, effective, and efficient legal system - Selecting program leaders based on organizational rules - Forgiving youth mistakes and allowing for

Criteria	Indicators
	correction - Encouraging promotion of virtue and prevention of vice
Diversity and Suitability in Evaluation Strategy	- Using diverse evaluation strategies - Choosing evaluation strategies appropriate to the program level and type
Emphasis on Continuous Improvement	- Systematic continuous improvement process for the curriculum - Promoting performance excellence and continuous improvement - Strengthening universities scientifically to reduce reliance on foreigners
Attention to National and Global Role	- Considering the global role in defining the program mission - Considering the national role in defining the program mission
Maintaining and Improving Quality	- Establishing a quality improvement unit - Institutional commitment to quality - Monitoring educational quality - Each person fulfilling their duties
Quality Assurance Policies	- Effective formulation of quality assurance policies - Developing and implementing quality assurance policies with internal stakeholders - Developing quality assurance policies with external stakeholders
Learning from Past Evaluations	- Providing evidence of necessary reforms based on accreditation recommendations - Using previous evaluation results to prepare a corrective actions list
Academic Leadership	- Establishing academic and professional leadership specific to the program - Leader's authority to realize program objectives
Measuring Curriculum Impact	- Measuring program impact on the target community - Measuring program impact on students
Characteristics of Learning Outcome Evaluation	- Reasonableness of the learning outcome evaluation process - Fairness of the learning outcome evaluation process
Characteristics of Mission Formulation	- Considering public values in mission formulation - Considering available capacities in mission

Criteria	Indicators
	formulation - Achievability of curriculum mission - Efforts to establish an Islamic just governance
Participation in External Accreditation	- Conducting periodic external evaluations - Involving organizational units in external quality assurance processes
Information Collection and Monitoring	- Establishing an information collection and monitoring system for the curriculum
Technology-Driven Curriculum Management	- Using modern information technologies in curriculum management
Documentation of Curriculum Activities and Processes	- Documenting curriculum processes - Documenting ongoing activities each academic year - Documenting and describing curriculum components
Documentation of Student Admission System	- Documenting student admission processes and procedures
Desirability of Curriculum Governance	- Proper management and governance of the curriculum based on the mission - Efforts to enhance governance effectiveness in curriculum development
Combating Individual and Research Unethical Behavior	- Providing disciplinary procedures - Observing ethical principles, research ethics, and other scientific norms - Fighting unethical scientific activities - Avoiding blind imitation of East and West and preventing intellectual dependency
Feedback and Expectation System	- Creating feedback mechanisms for students - Creating feedback mechanisms for faculty - Establishing feedback and satisfaction measurement systems - Systematic process for identifying student expectations - Openness to students' expression of ideas - Encouraging criticism and consequent university improvement
Identification and Counteraction of Enemy Conspiracies	- Preventing colonial efforts to alienate countries from themselves - Identifying and neutralizing enemy conspiracies and preventing their infiltration

Table 8. Criteria and Indicators of "Faculty Member" Factor

Criteria	Indicators
Evaluation of Faculty Performance	- Monitoring faculty performance in social services - Monitoring faculty teaching performance - Monitoring faculty research performance - Monitoring overall faculty performance
Faculty Engagement in Personal Growth	- Establishment of a faculty personal development system - Faculty engagement in their professional development
Procedural Requirements for Faculty Hiring	- Alignment of faculty hiring processes with the program mission - Preparation of hiring and development guidelines for faculty
Faculty Organizational Commitment	- Faculty commitment and attachment to the mission - Faculty adherence to ethical principles - Efforts to maintain and minimize faculty turnover - Commitment to Islamic values alongside expertise
Faculty-to-Student Ratio	- Ratio of faculty members to students
Suitability of Faculty Practical and Experiential Competencies to the Curriculum	- Alignment of faculty skills with the curriculum - Possession of sufficient and relevant professional or scientific experience
Suitability of Faculty Academic and Research Qualifications to the Curriculum	- Matching faculty research qualifications with the program level - Appropriateness of faculty academic degrees with program objectives
Suitability of Faculty Personal Characteristics to the Curriculum	- Compatibility of faculty personal traits with the program - Avoidance of despair and hopelessness
Faculty Counseling Ability	- Faculty having sufficient expertise in counseling
Attention to the Diversity Principle in Faculty Hiring	- Efforts for personality diversity in faculty recruitment - International diversity among faculty - Diversity in ethnicity and race of faculty - Gender balance among faculty members
Facilitating Faculty Scientific Growth	- Promotion and scientific development of faculty - Enhancing faculty teaching quality
Essential Faculty Competencies	- Identification of essential faculty competencies aligned with the program

Criteria	Indicators
Faculty Experiential Competencies	- Adequacy of faculty practical and experiential competencies
Necessary Academic and Research Qualifications for Faculty	- Sufficient research expertise of faculty - Holding a PhD or equivalent degree - Adequate teaching skills among faculty - Adequate scientific qualifications of faculty
Adequacy of Faculty Quantity	- Sufficient number of faculty managing the program - Adequate number of full-time core faculty - Sufficient faculty number based on program mission
Management of Faculty Activities	- Planning faculty activities based on academic rank - Aligning faculty activities with program mission - Managing faculty workload
Faculty Participation in Curriculum Improvement	- Curriculum evaluation by faculty - Faculty feedback on curriculum improvement - Faculty participation in service activities related to the program - Faculty role in decision-making
Faculty Hiring Criteria	- Competency-based faculty hiring - Faculty up-to-date expertise - Balance of faculty specialties and skills - Faculty possessing diverse educational perspectives - Commitment to national laws and avoidance of non-compliance
Faculty Educational Role	- Faculty guidance of students - Faculty participation in teaching - Faculty involvement in research - Faculty participation in national and international projects
Faculty Educational and Ethical Role	- Raising awareness of deceived individuals and exposing enemy distortions - Efforts to inspire hope - Preventing student deviation and clarifying the truth
Faculty Political Role	- Criticizing faculty and officials for deviating from national and religious goals - Clarifying faculty and officials' deviations from national and religious objectives - Exposing oppressors' crimes

5. Discussion & Conclusion

Among university evaluation models, accreditation is considered one of the most effective and reliable approaches to quality assurance, which assesses each academic discipline using specific and distinct criteria reflecting its unique characteristics. Since the evaluation criteria are value-based, it is essential to develop Iranian–Islamic evaluation components tailored for accrediting various academic disciplines.

This study aimed to extract Iranian–Islamic accreditation indices for the field of Management, one of the most critical university fields responsible for training current and future managers of the country. To achieve this, international accreditation frameworks in the field of Management were collected and integrated, and subsequently, Iranian–Islamic values for university evaluation were derived based on the perspectives of Imam Khomeini (RA). Ultimately, by merging these two phases, a comprehensive and indigenous model was developed.

The Iranian–Islamic accreditation indices for the Management discipline comprise 7 factors, 195 criteria, and 496 indicators. The seven accreditation factors of the desired framework are as follows: curriculum content, curriculum management, faculty members, students, alumni, services and support, and research & scientific and practical interactions. Among the 15 recognized accreditation models for Management, only the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE, 2024) addresses 4 out of these 7 factors, whereas the other 14 models consider all 7 factors. As a result, there is a convergence between the accreditation factors identified in this study and those employed by international accreditation bodies in the field of management.

Furthermore, Abbaspoor and Mojtabazadeh (2022) in their research, present 25 factors for the accreditation of national higher education and have adopted a more detailed approach in selecting the factors compared to the present study but cover all of them. Similarly, Zafarpoor, Mohammadi & Khodaei (2017) and Hatami & Mohammadi (2013), each in their respective article, have identified 9 factors for Iran's higher education accreditation, which encompass all 7 factors presented. The eight factors proposed by Abili, Mostafavi, Narenji-thani, and Shah-Hosseini (2021) for accrediting higher education institutions in e-learning environments, the nine factors identified by Amin-Bidokhti, Mohammadi, and Rahimi (2018) for accrediting entrepreneurial universities, as well as the nine factors introduced by Shams and Maarefvand (2015) for accrediting educational management programs, all encompass the seven factors identified in the present study. This indicates

significant convergence between the existing literature and the findings of this study.

The implementation of this model in the accreditation process of management programs in Iranian universities by the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology or other relevant institutions can lead to improved educational quality, the training of skilled graduates committed to national and Islamic values, and the enhanced performance of current and future managers.

Given its comprehensive nature, the proposed framework can also be applied to various disciplines and subfields of management. In this regard, experts in each domain may review the list of proposed indices and select those most appropriate for their specific field.

The method of developing an accreditation framework based on Iranian-Islamic values, as employed in this study, can also be applied to other fields of knowledge. This recommendation can be pursued both by higher education policymakers and by researchers in this domain.

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The Role of Values in Policy Process Theories final

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines the role of values in policy process theories, addressing the central question of whether policy propositions are solely based on objective facts or whether values play an active role in policymaking. Design/Methodology/Approach: Using a systematic review of two authoritative volumes of Theories of the Policy Process (edited by Weible and Sabatier), the research analyzes eight theoretical frameworks and identifies 28 distinct influences of values in different stages of policymaking.

Findings: The findings reveal that values are not merely background factors but active and decisive elements shaping all stages of the policy process, including agenda-setting, formulation, adoption, implementation, and evaluation. Even in seemingly objective frameworks such as the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) and policy diffusion, professional, ideological, and cultural values shape the selection and acceptance of solutions. The study also demonstrates that value conflicts among actors (e.g., policy entrepreneurs, bureaucrats, political elites, and target communities) significantly affect coalitions, decisions, and policy outcomes.

Practical Implications: The study suggests three implications for policymakers: (1) designing sustainable and effective policies requires integrating the value systems of society and stakeholders into all stages of policymaking; (2) policymakers must recognize, manage, and reconcile conflicts between competing values, such as individual vs. collective or professional vs. ideological values; and (3) understanding values can enhance civic engagement and align policies with religious and cultural foundations.

Originality/Value: By highlighting 28 distinct ways in which values influence the policy process, this research challenges the positivist claim of value-free policy science and provides a post-positivist perspective that emphasizes the value-ladenness of policy theories. It contributes to both policy studies and axiology by offering a framework for understanding policymaking as a dynamic arena of value interaction, conflict, and redefinition.

Introduction

The prevailing perception of science is that it is a body of proven knowledge. In this view, scientific theories are meticulously derived from empirical findings obtained through observation and experimentation. Science is built upon what can be seen, heard, touched, and the like. This perspective gained prominence during the scientific revolution, primarily in the 17th century, through the work of pioneering scientists such as Galileo and Newton. Influenced by the achievements of great "experimentalists" like Galileo, some argued that experience should increasingly be regarded as the source of knowledge. Subsequently, this view was continually reinforced by the remarkable achievements of empirical science (Chalmers, 2023: 13). In the 19th century, nearly all those who discussed the nature of science agreed that science must be "free from value judgments." Above all, positivists and their followers emphasized that science deals with facts. Facts are objective matters, and knowledge seeks to uncover them. In contrast, values are subjective and based on human interests, cannot be derived from truths, and truths should not be influenced by values (McMullin, 2007). Indeed, positivism is an ideology of the 19th century, referred to as the "post-Enlightenment era" (Delanty, 2005: 41). The roots of positivist thought can be traced to Saint-Simon, who argued: "The greatest and best means of advancing science is to place the world within the framework of experience. Of course, we do not mean the vast world, but rather this small world, namely humanity, which we can subject to experience" (Mohammad Amzian, 2001: 38). Positivism is fundamentally based on opposing any thought that transcends the realm of the senses, whether religious, metaphysical, or rational (Mohammad Amzian, 2001: 40). Comte states: "As long as we think positivistically about astronomy or physics, we should not think differently about politics or religion. Thus, the positivist method that triumphed in the natural sciences must extend to all dimensions of thought" (Mohammad Amzian, 2001: 40). Durkheim considered social phenomena as objects and believed they should be studied as such. He argued that there is no need to philosophically examine the nature of these phenomena to ascertain their validity (Mohammad Amzian, 2001: 43-44). In short, in positivism, there is no distinction between natural and social sciences. In this view, the meaning of knowledge is defined solely by naturalistic science. The foundation of science is observation, meaning that scientists rely solely on experience to discover general laws. Science does not judge its subject and is a neutral endeavor free from social and ethical values. Positivism has often been criticized for being a conservative doctrine—one that supports the supremacy of science over other forms of knowledge and is driven by a

strong instrumental rationality that seeks intellectual dominance over nature and society (Delanty, 2005: 38-40).

It is worth noting that under the umbrella of naturalism, there are numerous epistemological stances, including empiricism (emphasizing the foundational role of experience as the basis of all knowledge) (Hume); verificationism (asserting that knowledge claims require empirical or observational evidence to be deemed valid) (Hempel); logical positivism (claiming that deductive logic and inductive inference form the basis of knowledge) (Schlick); and falsificationism (asserting that knowledge claims involve systematic attempts to refute or falsify them using empirical or observational evidence) (Popper) (Dixon & Dogan, 2004). In all these cases, the emphasis is on the experience of facts, their observation, and the testing of theories, with the assumption that science production is a neutral and value-free process.

Although this study focuses on policy-making as a subset of social sciences, it should be noted that such an explanation of knowledge production faces serious criticism even within the natural sciences. First, science does not begin with observation; observation itself is influenced by theories (Chalmers, 2023: 34). Second, observational statements are theory-laden and thus fallible, creating disruptions in evaluation (Chalmers, 2023: 50). Third, the process of knowledge production cannot solely rely on facts. Given the two previous points, every theory requires prior theories for validation, and this chain does not end unless, as Popper suggests, there are foundational propositions. He states regarding these propositions: "These propositions are accepted as a result of a decision or agreement and are thus conventional" (Chalmers, 2023: 79). Reflecting on Popper's notion of decision and agreement, it becomes clear that the domain of science cannot be confined to objective facts and devoid of value-based or metaphysical elements. The critical question is: On what basis is that decision made? This is where concepts such as values enter the process of knowledge production.

Beyond the critiques of this perspective in the philosophy of natural sciences—which, by extension, face even more serious critiques in the social sciences—this study aims to examine the propositions generated in policy studies. It seeks to answer whether the thinkers in this field have relied solely on facts in their theories and propositions about the policy process, or whether values and metaphysical elements also play a role in their theorizing. If such concepts are present in these theories, what is their position, and what role do they play? In other words, what influence do values have in the policy process?

To highlight the practical importance of addressing these questions, several points can be noted. From the perspective of Western theories, one of the key themes in public administration is the concept of public value failure. In this approach, the government is not merely on the sidelines of the market; beyond addressing market failures, even in cases where the market operates efficiently, the fundamental question for policymakers remains: Is there an issue in providing and delivering public values? (Danaifard, 2016: 39-40). Understanding the role of the "value" component in policy process theories can significantly aid governments in succeeding in this mission.

1. Literature Review

Numerous studies have addressed the role of values in science broadly, in social sciences, in policy analysis, or the impact of metaphysical concepts such as ethics in public policy or values in specific policy domains. Some of these studies are referenced below.

	Title	Author(s) and Year of Publication	Description
1	Values in Science	McMullin (2007)	This article broadly addresses the role of values in science.
2	Understanding the Role of Individual and Social Values of Managers in Implementing Approved Policies in Iranian Government Organizations	Samadi, Faghihi & Daneshfard (2018)	The aim of this research is to understand the social and individual values of government managers that influence the implementation of policies approved by policymakers.
3	The role of values and facts in policy development for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families	Gallagher (1992)	This article examines the relative role of facts and values in policymaking for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. A decision-making model is presented, demonstrating how values influence policy choices. The value assumptions underlying Public Law 99-457 (Part H) are discussed. Finally, suggestions are offered on how values influence professional decision-making.
4	Geriatric health care	Clark (1991)	This analysis focuses on three

	policy in the United States and Canada: A comparison of facts and values in defining the problems		elements of the elderly healthcare dilemma (the factual basis of predictions, the role of important social values, and the relationship between ethics and healthcare policy) to compare elderly healthcare policies in Canada and the U.S. Examining these factors reveals significant differences between the two countries in how healthcare—particularly elderly care—is viewed as an individual right versus a social responsibility.
5	Economic Analysis, Moral Philosophy, and Public Policy	Hausman, McPherson, & Satz (2017)	Through extensive reasoning and examples, this book demonstrates how understanding moral philosophy can improve economic analysis, how moral philosophy can benefit from economists' analytical tools, and how economic analysis and moral philosophy together can inform public policy.

What distinguishes the present study from previous research is its specific aim to systematically examine scholarly literature on the policy process, with particular attention to the role and conceptual position of values within major theoretical frameworks. This study provides a comprehensive overview of key policy process theories, focusing on how values are mentioned, interpreted, and positioned within each framework.

It is worth noting that these theories have been developed based on extensive analyses of numerous policy cases across different sectors. By identifying common features and conceptual patterns in these cases, theorists have constructed structured frameworks to explain how policymaking processes function.

Therefore, studying these theoretical models offers an indirect yet broad view of policy processes themselves. This approach is in some respects comparable to methods used in the philosophy of natural sciences, where theories are often formed through the examination of historical patterns in the development and organization of scientific knowledge.

2. Theoretical Foundations

2-1. Values

The term "value" originally referred to the economic assessment of something, particularly in the context of economic exchange, as seen in the works of Adam Smith, the 18th-century political economist. The concept of value expanded significantly into broader philosophical domains during the 19th century under the influence of various thinkers and schools: neo-Kantians Rudolf Hermann Lotze and Albrecht Ritschl; Friedrich Nietzsche, who proposed the theory of transvaluation of all values; Alexius Meinong and Christian von Ehrenfels; and Eduard von Hartmann, the philosopher of the unconscious, whose "outline of axiology" was the first to use the term in its title. Hugo Münsterberg, often regarded as the founder of applied psychology, and Ralph Barton Perry's book *General Theory of Value* (1926) are considered masterpieces of this new approach. Perry theorized that a value is "any object of interest." He later explored eight domains of "value": ethics, religion, art, science, economics, politics, law, and custom. A common distinction is made between instrumental and intrinsic values—that is, between what is good as a means and what is good as an end. John Dewey, in *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922) and *Theory of Valuation* (1939), offered a pragmatic interpretation, attempting to break down the distinction between means and ends, though his effort emphasized that many practical matters in human life—such as health, knowledge, and virtue—are good in both senses. Other philosophers, such as C.I. Lewis, Georg Henrik von Wright, and W.K. Frankena, expanded these distinctions—for example, between instrumental value (good for a specific purpose) and technical value (good at performing a task) or between contributory value (good as part of a whole) and final value (good as a whole) (Britannica, 2015, June 10).

2-2. Policy Process Theories

Policy process research examines the complex interactions among actors, institutions, events, and contexts that shape public policies over time. As Weible (2023, pp. 1-4) explains, this field recognizes the inherently political and multifaceted nature of policy-making, where no single theoretical perspective can fully capture the dynamics involved. Various theories - each offering distinct conceptual lenses - have emerged to analyze different aspects of the policy process, from agenda-setting and formulation to implementation and evaluation. These theoretical approaches share common foundations in examining how bounded-rational actors operate within specific contexts, respond to events, and produce policy outcomes, while

differing in their focal points and levels of analysis. The plurality of theories reflects both the complexity of policy processes and the field's ongoing development, with each framework contributing partial but complementary insights into how policies emerge, evolve, and affect societies.

2-3. Multiple Streams Framework (MSF)

The Multiple Streams Framework serves as a critical tool for analyzing the policy process under conditions of ambiguity and global complexity. It has been applied in various domains, such as global warming, nuclear energy, migration, and multilateral trade agreements. Complex and contested issues, coupled with ambiguity in political life, have increased the relevance of this framework (Herweg, Zahariadis & Zohlnhöfer, 2023).

2-4. Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (PET)

Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (PET) seeks to explain the phenomenon that, while political processes are generally characterized by stability and incrementalism, they occasionally produce significant and widespread changes compared to the past (Baumgartner, Jones, & Mortensen, 2023). In policy studies, punctuated equilibrium refers to a specific state where political conflict extends beyond the constraints of policy subsystems dominated by experts, spreading to other policy-making arenas. This concept relies on the mechanism of policy image—how a policy is described or understood—and a system of partially independent institutional arenas where policy-making can occur. The general hypothesis of punctuated equilibrium extends this framework to situations where information flows into a policy-making system, and the system, responding to these environmental cues, pays attention to the issue and takes action to address it if necessary. Policy images play a critical role in expanding issues beyond the control of experts and specific interests, which are referred to as "policy monopolies" (True, Jones, & Baumgartner, 2007).

2-5. Social Construction and Policy Design

The idea of social construction has its roots in the sociology of knowledge. This perspective posits that humans create their environment based on their analyses. Members of a society construct patterns of meaning through interpretation and then assume these patterns exist. Social constructivists believe that the linguistic categories used to understand concepts are products of a society's beliefs rather than objective, real, or natural meanings (Danaifard, 2016: 106).

2-6. Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF)

The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) is a theoretical framework designed to describe and explain how individuals collaborate to make collective decisions in public policy. Positioned between macro and micro theories of the policy process, it acknowledges that the broader environment (institutions, geography, culture, etc.) influences individual and collective actors, particularly their beliefs and behaviors. In turn, the environment is also shaped by the actors' behaviors and the policies they pursue. ACF focuses on aspects of policy-making beyond elections and social movements, where individual and group efforts are often overlooked by news media, social media, and the general public. However, the dynamics highlighted by ACF fundamentally influence policy processes and collective decisions at all levels of governance (Nohrstedt et al., 2023).

2-7. Policy Feedback Theory

Policy Feedback Theory focuses on the question of how policies influence and shape political interactions. Although research on policy feedback effects has recently been added to the political science literature, the idea that public policies can shape the political behavior of a range of actors has a long history in this discipline (Mettler & SoRelle, 2023).

2-8. Narrative Policy Framework (NPF)

The Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) is an approach to studying the policy process that addresses the central question of whether policy narratives play a significant role in the policy process. The growing scientific hypothesis in this perspective is that policy narratives do have such a role. Reasons for studying narratives include the fact that policy debates are often conducted through competing narratives, occurring in both formal institutional settings (e.g., congressional debates) and informal settings (e.g., interest group websites, Twitter, YouTube). Additionally, narratives influence various stages of the policy process, such as problem definition, legislation, bureaucratic rules, media communications, policy evaluations, expert testimonies, public opinions, and more. Thus, NPF posits that understanding the role of narratives is critical to comprehending the policy process in various settings and at multiple points within this process (Jones et al., 2023).

3. Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) Framework

The Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) Framework provides concepts, variables, a meta-theoretical language, and diagnostic and

empirical tools for policy analysts to examine various institutional arrangements. Institutional arrangements are defined as "persistent patterns of human actions in situations structured by rules, norms, shared strategies, and the physical world." In the context of public policy, regulatory frameworks, subsidy programs, or participatory processes can be understood as institutional arrangements (Schlager & Villamayor-Tomas, 2023).

The goal of the IAD Framework is to enable researchers to examine and develop explanations showing how people use institutional arrangements to solve collective problems and understand the logic of institutional designs. In other words, the IAD Framework has a problem-solving orientation. This orientation distinguishes it from other major policy process frameworks and theories. While the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) focuses on coalitions and coalition activities, and Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (PET) explains patterns of activity and policy outcomes, IAD focuses on diagnostic and prescriptive research. The starting point for applying the IAD Framework is typically a public problem, often framed as a collective action problem or social dilemma in its common applications. Many public problems (such as public service congestion, environmental degradation, and financial crises) arise as a result of uncoordinated decisions by governments, companies, and/or civic organizations. The outcome for an actor depends not only on their own choices and actions but also on the choices and actions of other actors in the situation. This interdependence, both in actions and outcomes, means that to solve problems and achieve desired outcomes, actors must consider each other and coordinate their actions and choices. However, cooperation and coordination cannot be taken for granted. Indeed, individual and collective interests often diverge, creating social dilemmas. These dilemmas are the essence of collective action problems, and institutional arrangements serve as a means to align them (Schlager & Villamayor-Tomas, 2023).

3-1. Policy Diffusion and Innovation

Other frameworks referenced in this study, despite offering diverse and valuable theories on how to view the public policy process, share a common tendency. Specifically, they focus on policy-making in a single locality, state, or country. However, policies spread—or diffuse—across governments. Understanding the nature of diffusion processes helps students and researchers see where policy ideas originate and why policymakers adopt them. Policy diffusion occurs when a government's decision to adopt a policy innovation is influenced by the choices of other governments (de Oliveira et al., 2023).

3-2. Ecology of Games Framework

Structurally, each ecology of games consists of a set of policy actors, issues, and forums related to a specific policy domain within a predefined geographical space, along with emerging games. While all systems are composed of similar separate components, the number and types of actors, issues, forums, and games vary significantly across different systems (Lubell, Mewhirter & Robbins, 2023).

3-3. Methodology

Given the study's objective of examining the role of the concept of values in policy process theories as real and accepted instances of theorizing in the academic community of policy studies, a systematic review of these theories appears to be the appropriate method to achieve this goal. To ensure the validity and comprehensiveness of the scientific sources under review, theories selected were those articulated by the prominent scholar in this field, Christopher M. Weible, in the book *Theories of the Policy Process*. The fifth edition of this book, published in 2023, has received 792 citations on Google Scholar to date, while the previous edition, the fourth, published in 2014, has garnered 5,540 citations. According to Google Scholar, the total citations to Weible's works amount to 27,283. Alongside Weible's *Theories of the Policy Process*, another book with the same title, edited by another prominent researcher in this field, Paul A. Sabatier, was also used as a basis for the review.

4. Findings

4-1. Role of Values in the Policy Process from the Perspective of the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF)

- Reconfiguration of Societal Values and the Increased Need for MSF

The Multiple Streams Framework is based on the garbage can model of organizational choice. On the other hand, the primary candidates for the garbage cans are issues involving changes in normative structures—priorities of fundamental values in a political system—and issues where no active participant dominates the policy process. When a society is in the process of reconfiguring its values, the established norms that form the basis of government-society relations are challenged. As a result, conventional wisdom is questioned, bringing opposing groups to the forefront of change. The activation of new groups and widespread disagreement over the relevant values that should guide political decision-making, in turn, increase ambiguity and enable the emergence of new issues and solutions. Such decoupling from previously established connections between windows,

issues, and policies complicates the process, as new and possibly unrelated elements are thrown into the can. From this perspective, issues like privatization or governmental reforms are good examples for applying the MSF model (Zahariadis, 2007).

Reconfiguration of societal values	→	Challenging norms governing state-society relations	→	Growing ambiguity	→	Increasing imperative to apply the MSF
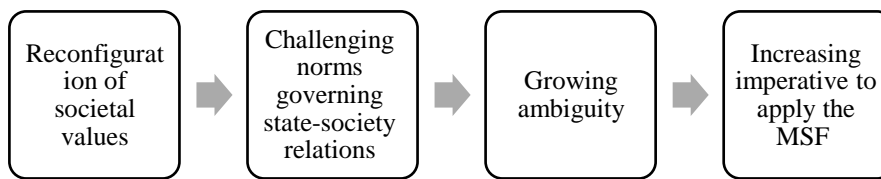
4-2. Values and Problem Definition

The problem stream includes various conditions that policymakers and citizens wish to address. Problems have a "perceptual and interpretive element." Some conditions are defined as problems and thus receive more attention than others. How is this done? Typically, a set of values is associated with a specific issue. Changes in specific conditions may harm those values, thereby triggering interest and attention. People define conditions as problems by allowing their values and beliefs to guide their decisions, categorizing issues into one group rather than another, comparing current performance with past performance, and comparing conditions across different countries.

4-3. Policy Entrepreneurs' Values and Linking Problems to Solutions

From the perspective of the Multiple Streams Framework, for an issue to gain prominence on the agenda and ultimately be decided upon, the independent streams (problem, political, and policy) must converge at some point. The opportunity to combine these streams arises when a "policy window" (sometimes called a "window of opportunity") opens. Moreover, due to the lack of a natural or inevitable connection between a problem and a solution, the MSF suggests that these two are typically linked by a policy entrepreneur and presented to policymakers receptive to the ideas (Herweg, Zahariadis, & Zohlnhöfer, 2023).

Policy Entrepreneur Values	⟹	Problem-Solution Coupling

4-4. Shared Values Between Policy Entrepreneurs and Policymakers and Increased Success

Not all entrepreneurs succeed at all times. More successful entrepreneurs are those with greater access to policymakers. For example, the Adam Smith

Institute had greater access to the government during Margaret Thatcher's premiership in the UK because its ideology was closer to hers than to other groups. Thus, options proposed by individuals associated with the institute were more readily accepted by policymakers (Zahariadis, 2007).

| Value Alignment Between Policy Entrepreneurs and Policymakers | → | Enhanced Policy Entrepreneur Access to Policymakers | → | Increased Policy Entrepreneur Effectiveness |
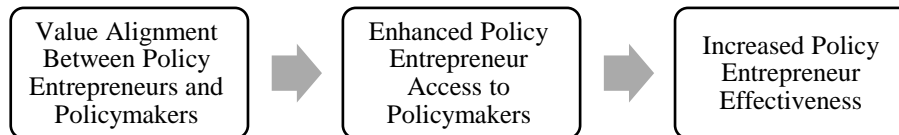
4-5. Societal Values and the Survival of Proposals

The survival and selection of policy proposals within the policy primeval soup are not random occurrences but rather follow predictable patterns shaped by rigorous selection mechanisms. For a proposal to emerge as a viable policy alternative, it must satisfy four fundamental survival criteria: (1) technical feasibility, (2) value acceptability, (3) public acquiescence, and (4) financial viability .When proposals fail to meet these threshold conditions - whether due to implementation challenges, value conflicts, lack of political support, or excessive costs - they are effectively eliminated from serious policy consideration during the pre-decisional phase of policy development (Herweg, Zahariadis, & Zohlnhöfer, 2023).

Thus, the acceptability of a proposal's embedded values within the policy community's value system proves particularly decisive, as value congruence significantly enhances a proposal's survival prospects and substantially increases its likelihood of ultimate adoption. This value alignment serves as both a necessary condition for policy viability and a catalyst for coalition-building among stakeholders.

| Policymaking Community's Values | → | Value Acceptability of policy alternative | → | Survival likelihood of policy alternatives |
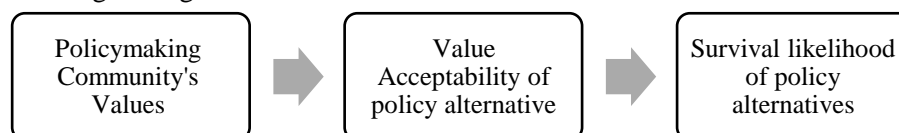
4-6. Policymakers' Values and Solution Selection

Policy values represent fundamental attributes embedded within policy solutions, though their specific manifestations evolve according to the political orientation of advocating coalitions. Rather than being inherently fixed to solutions, these values are dynamically constructed and politically ascribed by competing coalitions. As normative principles intrinsically valued in policymaking, they constitute political constructs rather than objective facts. Consider the contrast between defined-benefit pension systems (e.g., U.S. Social Security) and individual retirement accounts (e.g.,

401(k) plans): Factual components remain comparable (contribution rates, distribution formulas); Value propositions differ fundamentally (collective welfare vs. individual responsibility). This value differentiation drives policy preferences beyond mere technical or financial considerations. Policy solutions typically embody multiple coexisting values that resonate differentially with potential coalition members. Actors within the policy process selectively emphasize, interpret, and mobilize around these values based on perceived congruence with their own normative frameworks (Zahariadis, 2021).
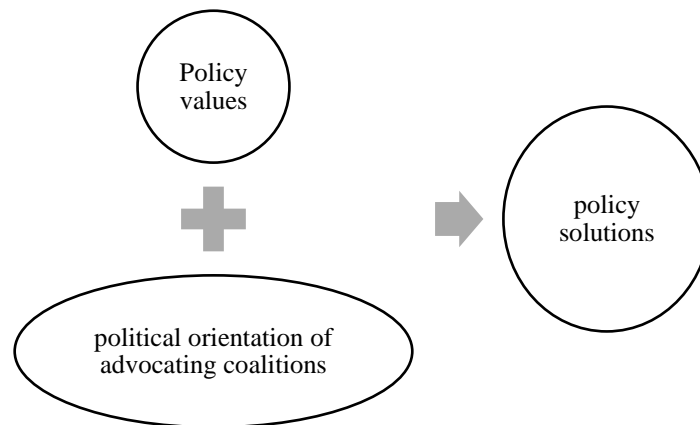
4-7. Role of Values in the Policy Process from the Perspective of Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (PET)

Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (PET) seeks to explain the phenomenon that, while political processes are generally characterized by stability and incrementalism, they occasionally produce significant and widespread changes compared to the past (Baumgartner, Jones, & Mortensen, 2023). In policy studies, punctuated equilibrium refers to a specific state where political conflict extends beyond the constraints of policy subsystems dominated by experts, spreading to other policy-making arenas. This concept relies on the mechanism of policy image—how a policy is described or understood—and a system of partially independent institutional arenas where policy-making can occur. The general hypothesis of punctuated equilibrium extends this framework to situations where information flows into a policy-making system, and the system, responding to these environmental cues, pays attention to the issue and takes action to address it if necessary. Policy images play a critical role in expanding issues beyond the control of experts and specific interests, which are referred to as "policy monopolies" (True, Jones, & Baumgartner, 2007).

4-8. Policy Image Connection to Fundamental Political Values andSustained Stability

When a subsystem is dominated by a specific interest, it is best described as a policy monopoly. A policy monopoly has a definable institutional structure responsible for policy-making in a specific issue area, supported by a powerful idea or image. This image is typically linked to fundamental political values and can be communicated simply and directly to the public. Since a successful policy monopoly systematically reduces pressures for change, it is said to involve a negative feedback process. However, policy monopolies are not permanently invulnerable (Baumgartner, Jones, & Mortensen, 2023).

| Entanglement of policy image with core political values | → | Policy monopoly | → | Negative (dampening) feedback to pressures | → | Stability or incremental change |
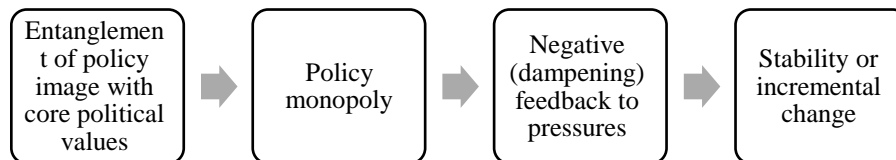
4-9. Shift in Attention from One Value to Another and Creating Disruption

Policy-making decisions are of the bounded rationality type. Choice situations are multifaceted, yet decision-makers tend to perceive choices based on a limited set of attributes and often face difficulties in trading off among these attributes. If a particular policy promotes economic growth but simultaneously has negative implications for human rights, one of these conflicting values may take center stage in decision-makers' attention. If attention shifts between these two dimensions—for example, due to a scandal or a change in the composition of the decision-making group, which sometimes occurs—the chosen policy may also change dramatically. With increasing pressure for change, resistance may succeed for a time, but if the pressures are sufficient, it may lead to widespread intervention by political actors and governmental institutions previously uninvolved. Generally, this requires a significant shift in the supporting policy image. When an issue is redefined or previously dormant dimensions of the debate are highlighted, new actors who were previously sidelined feel empowered to assert their authority. These new actors may insist on rewriting rules and shifting the balance of power, which is reinforced by new institutional structures as previously dominant agencies and institutions are forced to share power with groups or agencies that have gained new legitimacy. Thus, changes resulting from the breakdown of a policy monopoly may become locked in as institutional reforms in the future. These new institutions persist after public

and political conflicts subside, often establishing a new equilibrium in the policy domain that continues even after the issue exits the agenda and enters parallel processing in a newly transformed policy community (True, Jones, & Baumgartner, 2007).

Shift in attention to policy values	➡	Breakdown of policy monopoly and emergence of new actors	➡	Formation of new policy subsystem with alternative value sets	➡	Policy punctuations
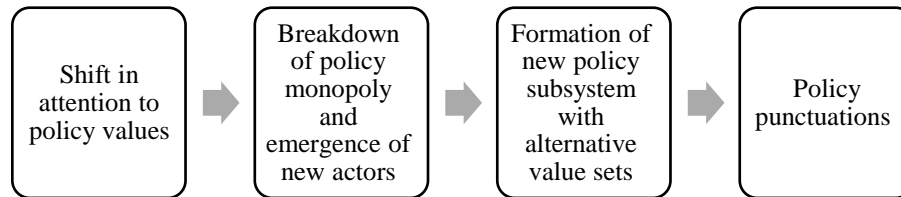
5. Role of Values in the Policy Process from the Perspective of Social Construction and Policy Design

5-1. Values and Agenda-Setting

While empirical positivist analyses strive to provide causal descriptions and predict behaviors, social perception seeks to describe the root causes associated with behaviors by relying on the process of Verstehen (interpretive understanding). Verstehen refers to the process of interpreting and understanding facts and their meanings using associated social values and goals (Danaifard, 2007: 92). Public issues refer to matters that affect the general public. Many issues exist that society wishes to address, but only those deemed sufficiently important and serious by policymakers are placed on the public policy agenda. Defining an issue is a political matter and is largely based on values (Danaifard, 2016: 110).

Policymakers' Values vs. Societal Values	➡	The process of understanding facts and interpreting their meanings	➡	Issue Prioritization	➡	Agenda-Setting for Priority Issues
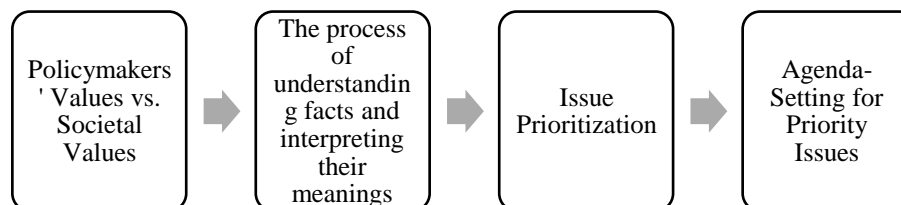
5-2. Policy Design, Value Reproduction, and Impact on Meaning and Civic Participation

Policy design, alongside the benefits or costs it brings to target groups, also pursues specific goals. "Target groups" or "policy audiences" refer to individuals affected by a particular policy, which may involve gaining benefits or bearing costs. The realities concerning the characteristics of the group may be factual, but the value elements that make them positive or negative are products of social and political processes. Policy design also

includes solutions, tools, a logic for legitimacy, and a structure for implementation. Collectively, the institutional culture of society, power dynamics, and social constructs are products of policy design. In this context, social construction helps define conditions that lead to the reproduction or transformation of values (Danaifard, 2016: 112-113). The goal of the social construction framework is to explain how and why specific types of policies are produced in particular contexts and how these policies shape subsequent participation patterns, political orientations, meanings of citizenship, and the form of dominant democracy. Social constructs are "created," "used," and "manipulated" in the production of policy and the meaning of citizenship (Ingram, Schneider, & DeLeon, 2007).

| Policy design | → | Social constructions | → | Value reproduction or transformation | → | Target group characterization (positive/ negative) | → | Impact on meaning-making and civic participation |
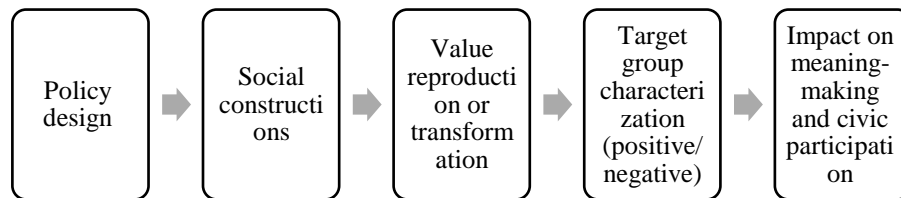
5-3. Dominant Social Values and Policy Design

According to this perspective, policymakers, particularly elected politicians, face different challenges in policy design concerning target groups (Danaifard, 2016: 120). Political scientists and public choice scholars agree that elected politicians seek re-election, and concerns about re-election influence their decisions in supporting and proposing legislation. Elected leaders respond to pressures from organized interests but also anticipate the electoral consequences of adopting value positions that do not align with dominant values (Ingram, Schneider, & DeLeon, 2007).

| Dominant societal values | → | Differential targeting of social groups by elected officials | → | Determining the distinctive nature of policy design |
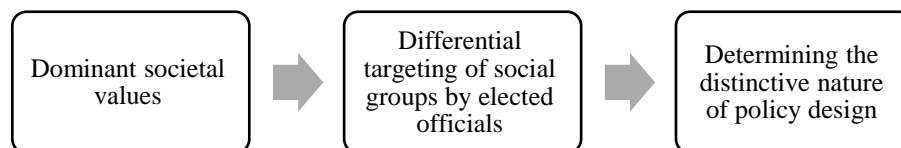
6. Role of Values in the Policy Process from the Perspective of the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF)

6-1. Socio-Cultural Values and Their Impact on Participant Behavior

The Advocacy Coalition Framework operates on assumptions at three levels: macro, meso, and micro. At the macro level, the framework posits that much of the policy process occurs within policy subsystems, involving negotiations among specialists. However, participant behavior within these

subsystems is influenced by two sets of external factors—one relatively stable and the other highly dynamic. Relatively stable parameters include fundamental issue characteristics (e.g., differences between groundwater and surface water), the basic distribution of natural resources, fundamental socio-cultural values, and the basic constitutional structure. These stable external factors rarely change over periods of about a decade and thus seldom provide a catalyst for behavioral or policy change within a policy subsystem. However, they are critical in determining the resources and constraints within which subsystem actors must operate (Sabatier & Weible, 2007).
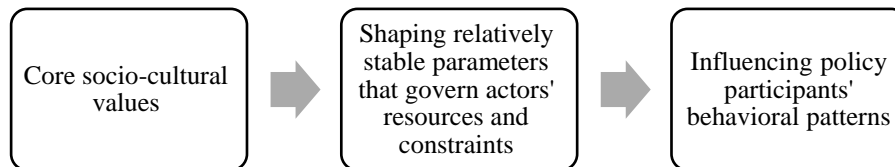
6-2. Altruistic Values and Individual Behavior

The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) fundamentally differs from rational choice frameworks. While rational choice frameworks assume actors are self-interested and rationally pursue relatively simple material interests, ACF assumes that normative beliefs must be empirically tested and does not preclude the possibility of altruistic behavior. In fact, ACF recognizes two normative reasoning systems: a "logic of appropriateness," where correct behavior means adhering to rules, and a "logic of consequences," where correct behavior involves maximizing positive outcomes. This is a classic contrast between sociologists and economists, as each logic starts from fundamentally different principles (Sabatier & Weible, 2007).
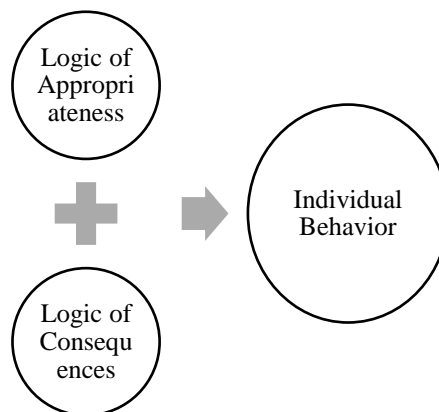
6-3. Normative Beliefs, Actor Orientations, and Political Conflicts

The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) emphasizes the difficulty of changing normative beliefs and actors' tendency to engage with the world through a set of perceptual filters formed by prior beliefs, which are challenging to alter. Consequently, actors from different coalitions likely perceive the same information in vastly different ways, leading to distrust. This, in turn, strengthens ties within the same coalitions and exacerbates conflict between rival coalitions. The ACF's individual model is particularly well-suited to explaining the escalation and persistence of political conflicts (Sabatier & Weible, 2007).

Normative beliefs	→	Creating perceptual filters in relation to the world	→	Different perceptions of the same information	→	Increased density of bonds within the coalition and conflict with rival coalitions
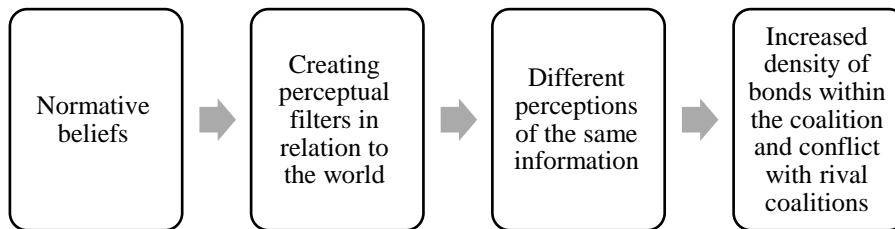
6-4. Fundamental Impact of Normative Core Beliefs, Ontological Principles, and Policy Values on Policy Formulation

The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) views policy actors as individuals with bounded rationality, meaning they are motivated by instrumental goals but are often unclear about how to achieve them and have limited cognitive capacities to process stimuli such as information and experience. Given these limitations, actors within subsystems simplify the world through their "belief system," which encompasses their perceived core values and policy-related beliefs. The ACF proposes a three-tiered belief system model, ranging from general to specific. "Deep core beliefs" include fundamental normative values and ontological principles, such as the nature of humans, norms regarding social justice, and the prioritization of primary values (e.g., individual liberty vs. social equality) (Nohrstedt et al., 2023). To elaborate, at the broadest level, deep core beliefs encompass most policy subsystems. These include general normative assumptions about human nature, the relative priority of core values such as liberty and equality, the relative priority of the welfare of different groups, the appropriate role of government versus markets, and who should participate in governmental decision-making. Traditional left/right scales operate at the level of deep core beliefs. Deep core beliefs are primarily products of childhood socialization and are thus very difficult to change (Sabatier & Weible, 2007).

Deep core beliefs are not specific to a policy subsystem and can apply across multiple subsystems. They shape and constrain policy core beliefs, which lie in the middle of the belief system and refer to general normative and empirical beliefs related to policy within a subsystem. Normative policy core beliefs reflect an individual's basic orientation and value priorities for a policy subsystem and may specify whose welfare is of particular concern. Empirical policy core beliefs include general assessments of a problem's severity, its primary causes, and the perceived impacts of policies. Finally, "secondary beliefs" more narrowly address elements such as appropriate tools for coalition coordination or specific "policy tools" suitable for achieving outcomes identified in an individual's policy core beliefs. Belief systems provide the raw materials through which policy actors engage in reasoning, persuasion, storytelling, and framing through analytical debates. Here, belief systems—particularly perceptions of problem causes and severity or the estimated impacts of policy solutions—intertwine with scientific and technical information, which peaks in legitimizing and supporting one perspective while discrediting others. For example, policy actors may bolster their arguments about a problem's severity by referencing science to support their claims. While the framework of belief change does not ignore the importance of other information sources, it highlights scientific and technical information as powerful political fuel in public discourse. The ACF assumes that policy actors within a subsystem can form one or more advocacy coalitions based on shared policy core beliefs. Members of a coalition coordinate their policy activities to translate their beliefs into public policies while blocking rivals' efforts to do the same. From this perspective, public policies represent political maneuvers and negotiations among coalitions and efforts to translate rival coalitions' belief systems into policy (Nohrstedt et al., 2023).

The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) assumes that policy participants strive to translate elements of their belief systems into actual policies before their opponents can do the same. To have any prospect of success, they must seek allies, share resources, and develop complementary strategies (Sabatier & Weible, 2007).
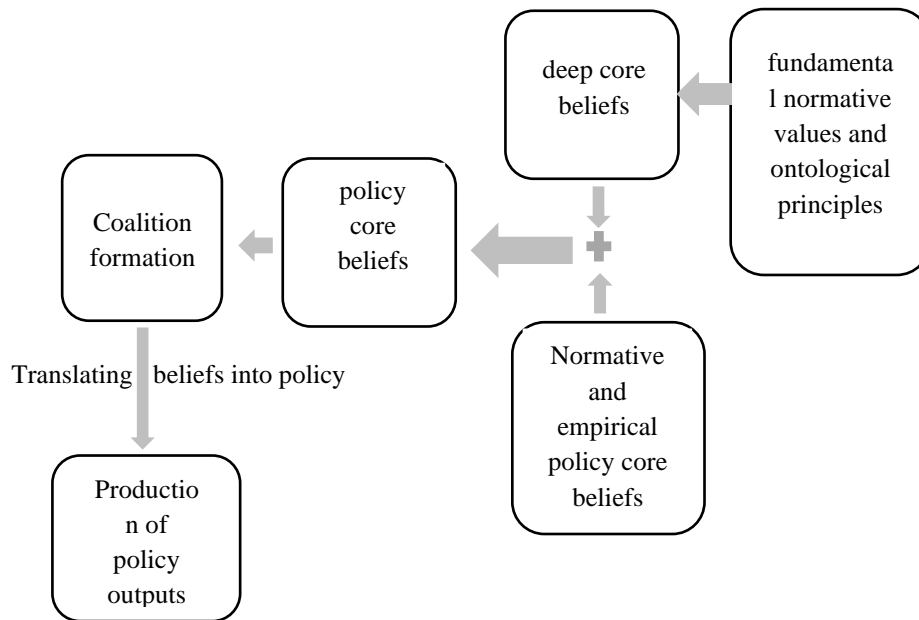
7. Role of Values in the Policy Process from the Perspective of Policy Feedback Theory

7-1. Policy Feedback Framework as a Tool for Evaluating Governance Performance Against Desired Values

Studying the policy process not only engages researchers in a new form of policy analysis overlooked by dominant approaches but also provides a foundation for it. The field of policy analysis, which aims to predict the most valuable approaches to solving social problems or evaluate the ability of existing policies to do so, typically focuses exclusively on issues of economic efficiency or social welfare. Analysts evaluate policy options based on the cost savings they promote and the social benefits they generate, such as higher university graduation rates or reduced incarceration rates. Meanwhile, policy process researchers have helped clarify these issues, including whether adopting such options is politically feasible and, if not, under what conditions it could be. Policy Feedback Theory lies at the intersection of these two approaches: it incorporates political considerations into policy analysis and evaluates how policies affect critical aspects of governance, such as promoting or hindering civic participation, advancing or obstructing the development of influential groups, and how they impact institutional governance capacity. Such analysis can shed light on policies' impact on democracy. It can also enrich policy process studies by highlighting how prior policies influence the

likelihood and shape of future policies. Given that democratic forms of governance are under increasing threat, the value of an approach to policy analysis that seriously examines the democratic capacity of government programs has perhaps never been higher for researchers, policymakers, and the general public (Mettler & SoRelle, 2023).

7-2. Core Values of Previous Policies and Their Impact on New Values

Public policies also impose rules and procedures on citizens that stem from policy design and implementation and may be a source of interpretive effects, which can also be called "cognitive effects" or "learning effects." Interpretive effects refer to the ability of public policies to shape norms, values, and attitudes. This dimension of the Policy Feedback model is partly based on Anne Schneider and Helen Ingram's (1993) social construction and policy design theory, which elaborates how citizens' subjective experiences of citizenship's meaning are shaped by policies and how this affects their status, identity, and role in the political community (Mettler & SoRelle, 2023).
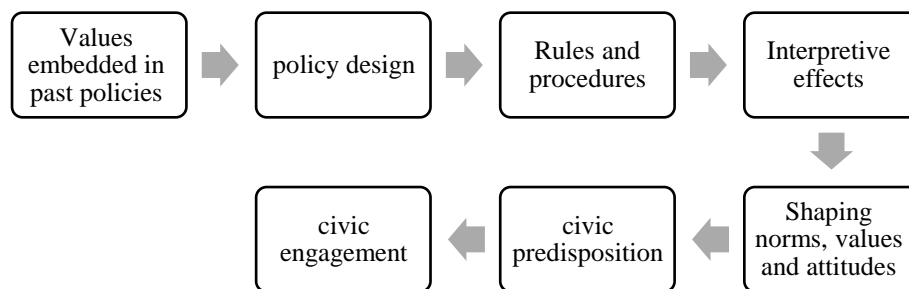
8. Role of Values in the Policy Process from the Perspective of the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF)

8-1. Belief Systems and Their Role in Narrative Content

If existing belief systems that help associated groups of people understand a political issue are grasped, they provide a significant ability to determine the structure of the semantic variables of policy narratives related to that issue. For example, ideologies or cultures that individuals in groups use to help understand the world around them are belief systems. These belief systems provide systematic ways to understand what socially constructed objects are likely to mean for specific categories of people (Jones et al., 2023). It is evident that belief systems are themselves influenced by a set of values that are important to these individuals.

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┌─────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐
│             │      │ Interpretation of│      │   Contingent    │
│Belief system│ ──▶  │socially constructed│ ──▶ │ meaning-making in│
│             │      │  policy objects │      │ policy narratives│
└─────────────┘      └─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘
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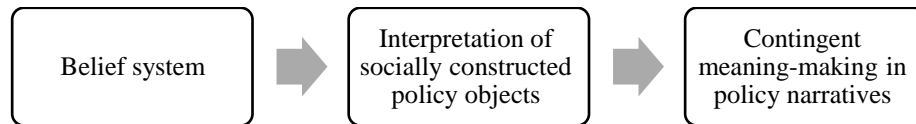
8-2. Belief Systems, Power, and Coalition Cohesion

Advocacy coalitions whose policy narratives include higher levels of coalition glue (coalition stability, strength, and intra-coalition solidarity) are more likely to influence policy outcomes. NPF research has consistently found statistically significant differences between opposing stakeholder groups and the coalitional use of policy beliefs. These same criteria (i.e., coalition stability, strength, and solidarity over time) can also be used to assess behavior and dynamics within and between coalitions (Jones et al., 2023).

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┌─────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐
│             │      │   Advocacy      │      │   Narrative     │
│Attributes of belief│ ─▶│coalition's power,│ ─▶│   dominance     │
│  systems    │      │  cohesion, and  │      │ probability in  │
│             │      │   stability     │      │ policy outcomes │
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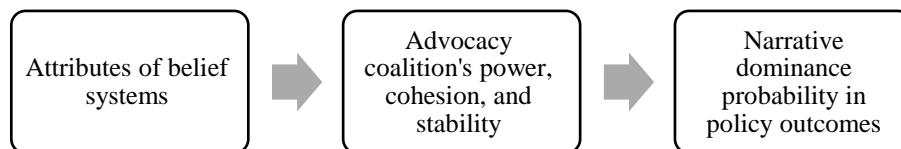
8-3. Potential for Normative and Value-Oriented Future Studies

The authors of the article "Narrative Policy Framework" conclude by emphasizing: "Perhaps one day we will write a philosophical defense of our commitments, but not today. For now, we only propose the idea that science and liberal democracy are worth defending. NPF should not remain neutral toward these positions, and thus, in the coming years, we call for more studies that incorporate liberal democratic norms into NPF's ongoing commitment to science. Given that narratives play a fundamental role in the rise of authoritarian populism and the decline of liberal democracy, a better understanding of how authoritarian populists appeal to the working class and how liberal democracy can better use narrative to its advantage seems essential" (Jones et al., 2023).

9. Role of Values in the Policy Process from the Perspective of the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) Framework

9-1. Actors' Value Systems and Their Impact on Policy (Decisions)

One of the pillars of the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework is the "action arena." The term action arena refers to the social space where individuals interact, exchange goods and services, solve problems, dominate one another, or engage in conflict (among many activities individuals undertake in action arenas). One of the components of analyzing an action arena is the actors. To accurately understand actors, various parameters must

be identified, one of which is their value system (Ostrom, 2007). In fact, an actor's value system influences the quality of the action arena and ultimately, through the patterns of actor interactions, impacts the final outcome, which, in this context, is a decision or policy.

Actors' valuation systems	→	action arena	→	patterns of interactions	→	outcomes
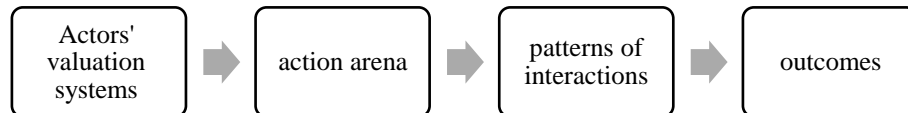
9-2. Values and the Culture of the Target Society and Their Impact on the Action Arena

One of the factors influencing the action arena is the "attributes of the community". The components of a community include "norms," "culture," and "worldview" (Schlager & Villamayor-Tomas, 2023). Community characteristics relevant to structuring an action arena include generally accepted behavioral norms, the level of shared understanding among potential participants about the structure of specific types of action arenas, the degree of homogeneity in the preferences of those living in the community, and the distribution of resources among those affected. The term "culture" is often used for this set of variables. For example, when all users of a shared resource share common values and interact within a complex set of arrangements, they are far more likely to develop appropriate rules and norms for resource management. The importance of building a reputation for adhering to commitments is high in such a community, and the cost of developing monitoring and enforcement mechanisms is relatively low. If users of a resource come from different communities and distrust one another, the task of formulating and sustaining effective rules becomes significantly more challenging (Ostrom, 2007).

norms, culture and worldview	→	attributes of the community	→	action arena	→	patterns of interactions	→	outcomes

9-3. Values as Evaluation Criteria for Outcomes

The interaction processes within an operational situation and the outcomes produced may be evaluated using criteria similar to those used in many public policy analyses, such as efficiency, effectiveness, equity, and accountability. Each criterion has multiple definitions. For example, equity may mean that all actors in an operational situation receive an equal share of an asset, or it may mean that the amounts received are a function of the level of investment in

providing a good, or the amounts received may be based on need. The type of "equity" chosen by policymakers affects who receives what and how, impacts institutional design, and influences actors' choices and actions. Thus, institutional arrangements not only support the realization of instrumental values, such as efficiently solving collective action problems, but also normative values like justice or security (Schlager & Villamayor-Tomas, 2023). In addition to predicting outcomes, institutional analysts can evaluate the outcomes achieved and the range of potential outcomes achievable under different institutional arrangements. Evaluation criteria apply to both outcomes and the processes of achieving them. While there are potentially many evaluation criteria, let us briefly focus on the following: (1) economic efficiency, (2) equity through financial equalization, (3) redistributive equity, (4) accountability, (5) alignment with public ethics, and (6) adaptability (Ostrom, 2007).

| Chosen value priorities | → | Evaluative criteria | → | Evaluation of policy outcomes | → | Effects on outcomes and action arena |
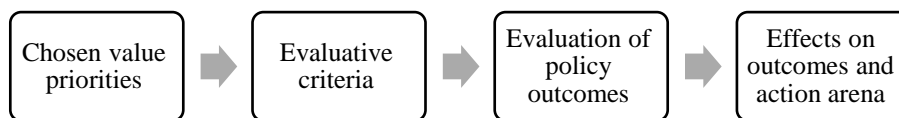
10. Role of Values in the Policy Process from the Perspective of Policy Diffusion and Innovation

10-1. Socialization Values and Their Impact on Emulating Good Behavior Creators

Policies (and the ideas that shape them) can spread through a socialization mechanism. The development and adoption of behavioral norms create conditions for policy diffusion. For example, if countries in a region can be convinced to adopt a common security norm, their defense spending levels and foreign policies may be adjusted and perhaps harmonized. Similarly, socialization regarding the urgency of action on global climate change can lead to faster diffusion of green energy policies. When a shared view of what constitutes "good behavior" for governments is accepted, early adopters are quickly emulated by governments that do not want to appear inconsistent or norm-violating (de Oliveira et al., 2023).

| Normative socialization value | → | Norm-conformity pressure | → | Policy diffusion through early adopter emulation |
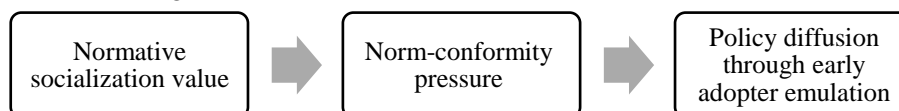
10-2. Impact of Value and Ideological Similarity Between Countries on Policy Diffusion

Policy diffusion is not solely influenced by geographic proximity. For example, when Dallas designed a package of policies to become an attractive

location for Amazon's new headquarters, it competed with Atlanta, Boston, and Los Angeles, not just Houston and Austin. State governments learn from experiments conducted across the country, and countries learn from the experiences of other countries worldwide. Indeed, recent research on policy diffusion among U.S. states shows that other considerations, such as ideological similarity, better explain policy spread today than geographic proximity. The policy diffusion literature identifies several factors specific to certain locations that can either limit or facilitate the implementation of policies from elsewhere. These factors include program complexity, past policy choices, institutional and structural constraints, ideological proximity, or "cultural proximity" (de Oliveira et al., 2023).

ideological-cultural alignment of jurisdictions	⟹	Accelerated policy diffusion velocity

10-3. Value-Based Assumptions as the Core of Policy Learning Validity

Rose (1993) argues: "Citing another country's name as an argument for or against a program is not lesson-drawing but rather playing a symbol in political rhetoric. Lesson-drawing cannot be politically neutral, as every program has a set of value-based assumptions, and policy is about conflicting goals and values. Consequently, the greater the alignment between policymakers' values and the program's values, the more likely the program can be transferred between two countries" (Danaifard, 2016: 204-206). Such transfers are more likely to succeed in the destination country, unlike cases where the necessary value alignment is absent.

Value congruence among policymakers across political jurisdictions	⟹	Policy lesson-drawing	⟹	Policy success in the recipient jurisdiction
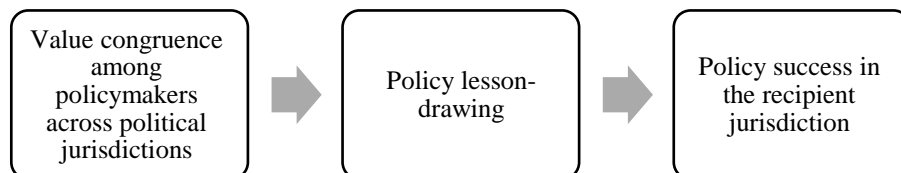
10-4. Professional Values as the Basis for Normative Isomorphism

When policymakers consider themselves committed to a set of professional standards and values, they feel obligated to act according to them. In such cases, the basis for compliance is adherence to the principles governing the community of specialists in that field. Behaviors such as striving to obtain licenses, certifications, or meeting certain standards are indicators of such normative isomorphism. In this context, policymakers feel morally obligated to adhere to those professional or socio-political values (Danaifard, 2016: 218-219). There is "normative

pressure" on state officials to adopt best practices from other states. State officials are typically socialized into shared norms through common professional training (e.g., a master's degree in public administration) and interactions in professional associations (e.g., the National Emergency Management Association) (Berry & Berry, 2007).

| Hegemony of professional values | → | normative pressure | → | Normative isomorphism |
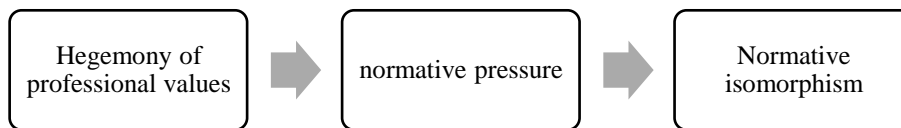
10-5. Symbolic values drive mimetic isomorphism

In the policy literature, "mimetic isomorphism" has received more attention than the other two types of isomorphism—coercive and normative. Marsh and Sharman define mimetic isomorphism as: "The process of copying external models due to symbolic or normative factors, not for technical or rational reasons or functional efficiency." Governments adopt behaviors and institutions of governments perceived as more advanced or models proposed by international organizations to be regarded as advanced by others and themselves. Mimicry can be a deliberate tactic by governments to gain legitimacy. That is, a government may fully know that a policy in question is technically ineffective, but still assigns greater value to its social outcomes among domestic and international audiences (Danaifard, 2016: 219).

| Dominance of symbolic values | → | Quest for legitimacy via perceived best practices | → | Ceremonial emulation of reference institutions | → | Mimetic Isomorphism |
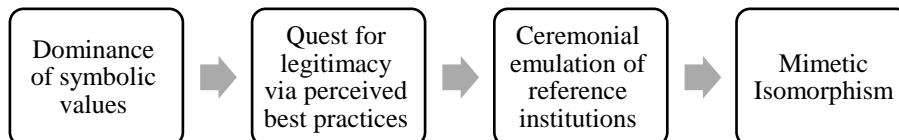
11. Role of Values in the Policy Process from the Perspective of the Ecology of Games Framework

11-1. Actors' Values as a Key Determinant of Outcomes

As previously mentioned, one of the key elements in the Ecology of Games Framework is the actors. Policy actors are individuals or organizations (e.g., government agencies, businesses, non-profits) that have interests in a specific issue area and are active in making decisions that affect it. Actors within and between systems have their own values, belief systems, policy preferences, resources, and decision-making strategies. Similarly, policy actors typically control various resources, such as funding, knowledge, and political power, which must be

coordinated in policy implementation. In line with other policy process theories, EGF asserts that policy actors are boundedly rational and influenced by motivational reasoning and cultural cognition processes. Thus, collaboration is often based on shared values and information processing that reinforces existing beliefs. From this perspective, policy actors often form coalitions similar to those proposed in the Advocacy Coalition Framework (Lubell, Mewhirter, & Robbins, 2023).

| Policy actors' value systems | → | Normatively-framed information processing | → | Normative coalition-building | → | Collaborative governance around shared values | → | Policy outcomes |

12. Conclusion

As observed, values play a highly significant and distinctive role in describing and analyzing the public policy process. Based on the theories discussed in the frameworks, it can be said that the values of policymakers, political authorities, policy entrepreneurs, professional communities, and the socio-political-cultural values of society all play a role in this regard. The impact of these values manifests in various aspects, which are briefly summarized in the table below.

Framework/Theory	Role of Values
Multiple Streams Framework - MSF	• Reconfiguration of societal values - Challenging norms governing state-society relations - Growing ambiguity - Increasing imperative to apply the MSF
	• Influence on Problem Definition
	• Policy Entrepreneur Values-Problem-Solution Coupling
	• Value Alignment Between Policy Entrepreneurs and Policymakers - Enhanced Policy Entrepreneur Access to Policymakers - Increased Policy Entrepreneur Effectiveness
	• Policymaking Community's Values - Value Acceptability of policy alternative - Survival likelihood of policy alternatives
	• Policymakers' Values - Solution Selection
Punctuated Equilibrium Theory - PET	• Entanglement of policy image with core political values - Policy monopoly - Negative (dampening) feedback to pressures - Stability or incremental change
	• Shift in attention to policy values - Breakdown of policy monopoly and emergence of new actors - Formation of new policy subsystem with alternative value sets - Policy

Framework/Theory	Role of Values
	punctuations
Social Construction of Reality & Policy Design	• Policymakers' Values vs. Societal Values - The process of understanding facts and interpreting their meanings - Issue Prioritization - Agenda-Setting for Priority Issues
	• Policy design - Social constructions - Value reproduction or transformation - Target group characterization (positive/negative) - Impact on meaning-making and civic participation
	• Dominant societal values - Differential targeting of social groups by elected officials - Determining the distinctive nature of policy design
Advocacy Coalition Framework - ACF	• Core socio-cultural values - Shaping relatively stable parameters that govern actors' resources and constraints - Influencing policy participants' behavioral patterns
	• Altruistic Values - Individual Behavior
	• Normative beliefs - Creating perceptual filters in relation to the world - Different perceptions of the same information - Increased density of bonds within the coalition and conflict with rival coalitions
	• fundamental normative values and ontological principles - deep core beliefs - Normative and empirical policy core beliefs - policy core beliefs - Coalition formation - Translating beliefs into policy - Production of policy outputs
Policy Feedback Theory	• Policy Feedback Framework as a Tool for Evaluating Governance Performance Against Desired Values
	• Values embedded in past policies - policy design - Rules and procedures - Interpretive effects - Shaping norms, values and attitudes - civic predisposition - civic engagement
Narrative Policy Framework - NPF	• Belief system - Interpretation of socially constructed policy objects - Contingent meaning-making in policy narratives
	• Attributes of belief systems - Advocacy coalition's power, cohesion, and stability - Narrative dominance probability in policy outcomes
	• Value-based and normative orientation for future studies, and the potential use of narrative framework for value-laden purposes
Institutional Analysis and	• Actors' valuation systems - action arena - patterns of interactions - outcomes

Framework/Theory	Role of Values
Development - IAD	• norms, culture, and worldview - attributes of the community • action arena - patterns of interactions - outcomes
	• Chosen value priorities - Evaluative criteria - Evaluation of policy outcomes - Effects on outcomes and action arena
Policy Diffusion & Innovation	• Normative socialization value - Norm-conformity pressure - Policy diffusion through early adopter emulation
	• ideological-cultural alignment of jurisdictions - Accelerated policy diffusion velocity
	• Value congruence among policymakers across political jurisdictions - Policy lesson-drawing - Policy success in the recipient jurisdiction
	• Hegemony of professional values - normative pressure - Normative isomorphism
	• Dominance of symbolic values - Quest for legitimacy via perceived best practices - Ceremonial emulation of reference institutions - Mimetic Isomorphism
Ecology of Games Framework	• Policy actors' value systems - Normatively-framed information processing - Normative coalition-building - Collaborative governance around shared values - Policy outcomes

This study, through a comprehensive analysis of the role of values in eight theoretical frameworks of the policy process and the identification of 28 distinct effects of values, demonstrates that values function not merely as background factors but as active and decisive elements in all stages of the policymaking process. From problem definition in the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) to the reproduction of norms in feedback theory, values dynamically influence decisions, coalitions, and policy outcomes.

In response to the study's central question—"Are policy propositions solely based on objective facts?"—it can be emphatically stated that policy science, contrary to the claims of positivists, has never been divorced from values. Even in seemingly objective frameworks like the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) or policy diffusion, professional, ideological, and cultural values undeniably shape solution selection and their acceptance. This conclusion aligns with Popper's and Chalmers' critiques of the "value-ladenness of theories."

Recognizing the importance of values in policymaking can have three practical implications for policymakers. First, designing sustainable and

successful policies requires understanding the value system of society and stakeholders, as well as incorporating these values at various stages. As discussed, the component of values influences all phases of policymaking, including agenda-setting, policy formulation, policy adoption, policy implementation, and policy evaluation.

A second practical implication is that policymakers must identify and manage conflicts between different values (such as individual vs. collective values or professional vs. ideological values). Additionally, given the role of values in shaping identity and civic engagement, policies should be designed to account for the values of the target community.

Since one of the foundations of producing religious knowledge is the study of axiology (value theory), understanding how values influence a particular field of study can greatly help in aligning its findings with religious concepts and teachings.

Although this study broadly covered the impact of values in dominant policy process theories, it has limitations that pave the way for future research. First, it did not systematically distinguish between different types of values (fundamental, professional, symbolic, ideological) or their levels of analysis (individual, group, institutional, societal). Paying attention to these distinctions could lead to a better understanding of policymaking dynamics.

Second, this study did not specifically address value conflicts among different policy actors. For example, the values of policy entrepreneurs (in MSF) may conflict with those of elected officials (in Punctuated Equilibrium Theory—PET) or bureaucrats (in IAD). Similarly, the values of target communities (in the social construction of reality) may differ from those of political elites. Studying these conflicts could lead to a more realistic understanding of the policy process.

Given the influential role of values in policymaking, it is recommended that the process of value formation itself be studied. Additionally, solutions should be proposed to resolve value conflicts and prioritize values beneficial to society, ensuring policies align with religious values and achieve appropriate outcomes.

In summary, this study, from a post-positivist perspective, demonstrated that policymaking is not a purely rational process but rather an arena of value interaction, conflict, and redefinition. As Delanty (2005) notes, modern science cannot claim neutrality; instead, it must acknowledge the role of values as an inseparable part of knowledge production. This perspective, particularly in social sciences and policymaking, not only contributes to a more realistic understanding of the policy process but also lays the groundwork for designing more responsive and equitable policies.

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A Social Value-Based Weighting Approach for Advanced Multi-Criteria Decision-Making Methods

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to address a key gap in Multi-Criteria Decision-Making (MCDM) methods—namely, their limited incorporation of social and cultural values. While MCDM is widely used for solving complex problems involving multiple, often conflicting criteria, most existing weighting techniques rely mainly on quantitative data or subjective judgments. This research seeks to develop a framework that integrates social values into the weighting process to enhance the alignment of decisions with societal expectations.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The study proposes a new framework termed Social Value-Based Weighting (SVBW). In this approach, baseline weights are first derived using any classical weighting method (subjective, objective, or hybrid). These baseline weights are then adjusted through a Social Priority Index, which reflects the degree to which each criterion aligns with selected social values. Values incorporated into the index include justice, public interest, resource efficiency, harm prevention, and religious democracy. The model is designed to be compatible with any existing MCDM technique, and the strength of value-based adjustments can be customized using flexible parameters. A numerical example and sensitivity analysis are used to evaluate the model's behavior and implications.

Findings: Results from the numerical example and sensitivity analysis demonstrate that integrating a social value layer into the weighting process does not fundamentally change final rankings but significantly enhances the transparency of the decision-making logic. More importantly, it increases the social acceptability of outcomes by explicitly reflecting societal value priorities. The findings highlight the potential of SVBW to reconcile technical decision-making processes with normative public expectations.

Practical Implications: The proposed framework offers wide applicability in areas such as public policy, resource management, investment decisions, and organizational planning. By embedding social values into traditional MCDM procedures, SVBW provides decision-makers with a more socially grounded and context-sensitive tool.

Originality/Value: This study contributes a novel conceptual bridge between quantitative decision analysis and social value considerations. The SVBW framework lays the foundation for developing context-specific, socially embedded MCDM approaches that enhance both technical rigor and societal legitimacy.

Keywords

Multi-Criteria Decision-Making (MCDM); criteria weighting; social values; Social Priority Index (SPI).

Introduction

Over the past decades, Multi-Criteria Decision-Making (MCDM) has emerged as one of the most significant and widely applied tools for solving complex problems that involve diverse and often conflicting criteria (Azhar et al., 2021; Aruldoss et al., 2013). This approach encompasses a broad range of methods, including pairwise comparison, outranking, and distance-based techniques, the most prominent of which can be found in families such as AHP, ANP, ELECTRE, PROMETHEE, TOPSIS, and VIKOR (Azhar et al., 2021). Evidence shows that the use of MCDM techniques has grown exponentially; among them, AHP remains the most widely used standalone method, while hybrid approaches hold the second position (Mardani et al., 2015).

Between 2004 and 2024, the field has rapidly evolved from fundamental models toward more advanced hybrid approaches, which are now increasingly integrated with tools such as artificial intelligence, fuzzy logic, and machine learning (Kumar & Pamucar, 2025). Furthermore, the scope of applications has expanded to domains such as energy, environment, sustainability, urban planning, and healthcare, all of which are aligned with global priorities, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Mardani et al., 2015; Kumar & Pamucar, 2025).

In such contexts, decision-makers must balance a set of quantitative and qualitative criteria to ultimately select the option that yields the highest overall utility. Consequently, determining appropriate weights for the criteria is recognized as one of the most critical and influential stages in the entire decision-making process. To address this need, numerous weighting methods have been developed, each based on distinct operational principles and computational procedures (Uzhga-Rebrov & Kuļešova, 2023).

These approaches are generally divided into two categories: subjective methods, which are simpler but depend heavily on the judgments of decision-makers; and objective methods, in which weights are derived mathematically and independently of individual preferences (Odu, 2019). The Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) and the Analytic Network Process (ANP) emerged in the 1980s as dominant weighting techniques, yet they have been subject to considerable theoretical and practical criticisms (Huang & Inuiguchi, 2015). To overcome these limitations, alternative models were proposed, such as the Diminishing Utility Decision-Making (DUDM) approach, which integrates the concept of diminishing marginal utility with AHP in order to model both primary and interactive weights more effectively while reducing the number of required pairwise comparisons and computational complexity (Huang & Inuiguchi, 2015).

Despite such advances, the issue of objectivity in determining criteria weights remains one of the fundamental challenges in the MCDM field (Uzhga-Rebrov & Kuļešova, 2023). Put differently, a central question is still left unanswered: on what basis should criterion weights be established, and can this foundation truly reflect the real values and priorities of society or the governing system?

A review of the scholarly literature reveals extensive efforts to overcome the limitations of traditional weighting methods. For example, Al-Aomar (2022) developed a hybrid AHP–Entropy method to integrate subjective and objective approaches and to address the challenge of heterogeneous data in preference judgments. Similarly, Wang and Lee (2009) introduced the fuzzy TOPSIS approach, which combines subjective weights derived from decision-makers' preferences with objective weights obtained through Shannon's entropy theory. In addition, Zavadskas and Podvezko (2016) proposed the IDOCRIW method, which merges entropy with the Criterion Impact Loss (CILOS) technique, thereby improving the accuracy of objective weight estimation. Odu (2019), in a comprehensive review, also emphasized that while subjective approaches are generally simpler, objective approaches provide the advantage of mathematically rigorous and unbiased weight derivation.

Collectively, these studies demonstrate that researchers have consistently sought solutions to balance subjective preferences with data-driven objectivity in the weighting process.

Nevertheless, most of these efforts have remained confined to the technical dimension of the problem, paying little attention to underlying social or cultural values. In fact, in many of these methods, the "importance of criteria" is either determined based on the individual judgment of the decision-maker or derived solely from data characteristics, while fundamental social principles and cultural values are absent from the decision-making process. The literature also highlights a significant gap between conventional MCDM methods and socio-cultural contexts.

Keykha et al. (2025) argue that methods such as Shannon's entropy rely exclusively on data or subjective judgments, rendering the results highly sensitive to modeler choices. Similarly, Ayan et al. (2023) stress that even recent weighting approaches continue to focus predominantly on technical aspects, overlooking cultural values. Al-Aaidroos et al. (2016) criticize utilitarian decision-making models for reflecting secular norms and for being misaligned with certain social values; they propose instead the adoption of altruistic utility and value-sensitive terminologies to align decision models

with ethical considerations. Finally, Al-Qur'an (2023) introduces a council-based framework, emphasizing the necessity of integrating ethics and mutual consultation into the decision-making process, consistent with behavioral decision-making theories.

As a result, in societies where values and ethics play a fundamental role in social and political life, neglecting them in the decision-making process can create a disconnect between decision outcomes and public expectations. Within such a context, principles such as justice, public interest, resource efficiency, harm prevention, and religious democracy hold a central position. Ignoring these principles not only undermines the acceptability of decisions but may also reduce their long-term effectiveness. This raises a critical question: can the weighting process in MCDM be redesigned in a way that reflects prevailing social values and brings decision outcomes closer to the cultural expectations and priorities of society?

The significance of weighting in multi-criteria decision-making (MCDM) can be examined from three perspectives: scientific, social, and governance. From a scientific standpoint, criteria weighting forms the core of all MCDM methods. If the assigned weights fail to reflect the true importance of the criteria, the entire decision-making process will lead to unreliable outcomes (Öztürk & Batuk, 2007; Odu, 2019). Comprehensive studies have shown that a variety of weighting approaches have been developed, each with substantial differences in their operational principles and computational procedures (Uzhga-Rebrov & Kuļešova, 2023). Although methods such as ranking, pairwise comparison, trade-off analysis, and fuzzy logic have been proposed to address uncertainty (Öztürk & Batuk, 2007), several challenges remain unresolved, including decreased consistency of judgments as the complexity of criteria increases and inefficiencies at different levels of decision-making (Mostofi et al., 2022).

Despite this progress, relatively few approaches have explicitly focused on *value-based* or *socially oriented* weighting. Thus, developing a framework that systematically incorporates prevailing social values into the weighting process represents not only a novel contribution but also a promising avenue for expanding the literature on MCDM.

In societies where policymaking and large-scale decision-making are not aligned with prevailing cultural and social values, outcomes often face resistance from the public. Under such conditions, even decisions that are economically or technically optimal may lack broad social acceptance. Incorporating social values into the weighting process of criteria directly

reflects the priorities of society in decision-making—an approach that significantly enhances the acceptance of results.

Research has shown that embedding values such as justice, consultation, fairness, and public interest in strategic management strengthens organizational legitimacy and ethical governance (Putra, 2025). This finding is consistent with the work of Khoiro and Husna (2022), who demonstrate a positive correlation between the perception of cultural-social values and support for educational and social policies, emphasizing that integrating social values into policymaking can lead to more inclusive development. Similarly, Al-Aaidroos et al. (2016) argue that while utilitarian decision-making models can be adapted to social contexts, genuine legitimacy requires modifications that incorporate altruistic utility and ethical considerations. Kalkavan et al. (2021) further highlight that ethical and social principles—particularly justice in income distribution and commercial integrity—play a vital role in sustaining economic development, as adherence to honesty reduces market uncertainty and facilitates growth.

Effective governance requires that social values and principles be integrated into all stages of policymaking, planning, and implementation; within this framework, decision-making without reliance on such values remains incomplete. Numerous studies have demonstrated that embedding social values can enrich governance structures and decision-making frameworks. Batchelor (2014), for instance, identifies justice, consultation, and accountability as pillars of governance and recommends that these principles be systematically incorporated into governance processes through change management approaches. Likewise, Al-Qur'an (2023) emphasizes mutual consultation grounded in social ethics and proposes a framework for strategic decision-making that aligns with behavioral decision-making theories.

Putra (2025) introduces the concept of social strategic management, which integrates values such as justice and trustworthiness into business decision-making processes, thereby enhancing both legitimacy and sustainable competitiveness of organizations. Similarly, Riandari et al. (2024), through the introduction of the Multi-Objective Preference Analysis (MOPA) method for tourism planning, demonstrate that this approach, with a high confidence level (0.917), outperforms traditional MCDA and can serve as a powerful tool for value-oriented decision-making.

Given that MCDM methods are widely applied in governance contexts—ranging from infrastructure project selection to social and economic policy formulation—designing a weighting approach grounded in prevailing social

values and principles can provide policymakers and managers with an effective and legitimate decision-support tool.

The primary objective of this study is to design and articulate a weighting approach based on prevailing social values within the framework of multi-criteria decision-making (MCDM). The study seeks to demonstrate how values such as justice, public interest, resource efficiency, and religious democracy can serve as illustrative examples of socio-cultural principles that are translated from theoretical foundations into practical rules for criteria weighting.

To achieve this objective, the research follows three main paths:

1. Explaining how selected social values can be explicitly incorporated into the decision-making process;

2. Providing a mechanism for translating these values into operational weighting rules that can be applied in determining or adjusting criteria weights; and

3. Developing a hybrid framework that can be implemented alongside conventional methods such as AHP, ANP, or objective approaches like entropy.

Through this design, the study offers a conceptual and theoretical foundation that paves the way for future applied and empirical research.

Based on the problem statement and research objectives, the key research questions are as follows:

1. How can social values and principles be translated into explicit and actionable rules within the weighting process?

2. In what ways does the proposed approach differ from classical weighting methods, and how can it be integrated with existing MCDM techniques?

3. What implications does the application of this approach hold for enhancing the social acceptance and cultural alignment of multi-criteria decision-making processes?

1. The Proposed Method: Social Value-Based Weighting (SVBW) in MCDM

The fundamental issue is that in MCDM, the weighting of criteria is usually based either on expert judgments (e.g., AHP, ANP, Direct Rating) or on the statistical properties of data (e.g., Entropy, CRITIC). However, in the context of social governance, it is essential that weights also reflect the values and priorities of society. Therefore, the proposed method—hereafter referred to as SVBW: Social Value-Based Weighting—adds a complementary normative layer to any existing weighting technique by adjusting baseline weights according to an index of "alignment with social values and principles".

The core idea is as follows: baseline weights W_j^0 are first derived using any conventional method (subjective, objective, or hybrid). Then, by calculating a *Social Priority Index $I_j \geq 0$* for each criterion, the weights are adjusted either multiplicatively or through a convex-combination scheme, followed by normalization. This design offers two main advantages:

1. It is compatible with any MCDM ecosystem; and
2. The intensity of social value influence can be controlled through a tunable parameter, ensuring transparency and enabling sensitivity analysis.

The essential terms and constructs required for this method include:

1. Alternatives: $A_i : i = \{1, 2, \ldots, m\}$
2. Criteria set: $C_j : j = \{1, 2, \ldots, n\}$
3. Baseline weights: W_j^0 for each j, obtained from any classical weighting method
4. Experts: $p = \{1, 2, \ldots, h\}$
5. Selected social values and principles: $r = \{1, 2, \ldots, k\}$

2. Methodological Steps

Step 1: Problem and criteria definition

Clearly define the decision problem and its stakeholders, and identify the criteria (with "the more the better" or "the less the better" orientation). Baseline weights for the criteria are determined using any preferred classical method.

Step 2: Identification of relevant social values

Based on the literature, a set of relevant social values is selected, and their relative importance β_r is elicited from experts. This can be accomplished

either by constructing a pairwise comparison matrix (e.g., using AHP) or through simpler methods for calculating relative importance.

Step 3: Mapping values to weighting rules

For each value r, one or more *normative rules* are defined. These rules specify how a criterion should receive additional reinforcement or attenuation of weight if it exhibits certain features. Examples of general rules include:

- **Harm prevention rule:** If a criterion plays a significant role in "reducing risks or harms" beyond a given threshold, it receives a reinforcement factor.
- **Justice rule:** If a criterion contributes to improving access or reducing discrimination, it gains additional weight.
- **Public interest rule:** The more broadly collective the benefits of a criterion are, the higher the reinforcement factor it receives.
- **Resource efficiency rule:** Criteria that significantly enhance the efficient use of resources are strengthened.
- **Religious democracy rule:** If a criterion fosters public participation, decision transparency, or managerial accountability, it is assigned a reinforcement factor.

Note: The rules can be defined in linguistic **If–Then** form and subsequently quantified using fuzzy membership functions.

Step 4: Estimating the membership of each criterion in social values

For each criterion c_j, its degree of membership in each value r is assessed, denoted as $\mu_r(j) \in [0,1]$. This evaluation can be conducted using expert panels or documentary evidence.

Step 5: Calculating the Social Priority Index I_j

In this step, a composite index is constructed by combining the inter-value weights β_r (which represent the relative importance of the values in the current decision problem) with the membership scores:

$$I_j = \sum_{r=1}^{k} \beta_r * \mu_r(j)$$

subject to:

$$\sum_{r=1}^{k} \beta_r = 1 \text{ , } \beta_r \geq 0$$

To determine the value weights β_r, group decision-making is recommended, either through individual ranking or individual scoring approaches. Differences of opinion among experts regarding values or their relative importance can be managed through these methods.

- In the ranking approach, if experts cannot provide direct scores of criteria with respect to the values, they are asked to assign a rank (from 1 to n) for each criterion under each value.
- In the scoring approach, if experts are able to assign explicit scores, they provide value-based evaluations of criteria, which are then aggregated into the index.

Step 6: Computing the final weights $\widetilde{W}_J$

Two main approaches are proposed for adjusting the baseline weights:

a) Multiplicative adjustment

A value-based reinforcement factor is defined for each criterion:

$$M_j = 1 + \alpha \cdot I_j \text{ ; } (\alpha \geq 0)$$

where α controls the intensity of value influence. The final weight is then calculated as:

$$\widetilde{W}_J = \frac{W_j * M_j}{\sum_{j=1}^{m} W_J * M_J}$$

b) Convex (axial–convex) combination

First, "pure value-adjusted" weights are obtained by multiplying and normalizing:

$$M_j = 1 + I_j$$

$$\widehat{W}_J = \frac{W_j * M_j}{\sum_{j=1}^{m} W_J * M_J}$$

Then, a convex combination is computed between the baseline weights and the adjusted weights:

$$\widetilde{W}_J = (1 - \lambda) w_j^0 + \lambda \widehat{W}_J, \lambda \in [0,1]$$

Here, λ serves as a transparency and sensitivity parameter: if $\lambda = 0$, only baseline weights are applied; if $\lambda = 1$, full social adjustment is applied.

Note: The selection of intensity parameters (α or λ) should be made collaboratively by experts and the decision-making team, often through sensitivity testing. As a guideline, moderate values are recommended at the outset (e.g., $\alpha \in [0.2, 0.5]$ or $\lambda \in [0.3, 0.6]$).

Normative properties of the SVBW method include:

1. **Non-negativity and normalization:** $\widetilde{W_j} \geq 0, \sum_j \widetilde{W_j} = 1$;

2. **Monotonicity with respect to Ij:** If w_j^0 remains fixed, then with an increase in I_j (while all others remain constant), the adjusted weight $\widetilde{W_j}$ will also increase.

3. **Compatibility with baseline weights:** When $\alpha = 0$ or $\lambda = 0$, the method precisely reduces to the baseline weights w_j^0.

3. Numerical Example

Step 1: Definition of criteria

Four benefit-type criteria are considered. The baseline weights are calculated.

Table 1: Baseline criteria and their initial weights

Criteria (C)	Baseline weight (w_j^0)
c1	0.292
c2	0.108
c3	0.413
c4	0.187

Step 2: Determining the set of values and inter-value weights

For simplicity, four values and their relative importance are assumed as follows:

Table 2: Selected social values and their inter-value weights

Social values (r)	Inter-value weights (β_r)
r1	0.4
r2	0.3
r3	0.2
r4	0.1

Step 3: Estimating membership of each criterion in values ($\mu_r(j)$)

Based on expert judgment, the following membership matrix is adopted:

Table 3: Membership matrix of criteria with respect to social values

Criteria (C)	r1	r2	r3	r4
c1	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2
c2	0.3	0.8	0.3	0.4
c3	1.0	0.5	0.2	0.4
c4	0.2	0.4	0.9	0.3

Step 4: Calculating the Social Priority Index I_j

For example, for c1:

$$I_j = \sum_{r=1}^{k} \beta_r * \mu_r\,(j) = (0.4 * 0.1) + (0.3 * 0.3) + (0.2 * 0.2) + (0.1 * 0.2)$$
$$= 0.19$$

Table 4: Computed Social Priority Index (Ij) for each criterion

Criteria (C)	Social Priority Index (I_j)
c1	0.19
c2	0.46
c3	0.63
c4	0.41

Step 5: Constructing reinforcement factors M_j and final weights

a) Multiplicative adjustment with $\alpha = 0.5$

For example, for c1:

$$M_j = 1 + \alpha \cdot I_j = 1 + (0.5 * 0.19) = 1.095$$

$$\widetilde{W_J} = \frac{W_j * M_j}{\sum_{j=1}^{m} W_J * M_J} = \frac{0.292 * 1.095}{(0.292 * 1.095) + (0.108 * 1.23) + (0.413 * 1.315) + (0.187 * 1.205)}$$
$$= 0.26187$$

Table 5: Reinforcement factors (M_j) and final weights under multiplicative adjustment (α=0.5)

Criteria (C)	Reinforcement factor (M_j)	$w_j^0 \times M_j$	Final weight (W_j)
c1	1.095	0.31974	0.26187
c2	1.23	0.13284	0.10880
c3	1.315	0.54310	0.44479
c4	1.205	0.22534	0.18455

b) Convex (axial–convex) combination with $\lambda = 0.5$

For example, for c1:

$$M_j = 1 + I_j = 1 + 0.19 = 1.19$$

$$\widehat{W_J} = \frac{W_j * M_j}{\sum_{j=1}^{m} W_j * M_j} = \frac{0.292 * 1.19}{(0.292 * 1.19) + (0.108 * 1.46) + (0.413 * 1.63) + (0.187 * 1.41)} = 0.2409$$

$$\widetilde{W_J} = (1 - \lambda) w_j^0 + \lambda \widehat{W_J}, \lambda \in [0,1] = (1 - 0.5) * 0.292 + 0.5 * 0.2409$$
$$= 0.2664$$

Table 6: Reinforcement factors, normalized adjusted weights, and final weights under convex combination (λ=0.5)

Criteria (C)	Reinforcement factor (M_j)	Normalized value-adjusted weight ($\widehat{W_J}$)	Final weight ($\widetilde{W_J}$)
c1	1.19	0/2409	0/2664
c2	1.46	0/1093	0/1086
c3	1.63	0/4668	0/4399
c4	1.41	0/1828	0/1849

Step 6: Ranking alternatives using WSM (optional)

Consider three hypothetical alternatives, A1, A2, A3, and a performance matrix (scale 0–100):

Table 7: Performance matrix of alternatives (A1,A2,A3) before normalization (scale 0–100)

Criteria	A1	A2	A3
c1	80	70	60
c2	65	75	85
c3	60	70	90
c4	50	60	70

Linear normalization (dividing by the maximum of each row):

Table 8: Linearly normalized performance matrix of alternatives

Criteria	A1	A2	A3
c1	1.0	0.875	0.75
c2	0.7647	0.8824	1.0
c3	0.6667	0.7778	1.0
c4	0.7143	0.8571	1.0

1) Using baseline weights w_j^0:

Table 9: Alternative scores and ranking using baseline weights (w_j^0) under WSM

Criteria	A1	A2	A3
c1	0.2920	0.2555	0.2190
c2	0.0826	0.0953	0.1080
c3	0.2753	0.3212	0.4130
c4	0.1336	0.1603	0.1870

Final scores: A1=0.7835, A2=0.8323, A3=0.9270

Ranking: A3≻A2≻A1

2) Using socially adjusted weights $\widetilde{W}_j$:

a) Multiplicative adjustment

Table 10: Alternative scores and ranking using socially adjusted weights under multiplicative adjustment (α=0.5)

Criteria	A1	A2	A3
c1	0.2619	0.2291	0.1964
c2	0.0832	0.0960	0.1088
c3	0.2965	0.3459	0.4448
c4	0.1318	0.1582	0.1845

Final scores: A1=0.7734, A2=0.8293, A3=0.9345

Ranking: A3≻A2≻A1

b) Convex combination

Table 11: Alternative scores and ranking using socially adjusted weights under convex combination (λ=0.5)

Criteria	A1	A2	A3
c1	0/2665	0/2332	0/1999
c2	0/0831	0/0959	0/1087
c3	0/2933	0/3422	0/4399
c4	0/1321	0/1585	0/1849

Final scores: A1=0.7750, A2=0.8297, A3=0.9334

Ranking: A3≻A2≻A1

Interpretation: In this example, the application of the Social Value-Based Weighting (SVBW) approach did not alter the final ranking of the alternatives. However, it enhanced the transparency and defensibility of the ranking logic, enabling decision-makers to clearly demonstrate why one alternative is preferred over another and how this preference is grounded in social values.

3. Sensitivity Analysis within the Proposed Framework

A key component of any multi-criteria decision-making (MCDM) model is sensitivity analysis, as it reveals how robust or fragile the results are to changes in model parameters. Within the proposed SVBW framework, it is also essential to examine how the ranking of alternatives responds under different scenarios. Four main dimensions of sensitivity are considered:

1. **Sensitivity to changes in alternatives:** In this case, the performance data of alternatives are modified, and the rankings are recalculated using socially adjusted weights. Comparing the results indicates whether small variations in the alternatives' values lead to meaningful changes in the final ranking. If the rankings remain stable, the proposed framework can be regarded as more reliable and robust.

2. **Sensitivity to changes in criteria:** Here, the number or type of decision criteria is altered (e.g., adding a new criterion or removing an existing one). The weighting procedure is then repeated, and the resulting rankings of alternatives are observed. This analysis demonstrates how flexible the proposed framework is when facing structural changes in the criteria set.

3. **Sensitivity to changes in social values and principles:** In this scenario, either the relative importance of social values or the degree of association of criteria with those values is varied. This allows identification of which criteria are most influenced by social values and which alternative rankings are more sensitive to shifts in value priorities.

4. Sensitivity Analysis Results

The results of the sensitivity analysis under different scenarios are summarized below.

1) Baseline table

Baseline Weights & Scores (SVBW example) — including criterion weights, scores for A1, A2, A3, and their rankings.

Table 12: Baseline Weights & Scores (SVBW example)

w-set	c1	c2	c3	c4	Score A1	Score A2	Score A3	Rank A1	Rank A2	Rank A3
Base (w_j^0)	0.292	0.108	0.413	0.187	0.7835	0.8323	0.9270	3	2	1
Multiplicative (α=0.5)	0.2618	0.1087	0.4447	0.1845	0.7734	0.8293	0.9345	3	2	1
Convex (λ=0.5)	0.2505	0.1822	0.3497	0.2174	0.7750	0.8297	0.9334	3	2	1

2) Sensitivity 1: Changes in alternatives

Two scenarios were tested:

- OPT1: Improvement of A2 on criterion c3 to 0.85
- OPT2: Reduction of A3 on criterion c2 to 0.9

Table 13: Sensitivity – Option Changes

Scenario	w-set	Score A1	Score A2	Score A3	Rank A1	Rank A2	Rank A3
OPT1: A2@c3→0.85	Base (w_j^0)	0.7835	0.8621	0.9270	3	2	1
	Multiplicative (α=0.5)	0.7732	0.8611	0.9342	3	2	1
	Convex (λ=0.5)	0.775	0.8549	0.9334	3	2	1
OPT2: A3@c2→0.9	Base (w_j^0)	0.7835	0.8323	0.9162	3	2	1
	Multiplicative (α=0.5)	0.7732	0.829	0.9234	3	2	1
	Convex (λ=0.5)	0.775	0.8297	0.9152	3	2	1

3) Sensitivity 2: Changes in criteria

Two scenarios were examined:

- CRIT1: Removing criterion c4 (with re-normalized weights)
- CRIT2: Reducing the importance of c1 by 20% (with re-normalized weights)

Table 14: Sensitivity – Criteria Changes

Scenario	w-set	Adjusted Weights	Score A1	Score A2	Score A3	Rank A1	Rank A2	Rank A3
CRIT1: remove c4	Base (w_j^0)	{c1:0.3592, c2:0.1328, c3:0.508}	0.7994	0.8266	0.9102	3	2	1
	Multiplicative (α=0.5)	{c1:0.3211, c2:0.1334, c3:0.5455}	0.7868	0.8230	0.9197	3	2	1
	Convex (λ=0.5)	{c1:0.3202, c2:0.2329, c3:0.4469}	0.7929	0.8247	0.9163	3	2	1
CRIT2: down-weight c1 by 20%	Base (w_j^0)	{c1:0.2481, c2:0.1147, c3:0.4386, c4:0.1986}	0.7701	0.8297	0.9380	3	2	1
	Multiplicative (α=0.5)	{c1:0.2211, c2:0.1148, c3:0.4694, c4:0.1947}	0.7609	0.8267	0.9447	3	2	1
	Convex (λ=0.5)	{c1:0.2110, c2:0.1919, c3:0.3682, c4:0.2289}	0.7635	0.828	0.9434	3	2	1

4) Sensitivity 3: Changes in social values (effect intensity)

Scenarios tested changes in α (multiplicative adjustment) at 0.2, 0.5, 0.8, and λ (convex adjustment) at 0.25, 0.5, 0.75.

Table 15: Sensitivity – Social Values (α, λ)

Setting	c1	c2	c3	c4	Score A1	Score A2	Score A3	Rank A1	Rank A2	Rank A3
Multiplicative α=0.2	0.278477	0.108357	0.427266	0.1859	0.779	0.8309	0.9304	3	2	1
Multiplicative α=0.5	0.2618	0.1087	0.4447	0.1845	0.7732	0.829	0.9342	3	2	1
Multiplicative α=0.8	0.248508	0.109148	0.458883	0.183461	0.769	0.8279	0.9379	3	2	1
Convex λ=0.25	0.271285	0.145148	0.381367	0.202201	0.7777	0.8268	0.9284	3	2	1
Convex λ=0.5	0.2505	0.1822	0.3497	0.2174	0.775	0.8297	0.9334	3	2	1
Convex λ=0.75	0.229854	0.219443	0.318101	0.232602	0.7726	0.8329	0.9388	3	2	1

Interpretation: Across all scenarios—changes in alternatives, criteria, and value intensity—the final ranking order of A3≻A2≻A1 remained stable. This indicates that the SVBW framework provides robust and reliable results while making the rationale behind rankings more transparent and socially grounded.

5. Conclusion

This study set out to design and articulate a weighting framework based on prevailing social values within multi-criteria decision-making (MCDM). The main motivation stemmed from the observation that conventional MCDM methods—whether subjective approaches such as AHP and ANP or objective approaches such as entropy—rely predominantly on quantitative data or individual judgments, with limited consideration of social and cultural values. Yet, large-scale and even organizational decisions that lack alignment with widely accepted societal values are likely to encounter resistance or lack of acceptance at the community level.

The proposed framework, termed Social Value-Based Weighting (SVBW), introduces a complementary normative layer on top of existing weighting methods. In this approach, baseline weights are first obtained through classical techniques and subsequently adjusted and normalized according to a *Social Priority Index*. This index captures the extent to which each criterion aligns with selected cultural and social values, such as justice, public interest, resource efficiency, harm prevention, and religious democracy. By doing so, the framework ensures that final outcomes are not only quantitatively sound but also socially legitimate.

The findings from the numerical example demonstrated that while the inclusion of a social layer in weighting did not alter the final ranking of alternatives, it enhanced the transparency and defensibility of the ranking logic. In other words, decision-makers can explicitly demonstrate why one alternative

is preferred over another and how this preference is grounded in social values. Moreover, the sensitivity analysis confirmed that the proposed framework remains relatively robust under changes in alternatives, criteria, values, and the number of experts, thereby strengthening the model's scientific validity.

The findings of this study show both convergence and divergence with prior research. In terms of convergence, the results are consistent with Sapienza et al. (2016), who emphasized the necessity of integrating ethical considerations into MCDM; the SVBW framework likewise demonstrates that the combination of qualitative values with quantitative computations is feasible. The study also aligns with Dusuki and Abdullah (2007), who highlighted the role of public interest in corporate social responsibility, as this very value was incorporated as an adjustment factor in the proposed model. Similarly, the work of Hanifah et al. (2023) resonates with the present study by underscoring that performance evaluation and decision-making systems gain legitimacy only when they reflect the cultural values of society.

On the other hand, divergence is also evident. Unlike many review studies (e.g., Odu, 2019; Uzhga-Rebrov & Kuļešova, 2023) that focused primarily on technical improvements to weighting methods, this research takes a step toward localizing and socializing the weighting process. While Al-Aaidroos et al. (2016) critiqued purely utilitarian decision-making models for their secular orientation, the present study shifts the focus from critique to the development of a viable alternative framework. Furthermore, whereas studies such as Mostofi et al. (2022) concentrated on issues of judgment consistency in AHP, this research assumes that such challenges can be moderated by introducing a social value layer rather than relying solely on mathematical refinements.

Taken together, these points of convergence and divergence suggest that the present study not only fills an important theoretical gap but also opens new avenues for expanding the MCDM literature by embedding decision-making processes more firmly within their social and cultural contexts.

The SVBW framework offers several avenues for practical application. First, in public policymaking, it can help governments and executive bodies prioritize infrastructure and social projects according to criteria such as justice, resource efficiency, and public interest. Second, in organizational management, firms can apply the model to design human resource policies or corporate social responsibility initiatives, particularly in contexts where societal sensitivity to fairness and equity is high. Third, in natural resource management, especially in sectors such as energy and the environment, the framework can guide decisions toward long-term sustainability and efficiency. Finally, in the financial and

investment sector, banks and financial institutions may adopt this approach to select portfolios that, in addition to generating economic returns, also meet expectations of social legitimacy.

Several directions for future research can be identified. Expanding the scope of values would allow inclusion of a broader spectrum of cultural and social dimensions beyond those considered here. Empirical validation in real-world case studies is essential to confirm the model's applicability. Developing user-friendly computational tools or software could also facilitate the adoption of the framework in organizational settings. Moreover, cross-cultural comparisons—testing the model in diverse contexts such as Europe, Asia, or Africa—could reveal whether the framework has global adaptability or is most effective within specific socio-cultural environments.

Despite its novelty and advantages, this study is not without limitations. The proposed framework considered only a limited set of social values, whereas societal realities are far more complex and multidimensional. The calculation of the Social Priority Index relies on expert judgments, which may be subject to individual or group biases. For simplicity, the model employed basic membership functions, although more advanced fuzzy approaches could enhance precision. In addition, the study remains theoretical and numerical; no field testing has yet been conducted in actual decision-making environments. Finally, issues of transferability may arise, as the framework might require redesign or adaptation in societies or organizations with differing value systems.

Overall, this research demonstrates that weighting in multi-criteria decision-making is not merely a computational exercise but also a social and value-driven endeavor. The proposed SVBW model sought to bridge the gap between quantitative analysis and social considerations. From a scientific perspective, the framework represents a novel contribution to the MCDM literature. From a practical standpoint, it holds promise for fostering decisions that are not only technically sound but also legitimate, equitable, and effective.

In conclusion, the study establishes a bridge between mathematics and social values—a bridge that, although still in need of refinement and empirical validation, has the potential to serve as a foundation for designing the next generation of decision-making models in today's complex and multidimensional world.

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National Production Studies with an Islamic Approach: A Scoping Review

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Abstract

Purpose: This study provides a comprehensive overview of research on national production with an Islamic approach in the Islamic Republic of Iran. It aims to map existing scholarly work published over the past decade, identify dominant themes and methodological patterns, and highlight key weaknesses to clarify how this field has developed and where further improvement is needed.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Using a scoping review methodology, the study examines all academic articles related to national production published between 2012 and 2025 (1391–1404). After applying screening criteria, 62 articles were selected for review. The analysis considers publication trends, disciplinary distribution, research methods, and the Islamic knowledge sources that scholars have relied upon.

Findings: The review indicates that publication peaks coincide with years associated with national economic slogans, with journals in economics and management contributing the largest share. Qualitative and library-based methods dominate the studies, while field-based and quantitative approaches remain limited. In terms of Islamic sources, most research draws on the ideas of Islamic scholars, whereas primary sources such as the Qur'an, narrations, and the sīrah of the Infallibles are comparatively underutilized. The thematic review shows that most studies focus on conceptualizing national production and identifying its components—the "what" dimension—with considerably less attention given to the operational "how" dimension or the development of practical, actionable strategies.

Practical Implications: The findings highlight several implications for researchers and policymakers: (1) enhancing the policy impact of research requires greater use of field-based, empirical, and quantitative methods; (2) strengthening the intellectual foundation of national production calls for deeper engagement with primary Islamic sources; and (3) future research should move beyond theoretical and strategic discussions to provide implementable and operational solutions that address real-world challenges.

Originality/Value: As the first comprehensive scoping review of national production research grounded in an Islamic approach, this study synthesizes fragmented scholarly efforts and identifies major conceptual and methodological gaps. It offers a roadmap for future research and contributes to improving the practical relevance of studies aimed at supporting policymaking aligned with Islamic societal values..

Introduction

For more than a decade, resistance economy and national production have been two fundamental strategies of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the face of sanctions and economic challenges, leading to national dignity and self-reliance. The designation of annual slogans during the past decade by the Supreme Leader reflects this very fact.

National production was first introduced in 2012 (1391 in the Iranian calendar) through the annual slogan, which set the main direction of the country's policies. National production does not only have an economic dimension; rather, the production of domestic goods is directly linked to political power and national dignity. Neglecting the provision of economic needs in the sacred domain of Islam creates the grounds for economic dependence and weakens the foundations of the Islamic government (Qorbi & Jamshidihā, 2019).

Supporting the production and consumption of domestic goods has always been a priority in policymaking, as such support is considered one of the best strategies to stimulate and sustain economic cycles. Preserving existing jobs in production sectors, expanding and creating new employment opportunities due to rising demand for current products and services, reducing unemployment, and expanding production cycles directly and indirectly are among its major advantages (Eidalkhāni, Akhvān, & Hasanavi, 2016).

Achieving economic progress through national production cannot be realized by uncritical imitation of Western models or those of developed countries (Mardani Nokandeh, 2017), since the ideals and values of each society influence the schools of thought and models adopted (Sadr, 2018). Therefore, viewing national production through an Islamic lens is essential.

Over the past decade, a growing body of research has emerged focusing on national production with an Islamic approach. Now, after a decade of this trajectory, it is necessary to review the path taken, map out the overall landscape of the studies conducted, and identify areas requiring further effort. Accordingly, the main objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive overview of the research carried out on national production with an Islamic approach. To achieve this objective, the following questions were formulated as the basis of the investigation:

- What research methods have been employed in studies on national production with an Islamic approach?
- To what extent have these studies utilized foundational Islamic research sources?

- How are the studies distributed in terms of research focus (the "what," "why," and "how")?
- To what degree have the studies addressed different Islamic approaches (rules, ethics, principles, tools, etc.)?

1. Theoretical Foundations

a. Production

There are multiple definitions of production, which are summarized in the following table:

Table 1. Different Definitions of Production

Definition	Source
As any activity in the economy that creates added value on a commodity. In other words, the transformation of raw materials into desired materials, which increases their value, is considered production.	(Sayyāh Varg, Amirpour, & Vahidi Motlaq, 2012)
Production refers to the emergence and nurturing of a phenomenon until it possesses various advantages, growth, stability, and the necessary conditions to be offered everywhere and be usable for everyone.	(Rezaei & Pishvaei, 2012)
Production is any phenomenon that, after undergoing the process of transformation from raw material to final product for domestic or foreign markets—with the aim of market awareness, profit-making, continuity of business activity, and consumer demand satisfaction—is supplied in order to meet the needs of consumers and the market.	(Sarboland & Rahbarhādi Beiglou, 2011)
To produce means to create new economic benefits. The concept of production, in addition to goods, also includes all services that contribute to enhancing the utility of goods and are available to individuals when needed.	(Qanādān, 2010)

b. National Production

An important part of economic issues relates to domestic production. If domestic production can be boosted, the issues of inflation and unemployment will be resolved, and the domestic economy will be truly strengthened (Khamenei, 2012).

One of the key macroeconomic indicators is national production, which reflects the productive capacity or economic power of a country. Economists summarize national production as the total monetary value of all final goods

and services produced within a year (Islamic Research Center of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, 2016).

National production means that all people of Iran—and indeed most Iranians wherever they may be—should join hands to innovate and provide the tools and necessities of life by themselves and from within their own resources (Hosseini Esfahani, 2012).

2. Literature Review

In line with the research questions, the focus of this review is on studies that, first, go beyond mere compilation and include source analysis; second, follow a systematic process of literature search; and third, concentrate specifically on the field of national production. Since no secondary studies were found that exclusively focus on national production and cover the range of related keywords, secondary studies in the broader field of Islamic management that meet the above criteria—systematic review and analytical contribution—are briefly presented in the following table.

Table 2. Secondary Studies in Islamic Management

No.	Title	Author(s)	Summary
1	Content Analysis of Islamic Management Literature with Emphasis on Selected Works	(Khanifar, 2005)	This article analyzed 20 managerial works with the theme of Islamic management using content analysis, based on the theoretical background of the research. The findings resulted in four cognitive frameworks designed from the studied books. The study also reviewed various perspectives on Islamic management, including narrations, Qur'anic verses, ethics, comparative studies, and analytical approaches. A key point was the diversity and multiplicity of Islamic management sources over the past two decades.
2	Review of Islamic Management Articles and Their Models	(Abedi Jafari & Bozorg Haddad, 2015)	Using a meta-analysis approach, the authors reviewed 217 research articles on Islamic management published between 2000 and 2015. The study found that the fields of human resource management and

No.	Title	Author(s)	Summary
			organizational behavior had the largest share of articles.
3	Meta-Methodology of Islamic Management Research in Iran (Case Study: Scholarly Articles 2001–2015)	(Sadeqi, Mashbeki Esfahani, Kardanayij, & Khodad Hosseini, 2015)	This study critically examined the methodology of Islamic management research using a meta-methodology approach. Reviewing 64 selected scholarly articles published between 2001 and 2015, the authors found that: (a) until 2013 few scholarly papers had been published in Islamic management; (b) topics such as production management, insurance, tourism, and financial management were rarely addressed; and (c) most studies relied on secondary sources, highlighting the need to shift research toward primary Islamic sources (Qur'an, Hadith, Sunnah, and reason).
4	Methodological Shortcomings of Scholarly Articles in Islamic Management: A Meta-Methodological Critique	(Sadeqi, Mashbeki Esfahani, Kardanayij, & Khodad Hosseini, 2017)	This paper examined Islamic management articles focusing on organizational behavior and organizational theory/design. The authors identified the very limited diversity of topics and numerous methodological flaws as key weaknesses of Islamic management research.
5	Review of Islamic Management Works in Iran during the Second Decade of the Islamic Revolution: The Period of Consolidation (1979–1989)	(Banafi, Abedi Jafari, & Dastyari, 2019)	This study highlighted the efforts undertaken during the second decade of the Islamic Revolution (1989–1998) using a type of meta-analysis. It analyzed Islamic management works published in that period and concluded that the content was largely promotional and foundational, with little attention to addressing emerging societal issues through rigorous methodologies. The authors argued that this period was one of

No.	Title	Author(s)	Summary
			consolidation for Islamic management, with universities gradually taking over the field's academic articulation.
6	A Meta-Study of Research in the Field of Islamic Management: Case Study of Master's Theses at the Faculty of Islamic Studies and Management, Imam Sadiq University	(Chitsazian & Mohammadi, 2019)	This study reviewed 147 master's theses defended up to 2015 at the Faculty of Islamic Studies and Management, Imam Sadiq University. The analysis covered methodology, sources, references, research approaches, and thematic orientation. Results showed that the jurisprudential approach was the most common, while the historical-sīrah approach was the least used. Among the three approaches to knowledge production, the "purification and completion" approach was dominant.
7	A Scoping Review of Islamic Management Research in the Islamic Republic of Iran: Meta-Study of Articles Published until 2021	(Seyed Tabatabaei, Ahmadi, Haji-Zadeh, & Miyanbandi, 2021)	This extensive study, conducted using a scoping review method, searched over 800 keyword combinations related to Islamic management and identified 3,336 articles. The authors analyzed the retrieved works from different perspectives. Among the innovations of this study are its comprehensiveness in identifying works on Islamic management, and its analysis based on both specialized areas of management science and various sources of Islamic thought. The most important outcome of the research is the mapping of existing studies across different domains of Islamic management, which can serve as a practical guide for future researchers in this field.

3. Research Methodology

This study employs a scoping review approach for analysis. A scoping review can be defined as a rapid review of key concepts within a specific research topic to identify the main sources and types of evidence available. Scoping reviews are particularly useful in addressing complex topics or areas where no comprehensive review has previously been conducted, and they can be carried out as stand-alone projects (Mays, Arksey, & O'Malley, 2005).

Scoping reviews are a form of semi-systematic review increasingly utilized to capture innovations in research that are either not well indexed, dispersed across various journals, part of the grey literature, or spread across multiple academic disciplines (Taylor & Pagliari, 2018).

Arksey and O'Malley first proposed the framework for scoping studies in 2005, which was later refined by Levac in 2010 (Levac, Colquhoun, & O'Brien, 2010). According to Arksey and O'Malley, the framework was designed around four main purposes:

1) Identifying the breadth, scope, and nature of research activity.
2) Determining the value of undertaking a systematic review.
3) Summarizing and disseminating research findings.
4) Identifying research gaps in the existing literature on a given topic.

They further outlined five stages for conducting a scoping study:

1. Formulating the research question.
2. Searching for and retrieving relevant studies.
3. Selecting relevant studies.
4. Charting and summarizing the information and data.
5. Reporting the results (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005).

The subsequent sections of this study are organized in line with these five stages. Since the research questions were already presented in the introduction, they will not be repeated here.
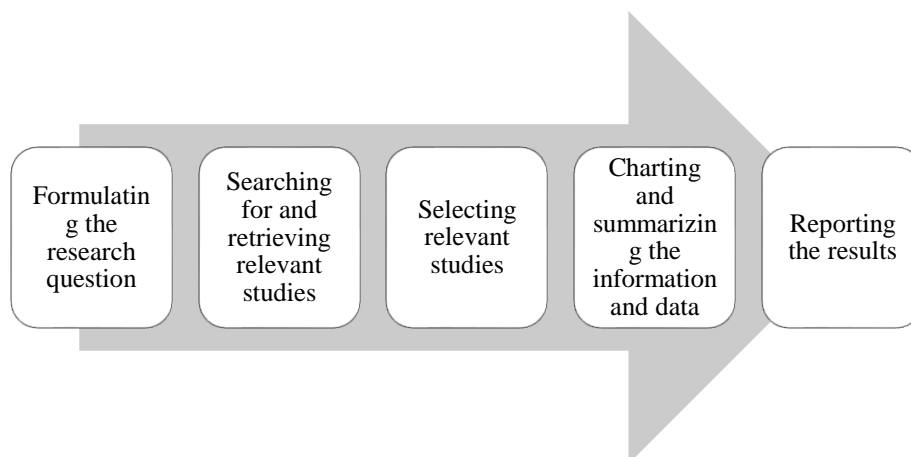
Figure 1. Stages of Conducting a Scoping Study (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005)

4. Search Strategy and Retrieval of Related Studies

In the first step, to answer the question "To what extent and with what quality has Islamic research been conducted in the field of national production?", the main keywords related to national production were initially identified through library research and a review of prior studies in this field, and then refined through consultation with experts. The keywords examined are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Keywords Used for the Search

No.	Keyword	No.	Keyword
1	National Production	5	Iranian Labor and Capital
2	Domestic Production	6	Production Boom
3	Domestic Goods	7	Production Leap
4	Iranian Goods	8	Resistance Economy

The scope of this study was limited to the Noor Specialized Journals Database, since it has broader coverage compared to other databases and is considered the largest repository of Islamic and humanities journals in Iran, with the most relevant periodicals indexed under it. Furthermore, the credibility scope was limited to scholarly research articles, as these articles possess the highest academic standing compared to other types and reflect the main scientific innovations. Therefore, reviewing scholarly research articles provides an appropriate benchmark for assessing Islamic studies on national production.

In summary, based on the research questions, the related articles were searched and selected according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria outlined in Table 4.

Table 4. Search and Exclusion Criteria

Criterion	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Publication Date	2012–2025 (1391–1404)	2011 and earlier
Geographic Scope	Iran	Outside Iran
Type of Publication	Electronic (available online)	Articles not available online
Language	Persian	Studies in Arabic or English
Title and Abstract	At least one of the main keywords is included in the title, abstract, or keywords	Articles mentioning keywords only in the text, not in the title/abstract/keywords
Academic Rank	Scholarly	Review, professional, conference papers, reports, theses, books
Accessibility	At least an abstract is available	Articles with only the title available
Field and Scope	Related to national production with an Islamic approach	Articles unrelated to national production or without an Islamic approach

5. Selection of Relevant Studies

Given the novelty of this field—namely, the emergence and growth of research on national production over the past decade—the total number of studies conducted is considerable. However, since the focus here is specifically on national production with an Islamic approach and selection is based on the criteria outlined in Table 4, the number of eligible studies decreased significantly.

After the search stage, a process of selection and screening was undertaken in several steps:

1) Title screening: Articles that were non-Islamic or unrelated to national production were excluded, reducing the pool from 11,402 articles in the Noor Specialized Journals Database to 2,992.

2) Scholarly credibility check: At this stage, 954 professional and review-type articles were excluded, leaving 2,038 scholarly articles.

3) Abstract review: By reviewing abstracts, a further 1,724 articles were eliminated, leaving 314.

4) Full-text review: To determine thematic relevance (Islamic orientation and connection to national production), full texts of some articles were examined. Ultimately, 62 articles were deemed eligible for analysis.

6. Summarizing and Analyzing the Data

In this stage, to facilitate the research process, the bibliographic information of all the selected articles (62 titles) was recorded in Excel. The articles were then classified according to different criteria and themes, as listed in Table 5. This section presents a summary of the findings based on the indicators and criteria specified in Table 5. Various charts were also used to present the results for better understanding.

Table 5. Indicators and Criteria for Evaluating and Comparing Selected Works

No.	Indicator	Criterion	Explanation
1	Bibliographic Information	Year of Publication	–
2		Journal Name	–
3	Methodological Approach	Data Collection Methods	Documents, Observation, Interview, Questionnaire, Library-based
4		Data Analysis Methods	Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed
5	Thematic Domain Research Focus Islamic Approach Type	Main Knowledge Source	Qur'anic, Jurisprudential, Scholars' Opinions, Others
6		Subject Domain of Journals	Management, Economics, Law, Political Science, Social Sciences, Others
7		Research Question Dimension	What (Conceptual), Why (Strategic), How (Practical Solutions)
8		Categories	Islamic Sources, Islamic Ethics, Islamic Rulings, Islamic Functions, Islamic Principles, Islamic Instruments

A. Bibliographic Information

1.   Analysis by Year of Publication

An analysis of articles by publication year shows that research on national production with an Islamic approach has primarily emerged after the 2010s

(1390s in the Iranian calendar). Before that, almost no works were published in this field, highlighting its novelty. The starting point coincided with the designation of 2012 (1391) as the "Year of National Production, Support for Iranian Labor and Capital" by the Supreme Leader of Iran. This designation not only guided the country's overall economic direction but also served as a strong motivation for academics and researchers to address national production from an Islamic perspective.

In the early years of this decade, the number of articles was limited and mostly conceptual, focusing on theoretical foundations. However, from 2016 (1395) onward—given the intensification of sanctions and emphasis on the resistance economy—a wave of research emerged in this area. The peak of publications occurred in 2019 (1398), the year designated as the "Year of Production Boom." During this period, numerous researchers attempted to analyze the foundations, challenges, and solutions of national production from different perspectives.

In subsequent years (2020–2024 / 1399–1403), publications continued, though with fluctuations. Between 2022 and 2024 (1401–1403), new topics emerged, such as the study of jurisprudential tools, legal analyses, and sociological perspectives. Overall, the growth trend of articles has mirrored the country's economic developments and major policy orientations. Whenever economic challenges have intensified, the academic literature has become richer. This demonstrates that research on national production with an Islamic approach is not merely an academic concern, but a reflection of the real needs of Iranian society and its economic system.
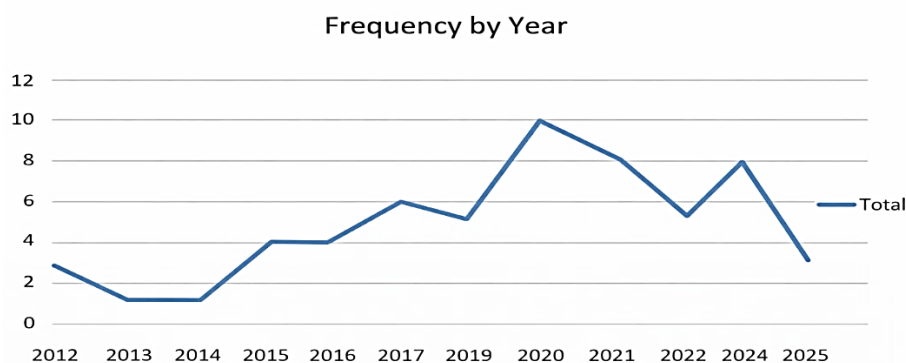

Figure 2 – Trend of Islamic National Production Articles (2012–2025 / 1391–1404)

2.   Analysis by Journal

An analysis of articles by journal reveals that research on national production with an Islamic approach has been published across a wide range of academic periodicals. This dispersion reflects the multidimensional nature of the topic: national production is not solely an economic matter, but is also interconnected with politics, management, law, social sciences, and even ethics.

Among the journals, *Islamic Economics* holds a prominent position, having published nine articles—the largest share in this field. This is expected, since national production is directly tied to Islamic economic debates and localized solutions. Following this, journals such as *Strategic Studies of Basij* and *Strategic Management Studies of National Defense* have also published significant contributions. Their involvement shows that strategic perspectives on national production have always been considered alongside economic ones.

Meanwhile, journals such as *Jurisprudential Economic Studies* and *Comparative Hadith Studies* have also addressed the topic, demonstrating that national production has considerable potential for jurisprudential and scriptural research. This diversity of perspectives has enriched the field.

Another important point is that many journals have published only one or two articles on the subject. This situation can be interpreted in two ways: first, that journals attempted to align themselves with national policy priorities (such as annual slogans and the Supreme Leader's emphasis) by occasionally covering related topics; and second, that national production with an Islamic approach has not yet matured into a fully specialized and stable field within academic publishing, and is instead addressed sporadically.

In conclusion, the analysis of journals indicates that national production with an Islamic approach is an interdisciplinary domain that has the potential to gradually become a stable and specialized research field—especially if certain journals commit to more consistent publication in this area.
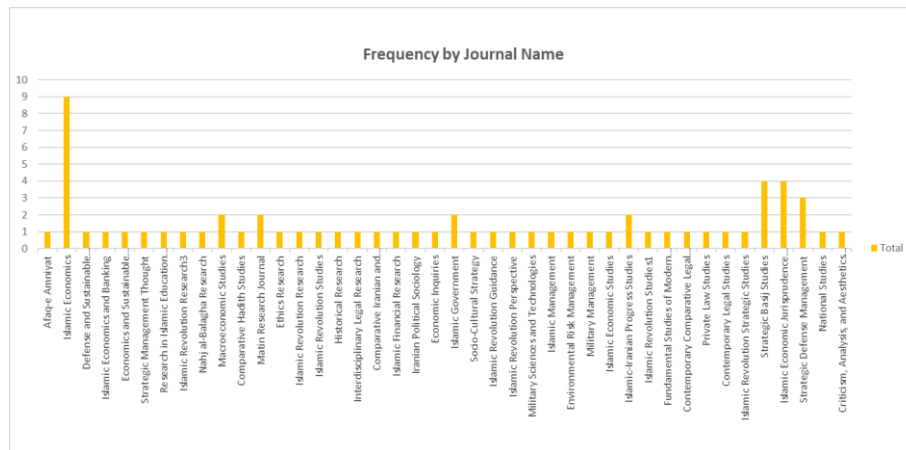
Figure 3 – Number of Articles Published by Academic Journals

B. Methodological Approach

1. Analysis by Data Collection Methods

Data collection methods constitute another criterion in assessing the research. Based on one categorization, data collection tools fall into five groups: (1) observation, (2) questionnaire, (3) document study (archival/library sources), (4) interview, and (5) physical tools. In this study, they were classified as: (1) observation, (2) questionnaire, (3) document analysis (study of policy documents), (4) library-based (study of records, speeches, etc.), (5) interview, and (6) physical tools. Studies employing combined tools were categorized under one of these main methods.

The review of articles indicates that library-based methods dominated. Most studies relied on written sources, leaders' statements, policy documents, and works of Islamic scholars. This is understandable, since national production from an Islamic perspective is deeply rooted in theoretical and conceptual foundations, prompting researchers to rely more on textual sources than on field data.

Alongside this method, the use of questionnaires and observation appeared in a few studies, though their share was very small. This limited use indicates that direct engagement with practical and socio-economic realities has received little attention. Only a handful of studies attempted to collect empirical data, such as surveying people's attitudes or behaviors regarding domestic consumption and support for national production.

Another striking point is the complete absence of interviews and physical tools across the reviewed studies. This represents a significant gap, as interviews with experts, economic policymakers, or industry practitioners could have provided deeper insights into the challenges and opportunities of national production. Likewise, physical tools or modern data-gathering methods (such as data mining or large-scale statistical analyses) have been virtually ignored in this domain.

Overall, these findings show that research on national production with an Islamic approach has relied more on theoretical and documentary bases rather than empirical field data. While this strengthens the conceptual framework, it may hinder the practical application of findings. For future research, greater reliance on fieldwork and mixed methods is recommended to bridge Islamic foundations with real-world economic conditions.
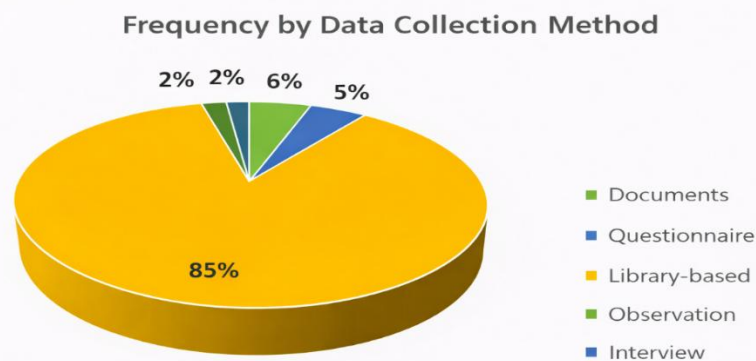
Figure 4 – Comparison of Data Collection Methods in Islamic National Production Studies

2. Analysis by Data Analysis Methods

An examination of the data analysis methods used in the articles reveals that qualitative approaches dominate research in the field of national production with an Islamic perspective. Most studies employed content analysis, theoretical inference, or comparative examinations of Islamic texts and sources. This is understandable given the nature of the subject, as much of the research has focused on elucidating Islamic foundations, extracting concepts from the Qur'an and Sunnah, or analyzing the ideas of Muslim

scholars. In such contexts, qualitative methods provide the best tools for deep interpretation and understanding of texts.

In addition to this dominance, a small number of studies employed mixed methods. These attempted to combine qualitative content analysis with quantitative data (such as surveys or economic statistics). Although limited, such studies add significant value by creating links between Islamic theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence.

Importantly, purely quantitative methods were almost absent. Researchers rarely engaged in statistical modeling, precise economic analyses, or hypothesis testing. On one hand, this is a weakness, as it prevents findings from being generalized and translated into concrete economic policymaking. On the other hand, the predominance of qualitative research has enriched theoretical and interpretive depth in the field.

In summary, research on national production with an Islamic approach remains primarily at the stage of generating theoretical and conceptual knowledge. To move toward practical application and informed economic decision-making, the adoption of quantitative methods and the development of more mixed-methods studies are indispensable.
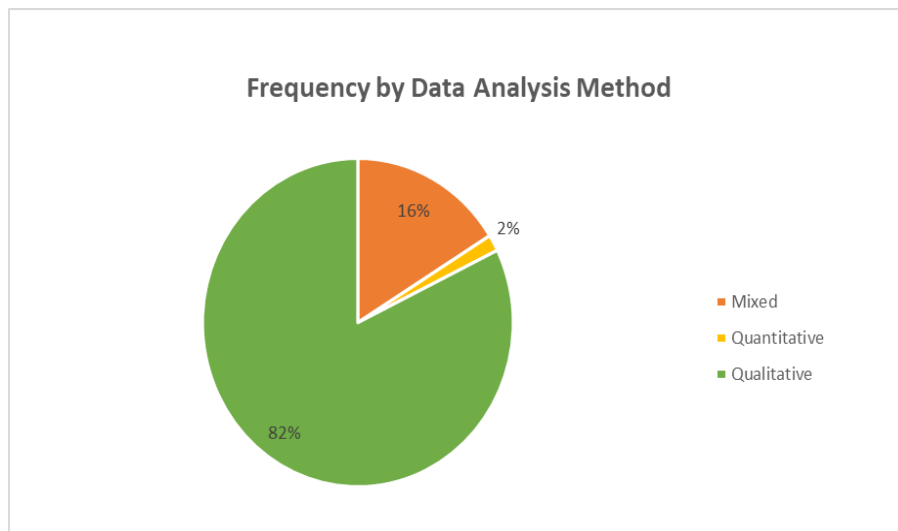

Figure 5 – Comparison of Research Methods in Islamic National Production Studies

C. Thematic Domain

1. Analysis by Main Knowledge Source

Various classifications exist regarding Islamic research. Based on a synthesis of researchers' categorizations, the following framework was adopted for dividing studies according to their knowledge sources:

1) Textual studies: research based on the Qur'an and Hadith of the Infallibles (peace be upon them), or a combination of both.

2) Sīrah-based studies: research grounded in the history and life practices of the Infallibles (peace be upon them).

3) Jurisprudential studies: research relying on fiqh sources.

4) Scholarly thought studies: research based on the ideas and theories of Islamic scholars.

5) Experience-centered studies (individual): research based on the experiences and conduct of religious leaders, such as prominent scholars or commanders of the Sacred Defense.

6) Experience-centered studies (institutional): research based on examining Islamic organizations and institutions such as mosques, Basij centers, or religious associations.

An analysis of the articles reveals that the greatest reliance has been on the ideas of Islamic scholars. A significant portion of the works extracted the foundations of national production from the statements and perspectives of the Supreme Leader of Iran. This is expected, as in recent decades, he has placed the strongest emphasis on national production and the resistance economy, with his statements serving as overarching strategies for Iran's economic system.

Following this category, jurisprudential and Qur'anic/ḥadīth-based sources appear in the next ranks. These articles sought to provide direct evidence from Qur'anic verses, narrations, and jurisprudential principles such as nafī sabīl (denial of domination) and the prohibition of purchasing foreign goods to establish the religious legitimacy of supporting domestic production. While important, the share of such works is smaller than that of studies relying on scholars' thought.

By contrast, works based on the sīrah of the Infallibles (peace be upon them) or historical/experiential studies are almost negligible. This constitutes a serious gap, as the life practices of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) contain numerous examples of economic policies, domestic production support, and economic justice that could inspire contemporary policymaking.

In conclusion, researchers have largely opted for the more accessible path of using secondary sources (scholars' thought) rather than engaging directly with primary sources (Qur'an, Hadith, sīrah). While this has contributed to the development of modern literature, achieving greater balance in future studies is necessary. Greater reliance on primary Islamic sources would enhance the depth and scientific credibility of research in this field.

Frequency by Main Knowledge Source of the Research

- Islamic Scholars
- Narrational (Hadith-based)
- Others
- Sirah (Life practices of the Infallibles)
- Jurisprudential (Fiqh-based)
- Qur'anic
- Qur'anic/Hadith
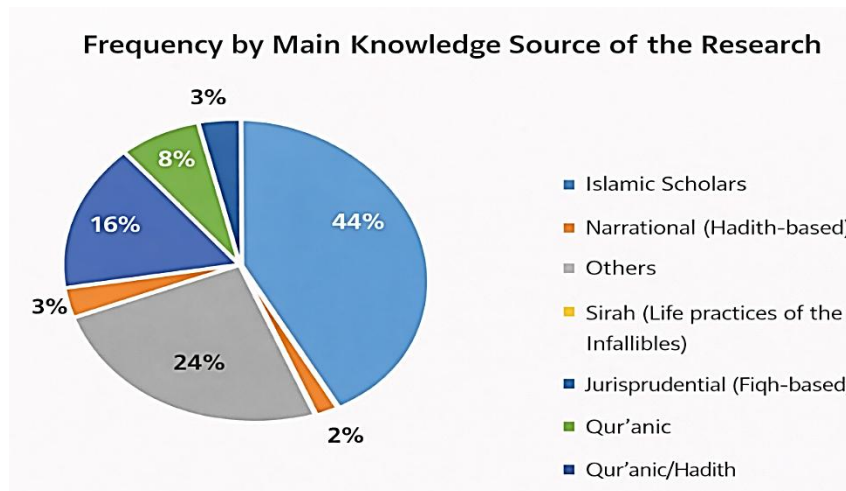
Figure 6 – Analysis of Articles by Type of Islamic Sources Used

2. Analysis by Subject Domain of Journals

An examination of articles on national production with an Islamic approach by subject domain of the journals indicates that this field is inherently multidimensional and interdisciplinary. Publications have appeared in economics, management, political science, law, social sciences, and even Islamic ethics journals. This demonstrates that national production is not merely an economic issue but is intertwined with broader social and political life in Iran.

Among these, economics and management journals have published the largest share. This is natural, since national production is primarily framed as an economic matter, directly linked to growth, employment, productivity, and the resistance economy. Management journals also play a role in addressing industrial policymaking, strategic planning, and business administration.

Political science ranks next, with studies focusing on national production in the context of national security, political independence, and resistance to external pressures. This view has led some studies to emphasize the link

between resistance economics and political authority. Legal studies have contributed through research on jurisprudential and legal issues such as combating smuggling or anti-dumping policies.

Equally noteworthy is the contribution of social science journals, which have examined cultural, value-based, and lifestyle dimensions of consumption. These works underscore that the success of national production depends not only on economic factors but also on changing social and cultural attitudes toward domestic goods.

In sum, the distribution of articles across different domains illustrates that national production is a comprehensive concept requiring cross-disciplinary collaboration. This dispersion enriches the field but also indicates the significant potential for further interdisciplinary and integrative research.
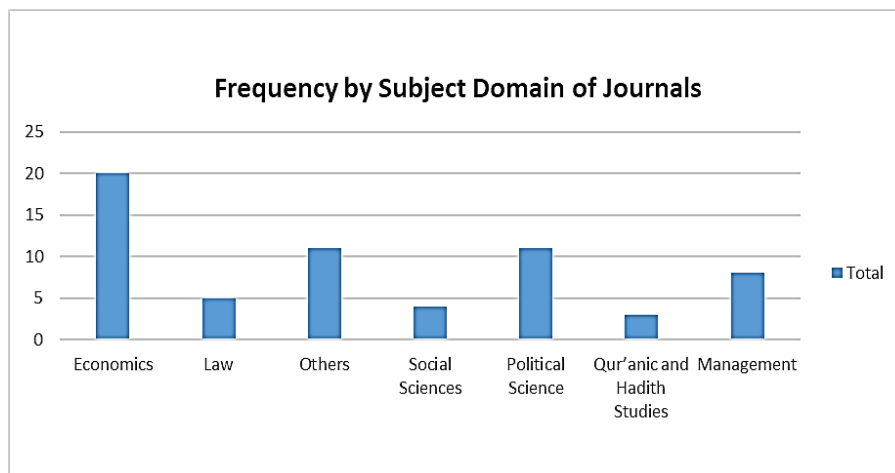
Figure 7 – Subject Domains of Journals Publishing Articles on National Production

3. Analysis by Research Question Focus

A crucial dimension in analyzing these studies is their research focus, which can be categorized into three main types: what, why, and how. The *what* dimension addresses conceptualization and theoretical foundations of national production; the *why* dimension analyzes strategic rationales and necessity; and the *how* dimension focuses on practical and operational solutions.

The findings reveal that the majority of articles emphasized the *what* dimension, aiming to clarify concepts and theoretical underpinnings of

national production in Islam. This reflects the early stage of the field, where the initial concern was to build conceptual clarity.

The next group of studies addressed the why dimension, examining strategic questions such as the necessity of supporting domestic production, its link to the resistance economy, and its role in strengthening national sovereignty.

By contrast, the how dimension was severely underrepresented, with very few articles offering practical or operational solutions. This imbalance constitutes a major weakness: while clarifying concepts and analyzing rationales are important, advancing national production in practice requires tangible models and solutions.

In summary, most research remains at the theoretical and strategic levels. Future scholarship must shift toward applied research and focus more on the how dimension to bridge the gap between theory and practice in Islamic approaches to national production.

Frequency by Research Question Focus

- Why (Strategic rationale)
- How (Practical solutions)
- What (Conceptual foundations)

31%

66%

3%
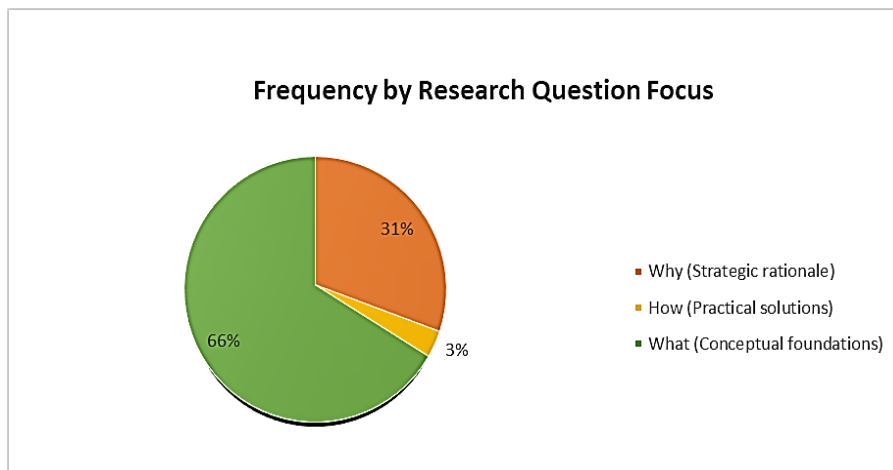
Figure 8 – Distribution of Articles by Research Question Focus

4. Analysis by Type of Islamic Approach

The accepted studies can also be analyzed by the type of Islamic perspective applied. Based on our categorization, six groups are identified:

1) Islamic sources: studies drawing on the Qur'an, fiqh, and related primary sources.

2) Islamic ethics: studies focusing on Islamic lifestyle, religious culture, and related values.

3) Islamic rulings: studies identifying specific fiqh rulings related to national production.

4) Islamic functions: studies emphasizing Islamic values such as justice and welfare.

5) Islamic principles: studies applying general Islamic principles, such as nafī sabīl (denial of domination).

6) Islamic instruments: studies addressing financial and economic instruments like ṣadaqah, zakāt, khums, waqf, and ṣukūk.

The review shows that Islamic sources accounted for the largest share, with many studies directly relying on Qur'an, Hadith, or fiqh-based perspectives to establish foundations for national production. This reflects a preference among researchers to root their work in authentic Islamic texts.

Islamic ethics ranked next, with studies emphasizing cultural consumption patterns, Islamic lifestyles, and social values. These highlighted that boosting national production requires cultural and behavioral transformation as much as economic policy.

Islamic functions also received considerable attention, particularly research linking domestic production to justice, welfare, and social cohesion.

Islamic rulings appeared mainly in studies exploring the permissibility of purchasing foreign goods or jurisprudential rules supporting domestic products. Although smaller in number, these studies carry significant importance as they could serve as bases for binding policies.

Islamic principles such as nafī sabīl were rarely examined, though they represent valuable untapped potential. Likewise, Islamic instruments such as ṣukūk, waqf, and zakāt appeared in a few innovative studies that directly addressed the design of Islamic financial tools for supporting domestic production.

In conclusion, while the greatest emphasis has been on Islamic sources and ethics, the domains of principles and instruments remain underdeveloped. These areas hold vast potential for future research to bridge theory with practice and generate actionable policy solutions.

Frequency by Type of Islamic Approach
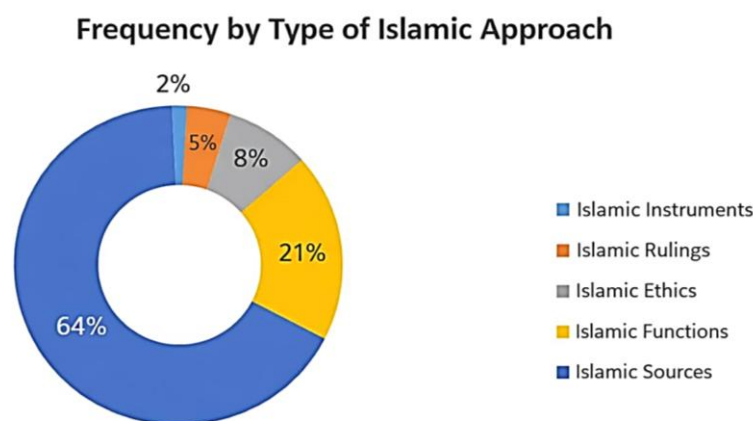
Figure 9 – Comparison of Types of Islamic Approaches in National Production Studies

7. Conclusion

The review and meta-analysis of research on national production with an Islamic approach reveal that this field is still emerging and in the process of development. A turning point came in 2012 (1391), designated as the "Year of National Production, Support for Iranian Labor and Capital." This designation was not merely symbolic; it functioned as a national macro-policy that inspired a wave of academic and seminary research on national production. In subsequent years—particularly 2016 and 2017 (1395 and 1396), with the slogans "Resistance Economy: Action and Implementation" and "Resistance Economy: Production and Employment"—and especially 2019 (1398), the "Year of Production Boom," scholarly attention to this domain reached its peak. This trend shows that macro-policies and the repeated emphasis of the Supreme Leader have played a decisive role in shaping and expanding the academic literature of this field.

The majority of findings have been drawn from scholarly journal articles. To complete the picture, however, other sources such as theses, seminary dissertations, books, and specialized reports should also be evaluated, and future research should be guided toward this domain. Another major weakness is the lack of conceptual coherence and a comprehensive, standardized set of keywords. This gap leads to ambiguities for researchers; for example, whether concepts such as "product quality" or "Iranian branding" fall within the scope of national production remains unsettled in the literature. Designing a coherent thematic system, agreed upon by scholars, could provide significant guidance for future studies.

From a methodological perspective, results show that most studies rely on qualitative and library-based approaches. Researchers have mainly drawn data from the statements of revolutionary leaders, policy documents, and Islamic texts. Field methods such as questionnaires, interviews, and observation have been rarely employed, and studies using mixed methods or quantitative data remain very limited. While this has enriched the conceptual and theoretical dimensions of research, it also highlights a serious weakness: without empirical evidence, it is difficult to operationalize findings or influence practical policymaking. Thus, the future of this field requires a significant shift toward field-based and mixed-methods research in order to reduce the gap between theory and practice.

The analysis of knowledge sources also yields important findings. Most research has focused on the ideas of Islamic scholars, especially Imam Khomeini, the Supreme Leader, and Ayatollah Shah-Ābādi. Far less attention has been paid to primary Islamic sources such as the Qur'an, Hadith, and the lived practices of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS). Yet, classical Islamic texts contain abundant evidence on economic independence, support for domestic production, and the rejection of dependency. Greater reliance on these primary sources could strengthen the legitimacy and depth of research. The underutilization of such sources indicates that researchers often opted for the more accessible path of secondary sources, whereas engaging with primary sources requires jurisprudential and hadith expertise but could significantly enhance the scholarly and practical value of studies.

With respect to research focus, findings show that about two-thirds of articles have addressed the "what" of national production, i.e., conceptual and theoretical foundations from an Islamic perspective. Some studies have addressed the "why," focusing on strategic necessity, such as the role of national production in achieving a resistance economy or national sovereignty. Very few studies, however, have dealt with the "how," providing practical or operational models. This imbalance indicates that scholarship in this field remains largely theoretical and strategic, with insufficient emphasis on implementation. Yet, facing the real challenges of Iran's economy requires research that directly engages with policy design, instruments, and practical programs. Moving from what and why toward how is thus an essential step for the future development of this field.

In terms of Islamic approaches, the largest share of articles belongs to Islamic sources and Islamic ethics. These works emphasized religious foundations and ethical values, interpreting national production within the framework of public culture and Islamic lifestyle. Other articles focused on Islamic functions such as economic justice and social welfare. However, the

important areas of Islamic principles and Islamic instruments received limited attention. Principles like nafī sabīl (denial of domination) and instruments such as waqf, zakāt, khums, and ṣukūk could play crucial practical roles in supporting domestic production. Neglecting these capacities highlights the gap between theoretical research and practical societal needs. Paying more attention to these approaches could create bridges between Islamic teachings and policy implementation.

Findings related to the subject domains of journals also show that national production is an interdisciplinary concept. Articles have been published in economics, management, political science, law, and social science journals. This dispersion reveals both the wide potential for cross-disciplinary research and the weakness of integration among disciplines. While economics and management dominate, social sciences and legal studies could provide important complementary roles in strengthening national production.

In summary, this scoping review shows that research on national production with an Islamic approach has established relatively strong theoretical foundations and clarified key concepts such as economic independence, resistance economy, and self-sufficiency from an Islamic perspective. However, weaknesses—including the limited number of studies, dominance of qualitative and library-based methods, underutilization of primary Islamic sources, lack of focus on the how dimension, and neglect of Islamic principles and instruments—have limited the practical impact of this field on economic policymaking.

For the future, several key recommendations emerge:

1) Broaden research sources to include books, theses, and seminary works to complete the current picture.

2) Shift toward field-based and mixed-methods studies to test theoretical findings in practice.

3) Strengthen the use of primary Islamic sources, which can enhance the jurisprudential and religious depth of studies.

4) Pay greater attention to the how dimension, developing models and practical solutions.

5) Establish platforms for interaction among academia, seminaries, and industry—through conferences and interdisciplinary projects—so that scientific findings can be translated into practice.

In other words, although this field has laid noteworthy theoretical foundations over the past decade, the next step must involve moving toward the application of these findings and producing actionable solutions grounded in Islamic teachings. Only then can research meaningfully

contribute to realizing a resistance economy, advancing the country's macro objectives, and strengthening national dignity and economic sovereignty.

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Designing a Model of Strategic Resilience: The Case of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the 12-Day War

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Abstract

Purpose: This study develops an operational and empirically grounded model of strategic resilience for the Islamic Republic of Iran in the context of a short-term, high-intensity military crisis. Focusing on the 12-day war, it examines how resilience was constructed and exercised at the nation-state level and seeks to clarify whether resilience functioned merely as a capacity for endurance or as a proactive, leadership-driven strategic capability.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The research adopts a qualitative approach based on Thematic Analysis. A total of 37 official statements and documents issued by senior political, military, and cultural-social actors during the crisis were systematically analyzed. Using an inductive, multi-stage coding process—including open coding, thematic categorization, and synthesis—382 semantic units were identified and organized into 17 basic themes, 6 organizing themes, and 3 overarching dimensions of strategic resilience.

Findings: The analysis reveals that strategic resilience in this case is neither static nor reactive, but dynamic, hierarchical, and centered on strategic agency. The resulting model comprises three interrelated dimensions: Socio-Political Resilience (25.9%), which provides the enabling foundation through integrated leadership, unity of command, and national cohesion; Resilience in Strategic Agency (54.7%), identified as the core dimension, highlighting active deterrence, demonstration of response capability, strategic justification, and narrative management through public diplomacy; and Resilience in Foundational Dimensions (19.4%), which supports resilience through continuity of critical governmental and economic functions, support for affected populations, and the mobilization of semantic and psychological capital. Overall, resilience emerges as a capability activated by a central strategic actor that aligns leadership, hard power, soft power, and social capital into a coherent crisis response.

Practical Implications: The findings suggest that effective national resilience in military crises depends on leadership-centered coordination, credible deterrence signaling, narrative control, and the maintenance of public trust and service continuity.

Originality/Value: By deriving a strategic resilience model directly from real-time crisis discourse, this study offers a context-sensitive and empirically grounded contribution to resilience research, advancing analysis beyond abstract frameworks and organization-level perspectives.Keywords: Strategic Resilience, National Security, Strategic Leadership, Military Crisis Management, Strategic Agency, Discourse Analysis, Deterrence.

Keywords

Introduction

In the contemporary strategic environment, characterized by escalating geopolitical risks and deep uncertainty, traditional crisis management approaches focused solely on prediction and response have lost their efficacy (Kitsing, 2022). In such conditions, "Strategic Resilience" has emerged as a high-level capability that ensures the survival and effective agency of nation-states in a turbulent world. The 12-day military conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Israel in 2025 provided a prominent example of a short-term, high-intensity crisis that demonstrated the importance of this strategic capacity. This crisis offers an opportunity for an in-depth study of a political system's ability to maintain cohesion and respond effectively to a major shock, particularly as the resilience of the Islamic Republic of Iran against sustained external pressures has consistently been a subject of contentious debate (Mahmoudi Kia, 1401).

The concept of resilience, in its foundational definition, refers to a society that "absorbs temporary or permanent risks and rapidly adapts itself to changing conditions without losing its stability and functionality" (Ghiasvand, 1393, p. 1). However, the theoretical literature has moved beyond this static view, which considered resilience merely as the "ability to return to the initial state," and now focuses on a dynamic approach based on learning, adaptation, and strategic transformation after a crisis (Golvardi, 1396; Hepfer & Lawrence, 2022). In this evolved perspective, strategic resilience transforms a crisis from a paralyzing threat into an opportunity for regeneration and to "Bounce Back Better" (Koronis & Ponis, 2018). This transformation is achieved through processes such as innovation and "Metamorphosis," whereby a political system reinvents its structures and mental models to succeed in the post-crisis world (Morais-Storz, Platou, & Norheim, 2018). Therefore, the concept is not limited to mere survival but is an active, forward-looking, and proactive approach to confronting uncertainties (Ahangari et al., 1401), describing a system that can maintain its required operations before, during, and after unexpected events (De Galizia et al., 2016) or return to its pre-crisis state (Woods, 2015).

Despite this conceptual richness, a significant research gap persists regarding the operational mechanisms of strategic resilience within a real, short-term, and high-intensity military crisis. The absence of a systematic study that qualitatively extracts and models Iran's operational pattern of resilience from textual data during such a crisis is clearly evident. Most existing analyses have concentrated on technical-military aspects, paying less attention to the complex social, psychological, and managerial dimensions that form the bedrock of national resistance. Furthermore, the

current theoretical background, both domestically and internationally, has predominantly focused on presenting macro-level conceptual models (Neumann, 2024) or examining resilience at the level of firms and organizations. Without a comprehensive model that demonstrates which components were prioritized at the nation-state level during a short-term military crisis and how they interrelate, our understanding of Iran's strategic logic in managing this crisis would remain incomplete. This research endeavors to fill this gap by focusing on the direct analysis of the discourse of key actors on the scene of the crisis.

Accordingly, the primary objective of this research is to design a comprehensive, data-driven model of the strategic resilience of the Islamic Republic of Iran during the 12-day war. This model seeks to identify the key dimensions and components of resilience and to illustrate the hierarchical relationships among them, ultimately aiming to answer the central research question: What are the dimensions and components of the strategic resilience model of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the face of the 12-day.

1. Theoretical Foundations and Research Background

1-1. The Concept of Resilience

The concept of resilience, which in recent decades has become a key term in the social and strategic sciences, has its roots in the natural and engineering sciences. In its classic form, resilience referred to the ability of a system to return to its original state of equilibrium after enduring a shock or disruption. This engineering-centric perspective was focused on robustness and rapid recovery (Mentges et al., 2023). However, as the concept entered more complex domains, this static definition gave way to more dynamic viewpoints that emphasized learning, adaptation, and evolution (Koronis & Ponis, 2018).

This conceptual evolution aligns with a paradigm shift in the security domain. Given the unavoidable vulnerabilities in modern open and networked societies, the pursuit of "absolute defense" is not a realistic option. Consequently, the security paradigm has shifted from the ideal of "complete invulnerability" toward risk acceptance and strengthening the ability to cope with shocks. In such a context, resilience emerges as a central approach for managing uncertainty (Neumann, 2024).

1-2. National Resilience and Societal Resilience

At the macro level, resilience has been conceptualized as a national capacity for confronting major crises. This concept, known as national resilience or societal resilience, is based on a "whole-of-society" approach. This

perspective posits that resistance to modern crises requires the integrated participation of all pillars of the nation. This active participation elevates the populace from the status of potential victims to that of an equal partner and supporter for emergency response forces, creating a "force-multiplier effect" (Neumann, 2024).

One of the most comprehensive operational frameworks in this field is the "Rings of Resilience Model," designed by Neumann (2024) to build, strengthen, and sustain strategic resilience against deliberate threats (Figure 1). This model describes resilience not as a list of static dimensions, but as a dynamic, multi-layered system.

Figure 1: Resilience Loops Model (Neumann,2024)
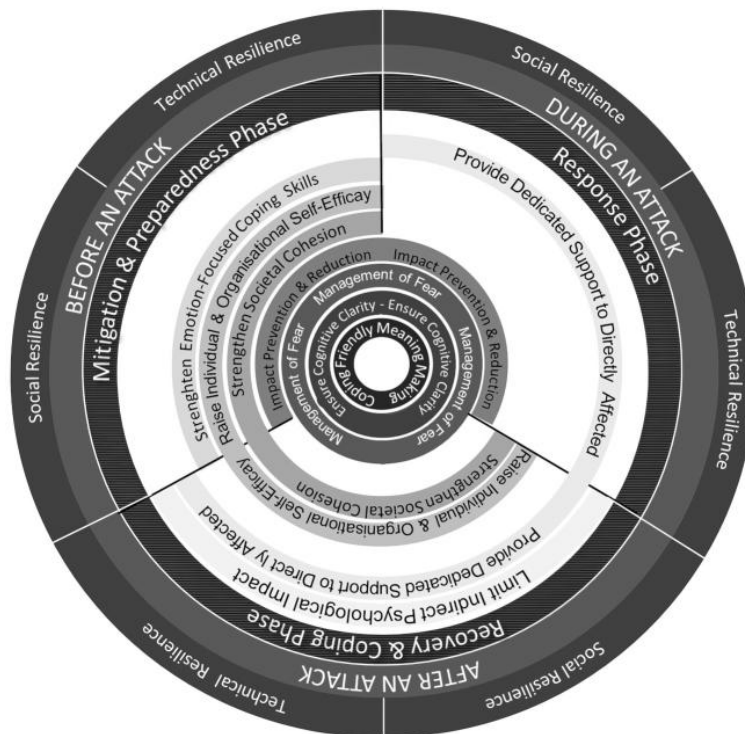
The structure of this model is based on organizing actions across three phases of a crisis: the mitigation and preparedness phase (before an attack), the response phase (during an attack), and the recovery and coping phase (after an attack). Within each of these phases, two key dimensions are distinguished: social resilience, which pertains to the social, psychological,

and cultural capital of the society, and technical resilience, which relates to physical infrastructure and management systems. The heart of the model consists of three central rings that define the primary objectives from the inside out: the central core is "Coping-Friendly Meaning Making," which is the ability of a society to make sense of a catastrophe through a powerful national narrative to neutralize the enemy's objective; the second ring is the "Management of Fear and Cognitive Clarity," which counters the enemy's psychological warfare by controlling emotions and providing accurate information; and the third ring is "Impact Prevention and Reduction," which focuses on practical measures to minimize damages. This model, particularly with its emphasis on the "meaning-making" core, provides a suitable framework for analyzing the findings of this research, which highlights the role of leadership and semantic dimensions (Neumann, 2024).

1-3. Strategic Resilience

At its most fundamental level, strategic resilience is defined as "the resilience of a society to premeditated disruptions and shocks through the acceptance of uncertainty," and it stands in opposition to "strategic vulnerability" (Neumann, 2024). While national resilience focuses on underlying capacities, strategic resilience pertains to the high-level capabilities of a system to lead and manage those capacities in crisis conditions. This perspective, moving beyond a defensive reaction, emphasizes proactive and forward-looking agency.

Modern literature conceives of strategic resilience not as a reaction to crisis, but as a dynamic and emergent property that is defined by the rate and continuity of innovations leading to value-creating strategic metamorphoses (Morais-Storz, Platou, & Norheim, 2018). In this view, the environment is assumed to be perpetually turbulent and unpredictable; therefore, resilience is defined by how an organization behaves under the constant assumption of these conditions, emphasizing action over reaction (Morais-Storz, Platou, & Norheim, 2018). From this perspective, crises are seen as "strategic inflection points" that create entrepreneurial opportunities for renewal and value creation. Thus, strategic resilience is inherently transformative and growth-oriented (Mafimisebi et al., 2025).

Recent research indicates that strategic resilience follows a configurational logic, meaning that the effectiveness of its constituent factors depends on how they are combined, rather than being the mere algebraic sum of their individual effects (Mafimisebi et al., 2025). This perspective challenges the idea of a single path to resilience, suggesting that multiple pathways exist. However, in all successful pathways, organizational slack

plays a vital role by creating a flexible safety margin that allows an organization to experiment with new options and alter its structure during a crisis (Mafimisebi et al., 2025). These configurational capabilities can encompass various practical dimensions. At the level of an organization or a system, these dimensions include efforts to maintain financial stability, operational stability, organizational stability, reputational stability, and business model stability (Rubakha et al., 2024). In specific circumstances, such as war, other dimensions like physical security and enhanced cybersecurity are also added to this set (Rubakha et al., 2024).

These practical and strategic capabilities are built upon four pillars or primary drivers: Preparedness, Responsiveness, Adaptability, and Learning (Koronis & Ponis, 2018). These four drivers, in turn, are grounded in a cultural and social capital foundation composed of three key attributes: the existence of Trust within the system, a strong and shared Organizational Identity, and an Open and Error-Tolerant Culture where mistakes are treated as learning opportunities (Koronis & Ponis, 2018). This demonstrates that strategic resilience is not merely a technical or functional skill, but a deeply social capacity.

Ultimately, a primary function of this proactive approach is to serve as a deterrence tool through a "benefit-denial" strategy. A resilient society, by credibly refusing to panic and by returning to normalcy quickly, denies the adversary their strategic success (i.e., inducing fear), thereby eroding their motivation for future attacks by rendering their tool ineffective (Neumann, 2024).

1-4. Literature Review

To review the existing literature pertinent to the research topic, similar titles were examined in reputable domestic and international information sources, from which the following articles were extracted.

Table 16: Literature Review

No.	Research Title	Year	Researchers	Research Findings
1	Master of Uncertainty: How Strategic Resilient Organizations Navigate Crisis	2025	Mafimisebi et al.	The results of the fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) show that there are three distinct and sufficient configurational paths to achieving high strategic resilience in small and medium-sized enterprises. A key finding is

No.	Research Title	Year	Researchers	Research Findings
				that "organizational slack" is a critical enabling factor in all successful paths but is not sufficient on its own. The research concludes that resilience emerges from complementary and interdependent combinations of capabilities, rather than a single factor.
2	Can national industrial investment funds enhance enterprise resilience?	2025	Wang, Niu, & Kang	The results specifically indicate that China's "National Integrated Circuit Industry Investment Fund (NICIIF)" significantly increases enterprise resilience. This enhancement is achieved through two primary mechanisms: improving access to financial resources and strengthening research and development (R&D) capacity. Furthermore, this positive effect is more pronounced in companies with weaker corporate governance and more intense market competition.
3	Factor analysis of financial performance and formation of strategic resilience in Ukrainian IT companies	2024	Rubakha et al.	The results of the factor analysis show that indicators such as profitability, asset turnover, financial stability, and cost structure have a significant impact on the net profit and revenue of Ukrainian IT companies during wartime. The research concludes that to maintain financial performance and achieve strategic resilience, companies must focus on developing long-term strategies centered on

No.	Research Title	Year	Researchers	Research Findings
				financial, operational, organizational, and physical security.
4	A resilience glossary shaped by context: Reviewing resilience-related terms for critical infrastructures	2023	Mentges et al.	By reviewing 93 definitions related to resilience, this study shows that the concept is highly context-dependent and, for critical infrastructures, should focus on capacities such as shock absorption, adaptation, and recovery.
5	Exploring the intricacies of social intelligence, entrepreneurial orientation, and organizational resilience	2023	Taneja et al.	The research findings indicate that Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) has a direct, positive, and significant impact on Organizational Resilience (OR). Another key finding is that Social Intelligence (SI) plays a partial mediating role in this relationship. Therefore, organizations with a high degree of EO can further enhance their resilience by strengthening their social intelligence.
6	Geopolitical risk and uncertainty: how transnational corporations can use scenario planning for strategic resilience	2022	Kitsing	Strategic resilience is introduced as a key capability for confronting geopolitical risks, and scenario planning is proposed as a tool to strengthen it.
7	The Heterogeneity of Organizational Resilience: Exploring functional, operational and strategic resilience	2022	Hepfer & Lawrence	The main result of this paper is the conceptual redefinition of organizational resilience as a heterogeneous phenomenon divided into three distinct forms: functional, operational, and strategic resilience. Each of these three forms has its own unique foundations, dynamics, and outcomes. The

No.	Research Title	Year	Researchers	Research Findings
				research concludes that future studies should target these distinct forms instead of a general concept.
8	Better than before: the resilient organization in crisis mode	2018	Koronis & Ponis	The result of this research is the presentation of a framework that views resilience as being beyond mere recovery. This framework is based on four key factors or "drivers" of resilience: preparedness, responsiveness, adaptability, and learning. The research concludes that these drivers require a cultural foundation based on trust, a strong organizational identity, and an open, error-tolerant culture to be effectively activated.
9	Innovation and metamorphosis towards strategic resilience	2018	Morais-Storz, Platou, & Norheim	This conceptual paper concludes that strategic resilience is a dynamic and emergent characteristic of organizations, defined by the "rate and consistency with which innovation leads to value-creating strategic metamorphoses." Achieving this type of resilience depends on a recursive cycle of problem formulation, innovation, and metamorphosis, which is itself influenced by organizational legacy and senior management.
10	Providing a Strategic Model for Measuring National Resilience	1401	Shahmohammadi et al.	The final result of this research is the presentation of an indigenous strategic model for measuring Iran's national resilience, which has eight dimensions (economic, social,

No.	Research Title	Year	Researchers	Research Findings
				cultural, political, defense, security, environmental, and science and technology), 23 components, and 83 indicators. This model is introduced as a tool for policymaking and improving governance.
11	An analysis of the effective factors in the resilience of the Islamic Republic of Iran against international economic sanctions	1401	Mahmoudikia	The results show that Iran's resilience against sanctions is based on three main components: 1. Discursive factors (such as the discourse of resistance), 2. Iran's domestic actions (such as strengthening good governance and economic diplomacy), and 3. Characteristics of the international system (such as multilateralism). The research concludes that policymakers should focus on strengthening constructive aspects and weakening destructive ones (such as corruption).
12	Providing a policy model for dealing with emerging epidemic diseases with a national resilience approach	1401	Ahangeri et al.	The result of this research is the presentation of a proposed policy model for confronting pandemics based on a national resilience approach. The research concludes that Iran was weak in the stages of prediction, foresight, and preparedness during the COVID-19 crisis and needs to strengthen these areas for future crises.
13	Designing a model for entrepreneurship development planning with a strategic resilience	1400	Zaheri et al.	The result of the research is the presentation of a conceptual model for resilient entrepreneurship development in tourism. The results show that factors such as an

No.	Research Title	Year	Researchers	Research Findings
	approach in tourism businesses			entrepreneurial mindset and institutional support, through specific strategies, lead to outcomes like sustainability, robustness, flexibility of businesses, and the flourishing of local economies.
14	Designing a strategic resilience model for active ecotourism businesses in border areas	1400	Zaheri et al.	The result of this research is the design of a paradigmatic model for the resilience of ecotourism businesses. Based on the results, strategies such as skill enhancement, branding, and creating a competitive advantage can lead to outcomes like sustainable security in border regions, social welfare, and the prosperity of the local economy.
15	Bureauphobia and Perceived National Resilience	1398	Molavi et al.	The results showed a significant and inverse relationship between bureauphobia and the perception of national resilience; that is, individuals with a negative view of bureaucracy assess national resilience at a lower level. It was also found that 31% of respondents were bureauphobics.
16	National Resilience: A Review of the Research Literature	1396	Gol-Vardi	This review research concludes that there is a significant gap in theoretical and empirical studies on national resilience in Iran. The review of global literature also showed that the concept of resilience is often broadly defined and its measurement tools lack sufficient validation.

Domestic research on resilience has primarily focused on the national level and in response to long-term and structural challenges. A significant portion of these studies has been dedicated to presenting conceptual and normative models for measuring or enhancing national resilience. For instance, Shahmohammadi and Khezri (1401/2022), with a comprehensive approach, have provided a strategic model with eight dimensions for assessing Iran's national resilience. In the same vein, studies like that of Mahmoudikia (1401/2022) have analyzed Iran's resilience against persistent pressures such as economic sanctions, identifying discursive factors and domestic actions as pillars of resistance.

International research on resilience, theoretically rich and extensive, primarily focuses on the enterprise and organizational levels. These studies view resilience as a dynamic capability that evolves through learning and adaptation. Koronis & Ponis (2018) consider it the ability to "bounce forward" after a crisis, based on four pillars: preparedness, responsiveness, adaptability, and learning. Morais-Storz et al. (2018) also define it as the result of "innovation and metamorphosis" for strategic reinvention.

More recent studies challenge the idea of a single pathway to resilience. Mafimisebi et al. (2025) show that multiple configurational paths exist, in which "organizational slack" plays a vital role. Hepfer & Lawrence (2022) also emphasize the heterogeneity of the concept by distinguishing resilience into three levels: functional, operational, and strategic. Although some studies have addressed the macro level, their focus is often on economic aspects (such as the impact of government investment on enterprise resilience by Wang et al., 2025) or managing geopolitical risks through scenario planning (Kitsing, 2022).

Ultimately, by reviewing the domestic and international literature, the distinction of this research becomes apparent in several areas. First, domestic research has primarily offered macro-level, normative conceptual models developed through elite interviews or the analysis of official documents. In contrast, the present study provides an operational model derived from the data of an actual crisis. Second, while the international literature is theoretically rich, its case studies often focus on resilience at the enterprise level or in the context of specific threats (like terrorism) or long-term crises (like pandemics). This research helps fill a significant gap by analyzing resilience at the nation-state level during a short-term, conventional military crisis.

Finally, this paper, through the direct discourse analysis of key actors on the crisis stage (senior political and military officials), instead of interviews

or surveys, demonstrates how various dimensions of strategic resilience are applied in practice and with what priorities. This methodological approach offers a direct and profound understanding of the logic governing crisis management at the highest strategic levels and constitutes the primary innovation of this research.

2. Materials & Methods

The present study is applied in its purpose and qualitative in its approach, employing a Thematic Analysis strategy to identify and design a model of strategic resilience for the Islamic Republic of Iran. Thematic analysis is a flexible yet systematic method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006), allowing the researcher to achieve a deep, multi-layered understanding of the phenomenon under study through immersion in the data. Generally, this method is utilized for purposes such as in-depth textual analysis, proper understanding of seemingly unrelated information, systematic analysis of qualitative data, and the transformation of qualitative data into a conceptual model (Boyatzis, 1998).

The data analysis process in this research was conducted using an inductive approach (from specific to general) and followed a systematic three-stage process:

1. Open Coding (Text Decomposition): In the first stage, each document was meticulously studied, and key concepts related to resilience were extracted. These concepts were recorded as descriptive initial labels (Open Codes) that were close to the original text.

2. Developing Organizing Themes (Description and Interpretation): In the second stage, the initial codes were grouped into broader conceptual categories based on semantic similarity. This process led to the formation of Organizing Themes, each representing a primary dimension of resilience.

3. Designing the Final Model (Text Integration): In the final stage, the organizing themes were compared, and logical connections between them were established. Through the synthesis and integration of these themes, a Global Theme, titled "The Strategic Resilience Model of the I.R. of Iran," emerged as the main dimension and core of the model.

To ensure the reliability of the analysis, the coding and categorization process at each stage was reviewed by a second researcher, and the results were cross-validated.

The statistical population of this research comprised all official texts, documents, and statements published by key political, military, and elite actors of the Islamic Republic of Iran within the 12-day crisis period. Given the nature of the research, purposeful sampling was employed to select sources that had the highest relevance to the topic and reflected the strategic perspectives of the state. The primary data collection tool was Document Mining from credible sources and the official portals of the relevant institutions. In total, 37 key documents were analyzed, the specifics of which are presented in Table 2.

Table 17: Profile of Analyzed Documents

No.	Name	Position (Title)	Number of Documents
1	Ayatollah Khamenei	Leader of the Islamic Revolution	4
2	Masoud Pezeshkian	President	5
3	Seyed Abbas Araghchi	Minister of Foreign Affairs	3
4	Ali Larijani	Advisor to the Leader of the Revolution	3
5	Major General Pakpour	Commander-in-Chief of the IRGC	6
6	Major General Hatami	Commander-in-Chief of the Army	5
7	Major General Mousavi	Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces	3
8	(A group of artists and writers)	Elites and Cultural-Social Actors	8
Total			37

3. Research Findings

This section presents the findings derived from the qualitative analysis of the documents. The process of thematic analysis began with the review of 37 key documents, and in the open coding stage, it led to the extraction of 382 unique semantic phrases. The significant overlap of concepts across various documents indicated that theoretical saturation had been achieved, thereby reinforcing the validity of the findings. Table 3 shows a sample of this process.

Table 18: Sample of the Open Coding Process

Code	Key Phrase from Text	Semantic Phrase
D0101	"It revealed its malicious nature... more than ever before."	Revealing the enemy's nature
D0102	"Striking residential centers."	Crossing red lines
D0214	"Life will become bitter for them, without a doubt."	Promising attrition and continuous punishment
D0505	"They thought a military collapse had occurred in Iran and that it lacked defensive power."	Narrating the enemy's miscalculation
D0610	"I assure the people that the government... will continue serving the nation."	Government's commitment to service continuity
D0710	"The Zionist regime is incapable of any action without America's permission."	Describing Israel as a non-independent actor
D0902	"If the people are with us, no problem will endanger the country."	Defining public support as a guarantor of national security
D1902	"He was the voice of Iran; the voice of Zaynab who does not let 'Karbala remain in Karbala'."	Framing media resistance within the Karbala narrative

In the subsequent stages of analysis, the semantic phrases were classified into 17 basic themes. Finally, these basic themes were categorized into 6 organizing themes and 3 global themes, which constitute the main dimensions and components of the "Strategic Resilience Model of the Islamic Republic of Iran." Table 4 displays the complete network of themes extracted from the documents.

Table 19, Network of Themes Extracted from Documents

Global Theme	Organizing Theme	Basic Theme	Frequency of Semantic Phrases
Socio-Political Resilience	Unity of Command and Integrated Leadership	Maintaining Structural Cohesion and Functional Continuity	27
		Narrative Management and Social Capital	14
	Social Cohesion and	Strengthening National	27

Global Theme	Organizing Theme	Basic Theme	Frequency of Semantic Phrases
	National Mobilization	Solidarity	
		Social Activism and Civil Resistance	8
		The Role of Intellectual and Cultural Authorities	2
Resilience in Strategic Agency	Active Deterrence and Symmetrical Response	Declarative Stance and Deterrent Warning	15
		Demonstration of Will and Response Capability	68
		Command and Control of the Operational Theater	2
		Strategic Justification and Legitimization	17
	Public Diplomacy and Narrative Management	Crisis Framing and Narration	59
		Activation of Diplomatic Capacities	28
		Persuading Public Opinion and Media Warfare	9
Resilience in Foundational Dimensions	Resilience in Economic Infrastructure	Continuity of Critical Government & Economic Functions	8
		Attending to and Providing Services for the Affected	2
	Semantic Resilience and Psychological Capital	Honoring and Attributing Meaning to Martyrdom	20
		Reliance on Value-Based and Ideological Foundations	17
		Management of Emotions and Mobilization of National Sentiments	8
Total			382

3-1. Explanation of the Dimensions of Strategic Resilience

Hereafter, the three global themes that form the final model are explained in detail.

1. The First Dimension: Socio-Political Resilience (The Enabling Dimension) This dimension, accounting for 25.9% of all codes, focuses on the capacity of the political and social system to maintain internal cohesion, mobilize national resources, and manage the crisis in an integrated manner, serving as the enabling foundation and prerequisite for proactive agency. This dimension consists of two main components:

    - Unity of Command and Integrated Leadership: This component refers to the central role of leadership in creating coordination, maintaining structural stability, and managing the macro-narrative of the crisis. The data shows that one of the first actions in the crisis was to demonstrate the continuity of the system's functions and prevent a power vacuum. Actions such as the immediate appointment of successors for the martyrs (*"Their successors and colleagues will immediately resume their duties"*) are a clear example of maintaining structural cohesion at the highest levels, which prevents confusion within the country's managerial and social body.

    - Social Cohesion and National Mobilization: This component, which had a high frequency in the data, indicates the actors' emphasis on the role of the people as a key source of power. Concepts like the call for unity (*"The country's officials and all segments of the population stand behind the armed forces"*) and the highlighting of civil activism (*"The action of... the female TV presenter... chanting takbir..."*) show that national resilience in Iran is deeply intertwined with the activation of social capital and popular mobilization.

2. The Second Dimension: Resilience in Strategic Agency (The Core Dimension) This dimension, accounting for 54.7% of all codes, was the most central and prominent dimension of resilience in this crisis. This finding indicates that the dominant discourse during the war was agentic, based on counter-action, and focused on shaping the operational environment.

    - Active Deterrence and Symmetrical Response: This component, which has the highest frequency of all components (68 codes), focuses on demonstrating the will and capability for a military response. Statements guaranteeing a decisive response (*"The powerful hand of the armed forces... will not let them go"*) and justifying the legitimacy of military action (*"The Iranian nation...*

also stands firm against an imposed peace") reveal a dual strategy: on one hand, reassuring domestic public opinion, and on the other, sending a deterrent message to the enemy.

- Public Diplomacy and Narrative Management: This component, also with a very high frequency, highlights the importance of the narrative war. The data analysis shows that a large part of the efforts was directed towards framing the crisis to one's advantage (*"It revealed its malicious nature... more than ever before"*), activating diplomatic capacities (*"It occurred while officials... were engaged in negotiations"*), and engaging in media warfare to counter enemy propaganda.

3. The Third Dimension: Resilience in Foundational Dimensions (The Supporting Dimension) This global theme, accounting for 19.4% of the codes, addresses the deeper underpinnings that make the other two dimensions possible and sustainable.

- Resilience in Economic Infrastructure: This component serves as the material foundation of national resistance and plays a vital role. This dimension focuses on "Maintaining Stability and Continuity of Critical Functions"; where the emphasis on the continuity of government services (*"I assure the people that the government... will continue serving the nation"*) shows that preventing disruption in public services and maintaining economic stability are considered key factors in supporting national resilience and public trust. Alongside this stability-oriented approach, the second component, "Resource Management and Support for the Affected," reveals the social and agentic aspect of this dimension. With an explicit directive for rapid aid (*"Officials... should be careful to... quickly attend to their situation and address all their needs."*), it highlights social responsibility and the strengthening of social capital in times of crisis.

- Semantic Resilience and Psychological Capital: This component addresses the intangible sources of national power that play a crucial role in a crisis. Attributing meaning to martyrdom (*"Several commanders and scientists were martyred."*), reliance on value-based foundations (*"Our cultural and civilizational wealth is hundreds of times greater than that of America and the like"*), and management of national emotions (*"This war... is full of lessons... that can create a new capacity for Iran's future"*) are

all strategies for strengthening the psychological capital and internal cohesion of society against the shock of the crisis.

Ultimately, the synthesis and integration of these three dimensions and their internal components form the final model of the Islamic Republic of Iran's strategic resilience, as visually depicted in Figure 2. This model indicates that resilience is not a singular attribute but a system in which socio-political cohesion provides the foundation, strategic agency seizes the initiative, and the foundational dimensions ensure its long-term sustainability and meaning.
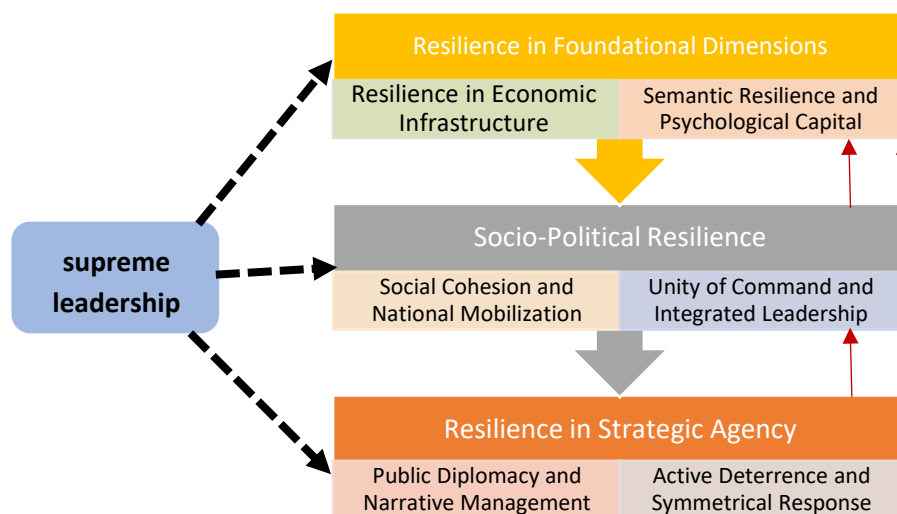
Figure 2: Final Model of Strategic Resilience in the Islamic Republic of Iran

4. Discussion & Conclusion

The research findings indicate that Iran's resilience model is a dynamic and hierarchical system that, contrary to passive approaches, is founded on proactive agency. The frequency analysis of the codes revealed that the "Resilience in Strategic Agency" dimension (54.7%) was significantly the most central dimension of the model, built upon the foundation of "Socio-Political Resilience" (25.9%) and supported by "Resilience in Foundational Dimensions" (19.4%). This structure is not merely descriptive but reveals a causal logic that constitutes the primary innovation of this research.

The model that emerged from this research establishes a deep dialogue with theoretical literature, complementing and operationalizing it. At the domestic level, studies such as Gol-Vardi (1396/2017) and Shahmohammadi & Khezri (1401/2022) have correctly emphasized the multi-faceted nature of national resilience. Our findings confirm this multi-dimensionality but go a

step further by revealing a causal and hierarchical relationship among these dimensions. While the existing literature presents these dimensions in parallel, our analysis demonstrates that it is the supreme leadership (part of the socio-political dimension) that activates popular cohesion, making this dimension a prerequisite and an enabling foundation for strategic agency.

At the international level, this model also corresponds well with theoretical frameworks. Neumann's (2024) "Rings of Resilience" model becomes effective when a "central core" links and aligns these rings; our findings show that the role of leadership is precisely to perform the function of that central core. Indeed, it is this "strategic leader" who plays the role of the "Master of Uncertainty," as described by Mafisebi et al. (2025) at the enterprise level, but in this case at the nation-state level, shaping the macro-orientation of the system in the face of geopolitical risks (Kitsing, 2022). Furthermore, the three-tiered model of Hepfer & Lawrence (2022) (functional, operational, and strategic) is clearly observable in our findings; infrastructural resilience (functional level) and military response (operational level) were both guided by macro-level leadership and semantic framing (strategic level). The innovation of our research lies in demonstrating that it is this strategic level (leadership) that directs and enables the other two levels, rather than merely existing alongside them. Finally, the "Semantic Resilience and Psychological Capital" dimension in our model is the practical translation of the concepts of "becoming better than before" (Koronis & Ponis, 2018) and "metamorphosis" (Morais-Storz et al., 2018). Our findings indicate that this "learning" and "post-crisis growth" does not occur automatically; rather, it is the supreme leadership that, by attributing meaning to the crisis (turning a threat into an opportunity), transforms it into a strategic asset for the future.

The key conclusion of this research is that the strategic resilience model of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a dynamic and causal system that is activated and directed by a central strategic actor, namely the Leader of the Islamic Revolution. It is this integrated leadership that provides the foundation for national cohesion and gives legitimacy and direction to strategic agency in its military and diplomatic dimensions. Therefore, resilience in this model is not a static attribute but a dynamic capacity that, in times of crisis, is activated by the supreme leadership and is formed through the constructive interaction of hard power, soft power, and social capital, which are mobilized by this leadership. This model represents a link between realities (agency), ideals (values), and leadership (the linking factor).

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A Model of Values-Based Strategic Leadership: An Analysis of the Testaments of Sacred Defense Commanders

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to construct an indigenous model of values-based strategic leadership derived from the testaments of commanders of the Sacred Defense. It addresses the core analytical question of how spiritual, ideological, operational, and social values function as strategic mechanisms in leadership under crisis. The study evaluates whether values act merely as ethical guidelines or constitute a comprehensive, action-oriented operating system for leadership.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Employing a qualitative design grounded in Thematic Analysis, 30 authenticated testaments of IRGC and Army commanders were examined. Through an inductive multi-stage coding process—including open coding, thematic clustering, and synthesis—90 conceptual codes, 34 basic themes, 12 organizing themes, and 4 overarching thematic dimensions were identified.

Findings: The findings demonstrate that values in this context are not background moral elements, but strategic drivers shaping leadership cognition, decision-making, mobilization, and organizational alignment. The resulting model comprises four dimensions: (1) Ontological-Spiritual Foundation (God-centricity, sincerity, Ashura-based meaning-making); (2) Political-Revolutionary Logic (loyalty to Velayat-e Faqih, preserving the Islamic Revolution, anti-arrogance logic); (3) Operational-Strategic Functions (duty-orientation, sacrifice, risk-taking, foresight, mission continuity); and (4) Human-Social Dimension (ethical guidance, family alignment, socio-moral responsibility). These values collectively redefine key strategic concepts such as victory, legitimacy, and resilience.

Practical Implications: The study highlights three implications:(1) sustainable crisis leadership requires embedding values throughout strategic and operational processes;(2) leaders must navigate tensions between operational demands and ideological commitments;(3) value integration enhances societal cohesion, mobilization capacity, and intergenerational mission continuity.

Originality/Value: By deriving a leadership model directly from firsthand wartime documents, this research introduces a culturally grounded, empirically informed framework. It challenges Western-centric leadership paradigms and positions values as a strategic advantage rather than purely moral attributes, contributing to leadership studies, crisis management, and Islamic management theory.

Keywords

Introduction

In turbulent and uncertain environments where traditional management styles are no longer effective (Javadian et al., 2023), strategic leadership is effective when it can create a sustainable link between external threats and opportunities and the organization's internal purpose and meaning. This role extends beyond planning to include meaning-making, alignment, and guiding decisions in complex situations (Ireland & Hitt, 2005). In recent years, the paradigm of organizational performance evaluation has moved beyond a singular focus on financial metrics, bringing values to the core of strategic leadership discourse (Carter & Greer, 2013). Accordingly, a growing body of research has shown that "values-based leadership" can enhance these functions through normative alignment, clarification of expectations, and the internalization of values among followers. Evidence also shows that ethical and values-based leadership styles are associated with improving responsible actions and reducing destructive behaviors in the workplace (Cao, Li, van der Wal, & Taris, 2023; Zheng, Epitropaki, Graham, & Caveney, 2022). This shift toward a values-based approach is a response to new challenges such as ethical scandals and the erosion of values, which demonstrated that laws alone are insufficient to guarantee ethical behavior (Rafiei et al., 2013; Shatalebi & Yarmohammadian, 2011). In this new paradigm, the leader's role transcends that of a mere manager, acting as the "guardian of values and architect of culture" for the organization (Rzemieniak, 2018).

Despite this, a significant portion of management literature has been developed within Western contexts, often emphasizing values such as individualism (Wang et al., 2012). Furthermore, many of these theories are based on philosophies such as utilitarianism, which may not fully align with an Islamic worldview (Rafiei et al., 2013). Consequently, an indigenous gap persists. In Iran's historical experience, the eight-year era of the Sacred Defense, which is not merely a military event but a major cultural phenomenon (Foroughzadeh & Soltani, 2018), serves as a prominent example of integrating values with strategic leadership. This period, in the words of the Supreme Leader, is "a great treasure from which our nation can benefit... extract, and invest" (Khamenei, 2009), an emphasis that signifies the necessity of transforming memorials and value-based knowledge into tangible mechanisms for advancing today's missions.

In this context, the testaments of the Sacred Defense commanders, as primary and firsthand documents, provide a unique platform to observe this translation of value into action (Ansari, 2024; Bahramian, 2021). These "heartfelt writings," which transcend personal advice to function as a "values-based covenant" (Sahragard et al., 2024), demonstrate how religious

and ethical beliefs are converted into the logic of decision-making and patterns of mobilization and coordination at the strategic level (Abedini et al., 2019). The analysis of these documents, whose authenticity has been verified in academic research (Bahramian, 2021), offers a rich source for understanding the ideological and value system of the leaders of that era.

Therefore, addressing values-based strategic leadership by relying on these authentic documents is not only theoretically necessary but can also provide an indigenous and practical model for today's organizations. Consequently, the present study aims to design an indigenous model of values-based strategic leadership derived from the testaments of the Sacred Defense commanders, using the method of Thematic Analysis. This model seeks to illustrate how values are translated into the logic of decision-making, human resource mobilization, organizational alignment, and mission continuity in a real-world context. Hence, the primary research question is: "What is the model of values-based strategic leadership derived from the testaments of the Sacred Defense commanders, and what are its core components and themes?".

1. Theoretical Foundations and Research Background

1-1. Strategic Leadership

In the complex and dynamic global landscape, organizations face unprecedented challenges that tie their survival to the ability to adapt and anticipate (Wang, Waldman, & Zhang, 2012). In such conditions, traditional management styles have lost their efficacy, and the need for strategic leadership has become a necessity for organizational durability and success. As a field of study, this type of leadership emerged from Upper Echelons Theory (Kurzhals, Graf-Vlachy, & König, 2020), which is based on the premise that organizations are a reflection of the values and personalities of their top executives, and these characteristics strongly influence their interpretation of situations and, consequently, their strategic choices (Hambrick, 2007, as cited in Carter & Greer, 2013).

Despite the concept's complexity and multidimensional nature, numerous definitions have been proposed. Strategic leadership is the ability to influence others to make decisions that ensure the long-term viability of the organization while simultaneously maintaining its short-term success. This role extends beyond mere planning to include meaning-making, alignment, and guiding decisions under uncertainty (Ireland & Hitt, 2005). Strategic leaders, including the CEO, top management team, and board of directors, are responsible for setting the vision, providing strategic direction, and managing the organization's resources (Boal & Schultz, 2007; Carter & Greer, 2013).

In recent decades, particularly following major ethical scandals around the world, it became clear that regulations alone are insufficient to guarantee ethical behavior and that leadership plays the primary role (Rafiei et al., 2013). This paradigm shift necessitated a transition from mere strategic leadership toward "Values-Based Strategic Leadership." This approach, which emerged in response to environmental instability and the inadequacy of "goals" as the sole motivating factor, is founded on the principle that in today's changing world, "it is values that work miracles" (Ghalavandi et al., 2019). In this paradigm, values function as the "organization's DNA," shaping its culture, identity, and mission (Rzemieniak, 2018). Similarly, in the Islamic management paradigm, which is based on human dignity and spiritual transcendence, ethics, as an innate matter, is considered the best foundation for theorizing (Rafiei et al., 2013). In this view, politics is subordinate to ethics, and ethics is practically defined as "respecting the rights of all stakeholders" (Refat, 2021; Rafiei et al., 2013).

1-2. Values-Based Leadership

In today's complex and dynamic world, traditional leadership paradigms based on control and rigid structures have lost their effectiveness in facing new challenges such as the erosion of values and cultural diversity (Faith, 2013; Snyder et al., 2017; Shatalebi & Yarmohammadian, 2011). In such an environment, the need for leaders who can unite employees around a shared vision and set of common values, beyond short-term goals, is felt more than ever (Rzemieniak, 2018). In response to this need, "Values-Based Leadership" (VBL) has emerged as a modern and effective approach (Shatalebi & Yarmohammadian, 2011).

This management approach shapes the relationship between leaders and followers based on "core values," wherein a coherent value system becomes the primary reference point for all organizational activities and decisions (Rzemieniak, 2018). In this paradigm, values act as the "organization's DNA," shaping its culture, identity, and mission (Rzemieniak, 2018). The role of the leader in this model transcends that of a mere manager; they are known as the "guardian of values and architect of culture," whose main task is to define, communicate, and, most importantly, embody the core values of the organization (Faith, 2013; Rzemieniak, 2018). To develop this leadership style, it is essential to create a balance between three key dimensions: "structure" (rules and procedures), "identity" (the leader's understanding of their role), and "culture" (shared values and beliefs), as an overemphasis on structure is the reason for the failure of many organizational transformation initiatives (Snyder et al., 2017; Snyder et al., 2018).

Despite the richness of ethical leadership literature in the West, many of these theories may not be fully compatible with Islamic culture and worldview (Rafiei et al., 2013). This gap highlights the necessity of developing indigenous models derived from Islamic principles. The "Islamic management paradigm" is based on the understanding of the human being and attention to their material and spiritual dimensions, with the transcendence of the human spirit as its axis. In this paradigm, ethics, as an innate matter, is considered the best foundation for theorizing (Rafiei et al., 2013).

Contrary to politicized views, in the Islamic model, politics is subordinate to ethics, and the foundation of leadership is built on intrinsic human dignity (Refat, 2021). Based on this, ethics is practically defined as "respecting the rights of all stakeholders," and consequently, the primary duty of an ethical leader is to identify and prioritize these rights based on divine teachings (Rafiei et al., 2013). This approach influences followers through specific psychological mechanisms. Domestic research shows that ethical leaders, by creating an environment based on fairness and trust, directly enhance employees' intrinsic motivation (Pâdâsh & Golparvar, 2010). This increase in intrinsic motivation, in turn, acts as a mediator leading to desirable organizational outcomes such as increased creativity (Pâdâsh & Golparvar, 2010) and a strengthened work conscience (Ghalavandi et al., 2019).

1-3. The Testaments of Martyrs

The eight-year era of the Sacred Defense is a major cultural phenomenon that has left a valuable treasury of concepts and values (Foroughzadeh & Soltani, 2018). Among this heritage, the testaments of the martyrs hold a special place. These documents are not merely legal or personal recommendations; they are texts that express the beliefs, ideals, and messages of the martyr to society (Abedini et al., 2019). These "heartfelt writings," which, in the words of Imam Khomeini, "shake and awaken a person," are a mirror to the ideological framework of the combatants (Khosravi Zargaz & Bakhshi, 2017; Ansari, 2024) and are considered the most important firsthand documents for a deep understanding of the Sacred Defense phenomenon (Foroughzadeh & Soltani, 2018).

Doubts have been raised regarding the uniformity and lack of authenticity of these testaments. However, scientific research has shown that although thematic similarities exist due to a "dominant discourse," analyses have proven that the emphasis on concepts is unique in each testament. Therefore, these documents are considered authentic and can be reliably used as a source of research data (Bahramian, 2021).

The fundamental basis of these testaments is a coherent and profound value system that originates directly from religious sources and a monotheistic worldview; research confirms the martyrs' conscious and deliberate influence from the verses of the Holy Quran (Eslami & Hosseini Mirsafi, 2023). Analyses show that the motivations of the combatants are divided into three categories: religious, revolutionary, and national, with the religious motive being the most powerful factor (Khosravi Zargaz & Bakhshi, 2017). Furthermore, discourse analyses indicate that these values are organized around a "central signifier": "Velayat-e Faqih (Guardianship of the Jurist) and the leadership of Imam Khomeini," with concepts such as "the event of Karbala" and "anti-arrogance" (Estekbar-Setizi) acquiring their meaning in relation to this axis (Rabiei & Tamannaie, 2014).

2. Literature Review

In this section, a review of relevant domestic and international research is first presented in a table and then analyzed textually. Based on this review, the research gap and the innovation of the present study are explained.

Table 20: Literature Review

No.	Research Title	Year	Researchers	Research Findings
1	Value-based leadership – a key to sustainable and competitive advantage	2018	Rzemieniak, M. W.	VBL is vital for building a sustainable competitive advantage. The leader acts as a "guardian of values" and "architect of culture."
2	Storytelling: a co-creative process to support value-based leadership	2017	Snyder et al.	Developing VBL requires balancing "structure," "identity," and "culture." Storytelling helps leaders foster innovation and sustainable quality.
3	Strategic Leadership: Values, Styles, and Organizational Performance	2013	Carter & Greer	A conceptual continuum of leadership styles exists, corresponding to an expanding scope of stakeholder attention and performance criteria.
4	The role of values-based leadership in sustaining a culture of caring	2013	Faith, K. E.	To preserve a "culture of caring" against external pressures, organizations must be led by VBL. The study emphasizes the need to support values-based

No.	Research Title	Year	Researchers	Research Findings
				leaders.
5	Strategic leadership across cultures	2012	Wang et al.	Culture impacts five key aspects of strategic leadership, and the paper calls for more indigenous, multilevel research.
6	Value based leadership paradigm	2011	Shatalebi, B., & Yarmohammadian, M. H.	Traditional leadership paradigms are inefficient. VBL helps achieve sustainable success by creating consensus around shared values.
7	Is ethical leadership and strategic leadership a dilemma?	2011	Tutar et al.	The results show a perceived conflict between ethical and strategic leadership among managers, although they should be complementary.
8	Religion in Strategic Leadership	2005	Worden	This paper argues for a meta-theoretic framework to resolve conflicts arising from the use of religion in leadership.
9	The Role of Integrity as a Mediator in Strategic Leadership	2003	Worden	"Integrity" mediates the inherent tension between strategic planning (profit-focused) and leadership vision (value-focused).
10	Analysis of the Testaments of Tehran's Martyr Commanders	1403 (2024)	Sahragard et al.	Analyzing 100 testaments, a five-dimensional model (knowledge, values, duty, attitude, behavior) was presented, with behavioral and attitudinal aspects being most prominent.
11	Strategic Leadership Capabilities of Public Managers in Political Positions	1402 (2023)	Seyed Naghavi et al.	Using a qualitative method, 9 overarching capabilities, including a "spiritual" capability, were identified for Iranian public sector leaders.
12	Developing a Value-Based Leadership Model in Iranian	1401 (2022)	Rostamaneh Najafabadi et al.	Based on macro-level policy documents, two distinct models for VBL in the Iranian education

No.	Research Title	Year	Researchers	Research Findings
	Education			system were presented, based on concepts like theocentric naturalism and five key elements.
13	A Behavioral Analysis of Imam Ali's (AS) Ethical Leadership in the Battle of Jamal	1400 (2021)	Refat, M.	This research presents Imam Ali's (AS) leadership as an ethics-centric model where ethics precede politics, comprising elements like human dignity and tolerance.
14	Analysis of Spirituality and Ethics in the Testaments of Cultural Martyrs	1400 (2021)	Mahdi Mirzaei	Analyzing testaments, 15 spiritual and ethical components were identified, with "faith and trust in God" and "sincerity" being the most frequent.
15	Re-examining the Semantic Position of Social Values in Testaments	1400 (2021)	Abedi Kushalshah et al.	A five-fold classification of values was presented, confirming a strong similarity in the value systems of martyrs from different eras.
16	Predicting Work Conscience based on Components of Value-Based Leadership	1398 (2019)	Ghalavandi, H. et al.	The components of VBL are strong predictors of employees' work conscience and enhance their intrinsic commitment and responsibility.
17	Designing a Model of Social Capital Based on Commanders' Testaments	1398 (2019)	Abedini et al.	Using grounded theory, a model for "social capital" was designed, with "voluntary public participation" as its core phenomenon.
18	Designing an Islamic Strategic Leadership Model Based on the Covenant of Malik al-Ashtar	1398 (2019)	Zarei et al.	Through qualitative content analysis, a comprehensive model of Islamic strategic leadership was presented, emphasizing role modeling, justice, and adherence to divine values.

No.	Research Title	Year	Researchers	Research Findings
19	Identifying Strategic Leadership Competencies with a Stakeholder Satisfaction Approach	1398 (2019)	Mohammad Beigi et al.	A four-faceted competency model with an "individual (ethical and value-based)" dimension was presented for the Iranian airline industry.
20	Motivation Analysis of Combatants in the Sacred Defense	1396 (2017)	Khosravi Zargaz & Bakhshi	Analysis revealed that religious motivation (63.5%) was the most powerful factor, followed by revolutionary (33.5%) and national (3%) motives.
21	Ethical Leadership: The Fruit of the Islamic Management Paradigm	1392 (2013)	Rafiei, M. et al.	This paper introduces the theory of "Ethical Leadership" as an indigenous model based on the Islamic management paradigm and respecting stakeholder rights.
22	A Discourse Analysis of the Testaments of the Holy Defense Martyrs	1393 (2014)	Rabiei & Tamannaie	Discourse analysis revealed that the central signifier (semantic core) of the testaments is "Velayat-e Faqih (Guardianship of the Jurist) and the leadership of Imam Khomeini."
23	The Relationship Between Ethical Leadership and Intrinsic Motivation for Employee Innovation	1389 (2010)	Pâdâsh, F. & Golparvar, M.	Ethical leadership, by positively influencing intrinsic motivation, indirectly strengthens and increases creativity in the workplace.

The international literature emphasizes that traditional leadership paradigms are inadequate in addressing modern challenges such as the erosion of values and cultural diversity. Accordingly,

Values-Based Leadership (VBL) has been introduced as a solution for achieving sustainable success by establishing consensus on shared values. This approach is considered vital for building a sustainable competitive

advantage, wherein the leader assumes the dual role of a "guardian of values" and an "architect of culture". Researchers have proposed various tools to operationalize this leadership style; for instance, storytelling is presented as a co-creative tool that helps leaders balance the three key dimensions of "structure," "identity," and "culture".

A key theme in this field is the link between values and strategy. Worden (2003) demonstrated that "integrity" can mediate the inherent tension between strategic goals (profit-oriented) and leadership vision (value-oriented). However, a perceived conflict between ethical and strategic leadership persists in the minds of managers. Furthermore, research highlights the importance of context; Wang et al. (2012) concluded that culture profoundly impacts key aspects of leadership and called for indigenous research to better understand this phenomenon.

Research in Iran has also extensively explored this area, often under the titles of "Ethical Leadership" or "Values-Based Leadership." These studies have focused on both the impacts of this leadership style and the design of indigenous models aligned with Iranian-Islamic culture.

In the area of indigenous model-building, researchers have developed models tailored to Iran's value systems. Rafiei et al. (2013) introduced the theory of "Ethical Leadership" as an indigenous model based on the Islamic management paradigm, centered on "respecting stakeholder rights". Refat (2021) analyzed the conduct of Imam Ali (AS), presenting his leadership as an ethics-centric model where ethics precede politics. Similarly, Rostamaneh Najafabadi et al. (2022) developed an operational model for values-based leadership within the Iranian education system.

Regarding its impacts, studies have shown that components of values-based leadership are strong predictors of employees' work conscience. It has also been found that ethical leadership indirectly enhances creativity in the workplace by positively influencing intrinsic motivation. These value systems are clearly observed in the analysis of martyrs' testaments. Discourse analysis of these documents reveals that "Velayat-e Faqih" (Guardianship of the Jurist) is their central signifier, and content analysis identifies "religious motivation" as the most powerful factor for their presence on the battlefield. Other studies have also used these testaments to design models for concepts like "social capital".

2-1. Research Gap and Innovation

The literature review clarifies the existing research gap and the innovation of this study. On one hand, international literature explicitly calls for

indigenous and culture-sensitive research to deepen the understanding of strategic leadership, a call this study directly answers by focusing on the unique context of Iran's Sacred Defense. On the other hand, while domestic studies have presented valuable models of ethical leadership, they have predominantly derived them from foundational religious texts and macro-level policy documents.

Research that systematically links "strategic leadership" with "values-based leadership" and extracts a comprehensive model directly from the lived experiences and firsthand documents of commanders as field leaders in a crisis environment is scarce. Therefore, the primary innovation of this research is the design of an indigenous, values-based strategic leadership model derived from the qualitative data of the ideological and practical framework of the Sacred Defense commanders. This fills the gap between general leadership theories and the need for practical, context-based models..

3. Materials & Methods

Adopting a qualitative paradigm, this research is fundamental-applied in its objectives. It utilizes the methodological framework of Thematic Analysis to construct a model of values-based strategic leadership from the testaments of Sacred Defense commanders. Thematic Analysis serves as a robust and adaptable approach for systematically identifying, organizing, and reporting patterns of meaning within a textual dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method facilitates a nuanced and profound exploration of the phenomenon, as it allows the researcher to become fully immersed in the data. As noted by Boyatzis (1998), its utility lies in conducting in-depth analyses of texts, systematically processing qualitative information, and ultimately transforming that data into a coherent conceptual model.

The empirical foundation of this study is the collected testaments of martyr commanders from the Sacred Defense era. The research population includes all authenticated testaments from commanders of the IRGC and the Army during this period. From this population, a sample of 30 key documents was selected using a purposive sampling strategy. This approach ensured the inclusion of testaments with the greatest relevance and richness concerning leadership principles. Data was gathered through a document mining approach, utilizing credible archival and library sources. The profile of the analyzed documents is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: List of Analyzed Testaments in the Research

No.	Code	Full Name	No.	Code	Full Name
1	W-001	Mehdi Bakeri	16	W-016	Abbas Karimi
2	W-002	Ali Sayad Shirazi	17	W-017	Esmaeil Daghayeghi
3	W-003	Abbas Babaei	18	W-018	Hassan Abshnasan
4	W-004	Hassan Bagheri	19	W-019	Valiollah Fallahi
5	W-005	Mehdi Zeinoddin	20	W-020	Yousef Kolahdouz
6	W-006	Mahmoud Kaveh	21	W-021	Mohammadreza Dastvareh
7	W-007	Mohammad Ebrahim Hemmat	22	W-022	Mohsen Vezvaei
8	W-008	Hossein Kharrazi	23	W-023	Reza Cheraghi
9	W-009	Mohammad Boroujerdi	24	W-024	Ali Chitsazian
10	W-010	Abdolhossein Borounsi	25	W-025	Seyed Ali Hashemi
11	W-011	Mohammad Ali Jahanara	26	W-026	Mostafa Chamran
12	W-012	Hossein Elmolhoda	27	W-027	Gholamali Pichak
13	W-013	Asghar Vesali	28	W-028	Hassan Haghnegahdar
14	W-014	Abdollah Meysami	29	W-029	Kazem Najafi Rastegar
15	W-015	Naser Kazemi	30	W-030	Ali Tajallaei

An inductive data analysis protocol was implemented for this study, which unfolded across three distinct, sequential phases:

1) Open Coding (Text Decomposition): The initial phase involved a thorough immersion in each testament, from which salient concepts related to leadership (e.g., values, decision-making, mobilization) were systematically extracted. These extractions were cataloged as 'Open Codes,' serving as primary descriptive tags that remained close to the source text.

2) Developing Organizing Themes (Description and Interpretation): Subsequently, the open codes were collated and categorized into broader conceptual clusters according to their semantic relationships. This clustering process resulted in the development of 'Organizing Themes,' with each theme representing a core dimension of the emergent leadership model.

3) Designing the Final Model (Text Integration): In the final phase, the organizing themes were synthesized, and their logical interconnections were mapped. This integrative analysis culminated in the emergence of a singular 'Global Theme,' titled the "Values-Based Strategic Leadership Model," which constitutes the conceptual core of the final framework.

To enhance the analytical rigor and ensure reliability, the entire coding and theme development process was independently reviewed by a second researcher to establish inter-coder consensus.

4. Research Findings

In this section, the concepts derived from the analysis of the testaments of the Sacred Defense commanders are presented in an integrated manner. Following the open coding process of the 30 testaments, 90 unique conceptual codes were extracted. These codes reflect the governing logic of the leaders' strategic actions under crisis conditions. Samples of these conceptual codes, along with key phrases from the text, are provided in the table below.

Table 3: Sample of the Open Coding Process

Code	Key Phrase from Text	Semantic Phrase
W-003	"Let all deeds be for God; worldliness is an obstacle to victory."	Divine Intention
W-011	"Defense is a religious duty; the outcome is in God's hands."	Duty-Orientation
W-019	"Do not forget justice and the rights of others."	Justice-Centricity
W-022	"Consider Karbala the model of sacrifice and victory."	Ashura-Based Modeling
W-027	"Victory means fulfilling the duty, not the apparent result."	Redefining Victory
W-008	"The enemy's rumors are meant to weaken faith."	Resistance to Psychological Warfare
W-014	"Obedience to a unified command is the secret to victory."	Professional Obedience
W-015	"Consider the Army and IRGC united and do not create discord."	Unity of Forces
W-021	"Do not abandon military order and discipline."	Operational Discipline
W-002	"Invite the youth to the front lines."	Voluntary Mobilization
W-009	"Raise your children to be followers of the path of Islam."	Faith-Based Succession Planning
W-018	"Support the families of martyrs and combatants."	Rear Front Support
W-004	"Be patient in hardships; God's promise is true."	Strategic Patience
W-012	"Do not fear death; martyrdom is not the end of the road."	Belief in Martyrdom
W-025	"Do not cease striving until the goal is reached."	Mission Continuity

Subsequently, through a process of constant comparison and upon reaching data saturation, these conceptual codes were first grouped into 34 basic themes. In the next stage, the basic themes were categorized into 12 organizing themes. Finally, these organizing themes were integrated into 4 global themes (main themes), which constitute the primary dimensions and components of the "Values-Based Strategic Leadership Model" derived from the testaments of the Sacred Defense commanders. The following table displays this final structure.

Table 4: Network of Themes Extracted from Documents

Global Theme (Main)	Organizing Theme	Basic Theme	Code Freq.
Ontological & Spiritual Foundation	God-Centricity & Trust	Submission to Divine Will	3
		Strategic Trust in God	2
		Monotheistic Self-Awareness	1
	Sincerity in Intention & Action	Monotheistic Intention	1
		Individual & Organizational Piety	3
	Inspiration from Ashura & Martyrdom	Ashura-Based Meaning-Making	5
		Idealization of Martyrdom	8
Political & Revolutionary Logic	Loyalty to Velayat & Obedience	Centrality of Velayat	6
		Strategic Obedience	2
		Absolute Loyalty	2
	Preserving the Revolution & Anti-Arrogance	Safeguarding the Revolution	3
		Value-Based Framing of the Conflict	2
		Global Vision	2
	National Unity & Cohesion	National & Ethnic Cohesion	2
		Organizational & Unit Cohesion	2
Operational &	Duty-Orientation &	Prioritizing Duty	4

Global Theme (Main)	Organizing Theme	Basic Theme	Code Freq.
Strategic Functions	Responsibility	Comprehensive Responsibility	3
	Self-Sacrifice & Pioneering	Readiness for Sacrifice	3
		Risk & Meaning Management	2
	Insight & Mission Continuity	Foresight & Succession Planning	4
		Narrative-Building & Messaging	4
		Ensuring Path Continuity	3
		Social & Scientific Mobilization	2
Human & Social Dimension	Advising Patience & Perseverance	Managing Family Grief	4
		Spiritual Consolation	2
		Strategic Perseverance	1
	Familial Love & Gratitude	Guidance within the Family	1
		Aligning Family with the Mission	2
		Raising the Next Generation	1
	Upholding Socio-Ethical Values	The Greater Jihad & Self-Purification	3
		Ethics-Based Professionalism	2
		Warning & Setting Boundaries	2
		Social Activism	1
		Preserving Identity & Norms	2
Total Codes			90

4-1. Explanation of the Dimensions of the Values-Based Strategic Leadership Model

1) First Dimension: The Ontological and Spiritual Foundation (The Foundational Dimension)

This global theme, which accounts for 24.5% of all conceptual codes (23 codes), constitutes the most fundamental layer of the model and addresses the worldview and belief system of the commanders. This foundation acts as a mental operating system that shapes the logic of all their strategic actions and is composed of three main components:

- God-Centricity and Trust (6 codes): This component focuses on absolute reliance on the divine will in conditions of uncertainty. The data shows that commanders view themselves and their abilities as a trust from God (W-010). This perspective shifts the responsibility for the final outcome from the leader to a higher power, allowing them to make bold decisions without being paralyzed by the fear of failure. This delegation of authority is a primary source of psychological resilience, as stated in the testament of Martyr Sayad Shirazi: "O Lord! To depart is in Your hands... Place me in the service of the Imam of our time, so that I may attain the grace of martyrdom..." (W-002).

- Sincerity in Intention and Action (4 codes): This component refers to the role of purifying motivation in legitimizing leadership. The data analysis reveals that "making the objective God-centric" (W-016) is a key mechanism for preventing strategic actions from deviating toward worldly goals (such as gaining power). Sincerity transcends being a mere individual virtue and becomes a governing principle of organizational action that earns the trust of the forces and strengthens internal cohesion. This principle is explicitly emphasized in the testament of Martyr Abdollah Meysami: "O brothers of the IRGC! Make piety and sincerity your capital..." (W-014).

- Inspiration from the Ashura Model and Martyrdom-Seeking (13 codes): This component, having the highest frequency in this dimension, indicates the central role of the Karbala model as a strategic framework. The commanders view the Sacred Defense as a historical extension of the Ashura movement and use it to give meaning to sacrifice and to redefine the concept of "victory." In this logic, martyrdom is not a failure but the pinnacle of success. This model transforms operational risk-taking into a religious virtue and raises the organization's tolerance threshold for casualties. This perspective is introduced as a fundamental prerequisite in the

testament of Martyr Zeinoddin: "The first necessary condition for safeguarding Islam is to believe in Imam Hussein (AS)..." (W-005).

2) Second Dimension: The Political and Revolutionary Logic (The Directional Dimension)

This global theme, comprising 22.3% of all codes (21 codes), explains the governing political and ideological framework of leadership action. This dimension shows that the leader in the field considers themself an executor of a grand national strategy within the framework of the Islamic Republic.

- Loyalty to Velayat and Obedience to the Imam (10 codes): This component, with its high frequency in the data, is the most central principle of this political logic. Adherence to the Velayat-e Faqih (Guardianship of the Jurist) acts as the final arbiter and a unifying factor in all decision-making. This obedience is not merely an organizational duty but an ontological belief that legitimizes military actions and ensures strategic cohesion by creating a unified command. Martyr Mehdi Bakeri expresses this principle as a heartfelt covenant: "Be a supporter and, from the bottom of your heart, a follower of the Imam..." (W-001).

- Preserving the Revolution and Anti-Arrogance (7 codes): This component shows that the commanders do not see the war as a purely defensive, border-limited phenomenon, but as an arena for safeguarding the macro-level achievements of the Islamic Revolution and combating global arrogance. This view expands the strategic horizon of the battle from the national to the international level and imbues it with a global mission. This approach is clearly articulated in the testament of Martyr Hassan Bagheri: "For now, our revolution has become like a poisoned arrow for all the arrogant powers..." (W-004).

- National Unity and Cohesion (4 codes): This component focuses on the commanders' emphasis on internal integrity as a strategic necessity. The data shows that leaders were aware of the dangers posed by ethnic divides (in regions like Kurdistan) or organizational rifts (between the Army and IRGC) and actively worked to counter them. This view considers national security a product of the internal cohesion of society, as Martyr Naser Kazemi addresses the people of Kurdistan: "...Do not let the enemies destroy our unity..." (W-015).

3) Third Dimension: Operational and Strategic Functions (The Action-Oriented Dimension)

This global theme, accounting for 26.6% of all codes (25 codes), is the most prominent dimension of the model and addresses the tangible and

practical manifestations of values on the battlefield and the "how-to" of command.

- Duty-Orientation and Responsibility (7 codes): This component is one of the key logics governing the commanders' decision-making. Duty-orientation means focusing on the correct performance of a task, regardless of its short-term outcome. This approach makes the organization resilient to potential failures and removes the psychological pressure of "achieving results at any cost" from the commander. This principle acts as a strategic anchor for maintaining stability in uncertain conditions, as stated in the words of Martyr Seyed Ali Hashemi: "We are commissioned to [fulfill our] duty, not [to guarantee the] result..." (W-025).

- Self-Sacrifice and Pioneering in Devotion (5 codes): This component focuses on leading by example. The data shows that commanders derive their legitimacy not from their rank, but from their pioneering in accepting risk and their readiness to sacrifice. This behavior creates deep trust among the troops and increases their motivation to participate in high-risk missions. This logic plays a key role in the psychological preparation of the forces, as stated in the testament of Martyr Kazem Najafi Rastegar: "...An operation is ahead in which we might all be sacrificed. But Ashura is our path..." (W-029).

- Insight and Ensuring the Continuity of the Mission (13 codes): This component, having the highest frequency in this dimension, focuses on the commanders' forward-looking perspective to preserve the path. Leadership in this model is not limited to victory in an operation but also includes the duty of providing insight and ensuring succession. This view makes the organization resilient to the loss of key leaders and guarantees that the mission will not stop with the departure of individuals. This forward-looking mission is expressed in the testament of Martyr Ali Chitsazian: "My wife! ...After me, continue the mission of the martyrs' blood with your pen..." (W-024).

4) Fourth Dimension: The Human and Social Dimension (The Sustaining Dimension)

This global theme, also comprising 26.6% of the codes (25 codes), transcends the strategic level to address the human and social aspects of leadership. This dimension shows that the commander is an ethical mentor and a member of a larger family and community.

- Advising Patience and Perseverance (7 codes): This is the most frequent recommendation in the human dimension. Aware of the

suffering their martyrdom will impose on their families, the commanders strive to strengthen the psychological capacity of their survivors by giving meaning to the loss and recalling the model of patience in the event of Karbala. This consoling function is an ethical responsibility that the leader does not forget even on the verge of death, as stated in the testament of Martyr Valiollah Fallahi: "...You, be patient like the wives of the martyrs of Karbala..." (W-019).

- Familial Love and Gratitude (4 codes): This component displays a human and tangible face of the leader. Contrary to the stereotypical image of a warrior detached from the world, the testaments are filled with affectionate expressions and gratitude for their families. The data shows that commanders considered their families as partners and supporters of their mission and rooted their spiritual strength in these healthy emotional bonds, such as the advice of Martyr Abbas Babaei to his wife: "...Being a Muslim is not only about praying and fasting; you must also be kind to people..." (W-003).

- Upholding Socio-Ethical Values (10 codes): This component focuses on extending the leader's concerns from the battlefield to the social and cultural spheres. The commanders see themselves as responsible for safeguarding societal norms and values, emphasizing concepts such as the "Greater Jihad" (the struggle against the self) and Hijab. This view indicates that military victory is not sustainable without the moral health of society, as stated in the testament of Martyr Mohammadreza Dastvareh: "...The greater war is within our hearts... My sisters should have the Hijab of Zahra..." (W-021).

The synthesis and integration of these four dimensions form the final "Values-Based Strategic Leadership" model. This model shows that the desired leadership in the view of the Sacred Defense commanders is a multi-layered, integrated system. The ontological and spiritual foundation (the foundational dimension) acts as the central core, providing the philosophical "why" for all actions. This core is manifested in the political and revolutionary logic (the directional dimension), which defines the framework of the leader's loyalty. These two theoretical dimensions are then translated into the "how-to" of command on the battlefield in the operational and strategic functions (the action-oriented dimension). Finally, the human and social dimension (the sustaining dimension) completes this structure, showing that this leader is a responsible human being towards their family and community. Together, these four dimensions define leadership not as a position, but as a comprehensive spiritual, political, operational, and social action.
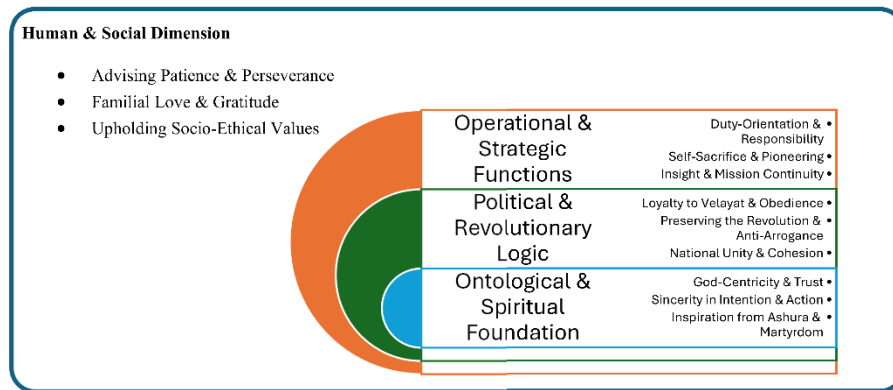
Figure 3. The Values-Based Strategic Leadership Model of Sacred Defense Commanders

5. Discussion & Conclusion

The research findings indicate that Iran's resilience model is a dynamic and hierarchical system that, contrary to passive approaches, is founded on proactive agency. The frequency analysis of the codes revealed that the "Resilience in Strategic Agency" dimension (54.7%) was significantly the most central dimension of the model, built upon the foundation of "Socio-Political Resilience" (25.9%) and supported by "Resilience in Foundational Dimensions" (19.4%). This structure is not merely descriptive but reveals a causal logic that constitutes the primary innovation of this research.

The model that emerged from this research establishes a deep dialogue with theoretical literature, complementing and operationalizing it. At the domestic level, studies such as Gol-Vardi (1396/2017) and Shahmohammadi & Khezri (1401/2022) have correctly emphasized the multi-faceted nature of national resilience. Our findings confirm this multi-dimensionality but go a step further by revealing a causal and hierarchical relationship among these dimensions. While the existing literature presents these dimensions in parallel, our analysis demonstrates that it is the supreme leadership (part of the socio-political dimension) that activates popular cohesion, making this dimension a prerequisite and an enabling foundation for strategic agency.

At the international level, this model also corresponds well with theoretical frameworks. Neumann's (2024) "Rings of Resilience" model becomes effective when a "central core" links and aligns these rings; our findings show that the role of leadership is precisely to perform the function of that central core. Indeed, it is this "strategic leader" who plays the role of the "Master of Uncertainty," as described by Mafisebi et al. (2025) at the

enterprise level, but in this case at the nation-state level, shaping the macro-orientation of the system in the face of geopolitical risks (Kitsing, 2022). Furthermore, the three-tiered model of Hepfer & Lawrence (2022) (functional, operational, and strategic) is clearly observable in our findings; infrastructural resilience (functional level) and military response (operational level) were both guided by macro-level leadership and semantic framing (strategic level). The innovation of our research lies in demonstrating that it is this strategic level (leadership) that directs and enables the other two levels, rather than merely existing alongside them. Finally, the "Semantic Resilience and Psychological Capital" dimension in our model is the practical translation of the concepts of "becoming better than before" (Koronis & Ponis, 2018) and "metamorphosis" (Morais-Storz et al., 2018). Our findings indicate that this "learning" and "post-crisis growth" does not occur automatically; rather, it is the supreme leadership that, by attributing meaning to the crisis (turning a threat into an opportunity), transforms it into a strategic asset for the future.

The key conclusion of this research is that the strategic resilience model of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a dynamic and causal system that is activated and directed by a central strategic actor, namely the Leader of the Islamic Revolution. It is this integrated leadership that provides the foundation for national cohesion and gives legitimacy and direction to strategic agency in its military and diplomatic dimensions. Therefore, resilience in this model is not a static attribute but a dynamic capacity that, in times of crisis, is activated by the supreme leadership and is formed through the constructive interaction of hard power, soft power, and social capital, which are mobilized by this leadership. This model represents a link between realities (agency), ideals (values), and leadership (the linking factor).

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Epistemological Re-reading of Islamic Management Knowledge
(Providing Implications for Understanding Islamic Management Knowledge and the Pattern of Its Realization)

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Abstract

Purpose: This article aims to typologize the theories discussed in the field of management in order to provide a foundation for evaluating and formulating theories categorized as Islamic management. Given the diverse reactions within Islamic societies to modern Western sciences—ranging from full acceptance based on the role of reason in religious epistemology to calls for transformation—the study argues that resolving this debate depends on a deeper understanding of the essence and nature of theory.

Design/Methodology/Approach: To develop the typology, the study reviews the philosophical foundations of Aristotle, whose framework has been widely accepted and applied by many Muslim philosophers. Aristotle's categorization of forms of wisdom serves as the conceptual basis for classifying theories. The article analyzes these philosophical premises to construct a classification system that differentiates theories according to their epistemic basis, criteria of validity, and content structure.

Findings: The analysis identifies three types of theory or wisdom within the realm of sciences: Theoretical wisdom, Practical wisdom, Poetic wisdom

Each type differs in its mode of production, standards of validity, and thematic content. As an interdisciplinary field, management knowledge draws upon all three forms of wisdom, and each type entails its own requirements and conditions for being linked to the process of Islamization. Understanding these distinctions clarifies how management theories originate and operate within different epistemological layers.

Practical Implications: Based on the typology, the article identifies the necessary implications for achieving Islamic management knowledge. Recognizing whether a given theory belongs to theoretical, practical, or poetic wisdom informs the appropriate strategies for evaluating its compatibility with Islamic teachings, modifying its components, or developing alternative theories rooted in Islamic epistemology.

Originality/Value: By employing an Aristotelian typology to analyze management theories, this article introduces a novel and philosophically grounded basis for assessing and constructing Islamic management theories. It contributes to ongoing debates about the interaction between Islamic thought and Western sciences and provides a structured framework to guide future efforts toward the Islamization of management knowledge.

Keywords

Introduction

In recent years, with the serious confrontation of Islamic societies with modern sciences, we have witnessed extensive and diverse reactions regarding the type of interaction Muslims have with the sciences produced in the West. Some have emphasized that reason is within the geometry of religious knowledge and is naturally a valid religious source and a divine proof alongside narrative evidence, and it makes no sense to consider rational proof alien and separate from narrative proof (Javadi Amoli, 2010, pp. 16-17), and Western sciences, which are the result of rational reflection (including abstract and empirical reason), have no conflict or contradiction with religion, and one can benefit well from these sciences. On the other hand, some, by considering sciences like management intertwined with the perspectives and value systems of the context in which such sciences were created, emphasize the necessity of re-reading and formulating management knowledge based on the Islamic value system (Mesbah Yazdi, 2009).

One of the knowledge domains where the concept of religious science and presenting Islamic knowledge in that domain has received much attention is the field of management knowledge. After the victory of the Islamic Revolution, demands from various groups in society have led to extensive efforts in creating and presenting Islamic management knowledge, resulting in different approaches both in conceptualizing Islamic management and in the methodology of its realization and research[1]. Some consider the use of the existing body of management knowledge produced for Islamic societies possible and believe that since sciences seek to discover reality and management knowledge in many cases seeks to express human behaviors, one can use the produced management knowledge. Some consider the use of management knowledge on making reforms and considering the cultural context of society. Others generally consider the use of management formulated in the West based on their value system and emphasize the necessity of producing sciences compatible with religious beliefs and values, and the social context of each society.

This disagreement can be attributed to two issues. One is the difference in understanding religion and the approach that proponents have toward religion, and based on the definition and understanding we have of religion, what are the sources of knowledge acquisition in religion, and to what extent

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1. In this introduction, we are not seeking to identify the existing types of perspectives on the concept and essence of Islamic management; therefore, for further familiarity, refer to: Abedi Jafari & Masoumi Mehr (2013), Amiri & Abedi Jafari (2013), and Chitsazian & Javanali Azar (2014).

is the main function of religion in human life (Bagheri, 2008). The second difference in these approaches stems from the difference in the definition and concept they attribute to the concept and content of management knowledge and theory in Islamic management. For example, when we consider a management theory as a proposition discovering reality that is the result of human experience, or when we consider theory as a proposition intertwined with ideology and somehow accompanied by ethical norms, the concept of Islamization for it differs.

Based on this, it seems that recognizing the nature and essence of theory in management greatly helps in explaining and understanding, as well as selecting the best model in researching this field. Accordingly, the main goal of the research is to re-read the perception and conceptualization that can be had of management knowledge and to lay the foundation for the concept of Islamic management based on it. Based on this goal, the main questions of this research are: What are the levels of perception and understanding of management knowledge? What is the nature and essence of scientific propositions called management? What does the concept of Islamic management mean in accordance with these perceptions? In this article, an effort has been made to answer these questions and some questions raised in this field, to provide a more precise definition of the concept of management knowledge, and based on it, to provide a basis for identifying the nature and type of propositions forming books named management theory, to address the concept called management theory on the extensive collection of existing theories in this discipline, so that based on it, corresponding methodologies for producing management knowledge in other indigenous contexts can be recommended.

In this article, attention has been paid to the fact that the perception of the concept of science has undergone a metamorphosis, and science encompasses a more diverse range of propositions compared to the perception that the tradition of Islamic scholars called science. This change in meaning and the new nature of science has had profound effects on many dimensions of science, such as its production and transformation, and without precision in it, we fall into error. An error that may grip researchers and theorists in the field of management, and in the process of producing Islamic management knowledge, they may take a path where their findings are not accepted by the scientific community, and managers and government and organizational officials also feel a great distance between the operational efficiency of the produced knowledge on one hand and the translated imported content on the other.

1. A Look at the Formation of Management Knowledge

The concept of management and administration of human collections and societies is an ancient concept that has been attended to simultaneously with human social life. However, not much time has passed since the creation of theories titled "scientific management" and the academic discipline with this title. In fact, presenting theoretical propositions as management theories and establishing professional management schools where individuals graduate in the academic discipline called management was a new event that occurred after the formation of modern sciences, and it was after World War II that management was introduced as a modern science. But for management to be recognized as a knowledge discipline and attract the minds of many scholars, it owes to a transformation and metamorphosis in the perception of the meaning and concept of science.

1-1. Metamorphosis in the Meaning of Science

The extensive expansion of sciences aimed at scientizing professions such as agriculture, tool-making, medicine, and management drew attention to a type of knowledge that was previously much less considered as science. Although these sciences were discussed in Aristotle's works, he considered them among practical wisdoms or arts that had a completely different nature from sciences. Before the Industrial Revolution, science and knowledge in Eastern and Western philosophy were always seen and defined as "applied to being," but after that, it suddenly turned into a concept "applied to doing" and gained general desirability. Science and knowledge in their new meaning is "applied science" and knowledge that can be offered, and science as a tool for gaining economic results and social benefits. Before the Industrial Revolution, in the view of scientists, knowledge was about things like knowing existence, human, nature, or desirable and commendable ends for human affairs, but after the Industrial Revolution and the transformations that occurred in epistemology, knowledge that had efficiency and could create economic value became important, and scholars' attention turned toward knowing the techniques of performing tasks (Drucker, 1995, p. 76).

One of those who well points to this change and is himself one of the founders of disseminating this interpretation of science is the American engineer Frederick Taylor. In his concise yet reference work titled "The Principles of Scientific Management," he describes this change in the view of science and the formulation of new sciences as follows (quoted from Denhardt, 2003, pp. 87-88):

> *Regarding the use of the word science in scientific management, a very serious objection has been raised. I was engaged in coming to the point*

that this objection basically originates from the professors of this country (America). They are annoyed by the use of the word science for every minor matter and daily affairs. I think the correct response to this criticism is to quote a new definition of science that has recently been proposed by one of the professors. He defines science as "classified or organized knowledge of any kind." And certainly, there has been a collection of knowledge, but this collection was not classified in the minds of foremen, and then this knowledge was turned into laws and rules and formulas and .... showed the organization and classification of knowledge, even though it may not have been approved by some people who should call it science.

1-2. The Birth of a Knowledge Called "Management"

It was in this type of view of the concept of knowledge that management came into existence. In fact, both management as a profession and management as knowledge are the offspring of the dominance of modern thought, which announced the main distinction of its thought with pre-modern in the rational basis of management from a technical viewpoint (Ahanchian, 2007, p. 43).

Drucker (1995, pp. 79-86) considers the creation of management knowledge as resulting from the third level of the technological revolution that played a fundamental role in creating the new civilization. In his view, the three levels or stages of the technological revolution are the technical level, productivity level, and management level. At the first level, techniques corresponded to natural sciences and physics, but the next two levels, namely productivity and management, corresponded to sciences related to social and human sciences. In fact, it was in the latter two levels that various management orientations such as industrial management, business management, and strategic management took shape.

In the management revolution that occurred simultaneously with World War II and in the fifth decade of the twentieth century, management is technology-centered. In this lexicon, management means techniques for utilizing existing science and knowledge to find out how to best achieve the expected results from existing knowledge. As stated, management was not a subject that was attended to and used in the second half of the twentieth century, and it had been used by humans for years, but what caused the difference in the new era was the technological view of management. Based on this view, the techniques used by managers and considered as the secrets of their success in administration and planning were systematically documented and classified in a precise template to serve as a basis for the

actions of other managers in the future. In the new meaning of management, a manager is someone responsible for using and applying other knowledge. In this meaning of management, technology or management knowledge specifies for managers first what other knowledges they should seek, and second, how they can achieve desired goals using these knowledges, and here knowledge is in the service of knowledge. Based on what was stated, management is a kind of social technology aimed at proper planning of affairs. Accordingly, a knowledge domain called management took shape and soon attracted much attention.

Since the goal of the article is the genealogy of management knowledge, in this opportunity, we delve into a more precise explanation of the perception of management as knowledge.

2. Two Perceptions of Management as Knowledge

In general, in using the concept of science, two meanings can be intended. Sometimes science is a single knowledge that is often expressible in the form of a proposition, briefly called "science as an epistemic proposition," and sometimes the use of the word science means expressing a coherent epistemic system resulting from several propositions, also referred to as "scientific discipline" (Sozanchi, 2010, pp. 15-16). Accordingly, when in the epistemic sphere of management, talk of science or management knowledge arises, at least two meanings and concepts can be derived from this phrase. First, single propositions that are also referred to as management theories or theories, and second, a collection of knowledge and theories that this knowledge can be used in better planning and administration[1] of human societies and communities (such as organizations).

Accordingly, in the following, we address these two perceptions of management knowledge and explain them as much as possible.

2-1. Management Science as a Scientific Discipline

As mentioned, the meaning of management knowledge as a coherent epistemic system recognized as a scientific discipline is a camp of theories inspired by other knowledges such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, ethics, political sciences, and the like (Hatch, 2007, p. 24) that are used in better planning and administration of societies and organizations.

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1. The meaning of "better planning and administration" refers to achieving the two key values of management: effectiveness and efficiency. Based on the realization of these values, human collectives are more successful in achieving their desired goals and purposes while incurring lower costs to attain them.

Unlike other disciplines such as mathematics, chemistry, philosophy, and sociology that have a specific subject and usually their theories are nourished by thinkers and theorists in that field, what distinguishes management knowledge from other knowledges is the goal and end of the discipline, namely, better planning and administration of affairs. In fact, it is the goal of this science that determines which epistemic propositions and theories can be considered as part of management knowledge or not[1]. The diversity of the mentioned knowledge disciplines that are the theoretical source of management can only be coherent under the end and goal of the management discipline, which is "planning and administration of human collections," and form a concept called "management knowledge".

Management science, in the meaning of an academic discipline, implies a multitude of epistemic propositions and diverse theories from other scientific disciplines that have been placed in the university discipline of management with a specific purpose and goal. The diversity of courses in this discipline encompasses a diverse range from psychology and sociology to systems study, economics, cultural studies, and even professional ethics. Of course, it should be noted that these disciplines and their theoretical approaches and level of analysis are not the same, and this kind of diversity that exists in the type of theoretical propositions of management knowledge causes a plurality

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1. There are various perspectives regarding the factor that causes the unity of a scientific discipline and distinguishes it from other disciplines (for further study, see Javadi Amoli, *Rahiq-e Makhtum*, Vol. 1, pp. 214-224). However, in general, to distinguish sciences from one another, two bases for the classification of sciences can be considered: subject and purpose. In the basis of classifying sciences based on subject, it is argued that the issues of each science ultimately revolve around a specific truth. For example, the reason for the kinship of the issues in the science of mathematics is that all of them discuss numbers and their properties and effects. Therefore, what connects the issues of sciences to one another is the same entity around which the issues of that science revolve, namely the subject of that science, and the distinction of sciences from one another also stems from the distinction of their subjects (Motahhari, 1990, p. 20). The other basis for unifying a scientific discipline and distinguishing it from other sciences is the expected purpose of that science. This perspective, with a historical-sociological approach to sciences and the emergence of interdisciplinary scientific disciplines (such as management and others), holds that the expected purpose of these sciences unifies them and enables the aggregation of epistemic propositions from multiple scientific disciplines under a single scientific discipline. By examining these two bases for classifying sciences more closely, it can be found that the basis for the division and unification of true sciences is their subject, while the criterion for unity in conventional sciences is their purpose (Sozanchi, 2010, p. 103).

in the method of thinking and research in this academic discipline. In fact, in university disciplines referred to as interdisciplinary, a range of different types of knowledge and wisdom can be found.

2-2. Management Science as Single Theoretical Propositions

Alongside the concept of management knowledge as a scientific discipline, management science can be interpreted as individual theoretical propositions that assist in the process of understanding, predicting, and acting in the management arena. As stated, management knowledge as a camp discipline has borrowed numerous theoretical single propositions from other disciplines such as sociology, psychology, economics, political sciences, etc., and uses them to achieve goals. On the other hand, there are theories that have emerged in the realm of the emergence of the management profession, and after that, during the maturation of the management discipline.

Accordingly, there are two types of theoretical propositions or theories in management. The first category is theories that have been taken from other disciplines and, since they are attended to and used by scholars and executive managers with the goal of reaching a better model for administration, are considered management theories. Alongside these theories, there is a group of theoretical propositions that have been specifically formulated for administration and management. In this view, every management theory is actually a kind of soft technology that contacts the organizational environment and the challenges that environment poses to organizations in relation to their performance, and the goal of this soft technology is to bring the performance of human collections to the desired level of effectiveness (Gaeini, 2011, pp. 163-165). Theories such as control theory, scientific management theory, balance theory, planning theory, and ..... are among these theories. The serious difference that this category of theories has with their counterparts in the management discipline, such as organizational behavior theories, is that those theories claim to discover, identify, and describe phenomena or external entities such as humans. Regardless of our view of external reality, whether mental or objective, but in any case, the subject of behavior theories is about an external reality. Whereas management theories talk about oughts and necessary actions that managers are responsible for to achieve the goals of human collections.

One of the best examples of the second category of theories is the theory that Taylor refers to as "scientific management." Taylor believes that each of the supervisors and foremen of the factory he studied, based on their experiences, recognized and systematically applied the best possible and

imaginable ways for performing tasks. He believed that the only action he took to achieve "scientific management" was identifying the mentalities and ways of performing tasks by supervisors and foremen. This effort by Taylor is actually his access to the thought system or management theories that were active in the minds of each of the operational managers of that collection.

In this article, what we pay attention to is the view of management as a scientific discipline. In fact, the concern of the article is finding requirements for Islamizing management in the form of a scientific discipline. Based on what was said, management knowledge encompasses a diverse range of theories from other disciplines. Therefore, a diverse range of scientific propositions, whether theories that discover reality or have a technological nature and speak of how to perform tasks, can be found in the scope of this knowledge. The important point that can be found in this diversity is that the concept of Islamization of knowledge is not the same for all of them. Therefore, in the following, we introduce a model for the genealogy of theories so that under it, while better identifying the nature of these theories, we can gain insights for Islamizing the existing theories under the broad umbrella of management knowledge.

3. Genealogy of Knowledge or Wisdom

One of the valuable foundations for the classification and genealogy of sciences is from Aristotle's viewpoint. Aristotle's views, on one hand, have been used and explained by Muslim philosophers such as Farabi, Avicenna, and Khwaja Nasir al-Din, and for this reason, have had profound effects on the scientific and philosophical heritage of the Islamic world, and many have used his foundations, and on the other hand, the authentic classifications he provided for human sciences (such as the three sciences of ethics cultivation, household management, and civil politics) are still used and attended to by scholars. Therefore, Aristotle's view on the division of sciences has been taken as the basis of analysis in this article.

From studying Aristotle's works, one can reach a general classification of the ranks of sciences that many thinkers have also utilized in their works (Hassani & Mousavi, 2019, p. 53; Keynes, 1890, p. 21; and also see Madadpour, 2008, p. 147). In Aristotle's view, sciences are divided into three ranks: theoretical sciences (including mathematics, natural science, and first philosophy or divine science), practical sciences (including ethics, household management, and civil politics), and productive sciences (including art and

construction and everything related to techne). In the following, we explain each of these three categories in detail[1].

3-1. Theoretical Sciences

In Aristotle's view, this category of sciences arises from theoretical wisdom (philosophy) and scientific knowledge (episteme). In Aristotle's view, scientific knowledge judges about general and necessary subjects (Hassani & Mousavi, 2019, pp. 50-52). The collection of theoretical sciences is propositions that describe or explain realities and engage in examining what is or is not. In Aristotle's view, this type of knowledge is the most complete type of wisdom whose end is not producing something or providing and preparing an effect and result, but understanding and comprehending the principles and primary causes of reality. This knowledge originates from human wonder and ignorance about existence and its end is explaining objects and the world that humans deal with (Madadpour, 2008, p. 219). Aristotle believes that this knowledge can be obtained through induction or syllogism. Induction is the origin of general knowledge, and syllogism starts from the general (Aristotle, 2001, p. 212).

3-2. Practical Sciences

The second type of knowledge is practical sciences. Practical sciences arise from practical wisdom (phronesis), and this category of wisdom is related to the subject of acting. Unlike productive sciences whose goal is making, practical sciences address human action (Hassani & Mousavi, 2019, p. 51) and seek to express and determine the correct action. Aristotle believes for knowing practical wisdom that: "The man of practical wisdom is one who thinks correctly about what is good and beneficial for himself; not about partial good, for example, what is good for health or strength, but for good

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1. However, in the view of some thinkers, particularly Muslim philosophers, the classification of human knowledge and theories is divided into two types: positive knowledge and normative knowledge, following the Greek philosophers who paid attention to this classification and which can be observed in the works of both early and later scholars, albeit with different naming. Based on this, in Islamic philosophy, wisdom is divided into two sections: theoretical wisdom and practical wisdom (Motahhari, 1999, p. 178). This omission and lack of reference to a third type of knowledge by thinkers such as Plato was due to their belief that artistic knowledge pertains to the lower realm of the human soul and lacks a domain that refers to objective and universal knowledge (Madadpour, 2008, p. 147). In fact, these philosophers believed that since artistic wisdom seeks particular propositions that are applicable to a specific issue and are limited to time and place, it is not possible to extract a general abstraction from it, and therefore, it cannot be labeled as wisdom.

and beneficial in the comprehensive sense, meaning ways and means of achieving a good life accompanied by happiness" (Aristotle, 2001, p. 215).

This type of science speaks of what should be or should not be, and as a result, with a kind of judgment and adjudication about human action, it is also referred to as normative knowledge. Normative knowledge and practical wisdom are limited in various aspects. First, it is limited to humans and does not include non-humans. Second, it relates to voluntary human actions and does not include actions in the realm of biology and psychology. Third, it relates to the oughts of voluntary actions and therefore deals with the rational faculty from the perceptual apparatus and the will faculty from the executive apparatus, not with imagination from the perceptual apparatus nor with desire from the executive apparatus. It should be noted that discussion about human free will and the preliminaries of voluntary action, what preliminaries occur for human voluntary action to take place, or discussion about the nature of free will or whether humans are free or determined, is outside the domain of practical wisdom and relates to theoretical wisdom in philosophy or anthropology. Fourth, practical wisdom does not discuss all oughts, but discusses those oughts that are general, absolute, and human oughts, not individual and relative oughts. In fact, since oughts arise from individuals' goals and individuals' goals can be contrary or even contradictory (for example, when individuals are enemies), therefore, the oughts discussed in practical wisdom are those for the human species and, with observance of conditions, have the capability to be generalized to all human beings. Like ethical oughts that have the capability to be generalized to all human beings (Motahhari, 1999, p. 179). In fact, practical wisdom, like theoretical wisdom, is a kind of timeless and placeless rules, but unlike them, speaks of oughts, recommendations, and prescriptions. As stated, Aristotle considers examples of this practical wisdom as statecraft or law-making; general procedures that, considering specific goals, determine the way to achieve them and specify human duty and action.

3-3. Productive Sciences

The third type of science is the productive sciences. This category of sciences is formed based on human practical ability (techne) and its goal. The type of this section is techniques that are necessary for meeting human needs (Hassani & Mousavi, 2019, p. 42).

To become more familiar with the concept of techne, it is necessary to become familiar with another concept that, in Aristotle's view, is intertwined with techne, and that is deliberation. Deliberation is neither related to the cognitive part nor to practical wisdom and ethics, but its subject is action in a situation of agency. Deliberation is not thought and opinion; truth and falsehood

flow in it. It has a kind of searching and researching, and the goal is important in it. Deliberation is goal-oriented, has quality, and time is important in it (not to be prolonged). The subject of deliberation is the ways that lead us to the goal, and of course, these ways are not known. One of the examples of deliberation is the way of making money (Hassani & Mousavi, 2019, pp. 44-45). This type of wisdom is of the executive and applied knowledge type that expresses how to perform a correct and prudent action in an unexpected and ambiguous social or political situation (Van de Ven, 2007, p. 3).

Friedman, in explaining productive sciences, believes that Keynes defines positive economics as a systematic body of knowledge about what is. He introduces normative science as a systematic body of knowledge that discusses the criteria of what ought to be, and defines art as a system of rules that are necessary for reaching a specific destination. In his view, art is a collection of compatible rules formulated to achieve specific goals. The goal of positive science is to determine and formulate a series of uniformities, the goal of normative science is to determine beliefs and thoughts, and the goal of art is to formulate knowledge and imagination (quoted from Namazi & Dadgar, 2006, pp. 97-101).

In Aristotle's view, the way to acquire techne is extensive experience through which humans reach a general perception about affairs. Experience is one case, but techne is abstracted experiences that are more general and theoretical than one experience. In techne, the individual has achieved a kind of causation, and for this reason, can cause a range of experiences and phenomena that mere experience cannot. Another important feature of techne is its teachability, which can be transferred to others (Hassani & Mousavi, 2019, p. 46).
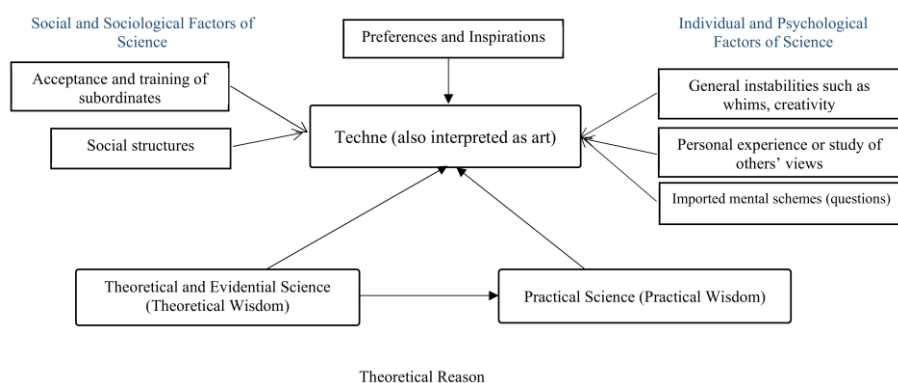

Figure 1: The Productive Relationship of Theoretical Sciences, Normative Sciences, and Artistic Wisdom

Table 1 refers to some features of the three types of wisdom and knowledge.

Table 1: Features of Types of Knowledge

Type of Knowledge or Wisdom	Subject of Study	Axis	Criterion of Validity	Content
Theoretical Sciences	Objective Truth / Is-Proposition	Theoretical Wisdom / Scientific Knowledge	Discovery of Truth / True/False	Discovery / Knowledge of Beings
Scientific Knowledge	Conventions / Ought-Proposition	Practical Wisdom	Non-Futility / In Achieving Human Perfection	Knowledge of Oughts, Recommendation of General Lines
Productive Sciences	Conventions / Ought-Proposition	Practical Ability	Non-Futility / In Achieving End and Goal	Recommendation for Specific and Particular Action(s)

4. Management Knowledge: Theoretical Science, Practical Science, or Productive Science?

In this opportunity, based on what was said about the definition of management knowledge on one hand and the genealogy of sciences on the other, we seek an answer to one of the research questions about the type and nature of management knowledge propositions. The management discipline, since it has a technological nature and is oriented toward an end, unlike disciplines such as physics, chemistry, psychology, or even law (where the basis of formation and coherence of the discipline is the subject of study) where most raised theories are of one type, the theories raised in it are not of one type; although the coherent end of the discipline has created a separate nature and unique identity called the management discipline. This discipline is a camp of theories from various scientific disciplines that a professional, called a manager or a scholar in this field, needs to use each of these sciences in reaching solutions when facing various situations or issues.

On one hand, a collection of general psychology theories, sociology, and social psychology borrowed, typically considered cognitive and theoretical theories that seek to know human behaviors or human collections (group, organization, or society). On the other hand, knowledge domains and theories related to practical wisdom, such as organizational ethics, justice,

regulation, and fundamental rights, are placed in it, which express the necessary oughts and ought-nots in the management and policy-making arena.

In the management discipline collection, these oughts and ought-nots are raised from many other disciplines that may not have an explicit title for this subject. In fact, although these sciences and propositions were discussed in the past in discussions like ethics, in the process of forming modern sciences, these sciences were raised under many disciplines such as economics and political sciences, and those ethical propositions were used in other consumer disciplines. Since these disciplines seek policy-making, they are intertwined with normative sciences, and in the modern era, ethical principles were pursued in the form of propositions that had scientific names. Amartya Sen presents this reality for the economics discipline, which is very close to management in terms of content and end, as follows (Sen, 1998, p. 2, quoted from Raei, 2017, p. 56):

> Modern economics largely took root as one of the branches of ethics. Not only was Adam Smith, the "father of modern economics," a professor of moral philosophy at the University of Glasgow, but the discipline of "economics" was long considered a branch of ethics. The fact that economics was one of the main courses in the "moral sciences" major at the university until recently is another example of the traditional view of the nature of economics.

A clear example of this entry is Adam Smith's work "The Wealth of Nations." Smith, as a professor of moral philosophy, wrote a book titled "The Wealth of Nations," which is a classic and foundational work in economics, in which he disseminates and expresses the ethical foundations of liberalism and economic liberalism.

Finally, there is a collection of theories in the management discipline that express the way and method of achieving goals. Most courses and books titled management, such as production management, market and marketing management, financial management, and the like, are of this type. This collection is theoretical propositions that say the way and method of performing work or building a collection and structure.

Another category of training that management students learn in professional schools is successful examples and principles that, based on the

experiences of successful managers, are documented and presented to students in the form of books and case studies[1].

Therefore, management knowledge as a university discipline includes all three types of wisdom and knowledge, and more precisely, it is hard to find a management book that has not benefited from all three types of knowledge and theory. It is professional managers who, in their minds, draw from these various realms of theory and choose a kind of theory for their action or reach a new theory for their actions.

4-1. Management as Scientific Theory

Here, it can be said that what is known as management theory in the strict sense is artistic wisdom. These theories are actually responses and solutions that managers present in facing real organizational and executive problems and issues at micro and macro levels relative to the issues. Of course, sometimes these theories are systematically formulated by their ideators and formulated and arranged based on the criteria of the scientific community and presented to the scientific community in the form of scientific management theories and welcomed; Taylor's and Fayol's efforts are among this category. Sometimes these theories are not formulated by the theorist but scholars analyze and formulate it scientifically and abstract the mental theories and mental models of successful managers in the form of management researches and sometimes combine them with other scientific findings; efforts of thinkers like Mintzberg who, by studying organizations and the actions of organizational strategists, have formulated and arranged various types of strategies adopted by them, are of this category.

As explained in the formation of artistic wisdom, many factors affect the formation of artistic wisdom, of which management theory is one. These factors include a diverse range of various epistemic and non-epistemic factors that are effective in the quality of creating and formulating management theories. On one hand, the manager's epistemic foundations and his theory about the nature of human[2]Society, capital, and the like affect his

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1. However, it should be noted that in professional management schools, these three types of wisdom and knowledge are not equally emphasized. For instance, at Harvard Business School, which primarily pursues its mission of training global leaders, there is a greater focus on teaching knowledge of the artistic wisdom type, with courses delivered through case studies. In contrast, at universities like Northwestern, which follow a more theoretical approach, there is a greater proportion of theoretical courses.
2. For example, a manager's theory regarding whether human nature is inherently good, evil, or neutral, or whether biological and material needs take precedence in

management theory and action. On the other hand, the ethical system governing the manager's mind and the oughts and ought-nots in his view specify the ends of his movement and determine the limits of his permitted and non-permitted actions. Non-epistemic factors such as genius, creativity, mental inspirations, as well as mental schemas and imitations influenced by other previous experiences, are other determinants of the formation of the manager's theory for decision-making and action, which ultimately lead to the formation of different management theories by individuals. This concept of management is what theorists like Mintzberg consider management as a triangle of science, action, and art, and for management education, three components must be considered (Mintzberg, 2004, p. 1).
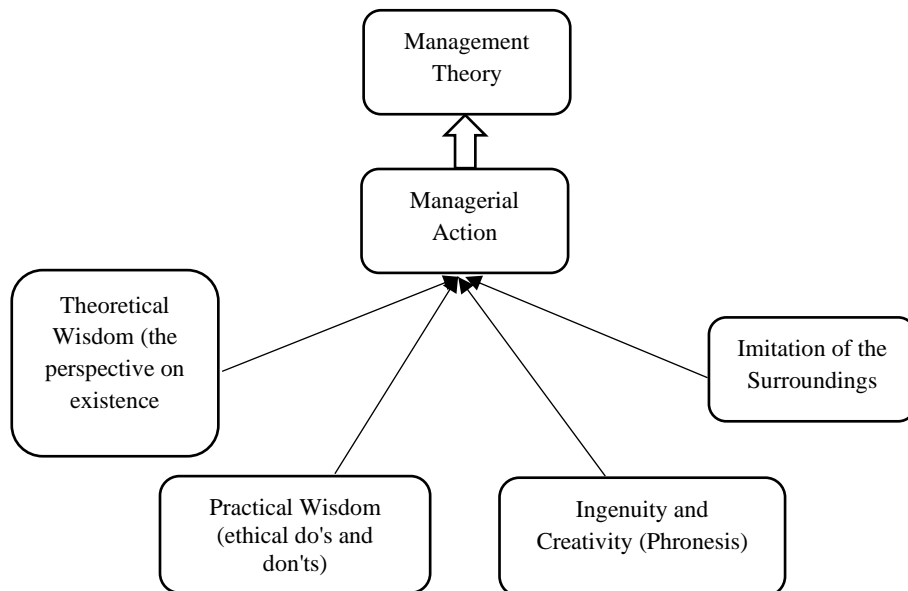

Figure 2: Foundations of Formation of Management Action and Theories

5. Another Understanding of Islamic Management

In the previous sections, the genealogy of scientific theories and also the nature of the management discipline and the theories attended to in the sphere of this discipline were mentioned. Although attributing a university discipline to the Islamic attribute has requirements beyond Islamizing all its

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humans over spiritual and psychological needs, has a significant impact on the actions and solutions adopted by the manager.

theories, which is not the opportunity to raise all of them[1]. But based on the article's goal, in this opportunity, we address one of the levels of Islamizing management knowledge, which is Islamizing the theories raised in the sphere of this discipline.

5-1. Islamic Theoretical Knowledge in the Management Arena

The first category of management knowledge propositions is theoretical propositions, most of which are borrowed from knowledge like psychology and sociology, and some others are formed in interdisciplinary knowledge domains of management, such as organizational behavior or organizational sociology. These theories are of the type of discovering reality, and based on adopting the basis of their Islamic being, they return to the Islamic being of the epistemic sources of these theories and the Islamic methodology of their formulation. Therefore, in this category of theories, we need to formulate theories based on Islamic anthropology and sociology that are formed by utilizing religious epistemic[2] sources and within a correct methodological framework.

The source and origin of formulating theories in this domain are considered two major theoretical sources:

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1. The Islamization of management as an academic discipline, at a minimum, requires a review and the possibility of attributing Islamic characteristics to the following three axes:

- Islamization of the discipline's content: Meaning the change in course content (content integrity).
- Islamization of the discipline's purpose: Since the basis for the unity and formation of the management discipline is its purpose, the arrangement and combination of courses and their relationships are influenced by the discipline's purpose (purpose integrity).
- Islamization of the academic discipline's institution: Science is one of the most enduring institutions that, by establishing standards and rules, regulates the actions of individuals involved in it. A significant dimension of the Islamization of the Islamic management discipline is the Islamization of institutional foundations, such as the rules governing the actors of this discipline and the desirable values within the context of this science, which, over the long term, leads to the reform of the behaviors of actors in this domain (agent integrity).

2. Ayatollah Javadi Amoli (2010) believes that knowledge derived from rational and cognitive sources has the capability to be attributed to religious science. These sources include: the Quran, intuition, demonstrative reasoning, and experience. However, regarding the last one, he holds that induction from experience provides a rational assurance that can be utilized in scientific understanding.

1. Theories produced in the arena of Islamic knowledge in other disciplines, such as psychology or sociology
2. Theories produced in the arena of interdisciplinary knowledge of orientations and specialized domains of management, such as organizational behavior and organizational sociology

To reach theories in this, of course, in this way, one can benefit from the existing knowledge theories in the mentioned domains. For example, theories proposed by humanistic psychologists, who mostly have a religious anthropology forming the basis of their view of humans, can be used. But it should be noted that such theories do not fully cover our understanding of humans and do not explain all human levels. For example, motivational theories like Maslow's theory can express the lower levels of humans that are animal, human, and humanistic dimensions of humans, and of course, for understanding the more transcendent dimensions of humans that include divine dimensions, we must refer to Islamic theories (Javadi Amoli, 2019).

The second category of management knowledge propositions is practical wisdom propositions that are of the type of ethical propositions and ought and ought-not. Parts of political knowledge, economics, law, and knowledge like economics, whose goal was planning affairs, have played an important role in shaping such oughts and ought-nots in the management knowledge arena. Since the foundation of these propositions is the value system, formulating and forming Islamic management knowledge requires reviewing all normative dimensions and practical wisdom theories. Although human nature can lead to formulating value propositions aligned with Islamic values, the system of prioritization and precedence or the dominance of one value over others, needs a rational faculty that only the legislator possesses. Therefore, this category of theories for Islamic management knowledge must be reformulated.

The third category of management knowledge propositions is management theories that are of the type of artistic wisdom. These theories are usually either abstracted from the actions of managers or individuals who, in the arena of action, solve problems they faced, or result from initiatives that the human mind has thought or imitated to solve the problem, and have not previously been tested in the crucible of experience. Attributing this theory to the Islamic attribute has a substantial difference from attributing other theories in the realm of theoretical wisdom and practical wisdom to the Islamic attribute. In theoretical wisdom, as long as the theory is the result of understanding from the main sources in understanding religion, it is possible to attribute this wisdom to the Islamic attribute. In the

realm of practical wisdom, the Islamic being of the end and the legitimacy of the tools used based on the principles expressed in Islam are the most important criteria for evaluating a practical wisdom proposition in this arena. But what does it mean to attribute a proposition of the type of artistic wisdom to the Islamic attribute?

5-2. Construction and Evaluation of Islamic Management Theories in the Strict Sense

As explained, a management theory that is of the type of poetic wisdom is the abstracted collection of actions and decisions of an individual in the position of management and decision-making, and other theories used in the management knowledge arena and taught to individuals are borrowed from other disciplines. The main question raised is how we can attribute these kinds of theories to Islamic being.

Based on the explanation given about constructing propositions that are of the type of artistic wisdom, these propositions have two theoretical sources and two meta-theoretical sources. These theories (meaning the prescription that a manager in a situation has given to solve a problem or perform a task), on one hand, are influenced by theoretical propositions and also ethical (normative) propositions governing the manager's mind, which are the theoretical sources of individuals' management theory. On the other hand, formulating and setting this prescription to solve the problem is influenced by the manager's creative faculty and mental models. In the first two cases, we need an epistemic layer for Islamic managers, and in the second layer, a kind of agentive goodness and soul cultivation by the manager.

6. Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on the claim made about the nature of Islamic management theories, the main basis for constructing such theories is conduct. The meaning of conduct is the practical logic that appears and manifests in implementing Islam in the container of time and place. Of course, the meaning of conduct in this concept is something broader and more extensive than the title of conduct that in the convention of Islamic sciences is only used for knowing the logic of life and the course of life of the infallible Imams (peace be upon them).

The conduct of the life of the infallible Imams is the complete and perfect example of Islamic life, and to reach applied Islamic sciences, it is necessary to study the conduct of those great ones completely and comprehensively. But it seems that in this regard, studying the conduct of scholars and the pious as individuals who have tried in diverse contexts and situations of human life, while committed to Islamic beliefs, to solve scientifically the

problems they faced, is a guiding light for reaching Islamic management. Of course, using the word conduct both for the practical logic of the life of the Ahl al-Bayt and for the type of life of scholars and the pious should not cause the mistake of seeing these two epistemic sources as equal. Undoubtedly, the most authentic conduct is the conduct of the infallible Imams (peace be upon them) during their lifetime, which the Shiite school has rich and unparalleled sources in this regard. This conduct, when discovering the opinion of the infallible, has the validity of a jurisprudential inference and certainly discovers the view and viewpoint of Islam. But the conduct of scholars and the pious only creates a kind of rational assurance that, after evaluation and offering them to fixed religious principles and foundations, acting based on them can have operational validity.

To better understand the point mentioned, attention to this principle is necessary so that every action of the manager and decision-maker, and consequently the theory abstracted from that action and decision, can be attributed to the Islamic attribute to a ratio, and this matter is subject to gradation. Therefore, a theory can, considering the basis, manner of execution, and the end it has, have a degree of Islamic being. That is, the Islamic being of a theory in management is a relative matter, and every theory can be Islamic to a degree. Of course, this claim does not mean the relativity of Islam and its ethical foundations, but means that Muslims in their Muslim life in moments of decision and planning affairs can manifest their Islamic intellectual foundations to a degree, and in this regard, the Islamic being of management theory propositions is subject to gradation, and a theory is Islamic to a degree. Every proposition that can better implement the ends intended by religion in society and realize more diverse goals of religion has more worthiness for attribution to the Islamic attribute.

Reaching Islamic management knowledge is a process that the scientific community and its audiences must undergo. Producing Islamic management theory means guiding and self-building the society, and therefore, it is a matter that is not realized suddenly and without jihad. This effort, although it displays itself in the scientific arena and knowledge propositions, is the result of a society's movement on the path to becoming monotheistic.

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Islamic Futures Studies in Futurists' Research: A Critical Analysis

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Abstract

Purpose: This article explores Islamic futures studies as a *liberatory intellectual project* rather than a new academic discipline. It aims to analyze and synthesize the conceptual frameworks proposed by prominent non-Iranian thinkers, particularly regarding how this project responds to the dual crisis in the Muslim world: "epistemological colonization" resulting in "used futures," and "internal intellectual stagnation" rooted in the closure of the gates of *ijtihād*.

Design / Methodology / Approach: Using an interpretivist paradigm and the method of thematic analysis, the study critically examines foundational texts and key works in the field. Through interpretive reading and thematic synthesis, it distills the core strategies and conceptual elements presented by leading scholars.

Findings: The analysis reveals that the liberatory project of Islamic futures studies is built upon a two-pronged strategy. The first is a critical movement toward the *decolonization of the mind*, facilitated by tools such as Causal Layered Analysis (CLA). The second is a constructive movement toward a *dynamic re-reading of tradition*, utilizing concepts such as transformation reform and the redefinition of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*. Together, these strategies aim to resist imposed futures and instead create "pluralistic" and justice-oriented futures.

Practical Implications: The approach encourages the formulation of alternative futures grounded in epistemic autonomy and renewed intellectual vitality. It also provides methodological guidance for scholars seeking to reconstruct future visions based on Islamic intellectual resources.

Originality / Value: The article highlights how this liberatory approach aspires to transcend inherited or externally imposed futures by generating diverse and justice-centered visions, such as a "Global Ummah" and "multi-civilizational worlds." Its contribution lies in synthesizing dispersed conceptual frameworks into a coherent model for Islamic futures studies as a transformative intellectual project.

Introduction

In recent decades, the discourse of "Islamic futures studies" has emerged as a critical and normative field of study within the international academic sphere. This intellectual current, reflected in the works of thinkers such as Ziauddin Sardar, Isma'il al-Faruqi, Sohail Inayatullah, Tariq Ramadan, and others, is an attempt to move beyond conventional futures studies and to present an alternative framework rooted in the Islamic worldview and epistemological tradition. However, within this endeavor, there is no single perception of the nature and purpose of this field. These perceptions exist on a spectrum: on one hand, there is the view that formulates Islamic futures studies as a "scientific discipline" with specific foundations and objectives for achieving "perennial peace," as seen in the works of Ikram Azam. On the other hand, there is an approach that sees it as more than a science, defining it as a "liberatory intellectual-political project" for analyzing and shaping the "future of the Muslim world." This second perspective, which is also the point of departure for this article, considers futures studies as a tool to confront the dual crisis that has enveloped the Muslim world.

The roots of this dual crisis can first be traced to an external challenge stemming from the epistemological hegemony of Western civilization. Postcolonial thinkers meticulously dissect the process of the "colonization of the future." They argue that the future has been transformed into an "occupied territory" (Sardar, 2003), a space where concepts like "development" have acted as a "Trojan horse" (Nandy, 1994) to impose the Western model as the only possible path to progress. This epistemological dominance, which Sardar (1999) traces back to Orientalism as a "deliberate misunderstanding," has resulted in the production of "used futures" (Inayatullah, 2008). These are futures that, in Sohail Inayatullah's terms, non-Western societies borrow without a deep understanding of their history and consequences, thereby diverting from their own path of authentic, indigenous development.

Alongside this external pressure, a paralyzing internal crisis has weakened the Muslim world's capacity for resistance and innovation. Thinkers like Mahdi Elmandjra (1992) and Isma'il al-Faruqi (1992) point with remarkable candor to the primary source of this decline: the closing of the "gate of *ijtihād*" in past centuries. This historical event gradually led to the dominance of a culture of imitation (*taqlīd*) and a fear of innovation, reducing Islam from a "world-affirming" religion that shapes history to a mere collection of legal rulings—a state of affairs that, in Sardar's (2003) view, has "removed agency and social responsibility from the shoulders of believers." This intellectual stagnation manifests as a "nostalgia for an

idealized past." Inayatullah (2005) identifies this phenomenon as the greatest obstacle to futurist thinking, as it, through the error of "misplaced concretism," substitutes creativity for shaping the future with attempts to literally reproduce the past.

It is within this context that this article, focusing on the perception of Islamic futures studies as a liberatory project, seeks to answer the following question: How do non-Iranian thinkers conceptualize and formulate Islamic futures studies as a liberatory intellectual project to overcome the dual crisis of internal stagnation and external colonization? Given the breadth of the field, this research delimits its scope to works written in or widely translated into English, to focus on the discourse that has taken shape in the international academic space. The central thesis of this article is that these thinkers view Islamic futures studies as a transformative project resting on two fundamental pillars: (1) a postcolonial critique and the decolonization of the mind and concepts, and (2) a dynamic and methodical re-reading of the Islamic tradition to activate its internal capacities. The present analysis will demonstrate that this intellectual current seeks to replace monolithic, imposed futures with "Multi Civilizational Futures" that are just and meaningful, inspired by an Islamic worldview, and shaped by Muslim societies themselves.

1. Literature Review

Futurist thinking among Muslim futurists has given rise to a rich and multi-faceted field of study. This article, focusing on the perspectives of non-Iranian futurists, deems it necessary, before categorizing the main intellectual currents, to first introduce the key figures of this domain and to address a fundamental question: What is these thinkers' essential perception of "Islamic futures studies" itself? Do they see it as an independent science, or do they merely address the future of the Muslim world?

The discourse of Islamic futures studies has been shaped by a group of thinkers, each approaching the field from a distinct perspective. Ziauddin Sardar, in works such as *The Future of Muslim Civilization* (1979) and *Islam, Postmodernism and Other Futures* (2003), has emphasized postcolonial critique and the necessity of epistemological reconstruction. Isma'il al-Faruqi, in his foundational book *Al-Tawhid* (1992), presents the Tawhidic worldview as the driving engine for civilizational renewal. Sohail Inayatullah, by developing methods like "Causal Layered Analysis" (1998), has provided practical tools for the decolonization of the future. Tariq Ramadan, in *Radical Reform* (2009), and Jasser Auda, in *Maqasid al-Shari'ah* (2008), have focused on methodological reconstruction in Islamic

jurisprudence and its principles. Sherman Jackson, in works like *The Third Resurrection* (2005), examines the issue of identity and agency from a theological and sociological standpoint, while Ikram Azam, in his book *Islam: Peaceful Social Change to the Future* (2004), has endeavored to codify this field as an academic discipline. A careful review of these thinkers' works reveals that their perception of the nature of Islamic futures studies is not uniform and can be seen on a spectrum:

a) **Islamic Futures Studies as an Academic Science/Discipline:** On one end of this spectrum are thinkers who consciously strive to establish Islamic futures studies as a scientific discipline. Ikram Azam, by distinguishing between "Islami Futurism" (as philosophy) and "Islami Futuristics" (as science), seeks to codify the field (Azam, 2004). Ziauddin Sardar, despite his strong critical dimension, is also one of the most serious theorists in this area. By presenting practical frameworks like the "Umrān Project" and methodological concepts such as "Institutionalized *Ijtihād*," he aims to found an indigenous and Islamic science of futurology (Sardar, 1988). Furthermore, Jasser Auda and Sohail Inayatullah, by providing systematic methodologies (Systems Theory and Causal Layered Analysis), are effectively building the tools of a scientific discipline that can be used to analyze any phenomenon from an Islamic perspective.

b) **Islamic Futures Studies as a Liberatory Project:** On the other end of the spectrum, Islamic futures studies is perceived as a critical and action-oriented project more than as a neutral science. This view, particularly prominent in the postcolonial thought of thinkers like Sardar and Ashis Nandy, regards the field as a tool for the "decolonization of the future" and for combating Western epistemological hegemony. In this perspective, the distinction between the "science of futures studies" and the "subject of the future of the Muslim world" is almost meaningless, because this science has emerged precisely for the liberation of the Muslim world and the shaping of its future. The goal is not merely to produce academic knowledge, but to "reclaim agency" and "shape the future." Al-Faruqi's "Islamization of Knowledge" project or Sherman Jackson's vision of the "Third Resurrection" also fit well within this category, as both are practical frameworks for transformation and liberation.

c) **Islamic Futures Studies as a Worldview in Action:** Perhaps the point of convergence for the two preceding views is that Islamic futures studies is rooted in a specific worldview. For example, in al-Faruqi's view, futures studies is nothing but the practical and

civilizational application of the "Monotheistic worldview." From this perspective, Islamic futures studies is not a separate science but the natural and necessary manifestation of a Muslim way of life in the contemporary world.

Therefore, it can be concluded that "Islamic futures studies," in the view of these thinkers, is a multi-faceted concept. The field is simultaneously an emerging science, a politico-cultural liberatory project, and a worldview in action. This article, while acknowledging this complexity, shows by categorizing the intellectual efforts of these thinkers into three main currents that the "liberatory project" aspect constitutes the point of departure and shared concern for most of them. In the following, these three intellectual currents will be discussed in detail.

1-1. First Current: Postcolonial Critique and Epistemological Deconstruction

The first and perhaps most fundamental intellectual current is an approach that traces the root of the current crisis not at the surface level, but deep within the epistemological and discursive structures of colonialism and Western modernity. The pioneers of this current are thinkers such as Ziauddin Sardar and Ashis Nandy, who have based their intellectual projects on the "deconstruction" of these mental structures. Sardar (1999), with his incisive analysis of "Orientalism," regards it not as a neutral scholarly inquiry, but as a "logic for confronting the challenge of Islam" and a tool for the mental and cultural subjugation of the East. He and his colleagues, in their foundational manifesto, *Barbaric Others*, by tracing the roots of this outlook to the biblical and classical Greek traditions, show how the West, by constructing an image of the "Other" as an inferior and irrational creature, has legitimized violence against it and pre-defined its future (Sardar, Nandy, & Davies, 1993).

Ashis Nandy (1987) deepens this critique with a sharp distinction between an "internal critique" and an "external critique" of modernity. Inspired by Gandhi, he proposes a radical external critique—one that attacks not only the flawed implementation of modernity, but the foundational values of the Enlightenment itself, especially "modern science," which he identifies as the "primary instrument of domination in our time" (Nandy, 1997). This penetrating and critical perspective is also sustained in Sardar's later analyses of the post-9/11 situation, where he employs concepts such as "Knowledgeable Ignorance" and the "Hamburger Syndrome" to describe the profound communication gap and the integrated nature of American power (Sardar & Davies, 2002).

However, this critical current does not stop at theoretical deconstruction; through the efforts of Sohail Inayatullah, it also extends to providing practical and methodological tools for the decolonization of the future. By coining the key concept of "used futures," Inayatullah eloquently demonstrates how non-Western societies unconsciously adopt development models that have already been tried and discarded by the West (Inayatullah, 2008). To counter this phenomenon, he introduces the tool of "Causal Layered Analysis" (CLA) as a method for penetrating the hidden discursive and mythical layers that shape the future (Inayatullah, 1998). In this way, Inayatullah adds a practical and methodological dimension for "transformative foresight" to the powerful theoretical critiques of Sardar and Nandy, paving the way to move beyond mere critique toward the active shaping of the future.

1-2. Second Current: Methodological Reform and a Return to Dynamic Sources

The second intellectual current, while fully accepting postcolonial critiques, holds the belief that the response to the crisis cannot be accomplished solely through a critique of the West. This current argues that the real key lies in a fundamental revision of the methodology for understanding religion and in reactivating the internal capacities of the Islamic tradition. This constructive outlook has crystallized into two main yet complementary branches: the theological-sociological branch and the fiqh-legal branch.

In the theological-sociological branch, Sherman Jackson holds a prominent position. In his profound work, *Islam and the Problem of Black Suffering*, he demonstrates how, through a creative re-reading of the treasury of classical theological schools (from the Mu'tazilites to the Ash'arites and Maturidis), one can provide authentic and meaningful answers to modern existential challenges, such as the problem of suffering, without the need to invent an entirely new theology (Jackson, 2009). He complements this approach in his book *Islam and the Black American* by presenting the inspiring vision of the "Third Resurrection." This vision is an identity-building project in which the Black American Muslim community, through the "appropriation" and mastery of the Islamic tradition, applies it to respond to the needs of its specific American context and liberates itself from dependency on the competing narratives of "Black Religion" or "Immigrant Islam" (Jackson, 2005).

In the fiqh-legal branch, Tariq Ramadan and Jasser Auda are considered leading figures. Ramadan (2009), by proposing the key concept of "transformation reform," calls for a shift from an adaptive and reactive

approach to an activist one, whose goal is not merely to conform to the world, but to change it based on Islamic ethics. His primary tool for this transformation is a revision of the principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) itself and the elevation of the status of the "Book of the Universe" (i.e., scientific and social realities) to that of a source coequal with the "Book of Revelation." This bold perspective necessitates a shift in the center of gravity of authority, away from the monopoly of the "*'ulamā' al-nuṣūṣ*" (scholars of the text) toward an equal partnership with the "*'ulamā' al-wāqi'*" (scholars of reality). Jasser Auda (2008), through his intelligent application of "systems theory," redefines "*Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*" as a dynamic and futurist legal philosophy. By moving beyond the traditional concept of "protection" toward concepts like "development" and "rights," and by distinguishing between variable "means" and constant "ends," he endows Islamic jurisprudence with extraordinary flexibility to confront the complex challenges of the future.

1-3. Third Current: Founding the Paradigm and Visioning Civilizational Futures

The third current adopts a macro-level, civilizational approach, seeking to present foundational worldviews that can serve as the basis for the reconstruction of Islamic civilization in the twenty-first century. Isma'il al-Faruqi, in his classic work *Al-Tawhid*, introduces " *Monotheism* " not merely as a creed, but as the "first determining principle" and the master key to understanding all components of Islamic civilization. From his perspective, this Monotheistic worldview entails an "ethic of action" in which humanity, as the "vicegerent of God" (*Khalīfah*), is obligated to transform and cultivate the world (al-Faruqi, 1992). This inspiring project was later continued in the works of thinkers associated with the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) under the banner of the "Islamization of Knowledge."

Ikram Azam (2004), inspired by Iqbal Lahori, endeavored to codify "Islamic futures studies" as an independent academic discipline. By distinguishing between "Islamic Futures Studies" (as philosophy and vision) and "Islamic Foresight" (as science and application), he identifies the "Perennial Peace Paradigm" as the ultimate goal of this discipline. Mahdi Elmandjra (1992), as a professional futurist, takes a more practical approach; while offering a frank critique of the internal shortcomings of the Muslim world, he insists on the necessity of creating a "grand and inspiring vision" and relying on "indigenous development." Anwar Ibrahim, by proposing the idea of an "Asian Renaissance," calls for a future in which economic growth

is balanced with social justice and a meaningful return to the spiritual values of Asian traditions (as cited in Muzaffar, 1997).

2. Summary and Identification of the Research Gap

A review of these three intellectual currents clearly shows that although each of these thinkers and currents has been studied individually, there is a scarcity of research that comprehensively and systematically synthesizes these diverse perspectives into a coherent framework and charts an "intellectual roadmap" for Islamic futures studies from the viewpoint of non-Iranians. This article precisely seeks to fill this research gap and strives, through critical analysis and a combination of these views, to present an integrated, deep, and multi-dimensional picture of this liberatory intellectual project.

3. Research Methodology

From a philosophical perspective, this research is situated within the interpretivist paradigm, as its primary goal is to achieve a deep and interpretive understanding of the concepts, worldviews, and arguments of thinkers within a complex theoretical field. The research approach is inductive, meaning that we began by studying and analyzing data—namely, the texts and works of these thinkers—and gradually moved toward identifying patterns and presenting a conceptual framework. The main research strategy has been the documentary analysis of primary and secondary sources, and it follows a mono-method qualitative design. Within this framework, data were collected through a comprehensive library study and systematic note-taking (*fiches*) from key works of selected thinkers (purposive sampling).

For the analysis of textual data, the method of thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), was employed. This method, due to its flexibility and high capacity for identifying patterns of meaning across a large and diverse dataset, is considered an ideal tool for synthesizing the perspectives of various thinkers. The analysis process involved the detailed coding of data, followed by the categorization of these codes into primary categories and themes. The results of this analysis, which led to the identification of three overarching themes as the main framework of the Islamic futures studies discourse, will be presented and discussed in detail in the next section.

4. Discussion

The thematic analysis of the data from this research reveals three main and inclusive themes that collectively form the intellectual framework of Islamic

futures studies from the perspective of non-Iranian thinkers. These themes, like three acts of a coherent narrative, are as follows:

1. **Diagnosis of the Dual Crisis: External Colonization and Internal Stagnation;** this theme is formed from categories such as "epistemological colonization" and "internal intellectual stagnation."

2. **Presentation of a Two-Pronged Strategy: Decolonization of the Mind and a Dynamic Re-reading of Tradition;** this theme includes the categories of "decolonization of the mind" and a "dynamic re-reading of tradition."

3. **Envisioning Pluralistic Futures for a Preferred Future;** this theme encompasses categories such as the "Global Ummah," "multi-civilizational worlds," and "God-centered futures."

In the following, these findings will be discussed and examined in detail to illuminate the various dimensions of this intellectual project.

4-1. First Finding: Diagnosis of the Dual Crisis; External Colonization and Internal Stagnation

The point of departure and the cornerstone of the thought of all thinkers examined in this research is a precise, frank, and multi-dimensional diagnosis of the deep crisis that has engulfed the Muslim world in the contemporary era. They show that this crisis is not a mono-causal phenomenon but has a dual and intertwined nature: on one hand, an external challenge stemming from the hegemony and epistemological colonization of the West, and on the other hand, an internal challenge rooted in intellectual and structural stagnation. These two challenges, like the two blades of a pair of scissors, have severely weakened the agency and ability of Muslims to build an independent and desirable future.

a) **External Colonization: The Future as Occupied Territory:** At the external level, these thinkers view the future as an "occupied territory" (Sardar, 2003, p. 179). This occupation is more epistemological in nature than it is military or economic. Ziauddin Sardar and Ashis Nandy, as prominent representatives of postcolonial critique, argue that Western modernity, by presenting concepts like "development" and "progress" as universal and unilinear ideas, has effectively deprived other civilizations of their right to define the future based on their own indigenous values and worldviews. This process, which Sardar considers a direct result of the influence of "secularism" (Sardar, 1991), has in practice led to the devastation of traditional worldviews and social disintegration

in non-Western societies (Sardar, 2003). Nandy (1994), with a sharp and penetrating tone, calls this concept of "development" a "Trojan horse" and a "prostitute word" that continues colonialism under a new name. This epistemological colonization, rooted in "Orientalism" as a "deliberate misunderstanding" (Sardar, 2007), is reinforced in the contemporary era with new tools. Referring to the post-9/11 period, Sardar and Davies (2002) speak of the phenomenon of "Knowledgeable Ignorance": an institutionalized "mis-knowing" about Islam that stubbornly persists even in the face of contrary evidence and eliminates any possibility of dialogue for building a shared future.

The direct consequence of this epistemological colonization is the entrapment of Muslim societies in a phenomenon that Sohail Inayatullah (2008) calls "the used future." This concept eloquently describes a situation in which non-Western societies unconsciously adopt models and images of the future that have been designed, experienced, and even discarded by the West. This happens not only due to media dominance but also because of the colonization of "imagination" itself. When science fiction stories, films, and futures studies theories are predominantly products of the West (Milojevic & Inayatullah, 2003), the ability of other societies to envision different futures rooted in their own cultural metaphors and myths (such as the Islamic metaphor "Trust in God, but tie your camel") is severely limited (Inayatullah, 1998).

b) **Internal Stagnation: The Crisis of Agency and Nostalgia for the Past:** Simultaneously with this external pressure, a paralyzing internal crisis has weakened the Muslim world's capacity for resistance and innovation. Isma'il al-Faruqi (1992), in the introduction to his work, describes the Muslim Ummah with shocking frankness as the "unhappiest ummah in modern times," afflicted by disunity, impotence, and neglect of its primary mission. He and other thinkers like Mahdi Elmandjra (1992) diagnose the main root of this decline in the closing of the "gate of *ijtihād*" in the tenth and eleventh centuries (AH). That historical event gradually led to the dominance of a culture of imitation (*taqlīd*), a fear of innovation, and consequently, an inability to interpret Islam in connection with the needs of contemporary society (Sardar, 2003).

This intellectual stagnation manifests itself in two destructive phenomena. First, the reduction of Islam to *fiqh* (jurisprudence),

which, in Sardar's (2003) words, has "removed agency and social responsibility from the shoulders of believers" and reduced religion to a set of individual rulings. Second, nostalgia for an idealized past. Inayatullah (2005) identifies this phenomenon as the greatest obstacle to futurist thinking in the Muslim world, because, through the "error of misplaced concretism," it defines progress as a literal return to the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. He quotes El-Affendi (1991) to point out that in such a view, there is no need to create a Utopia, because "the perfect world has already existed," and the main issue is simply "to regain that state." This view of the past, as Sherman Jackson (2009) aptly demonstrates in the context of the Black American community, strips religion of its ability to provide meaningful theological responses to historical suffering and new challenges, exposing it to the risk of dysfunction.

Therefore, the first and most important finding of this research is that Islamic futures studies, from the perspective of these thinkers, begin with a "precise and dual formulation of the problem." Instead of offering simplistic solutions, they first dissect this complex crisis and show that any project for building the future must simultaneously fight on two fronts: the epistemological colonization from without that constrains imagination, and the intellectual stagnation from within that paralyzes agency. This comprehensive diagnosis is the cornerstone of all the strategies and visions that will be presented hereafter.

4-2. Second Finding: A Two-Pronged Strategy; Decolonization of the Mind and a Dynamic Re-reading of Tradition

After a precise and multi-dimensional diagnosis of the crisis, the thinkers under consideration present strategies that are equally comprehensive and two-pronged. They have correctly understood that a one-dimensional solution, whether purely critical or purely intra-religious, will be incapable of confronting this complex crisis. Therefore, their proposed strategy rests on a simultaneous and coordinated movement on two fronts: on one hand, the decolonization of the mind and of dominant concepts as a critical and liberatory project, and on the other hand, a creative and methodical re-reading of the Islamic tradition to activate its internal capacities as a constructive and identity-building project. These two strategies are not only not contradictory but are vital complements to each other; without the

realization of both, any attempt at future-making will end in either passivity before the West or in isolation and regression.

a) **Decolonization of the Mind and the Future: A Critical and Liberatory Project:** The first and most necessary step on this path is a deep intellectual project to liberate the Muslim mind from colonial epistemological frameworks. These thinkers go beyond superficial political or economic critiques to target the epistemological roots of Western dominance. Ashis Nandy (1987), emphasizing that colonialism at its core is the "organized suppression of the cultural life of the people," concludes that the "reaffirmation of cultural traditions" must be at the heart of any anti-colonial struggle. This means reclaiming the "categories used by the victims" and challenging modern specialism. By presenting the concept of "critical traditionalism," he shows us a path that seeks neither a dogmatic defense of the past nor its museum building, but rather a creative reinterpretation of traditions to respond to today's challenges.

Sohail Inayatullah takes this critical project beyond the purely theoretical realm by providing practical methodological tools. The "Causal Layered Analysis" (CLA) method, which he developed, helps analysts to move beyond the surface of everyday phenomena and short-term solutions (the litany) and to penetrate deeper layers, namely systemic causes, discourses/worldviews, and ultimately, the unconscious myths and metaphors that shape social reality (Inayatullah, 1998). He also, by distinguishing between "strategic foresight" (which is based on competition) and "transformative foresight" (which emphasizes the transformation of self and other), proposes a process for questioning the official and assumed future (Inayatullah & Sweeney, 2020).

Sherman Jackson also offers a practical strategy for marginalized communities with the concept of "appropriation." Appropriation means "the taking on of a set of non-native ideas or doctrines in one's own existential or ideological struggle" (Jackson, 2005, p. 28). This process allows the Black American Muslim community to redefine Islam based on their historical and existential needs, without completely surrendering to the cultural authority of "Immigrant Islam." Together, these approaches form a coherent plan of action for the "decolonization of the future" and the reclaiming of the fundamental right to imagination, conceptual definition, and future narration.

b) **A Dynamic Re-reading of Tradition: A Constructive and Identity-Building Project:** The second prong of this strategy, which is no less vital than the first, is an affirmative and constructive project to return to authentic Islamic sources and reactivate their dynamic capacities. By reopening the "gate of *ijtihād*" in an institutionalized and systematic manner (Sardar, 1988), these thinkers seek to breathe new life into the body of Islamic thought.

Isma'il al-Faruqi (1992), by returning to the most fundamental principle of Islam, transforms "monotheism" *(Tawhid)* from an abstract theological creed into an active worldview and an "ethic of action." In this view, monotheism entails that humanity, as the "vicegerent of God" (*Khalīfah*), takes on the responsibility of "transforming creation" to realize the divine pattern. This perspective liberates Islam from any fatalism and isolationism and turns it into a "world-affirming" religion in which building history and cultivating the world is a sacred religious duty.

Tariq Ramadan (2009) takes this re-reading project to its peak by presenting the concept of "Transformation Reform." By distinguishing between "fixed principles" (*thābit*) and "variable aspects" (*mutaghayyir*), he argues that faithfulness to Islam requires constant reform and "renewal" (*tajdīd*) in understanding its variable aspects. The pinnacle of his theory is the introduction of the "Book of the Universe" as a source of knowledge coequal with the "Book of Revelation" (The Text). This means that empirical and human sciences are no longer merely auxiliary tools for understanding the text, but have themselves become an "independent and complementary source for deriving law and ethics." This revolutionary approach opens the way for an entirely new *ijtihād* whose goal is not just to adapt to the world, but to change it based on a comprehensive Islamic ethic.

In the same vein, Jasser Auda (2008), by employing "systems theory," redefines "*Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah*" as the legal philosophy of an open and dynamic system capable of interacting with changing realities and of "self-renewal." By intelligently distinguishing between variable "means" and constant "ends," as well as elevating the concept of *‘urf* (custom) to "cognitive culture" and the worldview of the jurist, he grants Shari'ah extraordinary flexibility to confront future transformations. Sherman Jackson (2009), by referring to the rich treasury of classical theological schools, also shows how concepts like "authority" (*ikhtiyār*) in the Mu'tazilite view or

"wisdom" (*ḥikmah*) in the Maturidi perspective can, respectively, provide a powerful theological basis for "active resistance" against injustice and "resilience in the face of suffering." Ikram Azam (2004) also, by redefining "*Jihād*" as the "unrelenting effort in peace and for peace," transforms it into a tool for creative and peaceful social change.

In conclusion, the second finding of this research clearly shows that the strategy proposed by these thinkers is a dual and coordinated one. From their perspective, Islamic futures studies requires both a "critical gaze outward" to break free from epistemological dominance and a "constructive gaze inward" to revive intellectual and spiritual dynamism. These two movements are the two wings of a bird, without either of which flight toward an independent and desirable future is impossible. This approach, in the words of Sardar (1988), is the only way that can transform the "stagnant pool" of Islamic civilization into a dynamic and life-giving stream.

4-3. Third Finding: Envisioning Pluralistic Futures for a Preferred Future; From the Global Ummah to Multi-Civilizational Worlds

After diagnosing the crisis and presenting two-pronged strategies, these thinkers proceed to envision "preferred futures." A noteworthy point that indicates the intellectual maturity of this current is the absence of a single, uniform blueprint for the future. The preferred future, in the view of these thinkers, is not an abstract and pre-determined utopia, but rather a set of "Futures" (Sardar, 2011) that are shaped based on shared principles and values but with different structures and manifestations. These visions can be analyzed on two levels: first, their shared ethical and social foundations, and second, the diverse political and civilizational structures they propose.

a) **The Shared Ethical and Social Foundations of the Preferred Future:** Despite differences in the final structure, all the visions presented are built upon a set of shared values and ethical foundations. The first and most important principle is justice. Anwar Ibrahim (as cited in Muzaffar, 1997), in explaining the "Asian Renaissance," explicitly declares that economic growth must always be balanced with a profound concern for social justice and equity. This concern for justice is elevated to the concept of Liberation in Tariq Ramadan's (2009) "transformation reform" project, meaning that the ultimate goal of Islamic ethics is not just individual improvement, but the struggle against oppressive structures and the

liberation of all human beings. This call for justice is rooted in the "world-affirming" worldview of al-Faruqi (1992), who considers building a just order in this world a religious duty for humanity and establishes an unbreakable link between "knowledge and justice" (Sardar, 1988).

The second shared principle is peace and coexistence. Ikram Azam (2004), by presenting the "Perennial Peace Paradigm" as the ultimate goal of Islamic futures studies and redefining "*Jihād al-Akbar*" as "creative, co-creative peaceful coexistence," places this principle at the core of his vision. This perspective stands in direct opposition to extremist and violent narratives of Islam and emphasizes the peaceful nature of the Islamic message.

The third foundation is human dignity and active agency. All these thinkers envision a preferred future as one in which humanity, as the "vicegerent of God" (*Khalīfah*) (al-Faruqi, 1992), possesses inherent dignity and has the necessary agency to shape its own destiny. This emphasis on agency stands against any form of fatalism or determinism and transforms the human being into a "The Human Change Agent", who bears the moral and spiritual responsibility to improve the world (Azam, 2004). This view is also reflected in Sherman Jackson's (2009) critique of "secular Human-centered "; he seeks a "God-centered" future in which the struggle for justice is not in opposition to faith, but is precisely founded upon it.

b) **Diverse Political and Civilizational Structures of the Future:** Upon the foundation of these shared values, different thinkers chart different political and civilizational structures for the future, which demonstrates the dynamism and flexibility of this intellectual current. Isma'il al-Faruqi (1992), with a macro and universal perspective, puts forward the vision of a "Global Ummah." This Ummah is a transnational social order based not on race or geography, but on an ideology and a shared commitment to Tawhid, with the ultimate goal of establishing "Pax Islamica" (Islamic Peace). This political structure is a "Nomocracy" or the rule of divine law, not a theocracy.

In contrast to this universal view, thinkers like Sherman Jackson and Tariq Ramadan focus on building concrete and indigenous identities in specific contexts. Jackson (2005), by presenting the vision of the "Third Resurrection," seeks to build a "self-authenticating" and autonomous Black American Muslim

community in America—a community that, while remaining faithful to the global Islamic tradition, "appropriates" it to respond to the needs of its specific context. Tariq Ramadan (1999), by moving beyond the classical division of *dār al-islām* and *dār al-ḥarb*, proposes the concept of "dār al-shahādah" (the land of testimony) as a model for the future of Muslims in the West. In this model, Muslims become active citizens who, through their constructive presence, bear witness to the ethical and spiritual values of Islam in Western societies.

On another level, Ziauddin Sardar and Sohail Inayatullah, with a postcolonial perspective, go beyond a single, unified future and propose the vision of "Multi-civilizational Futures" (Sardar, 2003). This view holds that the preferred future is one in which different civilizations emerge and coexist with their own criteria and values. Inayatullah's (2005) preferred scenario for the Muslim world, namely "The Virtuous Spiral," is a manifestation of this same view: a future in which Islam, while preserving its identity, enters into a dialogue with modernity, builds its own alternative science (Sardar, 1989), and achieves a post-postmodern society that is balanced both spiritually and materially. This vision is perfectly aligned with the view of Ashis Nandy (1989), who sees the future of humanity as dependent on the "recovery of the other selves of cultures" and on hearing the voices of the margins (the shamans).

In conclusion, the third finding shows that the preferred future in the view of these thinkers is not a one-dimensional utopia. Rather, it is a set of pluralistic possibilities, all of which are based on the shared foundations of justice, peace, and human dignity, but which recognize diversity and variety in their civilizational and political manifestations. This vision seeks not to impose a single model on the world, but to create a space for the peaceful coexistence of "pluralistic futures"—futures that, in the words of the Holy Qur'an cited by Ikram Azam (2004, p. 11), belong to the God-conscious and the pious.

4-4. Final Conclusion

This research, conducted to analyze and synthesize the perspectives of prominent non-Iranian thinkers on Islamic futures studies, concludes that this intellectual current is a profoundly critical, methodical, and liberatory intellectual project that seeks to reclaim agency and the right to self-determination for the Muslim world. In response to the main research

question, it can be said that these thinkers conceptualize Islamic futures studies not as a technical exercise in predicting the future, but as a "transformative project" resting on two main pillars: (1) a postcolonial criticism and the decolonization of dominant concepts, and (2) a dynamic and methodical re-reading of the Islamic tradition.

The present analysis has shown that the starting point of this project is a precise diagnosis of the dual crisis that has enveloped the Muslim world: on one hand, the "epistemological colonization" by the West that has turned the future into an "occupied territory" (Sardar, 2003), and on the other hand, an "internal intellectual stagnation" resulting from the closing of the gate of *ijtihād* and the prevalence of nostalgia for the past (Elmandjra, 2005; Inayatullah, 2005). In confronting this crisis, these thinkers present a two-pronged strategy. On one hand, they use critical postcolonial tools to "deconstruct" imposed concepts and decolonize the mind (Nandy, 1987), and on the other hand, through a creative return to tradition, they activate the dynamic capacities of concepts such as *Tawhid* (al-Faruqi, 1992), *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* (Auda, 2008), and theology (*kalām*) (Jackson, 2009) for shaping the future. This dual approach, which culminates in Tariq Ramadan's (2009) concept of "transformation reform," prevents falling into the trap of West-toxification or regression.

Ultimately, the preferred vision of these thinkers is not a monolithic and pre-determined future, but a world based on "pluralistic futures." These futures, although diverse in their political and civilizational structures (from al-Faruqi's Global Ummah to Ramadan's *dār al-shahādah* and Sardar's multi-civilizational worlds), are all founded on the shared ethical foundations of justice, peace, and human dignity. Therefore, Islamic futures studies in this school of thought is not an escape from the present or a return to the past, but rather a responsible and courageous engagement with the complexities of the contemporary world to create a future that is both faithful to revelatory principles and responsive to the needs of humanity today and tomorrow.

5. Suggestions for Future Research

Given the findings and limitations of this research, the following suggestions for future studies are presented:

1. **Conducting Comparative Studies:** It is suggested that comparative research be conducted between the views of these non-Iranian thinkers and prominent Iranian thinkers in the field of futurist thought, to examine the points of convergence, divergence, and the possibilities for dialogue between these two intellectual domains.

2. **Expanding Linguistic and Geographical Scope:** Conducting research that focuses on thinkers from other linguistic spheres (especially Arabic and French) could significantly help to complete the picture presented in this article. Examining the thoughts of thinkers from North Africa or Indonesia could add new dimensions to this discussion.

3. **Applied and Case-Study Research:** It is suggested that research with a practical approach be undertaken to examine how the theoretical frameworks presented by these thinkers (such as Causal Layered Analysis or transformation reform) can be applied in cultural, educational, and economic policymaking in Muslim countries. A case study of a social movement or a reformist institution inspired by these ideas could be very insightful.

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From Algocracy to Ethical Stewardship: Islamic Ethics and the Moral Reconstruction of Algorithmic Governance

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Abstract

Purpose: The rapid diffusion of algorithmic systems into public decision-making has fundamentally reshaped governance by reallocating moral and cognitive authority from human agents to automated systems. While algorithmic governance promises efficiency and neutrality, it simultaneously generates profound ethical concerns related to legitimacy, justice, accountability, and human responsibility. This study aims to reconstruct the ethical foundations of algorithmic governance through the lens of Islamic ethical philosophy.

Methodology: The research employs a qualitative content analysis of primary Islamic sources, including selected Quranic verses and hadiths. Through systematic coding and thematic interpretation, core ethical principles relevant to governance and decision-making are extracted and analytically mapped onto contemporary challenges of algorithmic governance.

Findings: The analysis identifies nine interrelated ethical principles—autonomy, dignity, justice, trust, honesty, caution, commitment, benevolence, and non-invasiveness—that together constitute a coherent moral framework for guiding algorithmic decision-making. These principles emphasize human moral agency, responsibility, and restraint, challenging purely technocratic or efficiency-driven models of governance.

Contribution: The study demonstrates that Islamic ethics provides both a transcendental normative foundation and an applied moral logic capable of addressing ethical deficits in algorithmic governance. By conceptualizing algorithms as instruments of moral agency rather than substitutes for it, the article advances the notion of ethical stewardship as a corrective governance paradigm.

Keywords

Algorithmic governance; Islamic ethics; Ethical stewardship; Moral legitimacy; Artificial intelligence; Accountability.

Introduction

The rise of algorithmic governance has redefined the moral and institutional landscape of public decision-making. Once envisioned as a pathway toward greater efficiency and objectivity, the embedding of algorithms into governance processes now reveals a deeper transformation in the nature of authority, legitimacy, and accountability. As Blankenship (2019) observes, algorithmic systems have transitioned from being instruments of administrative rationality to becoming active agents that shape political and moral orders. This transformation signifies not merely a technological shift but a profound reconfiguration of how power is exercised and justified in contemporary governance (Davutoğlu, 2025; Gritsenko & Wood, 2022). Early advocates of digital rationalization emphasized precision, scalability, and predictive capability (Henman, 2020), yet these promises have been overshadowed by mounting evidence of opacity, bias, and erosion of human discretion (Bunnell, 2021; Bloch-Wehba, 2020). The resulting condition, often described as algocracy (Danaher, 2020), marks a moment in which decision-making authority is increasingly delegated to autonomous systems rather than to accountable human agents.

The ethical paradox at the heart of algorithmic governance lies in its simultaneous claim to neutrality and its capacity to reproduce structural injustices. Studies across diverse political systems indicate that algorithmic decision-making frequently amplifies discrimination, undermines transparency, and weakens social trust (Festic, 2022; Ghose et al., 2025). The problem, as Volkov (2025) and Chomanski (2022) argue, is not only technical but deeply normative: algorithms encode implicit moral assumptions while concealing them under the guise of data-driven objectivity. Global responses—ranging from algorithmic impact assessments (Monteiro, 2025) to fairness and explainability frameworks (Ződi, 2022)—attempt to restore accountability but remain constrained by secular and procedural ethics that prioritize compliance over moral responsibility. This has given rise to what Innerarity (2024) calls a "legitimacy deficit," in which societies accept algorithmic efficiency at the cost of moral coherence and human dignity.

While much of the existing scholarship has examined the institutional and political implications of algorithmic governance in Western contexts (Calzada, 2018; Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2022; Mendonça et al., 2023), the moral and spiritual dimensions of this transformation remain underexplored. The global discourse often assumes that ethical reasoning can be standardized through universal procedural norms, overlooking the plural moral traditions that shape conceptions of justice and responsibility.

As D'Iribarne (2008) and Fritzen (2007) suggest, governance models detached from local moral frameworks risk both cultural alienation and institutional fragility. This is particularly evident in societies where governance is deeply intertwined with religious and ethical epistemologies—contexts in which divine accountability and moral intention are integral to public legitimacy.

In the Islamic intellectual tradition, governance is conceived not merely as the management of public affairs but as an act of moral stewardship (amanah). Decision-making (hukm) is bound to the principles of justice (ʿadl), trust (amānah), and human dignity (karāmah), all of which are grounded in divine accountability. Within this worldview, authority is legitimate only insofar as it conforms to moral purpose and serves the common good. Algorithmic systems, when viewed through this lens, are not neutral tools but entrusted mechanisms that must embody ethical intention (niyyah) and moral consciousness (taqwā). Such an orientation stands in contrast to the value-neutral paradigms of global governance, reframing the ethical challenge of algorithmic systems as one of spiritual accountability rather than mere technical optimization (Ames & Mazzotti, 2023; Vredenburgh, 2025).

However, despite the moral richness of Islamic ethical thought, there remains a striking absence of research integrating its principles into the study of algorithmic governance. Existing frameworks seldom address how divine justice could inform automated decision-making or how moral agency might be preserved within computational architectures. The neglect of non-Western ethical systems has produced a normative gap: algorithmic governance is globally pervasive but morally provincial. As a result, the moral imagination guiding AI and governance remains limited to procedural justice, overlooking deeper questions of intention, responsibility, and transcendence (Ghosh et al., 2025; Davutoğlu, 2025).

This paper responds to that gap by developing an ethical framework for algorithmic governance grounded in Islamic moral philosophy. How can the principles of justice, trust, and human dignity derived from Islamic teachings inform the ethical foundations of algorithmic governance? In addressing this question, the study positions Islamic ethics not as a counterpoint but as a complementary moral paradigm that enriches global debates on algorithmic legitimacy. By aligning the technical architectures of governance with the moral architecture of responsibility, this research proposes a spiritually anchored vision of algorithmic ethics—one in which automation serves humanity through justice, transparency, and divine accountability.

1. Literature Review

1-1. Algorithmic Governance

The emergence of algorithms as decision-making instruments in public governance has generated a profound transformation in how authority, knowledge, and legitimacy are distributed in modern societies. This transformation, often referred to as algorithmic governance, marks a paradigmatic shift from human-centered discretion to computational reasoning (Blankenship, 2019; Davutoğlu, 2025). Initially celebrated for its promise of efficiency and precision, algorithmic governance has revealed multiple ethical and institutional challenges, such as algorithmic opacity, the reproduction of inequality, and the concentration of informational power (Bunnell, 2021; Bloch-Wehba, 2020; Kariotis & Mir, 2020). Beyond the functional domain, algorithms have emerged as moral and interpretive actors that shape cognitive patterns, public participation, and legitimacy within governance systems (Festic, 2022; Jin, 2023).

Over the past decade, the discourse has evolved from an instrumental view of algorithms toward a recognition of their structural and normative power. Danaher (2020) conceptualized this transformation as algocracy, the governance of society through algorithms, where authority becomes encoded into automated systems. Gritsenko and Wood (2022) describe this as an "architecture of choice," wherein algorithms regulate behavior by design rather than by law. Similarly, Davutoğlu (2025) observes that algorithmic governance reconstitutes public institutions as computational entities governed by machine logic. From a Foucauldian perspective, these mechanisms reflect a form of algorithmic governmentality that produces new modalities of surveillance and normalization. Volkov (2025) warns that the mechanization of decision-making may erode legitimacy and trust, while Innerarity (2024) highlights the democratic tension between automation and participatory governance. Collectively, these studies suggest that the algorithmization of governance introduces an ethical rupture in the moral fabric of decision-making, shifting accountability away from human agents toward technical systems.

1-2. Ethical Dilemmas and the Islamic Moral Framework

Recent debates have increasingly focused on the moral deficits of algorithmic governance. Scholars argue that intelligent systems, while enhancing efficiency, often conceal biases and structural injustices behind a façade of neutrality (Vredenburgh, 2025). The lack of transparency and explainability jeopardizes both legal legitimacy and the protection of citizens' rights (Ghose et al., 2025; Ghosh et al., 2025; Peng et al., 2024). As Ződi (2022) notes, the

absence of reasoned justification in algorithmic decision-making undermines institutional integrity. Attempts to restore ethical oversight through mechanisms like algorithmic impact assessments (Monteiro, 2025) represent a step toward accountability but remain grounded in secular, Western ethics that neglect metaphysical and spiritual dimensions of responsibility.

By contrast, Islamic teachings provide a deeply moral and theocentric foundation for governance. Within Islamic epistemology, decision-making (hukm) is an act of moral stewardship and divine accountability. Humans, as God's vicegerents (khalifah), are entrusted (amanah) with upholding justice (adl), integrity, and the preservation of human dignity (karamah). From this perspective, algorithms are not morally neutral tools but entrusted mechanisms that must serve social justice and the common good. Justice demands that algorithms avoid discrimination; trust requires transparency and responsible data stewardship; and human dignity mandates that automation not depersonalize moral agency. Moreover, concepts such as niyyah (intent) and taqwa (moral consciousness) introduce a spiritual dimension to decision-making absent in Western frameworks. In Islamic ethics, legitimacy is derived not merely from procedural correctness or efficiency but from moral intention and conformity with divine justice. This ethical orientation reframes algorithmic governance as a moral responsibility rather than a purely technical enterprise.

1-3. Algorithmic Bias, Discrimination, and the Pursuit of Justice

Empirical investigations have consistently revealed that algorithmic systems replicate and amplify existing social inequalities, producing discriminatory outcomes across criminal justice, employment, and social services (Alon-Barkat & Busuioc, 2023). ProPublica's investigation of the COMPAS recidivism algorithm exposed systematic racial bias, with Black defendants disproportionately misclassified as high-risk (Angwin et al., 2016). Similarly, facial recognition technologies exhibit significantly higher error rates for women and minorities, raising concerns about discriminatory enforcement (Buolamwini & Gebru, 2018). The mechanisms generating bias are multifaceted: historical prejudices embedded in training data perpetuate past injustices; proxy variables inadvertently encode protected characteristics; and feedback loops reinforce discriminatory patterns over time (Barocas & Selbst, 2016; Obermeyer et al., 2019). Moreover, the interaction between human decision-makers and algorithmic recommendations can exacerbate bias through "selective adherence," wherein administrators accept outputs that confirm preexisting stereotypes while overriding counter-stereotypical

predictions (Stevenson, 2018). From an Islamic ethical standpoint, algorithmic discrimination constitutes a violation of adl (justice) and the Qur'anic prohibition against zulm (oppression) (Ramlan & Malkan, 2025). The principle of maslahah (public interest) demands that technological systems advance collective welfare and protect vulnerable populations rather than perpetuating structural injustice (Auda, 2008). Islamic jurisprudence's emphasis on substantive fairness—not merely formal equality—provides a rigorous framework for evaluating whether algorithmic governance serves justice or reproduces oppression.

1-4. Legitimacy, Democratic Accountability, and the Rise of Algocracy

The delegation of consequential decisions to algorithmic systems raises fundamental questions about political legitimacy and the preservation of democratic values (Danaher, 2016). Political theorists have conceptualized this transformation as algocracy—governance by algorithms—wherein traditional accountability structures prove inadequate for overseeing automated decision-making (Aneesh, 2009; Cristianini & Scantamburlo, 2020). Danaher's critique identifies two core legitimacy deficits: the "hiddenness concern," involving covert data collection without informed consent, and the "opacity concern," referring to the inscrutability of algorithmic reasoning. These deficits undermine transparency, public deliberation, and contestability—the foundational pillars of democratic governance .Scharpf's framework distinguishes input legitimacy (democratic participation), throughput legitimacy (procedural fairness), and output legitimacy (effectiveness and public value alignment). Algorithmic governance threatens all three dimensions: it operates with minimal democratic oversight, lacks procedural safeguards for affected individuals, and may optimize narrow efficiency metrics while disregarding broader social values (Scharpf, 2022). From an Islamic perspective, legitimacy derives not from procedural correctness alone but from conformity with divine justice and the fulfillment of moral obligations. The concept of khilafah (stewardship) positions human beings as God's vicegerents entrusted with authority that cannot be abdicated to non-conscious entities (Masoudian et al., 2025).

1-5. Localization, Institutional Challenges, and Cultural Adaptation

Despite growing global attention to algorithmic governance, its localization in non-Western contexts remains limited and fragmented. In Iran and other developing societies, algorithmic systems are gradually entering domains such as education, healthcare, welfare, and social management, yet the lack of systematic understanding and elite-level discourse has hindered the

formulation of coherent, ethical policies (Zhang, 2024). Structural centralization, weak intermediary institutions, and fragmented data infrastructures further complicate the contextualization of global regulatory frameworks (Fritzen, 2007; Ghosh, 2003; Bebbington et al., 2004). The uncritical transplantation of Western governance models often leads to cultural incompatibility and institutional inefficiency (D'Iribarne, 2008). In response, scholars such as Calzada (2018) and Tan et al. (2019) call for the development of participatory and context-sensitive models of ethical digital governance that align technological innovation with local moral traditions and social realities. These arguments resonate strongly with the Islamic philosophy of governance, which links ethical legitimacy to the pursuit of justice, transparency, and communal welfare. Accordingly, embedding Islamic ethical principles into algorithmic governance could bridge the moral gap between global technological systems and culturally grounded governance models.

1-6. Research Gap

The current body of literature highlights several limitations that justify the need for a new theoretical lens. First, existing studies primarily conceptualize algorithmic governance through functional and technocratic perspectives, with limited exploration of its moral and spiritual foundations. Second, the ethical frameworks adopted globally remain largely Western, focusing on procedural fairness while overlooking divine accountability and metaphysical dimensions of justice. Third, non-Western and Islamic contexts are underrepresented, leaving the ethical potential of Islamic governance principles unexplored. Consequently, there exists a clear normative and cultural gap between the prevailing discourse on algorithmic governance and the Islamic ethical worldview centered on justice, trust, and human dignity.

This study therefore seeks to fill that gap by exploring the ethical components of algorithmic governance grounded in Islamic teachings. It proposes a normative framework in which algorithms are viewed as instruments of moral responsibility and divine trust, aimed at advancing social justice, transparency, and the dignity of human agency. In doing so, the research aspires to contribute to the emerging field of value-based technological governance by situating the Islamic moral perspective as both a critique of and a complement to global algorithmic ethics.

2. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative and interpretive research design to explore the ethical components of algorithmic governance through the lens of

Islamic teachings. Rather than relying on empirical or statistical measurement, the approach is normative and analytical, aiming to uncover how moral principles embedded in Islamic thought—such as justice (adl), trust (amanah), and human dignity (karamah)—can inform the ethical evaluation of algorithmic systems in governance contexts. The study proceeds through an integrative logic that combines critical synthesis of global scholarship on algorithmic governance with conceptual interpretation of Islamic moral and jurisprudential sources. International academic works addressing the ethical, legal, and political challenges of algorithmic decision-making were reviewed alongside primary and secondary Islamic texts, including Qur'anic exegesis, philosophical reflections, and ethical treatises concerning governance, responsibility, and stewardship. The focus of the analysis is not on quantifiable relationships but on how ideas, values, and principles from these two intellectual traditions intersect to produce a cohesive framework of "Islamic algorithmic ethics."

The analytical process involved a continuous and reflective reading of the texts, emphasizing the extraction of recurring ethical themes and their reinterpretation within contemporary governance debates. This interpretive process combined inductive reasoning—deriving ethical categories emerging from Islamic sources—with deductive reasoning, whereby these categories were examined against existing debates on transparency, fairness, and accountability in algorithmic governance. Through this synthesis, the study identifies a series of moral correspondences and tensions between Islamic ethical paradigms and global algorithmic ethics, leading to the formulation of a value-based framework suitable for culturally grounded governance. The emphasis throughout the analysis was placed on conceptual clarity, internal coherence, and contextual relevance rather than numerical generalizability.

To ensure validity and credibility, interpretive triangulation was applied through the cross-examination of insights from multiple domains—classical Islamic ethics, contemporary literature on governance, and scholarly discourse on technology ethics. The researcher maintained reflexivity throughout the analytical process, critically evaluating interpretive assumptions to prevent bias and preserve fidelity to both the spirit of Islamic moral philosophy and the realities of algorithmic decision-making. Since the research is conceptual and non-empirical, no human participants or personal data were involved; however, ethical rigor was observed through intellectual transparency, accurate citation, and respect for the integrity of both Islamic and academic sources. The methodological stance of this paper is therefore explicitly reflective and value-oriented, seeking not to test hypotheses but to articulate a

normative synthesis that aligns emerging forms of algorithmic governance with enduring Islamic principles of justice, accountability, and human dignity.

3. Results

After examining Qur'anic verses and prophetic traditions relevant to justice, trust, dignity, and responsibility, a thematic analysis was conducted to uncover the ethical dimensions of algorithmic governance from an Islamic perspective. Each textual unit—whether a verse or hadith—was carefully interpreted to extract the underlying moral principle that could inform the governance of algorithmic systems. Through this process, foundational ethical ideas were identified and categorized, allowing the gradual emergence of a structured moral framework aligned with Islamic teachings.

The analysis revealed that Islamic sources articulate a comprehensive ethical vision that directly resonates with the moral challenges raised by algorithmic governance. Verses such as "Do not betray God and the Messenger or betray your trusts while you know" (Al-Anfāl, 26) and "We have certainly honored the children of Adam" (Al-Isrā, 70) highlight the moral imperatives of trust, accountability, and human dignity. Similarly, prophetic sayings emphasizing honesty in speech, transparency in trade, and confidentiality in communication reinforce the moral logic of responsibility and integrity that must guide decision-making processes—whether human or algorithmic. Collectively, these teachings underscore the sanctity of trust and the prohibition of betrayal, deception, and intrusion into the private domain of others.

Building upon these textual insights, the analysis progressed from identifying individual moral codes to integrating them into broader ethical themes. The first cluster of themes concerns autonomy, emphasizing human moral agency, free will, and the stewardship of divine blessings. It establishes that individuals—and by extension, algorithmic decision-makers designed by them—are accountable for their choices. The second cluster relates to human dignity, which combines both inherent and acquired aspects of worth. The Qur'anic notion of honoring humanity in creation, alongside the principle that piety constitutes the true criterion of dignity, provides a moral foundation for ensuring that algorithmic systems respect human value and avoid objectifying individuals as mere data points.

The third thematic cluster, justice, represents the central pillar of Islamic governance ethics. It stresses fairness, proportionality, and the protection of social welfare, prohibiting any form of exploitation, bias, or unequal treatment that may result from algorithmic decisions. Closely linked to justice is the principle of commitment, which demands the fulfillment of promises, the observance of consent in using others' resources, and the

acquisition of benefits through legitimate means. The fourth cluster, trust, elaborates on the responsibility to safeguard confidentiality, to maintain honesty in interactions, and to avoid disclosure of information that could cause harm—ethical standards highly relevant to algorithmic transparency and data stewardship.

Another recurring set of themes revolves around caution, highlighting the necessity of verification, precision, and avoidance of harm or assumptions. This moral posture parallels the contemporary emphasis on risk assessment and error prevention in algorithmic design. Similarly, honesty and benevolence emerge as reinforcing virtues: honesty calls for truthfulness, transparency, and avoidance of deception, while benevolence demands goodwill and an orientation toward the collective welfare of society. Finally, the principle of non-invasiveness underscores the prohibition of unwarranted intrusion into the private domain of individuals and the avoidance of actions that cause psychological, social, or informational harm—foundations that align with the ethical imperative of privacy in algorithmic systems.

Together, these interrelated moral dimensions form a coherent framework for evaluating and guiding algorithmic governance through an Islamic ethical lens. They converge on three core imperatives: justice as the structural foundation of decision-making, trust as the moral condition of legitimacy, and human dignity as the spiritual boundary that governs technological power. The analysis demonstrates that Islamic ethics offers not merely a set of religious precepts but a dynamic and contextually relevant framework for addressing the governance challenges posed by algorithmic systems. This framework integrates accountability, transparency, and compassion into a unified vision of moral governance, positioning technology as a means of serving divine justice rather than as an autonomous authority.

The results therefore establish that algorithmic governance, when aligned with the moral principles articulated in Islamic sources, can transcend the limitations of purely procedural ethics. It can evolve into a spiritually grounded system of decision-making that upholds human dignity, prevents harm, and ensures accountability before both society and God. This synthesis reveals how the normative depth of Islamic thought can contribute to the global discourse on responsible algorithmic governance, providing a culturally rooted yet universally resonant ethical framework.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that Islamic ethics provides a comprehensive and morally coherent framework for addressing the legitimacy crisis and ethical deficits observed in algorithmic governance. Contemporary scholarship has

extensively discussed the shift from human-centric governance toward automated decision-making (Blankenship, 2019; Davutoğlu, 2025), emphasizing efficiency, scalability, and predictive precision. However, as multiple studies demonstrate, such transformations also generate normative tensions regarding justice, accountability, and transparency (Festic, 2022; Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2022). The present research contributes to this debate by showing that Islamic moral principles—grounded in divine accountability and social justice—can offer an alternative ethical grounding that complements and extends existing secular frameworks.

In line with the concerns expressed by Chomanski (2022) and Volkov (2025) about the erosion of legitimacy in algocratic systems, the results of this study affirm that technological efficiency alone cannot justify algorithmic authority. Islamic ethics, by contrast, restores the moral link between governance and intention (niyyah), ensuring that algorithmic systems serve human welfare rather than instrumental rationality. This argument resonates with Davutoğlu's (2025) view that algorithmic governance transforms the nature of decision-making, demanding new normative foundations beyond technical optimization. While Mendonça et al. (2023) describe this as the emergence of "algorithmic institutionalism," where code itself becomes a rule-making agent, the Islamic ethical framework re-centers moral agency within human responsibility before God, thus resisting the depersonalization inherent in automated systems.

The emphasis on justice (al-ʿadl) identified in this study parallels the findings of Gritsenko and Wood (2022), who argue that algorithmic systems must be seen as new "modes of governance" rather than neutral tools. Yet, whereas their approach highlights procedural fairness through institutional calibration, the Islamic model advances a more substantive conception of justice: one that integrates moral equity, transparency, and compassion. This conception aligns with Bunnell's (2021) call for decentralized and independent oversight mechanisms to mitigate algorithmic harms, but extends it by embedding justice within a transcendent moral order rather than within administrative checks alone.

Similarly, the principle of trust (al-amānah) elaborated in this study complements Perdana et al. (2025), who propose "algorithmic trust" as a regulatory mechanism in Indonesia's central banking system. Both frameworks emphasize reliability and accountability; however, the Islamic perspective deepens this notion by linking trust not only to compliance but to moral stewardship—where the misuse or concealment of information is regarded as a form of betrayal before both society and God. This

interpretation offers a corrective to the purely institutional models of trust found in Western literature.

The principle of human dignity (al-karāmah) derived from Islamic texts corresponds to the concerns raised by Jin (2023) and Ghose et al. (2025), who note that algorithmic discrimination and bias undermine legitimacy and reinforce existing inequalities. Yet while their analyses remain rooted in policy and governance mechanisms, Islamic ethics frames dignity as an ontological attribute of humanity, mandating that algorithmic systems be designed to protect rather than quantify the human being. This corresponds with the perspective of Innerarity (2024), who cautions that algorithmic governance risks hollowing out the moral content of democratic legitimacy unless anchored in deeper ethical commitments.

Moreover, the results echo findings from Calzada (2018) and Astuti et al. (2025), who emphasize the need to contextualize algorithmic governance within diverse political and cultural systems. In agreement with Fritzen (2007) and D'Iribarne (2008), this study demonstrates that universal governance models are insufficient without adaptation to local moral and institutional contexts. The Islamic framework developed here offers precisely such contextualization: it translates universal ethical imperatives—justice, trust, responsibility, and caution—into a system of governance grounded in local epistemic traditions. This echoes Zhang (2024)'s call for context-sensitive countermeasures to algorithmic uncertainty and aligns with Srikanth's (2025) argument that e-governance and AI must evolve through participatory and culturally resonant designs.

Another area of convergence lies in the principle of caution (al-iḥtiyāt), which aligns with Monteiro's (2025) advocacy of algorithmic impact assessments as instruments of accountability. Both emphasize preventive ethics: anticipating harm before it occurs. Yet, Islamic ethics situates caution within the broader moral duty to prevent injustice and protect collective welfare, expanding Monteiro's institutional approach into a moral obligation. The same applies to the principle of honesty (al-ṣidq), which reinforces the transparency and explicability dimensions of algorithmic governance highlighted by Chenou and Valenzuela (2021) and Bloch-Wehba (2020). While these authors focus on regulatory transparency, the Islamic approach embeds honesty in a moral continuum—linking epistemic truth with ethical intention.

Finally, this research confirms the observations of Grimmelikhuijsen and Meijer (2022) regarding the six legitimacy threats to algorithmic decision-making, including opacity, bias, and lack of accountability. Islamic ethics

directly responds to these threats by introducing a normative vocabulary that encompasses both procedural safeguards and spiritual accountability. It thus provides what Volkov (2025) terms the missing "moral anchor" of algocracy—a framework through which technical systems can be morally adjudicated and socially trusted.

In summary, the comparison of this study's findings with existing literature reveals both convergence and divergence. There is convergence in recognizing that algorithmic governance requires transparent, fair, and accountable systems (Henman, 2020; Ghosh et al., 2025), yet divergence in the source of moral authority that ensures such outcomes. Whereas secular frameworks rely on institutional design and regulatory enforcement, Islamic ethics situates governance within a cosmology of justice and divine responsibility, ensuring that legitimacy is not only procedural but moral. This synthesis enriches global debates on algorithmic ethics by integrating the human, moral, and spiritual dimensions often absent from mainstream governance theories. It reinforces the idea that algorithmic legitimacy, if divorced from moral intention and ethical purpose, remains fragile. Hence, the incorporation of Islamic ethical principles into algorithmic governance offers not only cultural contextualization but also a universal moral orientation—one that reconnects efficiency with justice, transparency with trust, and automation with the preservation of human dignity.

5. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that algorithmic governance, while promising in its capacity to enhance administrative precision and efficiency, remains normatively fragile without a moral foundation rooted in substantive ethical commitments. By drawing upon Islamic ethical principles, justice (ʿadl), trust (amānah), human dignity (karāmah), honesty (ṣidq), and moral responsibility (taqwā), the research provides an alternative framework for conceptualizing legitimacy and accountability in automated decision-making systems. In contrast to secular frameworks that rely primarily on procedural safeguards and institutional calibration (Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2022; Gritsenko & Wood, 2022), the Islamic model introduces a moral ontology that links governance to divine accountability and the intention behind action (niyyah). This framework transforms algorithmic ethics from a question of regulatory compliance into one of moral purpose and communal responsibility. By situating algorithmic authority within a broader ethical cosmology, it offers what Volkov (2025) describes as the missing "moral anchor" of algocracy and responds to the legitimacy crisis identified by

Innerarity (2024) and Chomanski (2022), who warn that efficiency-driven systems risk hollowing out the moral core of governance.

The findings also align with emerging perspectives that call for contextualized and culturally grounded approaches to AI and governance (Astuti et al., 2025; Calzada, 2018; Srikanth, 2025). Islamic ethics contributes to this discourse by demonstrating that technological rationality and moral transcendence need not be opposites but can be harmonized through a conception of stewardship (khilāfah). This integration highlights that the governance of algorithms is not only a matter of data management or risk mitigation (Peng et al., 2024; Monteiro, 2025) but also a question of moral cultivation—how societies ensure that digital architectures reflect their highest ethical values. In doing so, this research expands the conceptual horizon of algorithmic governance beyond the limits of proceduralism, suggesting that faith-based ethical systems can serve as epistemic resources for global AI governance debates (Davutoğlu, 2025; Ghosh et al., 2025).

Nonetheless, the study acknowledges several limitations. The analysis, being conceptual and text-based, focuses on interpreting Islamic sources rather than empirically evaluating algorithmic systems in practice. While this provides theoretical clarity, it leaves open questions about operationalization—how principles such as trust or justice can be technically encoded within machine-learning pipelines or decision-support algorithms (Henman, 2020; Chenou & Valenzuela, 2021). Furthermore, the focus on Islamic ethics, while deliberate, does not capture the full diversity of ethical reasoning across Muslim societies, where legal schools, cultural traditions, and governance structures vary considerably (D'Iribarne, 2008; Fritzen, 2007). Future research should therefore explore empirical and comparative pathways to integrate Islamic moral precepts into algorithmic design and oversight mechanisms, for example through participatory approaches that involve religious scholars, data scientists, and policy actors in co-developing AI governance frameworks (Kariotis & Mir, 2020; Webb et al., 2018). Longitudinal studies examining how Islamic ethical principles influence public perceptions of algorithmic legitimacy in Muslim-majority societies would also enrich the field. Moreover, interdisciplinary collaborations that bridge theology, computer science, and public administration could advance a pragmatic model of "algorithmic stewardship," aligning technological governance with spiritual responsibility.

Ultimately, the research underscores that algorithmic governance must not only be efficient and transparent but also morally intelligible. Without grounding in ethical intention and divine accountability, governance risks devolving into technocratic control devoid of legitimacy. By recovering the

moral vocabulary of Islamic ethics and situating it within the contemporary discourse on AI and governance, this study contributes to a re-enchantment of the digital public sphere—one that reaffirms the primacy of justice, human dignity, and trust in an age increasingly governed by algorithms.

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The Role of Taqwa and Islamic Ethical Principles in Enhancing Employee Mental Health and Organizational Productivity: A Deliberative Inquiry

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Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates the impact of Taqwa and Islamic ethical principles on employee mental health and organizational productivity. By examining virtues such as repentance, faith, and moderation, as well as prohibitions against vices like envy, despair, and deception, the research aims to clarify the ethical implications of Taqwa for individual well-being and workplace outcomes.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Using a deliberative inquiry approach, the study analyzes Islamic texts (Quran and Shiite Hadiths) alongside contemporary empirical evidence. Through this dual-source analysis, the research identifies how Taqwa operates as an ethical and psychological regulator within organizational contexts.

Findings: The findings indicate that Taqwa enhances psychological well-being by regulating emotions, strengthening interpersonal relationships, and promoting mental vitality. These improvements reduce workplace stress and burnout while simultaneously boosting organizational productivity. The study additionally shows that implementing Taqwa-driven ethical principles contributes to healthier work environments and more resilient employees.

Practical Implications: Practical recommendations include developing Taqwa-based training programs, adopting supportive policies that reinforce marital and social bonds, and encouraging wholesome recreational activities within organizations. These measures can institutionalize ethical well-being and improve organizational effectiveness.

Originality: This research proposes a divinely inspired ethical framework for management that contrasts with secular approaches to workplace mental health. By integrating Islamic values into organizational settings, the study offers novel and effective solutions for mental health management and outlines directions for future research to expand the application of Taqwa-based principles.

Keywords

Introduction

In today's organizational landscape, employees require more than technical skills to achieve optimal performance; they also need psychological support and a conducive work environment to maintain mental well-being. Factors such as stress, work pressure, complex interpersonal relationships, and work-life imbalance significantly undermine mental health, leading to reduced productivity, job dissatisfaction, and substantial organizational costs through burnout and turnover (Maham & Bhatti, 2019). Consequently, organizations prioritizing employee mental health through targeted interventions can enhance efficiency and job satisfaction.

Despite scientific and material advancements in modern societies, individuals face significant mental health challenges, including languishing, depression, anxiety, and a lack of vitality. Even in affluent societies, the proliferation of material comforts has not translated into greater life satisfaction, with many resorting to sedatives, narcotics, or alcohol to alleviate anxiety (Shirazi, 2013/1392). This pervasive psychological crisis underscores that, despite technological and economic progress, human mental and spiritual well-being remains compromised.

Religion, as a deeply rooted spiritual resource, has historically offered solutions to enhance mental health. Islamic teachings, in particular, emphasize the interdependence of physical and mental health as pillars of human flourishing, advocating a return to divine principles to address psychological and social challenges (Shirazi, 2013/1392). Islamic ethics, rooted in Taqwa (God-consciousness), promote values like honesty and commitment, mitigating modern workplace challenges such as burnout by aligning personal faith with professional duties (Amin et al., 2021). However, contemporary reliance on Western theories, which often lack a holistic understanding of human nature, sidelines religious teachings that offer effective solutions. The drift from innate (fitrah) and divine principles is a primary driver of these mental health crises.

Modernity, emerging around the 16th century post-Renaissance, replaced faith-based paradigms with self-reliant rationality, initiating a process that obscured humanity's divine fitrah and fostered self-centeredness and materialism (Mottahari, 2021/1401). While modernity introduced spirituality as a means to achieve superficial calm, it failed to address deeper existential issues, as it sidelined God and Tawhid (monotheism), rendering ethics and spirituality insufficient for true restoration (Khosropanah, 2014/1393). True Tawhid must permeate daily life, not remain a mere concept.

What, then, is the practical response? Taqwa serves as a master key, grounded in Tawhid, fostering holistic human well-being across physical, psychological, and social dimensions. In contrast to secular modernity's material focus, Taqwa integrates spiritual dimensions into work life, countering spiritual voids that contribute to anxiety and depression (Ab Rahman et al., 2010). The human soul influences actions, and actions, in turn, shape the soul; virtuous actions enhance spiritual health, while corrupt actions exacerbate spiritual decline (Shirazi, 2013/1392). Taqwa, far from being a mere abstract virtue, acts as a practical mechanism: without it, no hospital, physician, or medicine can fully restore health. A person with Taqwa, content with their rightful share, enjoys greater mental tranquility, reduced nervous disorders, and a healthier heart, avoiding ailments like ulcers or weakened vitality from excess, ultimately leading to a longer, balanced life (Shirazi, 2013/1392). Specifically, Taqwa, translated as self-restraint, serves as a deterrent to vices (e.g., envy, despair) that are primary sources of psychological distress, while fostering virtues (e.g., faith, moderation) that enhance human resilience. This spirituality, derived from Taqwa, promotes inner peace and resilience against workplace stressors, positively impacting job satisfaction in modern organizational contexts (Bhatti et al., 2021b).

1. Literature Review

1-1. Problem Statement

Contemporary organizations face a myriad of ethical challenges that significantly undermine employee mental health and organizational productivity. Issues such as workplace deviance (e.g., dishonest behaviors, lack of accountability), unethical competition, interpersonal conflicts, favoritism, mistrust, greed, and self-interest create toxic work environments, leading to pervasive problems like stress, anxiety, burnout, and reduced job satisfaction (Kamil et al., 2015; Maham & Bhatti, 2019). These challenges are well-documented in organizational literature, with studies highlighting their detrimental effects on employee well-being and organizational outcomes, including decreased efficiency, diminished employee engagement, and substantial costs due to high turnover and absenteeism (Bhatti et al., 2021b; Ab Rahman et al., 2010). The root of these issues often lies in the secular orientation of modern workplaces, which prioritize material progress over spiritual and ethical considerations, fostering alienation and exacerbating psychological distress (Amin et al., 2021; Helfaya et al., 2020). This spiritual void, a byproduct of modernity's shift toward self-reliant rationality since the

Renaissance, has sidelined the innate human nature (fitrah) and divine principles, contributing to a global mental health crisis characterized by depression, languishing, and reduced life satisfaction (Khosropanah, 2014/1393; Mottahari, 2021/1401).

Despite the acknowledged impact of these ethical dilemmas, existing approaches predominantly rely on secular frameworks, such as organizational justice or empowerment strategies, which often fail to address the deeper spiritual and moral dimensions of human behavior (Saki et al., n.d.; Unspecified, 2022). These frameworks, while valuable, lack the holistic perspective offered by religious traditions, particularly Islamic divine ethics, which emphasize the interdependence of physical, psychological, and social well-being (Shirazi, 2013/1392). Furthermore, much of the literature on Islamic ethics in organizations draws from Sunni interpretations, overlooking the rich Shiite Hadith (e.g., from Imams Ali and Ja'far al-Sadiq) that provide profound insights into Taqwa's role as a mechanism for inner transformation and mental equilibrium (Maham & Bhatti, 2019; Bhatti et al., 2021a). Additionally, prior studies often fail to conduct a root-cause analysis of virtues (e.g., faith, moderation) and vices (e.g., envy, despair), limiting their ability to propose targeted interventions for workplace mental health.

This study addresses these gaps by adopting a religious perspective grounded in Shiite divine ethics, with Taqwa (God-consciousness) as the pivotal construct. Taqwa, conceptualized as self-restraint and alignment with divine principles, serves as a master key to mitigate ethical challenges by deterring vices that fuel psychological distress and cultivating virtues that enhance resilience and well-being (Shirazi, 2013/1392). Unlike secular or Sunni-centric approaches, this research leverages Shiite narratives to explore Taqwa's therapeutic mechanisms, such as its capacity to foster inner peace, reduce workplace stress, and promote work-life balance through practices like timely marriage and moderated interpersonal relationships (Bhatti et al., 2021b). By integrating these insights with contemporary psychological models (e.g., broaden-and-build theory; Fredrickson, 2001), the study aims to develop a comprehensive framework that not only addresses organizational ethical dilemmas but also critiques the spiritual voids of secular modernity, advocating a Tawhid-centered approach to restore fitrah and enhance organizational performance. Through this lens, the study seeks to offer actionable interventions for fostering mental health, ethical behavior, and productivity in modern workplaces.

1-2. Literature Review

Impact of Taqwa (Islamic piety) on employee happiness: A study of Pakistan's banking sector, Maham, R., & Bhatti, O. K. (2019)

This empirical study examines the influence of Taqwa on employee happiness in the high-stress banking sector of Pakistan, using regression analysis on survey data from 500 employees. It operationalizes Taqwa as a multidimensional construct involving Islamic spirituality (e.g., prayer) and social responsibility (e.g., charity), finding a positive correlation with happiness as a proxy for mental well-being, and recommends integrating Taqwa into HR practices for improved organizational performance. In our study, unlike this work, which draws primarily on Sunni interpretations of Islamic piety without emphasizing Shiite Hadith (e.g., from Imams like Ja'far al-Sadiq), we focus on Shiite-derived divine ethics rooted in Tawhid, providing a deeper theological foundation for Taqwa as a remedy for mental health issues. Additionally, while this study correlates Taqwa with happiness, our research innovates by root-causing virtues (e.g., faith) and vices (e.g., envy), explaining their origins and how Taqwa strengthens or cures them, extending beyond general well-being to specific organizational interventions for burnout and work-life imbalance.

The relationship between Islamic piety (Taqwa) and workplace deviance with organizational justice as a moderator, Kamil, N. M., Sulaiman, M., Osman-Gani, A. M., & Ahmad, K. (2015)

This quantitative research investigates how Taqwa reduces workplace deviance (e.g., unethical behaviors) in Malaysian organizations, moderated by organizational justice, using structural equation modeling on data from Muslim employees. It posits Taqwa as an internal ethical compass that fosters self-control, ultimately enhancing mental resilience against workplace stressors. Our article differs by centering on Shiite Muslim divine ethics, contrasting with this study's Sunni-oriented framework that overlooks Shiite narratives on Taqwa's role in inner revolution (e.g., through repentance). Furthermore, we innovate by dissecting the roots of vices like dishonesty and their psychological origins, demonstrating Taqwa's therapeutic mechanisms for virtues and vices, which this study does not address in depth, and applying it specifically to mental health outcomes like anxiety reduction in organizational contexts.

Spirituality in the Workplace: The Role of Taqwa towards the Advancement of the Contemporary Organization, Ab Rahman, Z.,

Asmawi, A., Kamaruzaman, N., Abd Razak, A., & Wan Mohd Yunus, W. M. A. (2010)

This conceptual paper explores Taqwa as the pinnacle of Islamic spirituality in modern organizations, arguing it promotes ethical responsibility and purpose-driven work, drawing on general Islamic principles to advance organizational harmony and employee motivation. Unlike this study, which relies on broad Sunni Islamic concepts without incorporating Shiite Hadith that richly interpret Taqwa as a safeguard against spiritual voids in modernity, our research emphasizes Shiite divine ethics grounded in fitrah (innate nature). We also innovate by analyzing the etiological roots of virtues (e.g., moderation) and vices (e.g., despair), illustrating Taqwa's role in their cultivation or eradication, extending the discussion to societal critiques of secularism not fully addressed here.

Islamic piety at the workplace via an artificial neural network, Bhatti, O. K., Aslam, U. S., Arain, G. A., Mehdi, S. M., & Shaikh, M. A. (2021a)

Utilizing artificial neural networks, this study models the impact of Islamic piety (Taqwa) on workplace behavior in Pakistani firms, finding that it energizes constructive contributions and reduces stress through ethical support among colleagues. Our work innovates by adopting a Shiite perspective on divine ethics, differing from this Sunni-focused analysis that neglects Shiite traditions on Taqwa's introspective dimensions. Additionally, we provide a root-cause analysis of virtues and vices, explaining their psychological origins and Taqwa's remedial function, which this study overlooks in favor of behavioral modeling, while applying it to broader mental health challenges like work-induced depression.

Islamic work ethics, rooted in Taqwa, emphasize values like honesty and dedication, which can mitigate modern workplace challenges such as burnout and dissatisfaction by aligning personal faith with professional duties, Amin, S., Ahmad, A., Hui, L. S., & Abbas, A. (2021)

This review conceptualizes Islamic work ethics through Taqwa, highlighting values like honesty to counter burnout in contemporary settings by integrating faith into professional roles. In contrast to this study's general Sunni ethical framework without Shiite Hadith integration, our research prioritizes Shiite divine ethics for a more profound Tawhid-based approach. We further innovate by tracing the origins of virtues (e.g., dedication) and vices (e.g., burnout's roots in imbalance), detailing Taqwa's strengthening or

curative mechanisms, and critiquing secular modernity's alienation, aspects not deeply explored here.

The Impact of Islamic Spirituality on Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment Through Work Ethics, Bhatti, O. K., Alam, M. A., Hassan, A., & Sulaiman, M. (2021b)

This empirical investigation demonstrates that Islamic spirituality, including Taqwa, enhances job satisfaction by fostering inner peace and resilience against stressors in organizational contexts. Our study diverges by emphasizing Shiite divine ethics, unlike this work's Sunni-centric view that underutilizes Shiite sources on Taqwa's role in spiritual equilibrium. Moreover, we innovate through etiological examination of virtues and vices, their causal roots, and Taqwa's targeted interventions for mental health, extending beyond satisfaction to societal implications like reducing collective anxiety in secular workplaces.

The Effect of Organizational Justice on Psychological Workplace Health in Tehran Schools, Saki, R., et al. (2017/1396)

This Persian study analyzes the effect of organizational justice on psychological workplace health in Tehran schools, finding that fair environments reduce stress and improve mental well-being among educators. Unlike this work, which examines justice in isolation without Islamic ethical integration, our research centers on Shiite divine ethics via Taqwa, innovating by root-causing virtues (e.g., fairness) and vices (e.g., injustice's psychological origins), and applying Taqwa as a remedy, while critiquing secular approaches not addressed here; additionally, we extend to broader organizational productivity, beyond educational settings.

Management and Empowerment of Energy Sector Employees for Preserving Mental Health and Enhancing Productivity, Unspecified (2022)

This Persian article discusses employee empowerment in energy sectors for mental health preservation and productivity enhancement, emphasizing training and support systems. Our study innovates by grounding empowerment in Shiite divine ethics through Taqwa, contrasting with this secular-focused approach, which lacks religious dimensions. We further dissect virtues and vices' roots and Taqwa's curative role, applying it to societal critiques of modernity, while this work is limited to practical empowerment without ethical etiology or broader implications.

2. Conceptual Framework & Methodology

Drawing from the conceptual framework of practical implications as a translational bridge between theory and practice (Alexander & McQuillan, 2024), the proposed framework for this study adapts the deliberative research approach to examine the impact of Taqwa (piety) and Islamic ethical principles on employee mental health and productivity. This framework positions Taqwa as the core construct, translating implications from Islamic texts into organizational applications. It employs a three-dimensional structure—theoretical, practical, and societal—to bridge the gap between ethical deliberations (e.g., restraint from vices and promotion of virtues) and modern workplace challenges, such as stress and burnout. The framework is grounded in hermeneutic extraction of implications from primary Islamic sources (e.g., Quran and Shiite Hadith) and integrates them with psychological models (e.g., broaden-and-build theory; Fredrickson, 2001) and management studies (e.g., Bhatti et al., 2021a). This ensures a robust, evidence-based model that critiques secular modernity's spiritual voids while advocating a God-centered, innate human nature (fitrah)-oriented approach (Khosropanah, 2014/1393).

The framework can be operationalized through conceptual mapping tools and thematic synthesis, facilitating empirical testing in future studies. It addresses limitations in prior literature by incorporating underrepresented Shiite narratives for deeper interpretive capacity (Maham & Bhatti, 2019).

Table 1: Conceptual Framework

Framework Dimension	Scientific Explanation	Key Implications from the Study	Proposed Application
Theoretical Implications	This dimension focuses on extracting conceptual implications from Islamic ethics to expand knowledge in Islamic management and organizational psychology. It aligns with the theoretical bridge in Alexander and McQuillan (2024), using hermeneutics to link Taqwa to mental equilibrium (Shirazi,	Taqwa implies balance between body and mind, restraining vices (e.g., envy) and promoting virtues (e.g., faith), consistent with positive psychology models (Fredrickson, 2001).	Extend Islamic management theories by integrating the Shiite Hadith for modeling employee resilience (Ab Rahman et al., 2010).

Framework Dimension	Scientific Explanation	Key Implications from the Study	Proposed Application
	2013/1392).		
Practical Implications	Emphasizing managerial applications, this dimension translates implications into policy tools, such as Taqwa-based training to mitigate burnout (Bhatti et al., 2021a). It serves as a practical bridge, per Alexander and McQuillan (2024).	Taqwa in marriage and friendships implies HR policies for work-life balance, reducing job stress (Kamil et al., 2015).	Develop organizational interventions like ethics workshops to enhance productivity and team cohesion.
Societal Implications	This explores broader societal impacts, critiquing secularism and promoting fitrah-based ethics (Maham & Bhatti, 2019). It aligns with the societal bridge in Alexander and McQuillan (2024).	Taqwa implies a Tawhid-centered response to modernity's anxiety, fostering societal well-being (Khosropanah, 2014/1393).	Inform public policies for ethical corporate cultures, reducing societal costs of burnout (Helfaya et al., 2020).

This framework provides a scientifically rigorous lens for translating Islamic ethics into management practice, with potential for quantitative validation using scales like Taqwa measures (Maham & Bhatti, 2019).

3. Methodology

This study employs a deliberative research approach (deliberative inquiry or implication-based hermeneutics), adapted from the conceptual framework of practical implications as a translational bridge between theory and practice (Alexander & McQuillan, 2024). This methodology is particularly suited for extracting ethical and conceptual implications from Islamic texts and integrating them with contemporary organizational psychology and management theories. It bridges the gap between theoretical deliberations derived from religious sources and their practical applications in workplace mental health and productivity. The approach is qualitative and conceptual, drawing on thematic analysis to interpret implications at three levels: theoretical, practical, and societal. This framework ensures a rigorous

translation of Islamic ethical principles, such as Taqwa (piety or God-consciousness), into actionable insights for organizational management, while addressing critiques of secular modernity's impact on mental well-being.

The methodology is structured in three sequential stages, each aligned with a dimension of implications from Alexander and McQuillan (2024), to systematically derive, analyze, and apply deliberations from primary Islamic sources (e.g., the Quran, Hadith from Shiite traditions, and Nahj al-Balagha) and secondary scientific literature (e.g., Shirazi, 2013/1392). Data sources include textual exegesis of religious narratives and empirical insights from organizational psychology. Analysis incorporates thematic coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and conceptual mapping to ensure validity and replicability. Triangulation of sources (religious texts, psychological models, and management studies) enhances credibility, while reflexivity is maintained to mitigate interpretive bias.

Stage 1: Identification of Implications and Theoretical Translation (Theoretical Implications)

This stage focuses on extracting core conceptual implications from Islamic ethical principles, expanding theoretical knowledge in Islamic management and organizational psychology. Following the theoretical dimension in Alexander and McQuillan (2024), implications are identified through hermeneutic analysis of texts, emphasizing Taqwa as a self-regulatory mechanism for mental equilibrium. Key themes (e.g., restraint from vices like envy and despair, promotion of virtues like faith and moderation) are coded using thematic analysis software or manual coding.

- **Analytical Tools:** Thematic analysis to categorize implications (e.g., Taqwa as a moderator of stress, aligned with broaden-and-build theory; Fredrickson, 2001).
- **Data Sources:** Primary Islamic texts (e.g., Quran, Surah al-Ra'd: 13:28) and scholarly interpretations (e.g., Shirazi, 2013/1392).
- **Objective:** To theoretically translate implications, enriching models of workplace ethics (e.g., integrating Shiite Hadith overlooked in Sunni-centric literature; Maham & Bhatti, 2019).

Stage 2: Analysis of Semantic Relations and Practical Translation (Practical Implications)

Building on the practical dimension of Alexander and McQuillan (2024), this stage analyzes semantic linkages between identified implications and organizational challenges (e.g., burnout, work-life imbalance). Conceptual mapping visualizes relations, such as how Taqwa mitigates ethical vices (e.g., dishonesty) to enhance interpersonal dynamics and productivity.

- **Analytical Tools:** Conceptual modeling (e.g., via diagrams) to trace pathways (e.g., Taqwa → reduced envy → improved team cohesion; Bhatti et al., 2021a).

- **Data Sources:** Integration of Islamic ethics with management studies (e.g., Kamil et al., 2015, on organizational justice as a moderator).

- **Objective:** Practical translation into managerial tools, such as HR policies for Taqwa-based training to reduce workplace stress.

Stage 3: Framework Presentation and Societal Translation (Societal Implications)

This final stage, inspired by the societal dimension in Alexander and McQuillan (2024), synthesizes implications into a conceptual framework for broader societal impact, critiquing secular modernity's spiritual voids and advocating a God-centered approach. The framework is presented as a three-dimensional model, proposing scalable applications.

- **Analytical Tools:** Synthesis via reflexive narrative and validation through cross-referencing (e.g., with societal ethics in Helfaya et al., 2020).

- **Data Sources:** Broader societal critiques (e.g., Khosropanah, 2014/1393 on Tawhid in daily life).

- **Objective:** Societal translation to inform policy, such as integrating Islamic ethics into corporate culture to address collective mental health crises.

Reliability is ensured through inter-coder agreement (if multiple analysts) and peer debriefing. Limitations include interpretive subjectivity, mitigated by source triangulation. This methodology provides a robust, translational lens for advancing Islamic management scholarship.

4. Findings / Results

In the framework of deliberative research, the ethical dilemmas outlined in the problem statement—such as gossip, lying, harassment, envy, and role conflicts—find profound resolution through Taqwa's implications for

mental health. For instance, viewing repentance as a manifestation of Taqwa reveals its psychological depth: it represents an internal revolution that restores balance by confronting vices and fostering virtues, thereby mitigating workplace stress and burnout (Mottahari, 2003/1382). Examining Taqwa-related concepts like repentance, backbiting, envy, and lying demonstrates how these teachings build spiritual strength and counteract weakening factors. Repentance, as an inner uprising against one's lower self, aligns with cognitive-behavioral models of self-regulation, reducing anxiety from ethical lapses like dishonesty (Fredrickson, 2001). Similarly, backbiting—analyzed as the effort of the incapable ("Al-Ghibah Jahd al-'Ajiz," Nahj al-Balagha, Hikmah 461)—creates virtual superiority illusions, leading to frustration and health deterioration, which Taqwa counters by promoting contentment and reducing interpersonal toxicity (Kaptein, 2022). Envy, as the least enjoyable vice ("The envious person enjoys the least pleasure and happiness from life," Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 77, p. 112), manifests as internal resentment over others' blessings; Taqwa extinguishes this fire before it escalates into verbal or physical harm, preserving mental health and societal harmony (Wu et al., 2022). As Imam Ja'far Sadiq (peace be upon him) states, "The envious person harms himself before harming the other party" (Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, Vol. 12, p. 18), and Imam Ali (peace be upon him) notes, "The less envy there is, the healthier the human body is" (Safina al-Bihar, Vol. 1, p. 251) and "The envious person is always sick, even if (apparently) he has a healthy and robust body" (Ghurar al-Hikam, p. 67). Lying, with its inherent duplicity and stress of exposure, disrupts soul balance and inflicts irreparable spiritual damage, akin to hypocrisy; Taqwa restores harmony, preventing moral erosion in organizational settings (Chen & Qian, 2024). As Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) says, "Whoever lies a lot, his beauty goes away, and whoever fights with people, his chivalry is destroyed, and whoever eats a lot of sorrow, his body becomes sick, and whoever has a bad temper, his soul is in torment." These implications translate Taqwa into practical organizational interventions, fostering resilience against ethical voids of modernity (Maham & Bhatti, 2019; Bhatti et al., 2021b).

For example, if we look at the concept of repentance as one of the manifestations of Taqwa, we can analyze it psychologically as follows: Essentially, repentance is one of the characteristics of humans compared to animals. Repentance is not that we utter the phrase "I ask forgiveness of Allah, my Lord, and I repent to Him," and that's it; it is not a matter of words. Repentance is a psychological and spiritual state, and even a spiritual

revolution in humans, where the phrase of seeking forgiveness is the expression of this state, not the state itself, not repentance itself, like many other things where the word is not the truth itself but the explainer of that truth. That we say "I ask forgiveness of Allah" several times a day, we should not imagine that we repent several times a day. If we truly repent once a day, we will undoubtedly achieve stages and levels of proximity to the Lord.

Repentance consists of a kind of internal revolution, a type of uprising, a type of revolution from the side of the human himself against himself. This aspect is one of the exclusives of humans.

Repentance means that internal uprising, where the high stations of human existence against the low stations of his existence—which have taken the reins of this internal country's affairs—suddenly revolt, take all of them and throw them into prison, and they themselves, with their forces and troops and armies, take the reins of affairs in hand. This state and form does not exist in animals and plants. Just as its opposite also exists, meaning sometimes the low stations of human existence revolt and revolution against the high stations of his existence, take them and throw them into prison, and take the reins of this country's affairs in hand. (Mottahari, 1382)

If we examine each of the Taqwa-related concepts of religion in this framework, we will see that all of them are teachings in the direction of construction, increasing human spiritual power, and confronting factors that weaken it. For example, when we speak of backbiting as a vice, this trait is analyzed within the individual as follows: Based on the narration " Backbiting someone is the work of a helpless person. " (Nahj al-Balagha, Hikmah 461), the backbiter, relative to a person who is superior to him, has not been able to gain superiority in the external world and through this wants to draw a virtual superiority over him in his mind, while in this matter he has failed and in fact his desperate effort has no result and will bring more frustration for him.

Perhaps for this reason, it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him): "The backbiter should not have an eye of greed for health." And it is clear that the Imam's intention is absolute health, meaning health of soul and body.

Or regarding envy, we see that it is said from the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): "The envious person enjoys the least pleasure and happiness from life." (Bihar, Vol. 77, p. 112) In analyzing envy, it can be said that envy means wishing for the destruction of others' blessings, and wishing

is a matter related to the inner soul of humans, and a person, by referring to his inner self, can understand whether he has suffered from this deadly psychological disease. For example, if he becomes upset and sad because of the blessings that are in the hands of others, this can be a symptom and sign of envy in him. From the Islamic perspective, as long as the fire of envy is merely in the human heart like fire under ash, no sin is written for him, but when it is accompanied by verbal and sometimes physical actions, this fire becomes ignited and its flames will definitely burn the envious person's lap and gradually melt the spiritual joy of humans and endanger his mental health and affect the world and hereafter of the individual and society.

For this reason, Imam Ja'far Sadiq (peace be upon him) says: "The envious person harms himself before harming the other party." (Mustadrak, Vol. 12, p. 18)

Imam Ali (AS): "The less envy there is, the healthier the human body is." (Safina al-Bihar, Vol. 1, p. 251)

Imam Ali: "The envious person is always sick, even if (apparently) he has a healthy and robust body." (Ghurar, p. 67)

Regarding lying, it can be said that the liar is always in stress of exposure, and to prevent this event, he sinks more and more into the swamp of lying day by day; in truth, he is destroying his own soul because the duplicity in lying means lack of harmony between appearance and interior, which also exists in other sins like hypocrisy, disrupts the balance of human soul and inflicts irreparable damages to the individual's spirit and psyche. In this regard, for example, we have a saying from Prophet Jesus (AS) who says: "Whoever lies a lot, his beauty goes away, and whoever fights with people, his chivalry is destroyed, and whoever eats a lot of sorrow, his body becomes sick, and whoever has a bad temper, his soul is in torment."

5. Discussion

According to what was stated, the implications are reported in the table below:

Table 1: Impact of Ethical Injunctions on Mental Health and Organizational Outcomes

Moral Virtue/Ethical Concept	Theoretical Implications (Impact on Mental Health)	Practical Implications in Organization (Effects on Employees)	Societal Implications (Broader Effects)	References
Piety (Taqwa)	Taqwa acts as a spiritual medicine for mental ailments, promoting contentment and reducing anxiety by restraining vices like envy, leading to psychological balance and tranquility.	In organizations, Taqwa reduces workplace stress and burnout among employees by fostering self-restraint, enhancing ethical decision-making, and improving interpersonal trust, thereby boosting productivity.	Societally, Taqwa counters modernity's spiritual voids, promoting collective mental health through ethical communities that prevent social distress and alienation.	Amini & Muhammad-Jafari (2020, p. 43); Shirazi (2013/1392, p. 143); Nahj al-Balagha (Sermon 198, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 43); Maham & Bhatti (2019)
Moderation in Eating (Less Eating)	Moderation prevents mental distress from overindulgence, ensuring sound thinking and emotional stability by avoiding vices like gluttony that disrupt psychological equilibrium.	Employees practicing moderation experience less mental fatigue and better focus at work, reducing stress-related absenteeism and enhancing job performance through balanced energy levels.	On a societal level, it fosters a culture of self-discipline, reducing collective health burdens from overconsumption and promoting mental serenity in communities.	Amini & Muhammad-Jafari (2020, p. 43); Ghurar al-Hikam (p. 320, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 43); Bihar al-Anwar (Vol. 59, p. 287, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 43)
Prohibition of Malicious Gossip	The injunction against malicious gossip mitigates psychological distress by curbing slanderous remarks that foster mistrust and emotional exhaustion, promoting mental tranquility through Taqwa-driven	In organizations, prohibiting malicious gossip reduces employee anxiety and mistrust, enhancing interpersonal relationships and eliminating toxic workplace cultures, thereby boosting productivity and collaboration.	Societally, it diminishes the spread of slanderous rumors, fostering social harmony and collective mental health through strengthened positive interactions.	Wu et al. (2022); Brady et al. (2023); Li et al. (2024); Nahj al-Balagha (Hikmah 461, cited in Mottahari, 2003/1382); Mustadrak al-Wasa'il (Vol. 12, p. 18, cited in Mottahari, 2003/1382)

Moral Virtue/Ethical Concept	Theoretical Implications (Impact on Mental Health)	Practical Implications in Organization (Effects on Employees)	Societal Implications (Broader Effects)	References
	contentment ("Al-Ghibah Jahd al-'Ajiz," Nahj al-Balagha, Hikmah 461).			
Prohibition of Envy	The proscription of envy alleviates psychological distress caused by coveting others' blessings, reducing depression and anxiety while fostering emotional stability and contentment through Taqwa ("The envious person enjoys the least pleasure," Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 77, p. 112).	In organizations, curbing envy minimizes unhealthy competition, enhances employee focus and job satisfaction, and strengthens team collaboration by reducing reputational damage and stress.	Societally, it mitigates anxiety from social comparisons, promoting equitable communities with improved collective mental health and reduced interpersonal conflict.	Wu et al. (2022); Bihar al-Anwar (Vol. 77, p. 112, cited in Mottahari, 2003/1382); Mustadrak al-Wasa'il (Vol. 12, p. 18, cited in Mottahari, 2003/1382); Safina al-Bihar (Vol. 1, p. 251, cited in Mottahari, 2003/1382); Ghurar al-Hikam (p. 67, cited in Mottahari, 2003/1382)
Prohibition of Harassment	The interdiction of harassment, including verbal abuse and bullying, mitigates psychological harm by preventing moral disengagement and fostering a respectful environment, enhancing mental well-being through Taqwa.	In organizations, prohibiting harassment eliminates hostile environments, reduces employee anxiety and depression, and enhances productivity through improved collaboration and psychological safety.	Societally, it curbs psychological violence, fostering harmonious communities with enhanced collective mental health and reduced social discord.	Chen & Qian (2024); Mottahari (2003/1382)
Maintaining Family Ties (Silat al-Rahm)	This virtue alleviates isolation and depression by providing social	In the workplace, strong family ties reduce employee anxiety from work-	Societally, it builds resilient communities by preventing	Amini & Muhammad-Jafari (2020, pp. 43-44); Bihar al-

Moral Virtue/Ethical Concept	Theoretical Implications (Impact on Mental Health)	Practical Implications in Organization (Effects on Employees)	Societal Implications (Broader Effects)	References
	support, enhancing mental peace, and emotional resilience against psychological distress.	life imbalance, improving focus and collaboration, as supported employees exhibit lower turnover rates.	mental health crises from loneliness, promoting collective harmony, and emotional well-being.	Anwar (Vol. 71, p. 81, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 43); Al-Amali (p. 340, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 44)
Patience (Sabr)	Patience acts as a coping mechanism, reducing anxiety and emotional turmoil by enabling adaptation to stressors without mental distress.	Employees with patience handle workplace pressures better, decreasing burnout and enhancing resilience, leading to sustained productivity during organizational changes.	Societally, it fosters a culture of endurance, mitigating collective psychological strain from adversities and promoting long-term community mental health.	Amini & Muhammad-Jafari (2020, p. 44); Quran (Al-Baqarah: 155, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 44); Al-Kafi (Vol. 2, p. 89, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 44)
Overcoming Anger (Kazm al-Ghayz)	Controlling anger prevents emotional outbursts and regret, promoting mental tranquility and self-control against psychological instability.	In organizations, anger management reduces interpersonal conflicts among employees, fostering a peaceful work environment and improving team dynamics for higher efficiency.	Societally, it curbs aggression-related mental health issues, building harmonious communities with reduced violence and enhanced collective emotional stability.	Amini & Muhammad-Jafari (2020, pp. 44-45); Quran (Al Imran: 134, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 44); Bihar al-Anwar (Vol. 72, p. 196, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 45)
Controlling the Gaze (Restraining Eyes)	Restraining the gaze avoids envy-induced distress, maintains mental	Employees practicing this virtue experience less distraction and	Societally, it promotes modesty and mental	Amini & Muhammad-Jafari (2020, p. 45); Al-Kafi (Vol.

Moral Virtue/Ethical Concept	Theoretical Implications (Impact on Mental Health)	Practical Implications in Organization (Effects on Employees)	Societal Implications (Broader Effects)	References
	purity, and reduces psychological harm from lust or comparison.	envy at work, leading to better focus, reduced stress, and improved professional relationships.	contentment, countering media-driven comparisons that cause widespread anxiety and depression.	5, p. 559, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 45); Ghurar al-Hikam (p. 663, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 45)
Positive Assumption (Husn al-Zann)	Good assumptions reduce suspicion and paranoia, fostering trust and emotional stability to prevent mental torment from negative thinking.	In the workplace, it minimizes misunderstandings among employees, enhancing collaboration and reducing anxiety from perceived threats, boosting overall morale.	Societally, it builds trusting communities, alleviating collective paranoia and promoting mental health through positive social interactions.	Amini & Muhammad-Jafari (2020, p. 45); Ghurar al-Hikam (p. 253, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 45); Bihar al-Anwar (Vol. 75, p. 209, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 45)
Good Character (Husn al-Khulq)	Good manners increase social bonds, reducing isolation-induced depression and promoting joy and psychological well-being.	Employees with good character foster positive team environments, decreasing conflicts and stress, which enhances job satisfaction and productivity.	Societally, it strengthens community ties, reducing mental health issues from social discord and promoting widespread emotional harmony.	Amini & Muhammad-Jafari (2020, pp. 45-46); Ghurar al-Hikam (p. 184, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 46); Bihar al-Anwar (Vol. 68, p. 396, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 46)
Trust in God (Tawakkul)	Trusting God alleviates worry and fear, providing psychological	In organizations, it helps employees cope with job insecurity, reducing	Societally, it counters existential anxiety from	Amini & Muhammad-Jafari (2020, p. 46); Quran (Al-

Moral Virtue/Ethical Concept	Theoretical Implications (Impact on Mental Health)	Practical Implications in Organization (Effects on Employees)	Societal Implications (Broader Effects)	References
	relief and peace against uncertainty-induced anxiety.	stress and improving focus, leading to higher resilience and performance.	materialism, fostering collective mental peace and stability in uncertain times.	Talaq: 3, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 46); Al-Kafi (Vol. 2, p. 65, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 46)
Truthfulness (Sidq)	Truthfulness preserves mental integrity, reducing stress from deception and promoting inner peace.	Employees practicing truthfulness build trust in teams, minimizing anxiety from conflicts and enhancing collaborative efficiency.	Societally, it reduces deception-related mental strain, promoting honest communities with lower rates of psychological distress.	Amini & Muhammad-Jafari (2020, p. 46); Ghurar al-Hikam (p. 218, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 46); Al-Kafi (Vol. 2, p. 104, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 46)
Prohibition of Deception	The directive against deception preserves mental integrity by reducing the stress and moral disengagement associated with dishonesty, restoring inner peace through Taqwa-driven truthfulness.	In organizations, prohibiting deception fosters trust within teams, reduces anxiety from conflicts, and enhances collaborative efficiency, leading to a more cohesive work environment.	Societally, it alleviates psychological strain from deceit, promoting honest communities with lower rates of mental distress and stronger social bonds.	Kaptein (2022); Chen & Qian (2024); Mottahari (2003/1382); Amini & Muhammad-Jafari (2020, p. 46)
Gratitude (Shukr)	Gratitude enhances contentment and joy, reducing depression by focusing on blessings rather	In the workplace, grateful employees exhibit higher morale, reducing stress and improving engagement and	Societally, it counters greed-induced anxiety, fostering thankful communities with improved	Amini & Muhammad-Jafari (2020, pp. 46-47); Al-Kafi (Vol. 2, p. 96, cited in Amini & Muhammad-

Moral Virtue/Ethical Concept	Theoretical Implications (Impact on Mental Health)	Practical Implications in Organization (Effects on Employees)	Societal Implications (Broader Effects)	References
	than lacks.	productivity.	collective mental health.	Jafari, 2020, p. 47); Quran (Ibrahim: 7, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 47)
Silence (Samt)	Silence promotes mental clarity and reduces regret from hasty speech, fostering psychological calm and reflection.	Employees who use silence wisely avoid conflicts, reducing workplace stress and enhancing thoughtful decision-making for better performance.	Societally, it minimizes harmful speech-related distress, promoting peaceful communities with lower mental fatigue from overcommunication.	Amini & Muhammad-Jafari (2020, p. 47); Nahj al-Balagha (Hikmah 209, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 47); Ghurar al-Hikam (p. 216, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 47)
Contentment (Qana'ah)	Contentment eliminates greed and anxiety, providing mental peace and self-esteem against material dissatisfaction.	In organizations, contented employees focus better without envy, reducing stress from competition and improving job satisfaction.	Societally, it counters consumerism's mental toll, fostering equitable communities with reduced anxiety from inequality.	Amini & Muhammad-Jafari (2020, pp. 47-48); Bihar al-Anwar (Vol. 68, p. 349, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 48); Nahj al-Balagha (Hikmah 370, cited in Amini & Muhammad-Jafari, 2020, p. 48)

This table outlines the theoretical, practical, and social implications of sixteen key ethical principles rooted in piety and demonstrates their role in reducing psychological distress and increasing employee well-being and

organizational productivity, supported by Islamic teachings and contemporary research.

6. Conclusion

This study has elucidated that Taqwa, as the cornerstone of Islamic divine ethics, plays a pivotal role in enhancing mental health and organizational performance. By fostering virtues such as repentance, patience, truthfulness, contentment, gratitude, and good character, while curbing vices like envy, lying, malicious gossip, and harassment, Taqwa creates a foundation for psychological and spiritual balance. These virtues promote inner tranquility, reduce anxiety, and strengthen self-discipline, enabling individuals to navigate psychological and social challenges effectively. In organizational contexts, Taqwa mitigates conflicts, builds trust, and enhances collaboration, leading to healthier work environments and increased productivity. At a societal level, it fosters harmony and reduces social harms caused by ethical lapses, contributing to collective well-being.

While Western ethical frameworks recognize the impact of moral behaviors on the human psyche—for instance, acknowledging lying as a vice that induces psychological stress, physical ailments, and even diminished aesthetic appeal—secular ethics, with its anthropocentric focus and absence of transcendental laws, lacks the sanctity and profound motivational force to ensure consistent adherence to ethical principles. In contrast, religious ethics, grounded in a teleological and God-centered approach, leverages Taqwa to awaken intrinsic motivations, guiding individuals toward actions that secure both worldly and eternal felicity. By cultivating psychological tranquility in individuals, families, and communities, Taqwa not only bolsters mental health but also indirectly alleviates physical ailments. This research, by integrating Islamic ethical concepts with their applications in organizations and societies, offers a novel framework for promoting ethical resilience and improving quality of life.

7. Limitations

This study is primarily theoretical, relying on deliberative inquiry and textual analysis of Islamic sources, which limits its empirical generalizability. The lack of quantitative data from diverse organizational settings restricts the ability to measure the direct impact of Taqwa-based interventions on employee mental health and productivity. Additionally, the focus on Shiite Hadiths may limit applicability in non-Shiite Islamic contexts or secular organizations. Cultural and contextual variations in interpreting Taqwa were

not fully explored, potentially overlooking nuances in its operationalization across different demographics.

8. Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies should empirically test the proposed Taqwa-based framework through longitudinal experiments or mixed-methods research in diverse organizational settings, measuring outcomes such as employee well-being, stress levels, and productivity metrics. Cross-cultural studies could investigate the applicability of Taqwa in non-Islamic or multicultural workplaces. Further research is needed to develop standardized tools for implementing Taqwa-based training programs and to explore their scalability across industries. Finally, integrating interdisciplinary perspectives, such as positive psychology or organizational behavior, could enhance the framework's robustness and practical utility.

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Appendices (if any)

Conflict of Interest Statement

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The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript in Religion, Management, and Governance (RMG). All financial, personal, or professional relationships that could be perceived to influence the work reported in this paper have been disclosed, and there are no competing interests.

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