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Economic and Financial Crime Governance under ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb: An Islamic Framework for Nigeria

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Abstract

Economic and financial crime poses a major governance challenge in Nigeria, affecting public resources, institutional integrity, socioeconomic development, and public trust. Despite extensive legal and institutional arrangements, persistent weaknesses in prevention, internal controls, coordination, accountability, and asset recovery suggest that enforcement alone is insufficient. This study examines governance principles associated with the administration of ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and critically assesses their relevance to contemporary Nigerian economic and financial crime governance. Employing a qualitative historical-doctrinal and comparative approach, it analyses the Islamic normative concepts of *amānah* (trust), *ʿadl* (justice), *ḥifẓ al-māl* (protection of wealth), *masʾūliyyah* (accountability), *maṣlaḥah* (public welfare), and *ḥisbah* (preventive supervision). The analysis locates the contemporary significance of ʿUmar's administration in the reconstruction of transferable governance principles for application within a modern constitutional state. It identifies functional convergence between these principles and contemporary mechanisms of public financial management, procurement control, institutional supervision, financial intelligence, investigation, prosecution, and asset recovery. Building on this comparison, the study proposes an Islamic Economic and Financial Crime Governance Framework for Contemporary Nigeria (IEFCGF-Nigeria), integrating ethical leadership, prevention, supervision, detection, accountability, restitution, deterrence, and institutional learning. The framework contributes to Islamic governance scholarship by operationalising *ḥifẓ al-māl* as an institutional

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objective for safeguarding public resources. It provides a conceptual basis for adapting Islamic governance principles to Nigeria's constitutionally plural setting and broadening economic and financial crime governance beyond enforcement.

Keywords: Economic and Financial Crime; Islamic Governance; Corruption; Accountability; Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Economic and financial crime represents not merely a criminal-justice problem but a broader challenge of governance, institutional integrity, and public-resource management. Fraud, corruption, embezzlement, money laundering, procurement irregularities, abuse of office, illicit financial flows, and related forms of financial misconduct can weaken public institutions, distort economic incentives, undermine distributive justice, and erode citizens' confidence in government. In developing economies, the consequences can be particularly significant because the diversion or inefficient use of public resources directly affects infrastructure, education, healthcare, social protection, and other public goods.

Nigeria has developed an extensive institutional and legislative architecture to address these challenges. The framework includes specialised anti-corruption and financial-crime institutions, public financial management systems, procurement regulation, financial intelligence mechanisms, asset-declaration requirements, anti-money-laundering legislation, proceeds-of-crime legislation, and judicial processes. The existence of these mechanisms, however, does not necessarily guarantee effective governance. The continuing importance of prevention, internal control, institutional accountability, coordination, financial intelligence, and asset recovery suggests that the central question is increasingly one of institutional effectiveness rather than institutional existence (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2022a, 2022b; World Bank, 2017)..

This problem invites examination from Islamic governance perspectives. Islamic political and economic thought treats the administration of public resources as a moral and fiduciary responsibility. Public authority is associated with amānah, while justice (ʿadl) constitutes a fundamental requirement of legitimate governance. The Qur'an commands the discharge of trusts to their rightful recipients and the exercise of judgment with justice. (Qur'an, 4:58). It also prohibits the wrongful consumption of wealth and the use of wealth to obtain illegitimate advantages. (Qur'an, 2:188 and 4:29) These principles provide an

ethical foundation for considering economic misconduct as a governance problem rather than merely an individual criminal act.

The protection of wealth (ḥifẓ al-māl) is likewise recognised within the classical objectives of Islamic law. The maqāṣid tradition associates Islamic law with the preservation of essential human interests, including property and wealth. Contemporary scholarship has emphasised, however, that maqāṣid should not be invoked superficially or detached from the textual and jurisprudential foundations from which the objectives are derived. In this study, ḥifẓ al-māl is therefore treated as an institutional governance objective involving the protection, control, monitoring, and recovery of public resources (al-Ghazālī, 1997; al-Shāṭibī, 1997; Güney, 2024)..

Within this intellectual tradition, the governance of ʿUmar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb has received particular attention. Historical and juridical literature associates his administration with public accountability, fiscal administration, supervision of officials, market regulation, and concern for public welfare. Recent scholarship has examined his governance more systematically, while other research has specifically considered the management and control of public money during his caliphate (Mustafa & Assaf, 2021; Muttaqin et al., 2024)..

Nevertheless, using ʿUmar as a contemporary governance model requires methodological caution. The institutional and constitutional environment of seventh-century Arabia differs fundamentally from that of modern Nigeria. The contemporary Nigerian state is constitutionally structured, institutionally differentiated, and religiously plural. Institutions such as the Bayt al-Māl and ḥisbah therefore cannot simply be transplanted into the modern state. The analytical task is instead one of functional adaptation: identifying underlying governance principles and determining how their functions may be expressed through contemporary institutions while respecting constitutional legality, human rights, religious plurality, and institutional specialisation.

Existing scholarship has examined ʿUmar's economic policies, fiscal administration, market regulation, and principles of governance. Other studies have addressed maqāṣid al-sharīʿah, Islamic financial governance, corruption, public accountability, and Nigeria's anti-corruption architecture. However, these strands have rarely been integrated into a systematic framework for analysing economic and financial crime governance in contemporary Nigeria. In particular, insufficient attention has been given to reconstructing

the governance principles associated with ʿUmar as an integrated preventive-accountability system and translating those principles into a context-sensitive framework for modern economic and financial crime governance (Güney, 2024; Mustafa & Assaf, 2021; Muttaqin et al., 2024)..

This article therefore pursues five objectives. First, it examines the Islamic normative foundations of economic and financial crime governance. Second, it analyses governance mechanisms associated with ʿUmar, particularly those relating to public wealth, official accountability, economic supervision, and prevention of financial misconduct. Third, it examines contemporary mechanisms for governing economic and financial crime in Nigeria. Fourth, it compares the historical principles with contemporary Nigerian arrangements. Fifth, it develops an adaptable Islamic governance framework for strengthening prevention, accountability, detection, recovery, and deterrence.

The study addresses five questions:

- What Islamic principles underpin the governance of economic and financial misconduct?
- What mechanisms associated with ʿUmar promoted accountability and protection of public wealth?
- How is economic and financial crime currently governed within Nigeria's legal and institutional framework?
- What convergence and divergence exist between ʿUmaric governance principles and contemporary Nigerian mechanisms?
- How can these principles be critically adapted to strengthen economic and financial crime governance in Nigeria?

The article makes three principal contributions. First, it reconstructs ʿUmar's governance not as a collection of isolated historical anecdotes but as an integrated set of principles involving ethical leadership, prevention, supervision, accountability, and restitution. Second, it operationalises ḥifẓ al-māl as an institutional objective involving protection, control, monitoring, and recovery of public resources. Third, it develops the IEFCGF-Nigeria model, which translates Islamic governance principles into functions that can be performed by modern constitutional institutions without requiring institutional transplantation.

Literature Review and Research Gap

Islamic governance regards public authority as a moral trust governed by amānah (trustworthiness) and ʿadl (justice). The Qur'an commands the discharge of trusts and just decision-making while prohibiting the wrongful appropriation of wealth. (Qur'an, 4:58; 2:188; 4:29). Classical political thought extends these principles to administration, official appointments, and protection of public interests. Islamic governance therefore offers not merely historical institutions but normative principles for promoting integrity, impartiality, and accountability in public administration (al-Māwardī, 1996)..

The protection of wealth (ḥifẓ al-māl) is among the essential objectives of Islamic law. Al-Ghazālī identifies property protection as a necessity for social order, while al-Shāṭibī develops a broader framework for objectives-based legal reasoning and public interest. Applied to economic and financial crime, ḥifẓ al-māl encompasses the protection of public resources, lawful acquisition, financial transparency, and prevention of institutional misuse. However, as Güney cautions, contemporary applications of maqāṣid require methodological discipline and a clear relationship between legal objectives and textual foundations. Accordingly, this study operationalises ḥifẓ al-māl through identifiable governance functions rather than invoking it merely as a normative justification (al-Ghazālī, 1997; al-Shāṭibī, 1997; Güney, 2024)..

The concept of ḥisbah provides a framework for preventing harmful conduct and promoting proper market practices. Its contemporary relevance is functional rather than institutional: financial regulators, consumer-protection bodies, auditors, and anti-corruption agencies perform specialised preventive roles that should not be equated directly with classical ḥisbah. The central principle is that misconduct should be identified and addressed before it causes extensive public harm. This approach highlights the importance of procurement controls, internal audit, risk assessment, reporting mechanisms, and institutional supervision (al-Māwardī, 1996; Altair, 2025)..

Studies of ʿUmar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb's administration highlight public accountability, fiscal management, and control of public revenues and expenditures. Mustafa and Assaf examine financial governance under ʿUmar, while Muttaqin et al. analyse administrative and accountability principles associated with his caliphate. Historical accounts also discuss official supervision, market regulation, and public welfare. Nevertheless, such reports

require source criticism because later historical compilations preserve traditions of varying evidentiary strength. Al-Ṭabarī's History, for example, transmits extensive accounts of the early caliphate that must be assessed within their historical and transmission contexts. This study therefore reconstructs governance principles cautiously rather than treating every report attributed to ʿUmar as historically certain (Mustafa & Assaf, 2021; Muttaqin et al., 2024; al-Ṭabarī, 1993; Rosdi & Simangunsong, 2025).

Nigeria has an extensive legal and institutional framework for addressing economic and financial crime, including the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), the Nigeria Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), and procurement, audit, regulatory, and judicial institutions. Relevant legislation includes the EFCC Establishment Act 2004, the ICPC Establishment Act 2000, the Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2022, and the Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act 2022. The central challenge is therefore not simply institutional absence but the effectiveness, coordination, and integrity of existing arrangements (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2000, 2004, 2018, 2022a, 2022b)..

The ICPC's 2025 Ethics and Integrity Compliance Scorecard assessed 344 federal ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs); none achieved full compliance. The results identified weaknesses in corruption-risk assessment, internal audit, procurement, financial reporting, monitoring, and whistleblowing arrangements. These findings support a preventive, institution-focused understanding of economic and financial crime governance. Similarly, the 2023 National Corruption Survey, published by the National Bureau of Statistics and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in 2024, documented patterns of interaction between citizens and public officials. Its reported contact rate should not, however, be interpreted as a direct measure of corruption prevalence (Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission [ICPC], 2025; National Bureau of Statistics & United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2024; Ezeohaa et al., 2026).

Nigeria's removal from the Financial Action Task Force's increased-monitoring list in October 2025 also indicates progress in addressing identified anti-money-laundering deficiencies, although it does not establish that wider economic and financial crime challenges have been resolved (Financial Action Task Force [FATF], 2025)..

Effective economic and financial crime governance requires more than investigation and punishment. Preventive measures—including transparent procurement, risk assessment, internal controls, financial reporting, conflict-of-interest safeguards, and institutional oversight—reduce opportunities for misconduct. These priorities align with international anti-corruption standards and public-integrity frameworks. Asset recovery is equally important. International guidance treats tracing, restraint, confiscation, and management of recovered assets as connected processes requiring institutional capacity and legal safeguards. Nigeria's Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act 2022 provides a statutory framework for relevant recovery mechanisms. From the perspective of ḥifẓ al-māl, recovering diverted resources is a substantive governance objective, not merely an adjunct to prosecution. The concept of maṣlaḥah further provides a basis for evaluating whether governance arrangements protect legitimate public interests, including public funds, institutional trust, distributive justice, service delivery, and economic stability. Islamic governance consequently combines ethical responsibility with institutional effectiveness rather than treating morality as a substitute for enforceable controls (United Nations, 2004; World Bank, 2007; Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2022b; Igbinedion & Osobase, 2025; OECD, 2020, 2026; Sproat et al., 2024).

The literature reveals four principal gaps. First, studies of ʿUmar's administration often examine particular policies or ethical principles without integrating them into a comprehensive economic and financial crime governance framework. Second, discussions of ḥifẓ al-māl do not always translate the concept into operational functions covering prevention, financial control, detection, accountability, and asset recovery. Third, research on Nigeria's anti-corruption system frequently focuses on individual institutions, legislation, or enforcement challenges without systematically comparing the wider institutional architecture with an integrated Islamic governance framework. Fourth, insufficient attention has been given to the methodological and constitutional challenges involved in adapting historical Islamic principles to a contemporary plural state. This study addresses these gaps by integrating historical reconstruction, Islamic legal analysis, and institutional comparison. Its contribution lies not in claiming that previous scholarship has ignored ʿUmar, Islamic governance, or Nigerian corruption, but in operationalising relevant principles, comparing their functions with Nigeria's existing institutions, and developing a context-sensitive framework grounded in amānah, ʿadl, ḥifẓ al-māl, and maṣlaḥah.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative historical-doctrinal and comparative design, combining historical reconstruction of governance principles associated with ʿUmar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb, doctrinal analysis of Islamic concepts, and institutional comparison with contemporary Nigerian economic and financial crime governance. Sources include the Qur'an, relevant hadith, classical Islamic legal, historical and fiscal literature, peer-reviewed scholarship, and authoritative legal and institutional documents (al-Ṭabarī, 1993)..

Historical reports are assessed according to provenance, transmission, chronology, corroboration, and consistency with broader historical evidence. The study distinguishes established principles from narratives of uncertain authenticity, recognising that historical compilations such as al-Ṭabarī's History preserve reports of varying evidentiary strength.[1] Thematic analysis focuses on amānah, ʿadl, ḥifẓ al-māl, maṣlaḥah, masʾūliyyah, ḥisbah, transparency, prevention, accountability, restitution, and lawful deterrence.

The study compares Islamic governance principles with Nigerian institutions across six functions: ethical leadership, protection of public resources, prevention and supervision, detection and investigation, accountability and enforcement, and restitution and recovery. It examines functional similarities and differences without assuming institutional equivalence. Accordingly, concepts such as Bayt al-Māl and ḥisbah are analysed in their historical and normative contexts rather than treated as direct equivalents of modern institutions.

The analysis proceeds through six stages: identifying relevant historical themes, assessing their evidentiary status, reconstructing normative principles, identifying their governance functions, comparing these functions with Nigerian institutions, and developing a context-sensitive framework. Triangulation across Islamic texts, classical literature, contemporary scholarship, and official sources strengthens conceptual validity. Historical description, normative interpretation, and policy recommendations are distinguished throughout.

Economic and Financial Crime Governance under ʿUmar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb

ʿUmar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb is selected because historical accounts of his administration provide insights into fiscal management, official accountability, market regulation, and public welfare. Scholarship highlights both the governance significance of his caliphate and

his concern for controlling public finances. His relevance is analytical rather than imitative: the study identifies principles applicable to contemporary institutional design without treating his administration as a directly transferable anti-corruption model (Mustafa & Assaf, 2021; Muttaqin et al., 2024)..

The principle of amānah requires public officials to regard authority as a trust rather than a means of personal enrichment. Consistent with Qur'an 4:58, this principle links the discharge of responsibilities with justice. Historical accounts associated with ʿUmar emphasise official conduct and accountability, although individual reports require critical evaluation. The contemporary implication is that effective anti-corruption governance requires an ethical administrative culture in which public office is understood as a responsibility rather than a private entitlement.

The Bayt al-Māl illustrates the principle that public resources must serve legitimate public purposes. Studies of ʿUmar's financial administration highlight revenue management, expenditure control, and protection of public money. Functionally, these principles correspond to modern budgeting, treasury administration, procurement, auditing, and financial reporting. The objective of ḥifẓ al-māl consequently extends beyond preventing theft to strengthening controls across the public-finance cycle (Mustafa & Assaf, 2021)..

Islamic political thought emphasises the competence and integrity of public officials. Historical accounts associated with ʿUmar similarly portray public office as a continuing responsibility requiring supervision. Contemporary applications include integrity screening, conflict-of-interest controls, asset declaration and verification, performance monitoring, investigation, and proportionate disciplinary action. Appointment without sustained oversight creates opportunities for institutional capture; accountability must therefore accompany the exercise of authority (al-Māwardī, 1996)..

The concept of ḥisbah provides a normative basis for preventing fraudulent and harmful market practices. Its contemporary relevance is functional rather than institutional, encompassing consumer protection, financial supervision, market regulation, inspection, and compliance. Similarly, the Islamic principle of fiscal responsibility supports transparent budgeting, procurement controls, expenditure monitoring, and auditing. These mechanisms are particularly important in public contracting, subsidies, and infrastructure spending, where substantial resources may be vulnerable to misuse (al-Māwardī, 1996; Altair, 2025)..

Effective economic-crime governance requires both proportionate sanctions and recovery of diverted public resources. Nigeria's Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act 2022 provides a relevant contemporary legal context for considering asset recovery. Nevertheless, enforcement must respect evidentiary standards, justice, due process, and constitutional rights; historical practices cannot justify arbitrary punishment in modern governance. (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2022b). The governance principles examined can be summarised as follows:

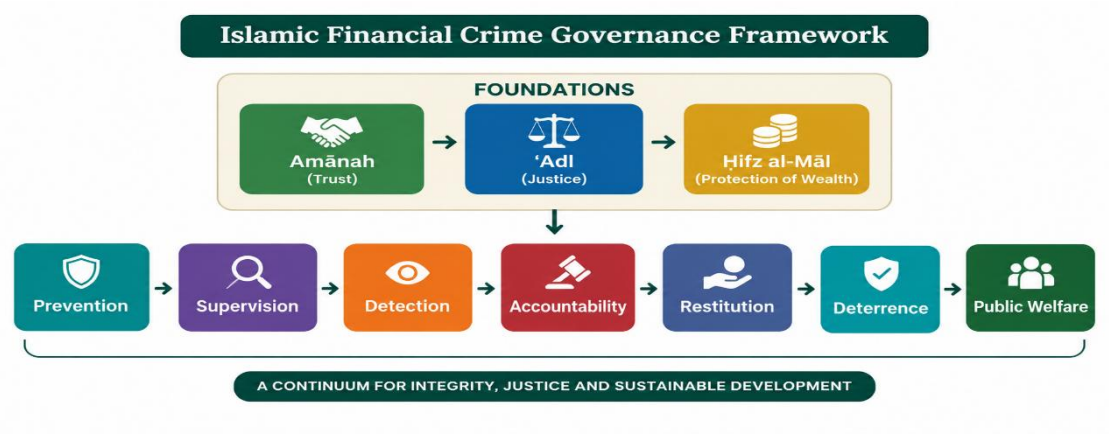


Figure 1. A Continuum for Intergrity, Justice and Sustainable Development

This sequence frames economic and financial crime as a systemic governance challenge requiring ethical leadership, preventive controls, effective oversight, lawful enforcement, and resource recovery—not merely punishment after an offence occurs.

Contemporary Economic and Financial Crime Governance in Nigeria

Nigeria's economic and financial crime governance system comprises the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Nigeria Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), Code of Conduct institutions, procurement and audit bodies, financial regulators, law-enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and courts. The Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2022 and Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act 2022 strengthen the legal framework for financial-crime control and asset recovery. The central challenge is therefore not institutional absence but whether these bodies operate as an integrated and effective governance system (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2000, 2004, 2018, 2022a, 2022b)..

The ICPC's 2025 Ethics and Integrity Compliance Scorecard assessed 344 of 357 federal ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs). None achieved full compliance: 48 demonstrated substantial compliance, 132 partial compliance, 141 poor compliance, and 23 non-compliance, while 13 non-responsive MDAs were classified as high-risk. Reported weaknesses included corruption-risk assessment, procurement, financial reporting, internal audit, whistleblowing, and institutional oversight. These findings underscore the importance of preventive controls rather than reliance on formal institutions alone (ICPC, 2025; Ezeohaa et al., 2026; OECD, 2020).

The NFIU complements prevention through financial intelligence and analysis of information relevant to money laundering and related offences. Effective intelligence systems can support timely detection, investigation, and potential recovery of illicit proceeds before assets become difficult to trace or recover (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2018)..

The EFCC and ICPC occupy central positions in Nigeria's investigation and enforcement architecture under their respective establishing statutes. Their effectiveness depends partly on coordination, information-sharing, institutional capacity, and complementary mandates. Fragmentation can create duplication, information gaps, and delays (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2000, 2004)..

The Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act 2022 provides a legal framework for managing proceeds of crime and associated recovery processes. From the perspective of ḥifẓ al-māl, enforcement should seek not only to punish offenders but also to recover diverted resources and protect legitimate public economic interests, subject to due process and applicable legal safeguards (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2022b; Igbinedion & Osobase, 2025; Sproat et al., 2024).

Nigeria's removal from the Financial Action Task Force's increased-monitoring list in October 2025 marked progress in addressing identified anti-money-laundering and counter-terrorist-financing deficiencies. Its absence from the June 2026 list indicates that it remained outside increased monitoring at that date. However, this development does not establish that wider economic and financial crime challenges have been resolved. Sustained progress requires risk-based supervision, effective financial intelligence, beneficial-ownership transparency, coordinated investigation, prosecution, and asset recovery (FATF, 2025)..

Nigeria's experience demonstrates the distinction between institutional presence and institutional effectiveness. Laws and agencies produce meaningful results only when supported by integrity, coordination, professional capacity, timely information, effective oversight, judicial efficiency, and preventive controls. This corresponds with Islamic governance principles that connect amānah (trust), ʿadl (justice), and ḥifẓ al-māl (protection of wealth) with continuous accountability and prevention of harm.

Comparative Analysis

The ʿUmaric governance tradition grounds public administration in amānah (trustworthiness) and ʿadl (justice). Although Nigeria has formal integrity institutions, implementation remains critical. Both approaches value public integrity, but Islamic governance explicitly grounds it in religious morality, whereas Nigeria's constitutional system accommodates diverse beliefs. Accordingly, amānah should inform universal public-service standards without religious coercion.

The principle of ḥifẓ al-māl corresponds functionally with public financial management, procurement controls, auditing, treasury administration, and asset recovery. It provides a normative justification for protecting public resources as a trust held for legitimate social purposes. Similarly, the principles of masʾūliyyah (accountability) and continuing supervision support integrity screening, asset verification, conflict-of-interest controls, and performance monitoring rather than reliance on appointment procedures alone.

The preventive logic of ḥisbah corresponds with contemporary regulation, compliance, risk assessment, and internal oversight. Its application does not require a religious enforcement body; preventive functions can be distributed among regulators, auditors, professional bodies, and anti-corruption agencies. Effective accountability also requires impartial investigation, evidence-based prosecution, due process, and proportionate sanctions. Deterrence depends not on severity alone but on credible detection and fair enforcement.

Asset recovery is a key point of convergence between ḥifẓ al-māl and contemporary Nigerian law. The Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act 2022 provides mechanisms for addressing criminal proceeds. Recovery should therefore

complement prosecution by restoring unlawfully diverted resources, subject to legal safeguards (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2022b)..

The principle of maṣlaḥah provides a further criterion for evaluating governance outcomes, including resource protection, institutional trust, reduced opportunities for misconduct, and improved public services. Its application must remain grounded in disciplined legal reasoning rather than unrestricted appeals to public interest (Güney, 2024)..

Islamic Economic and Financial Crime Governance Framework for Contemporary Nigeria

This study proposes the Islamic Economic and Financial Crime Governance Framework for Contemporary Nigeria (IEFCGF-Nigeria), founded on five principles: amānah (trust), ʿadl (justice), ḥifẓ al-māl (protection of wealth), masʾūliyyah (accountability), and maṣlaḥah (public welfare). These principles inform a governance continuum of ethical leadership, prevention, supervision, detection, accountability, restitution, deterrence, institutional learning, and public-welfare outcomes. The process is cyclical, as lessons from investigations and asset recovery should inform preventive controls and institutional reform.

The framework translates its five principles into practical institutional measures. Amānah requires integrity standards, conflict-of-interest rules, verified asset declarations, ethical training, and enforceable disciplinary procedures. ʿAdl demands impartial, evidence-based enforcement free from selective targeting and arbitrary sanctions. Ḥifẓ al-māl centres on protecting public resources through transparent budgeting, treasury controls, procurement integrity, internal audits, expenditure verification, financial reporting, and asset recovery. Masʾūliyyah requires continuous accountability through appointment screening, performance monitoring, legislative oversight, investigation, and judicial review. Maṣlaḥah evaluates governance by its contribution to public welfare, including reduced financial leakage, recovered public resources, improved procurement integrity, institutional trust, and service delivery (al-Māwardī, 1996; Güney, 2024)..

Prevention should combine institutional risk assessments, segregation of duties, procurement controls, whistleblower protection, conflict-of-interest safeguards, and regular compliance reviews. Reflecting the preventive logic of ḥisbah, this approach prioritises

identifying institutional weaknesses before they facilitate misconduct. Detection requires better coordination among audit bodies, the Nigeria Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), regulators, and investigative agencies through timely information-sharing and interoperable data systems. Where misconduct occurs, investigation and prosecution must follow evidence-based procedures and constitutional safeguards, ensuring that Islamic governance principles reinforce rather than undermine due process (Altair, 2025; United Nations, 2004; Ezeohaa et al., 2026; OECD, 2020, 2026).

Asset tracing, freezing, seizure, forfeiture, and restitution should be integrated into financial-crime investigations from the outset to strengthen public-resource protection. Beyond punishment, each significant case should generate a structured review of the misconduct, the controls that failed, and the reforms required. These lessons should inform revised policies, risk assessments, and compliance procedures, making institutional learning an integral component of deterrence (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2022b; World Bank, 2007)..

The framework can be implemented through existing Nigerian institutions rather than by reproducing historical Islamic institutions. Codes of conduct and integrity systems support ethical leadership; treasury, procurement, and audit mechanisms protect public resources; the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) supports prevention; the NFIU, auditors, and regulators contribute to detection; the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), ICPC, and relevant agencies undertake investigations; while prosecutors, courts, and oversight bodies support accountability. Asset-recovery mechanisms and compliance reviews facilitate restitution and institutional learning.

Seven priorities follow: institutionalising preventive integrity systems; verifying asset declarations and conflicts of interest; improving financial-information sharing; strengthening procurement transparency and risk assessment; integrating asset recovery into enforcement; embedding post-case learning; and evaluating institutional performance through outcomes rather than activity statistics alone.

Implementation must remain constitutionally compatible, religiously non-coercive, sensitive to historical evidence, institutionally realistic, and respectful of due process and legitimate property rights. Islamic ethical principles should therefore inform public governance without discrimination or the artificial transplantation of historical institutions.

DISCUSSION

The analysis demonstrates that economic and financial crime governance should not be reduced to criminal prosecution. The historical material associated with ʿUmar suggests a broader conception of governance in which ethical leadership, public-resource protection, supervision, and accountability operate together (Mustafa & Assaf, 2021; Muttaqin et al., 2024)..

The first major implication concerns the role of ḥifẓ al-māl. When interpreted institutionally, protection of wealth extends beyond preventing individual theft. It requires systems capable of protecting public resources throughout the financial-management cycle. Budgeting, procurement, expenditure, auditing, financial reporting, monitoring, and recovery can therefore be understood as practical mechanisms for operationalising this objective (al-Ghazālī, 1997; al-Shāṭibī, 1997)..

Second, the study demonstrates the importance of distinguishing historical institutions from transferable functions. The Bayt al-Māl cannot simply become the modern Nigerian treasury, and ḥisbah cannot simply become a contemporary religious enforcement body. What can be adapted are their governance functions: accountable management of public resources and preventive supervision of conduct affecting public welfare (al-Māwardī, 1996)..

Third, the analysis suggests that ethical governance and institutional design should not be treated as competing approaches. Ethical values without effective controls may be insufficient, while institutions without ethical leadership may become formalistic. The IEFCGF-Nigeria model therefore integrates both dimensions.

Fourth, contemporary Nigerian evidence demonstrates the distinction between institutional presence and institutional effectiveness. The existence of anti-corruption agencies, financial regulations, and public-finance procedures does not automatically eliminate institutional vulnerability. The 2025 ICPC EICS is particularly important because it identifies weaknesses in preventive systems within federal institutions (ICPC, 2025)..

Fifth, ḥisbah provides a useful conceptual lens for understanding risk-based prevention. Its contemporary relevance lies not in reproducing its historical institutional form but in emphasising the need to identify and address harmful practices before they become entrenched (Altair, 2025)..

Sixth, accountability should include institutional failure. If a procurement irregularity occurs because risk controls were absent, the governance response should not stop with identifying an individual offender. It should also ask why the institutional system permitted the misconduct.

Seventh, asset recovery should be treated as a central governance objective. The protection of public wealth is incomplete if illegally diverted resources are not recovered. Recovery should therefore be integrated into investigation and enforcement strategies (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2022b; World Bank, 2007; Igbinedion & Osobase, 2025; Sproat et al., 2024).

Eighth, maṣlaḥah provides a structured evaluative principle. The success of economic and financial crime governance should ultimately be judged by its contribution to public welfare, institutional trust, protection of resources, and fair public administration. Such use of maṣlaḥah, however, must remain disciplined by the broader legal and normative structure of Islamic law. (Güney, 2024). The study therefore proposes a three-stage process for translating Islamic governance principles into contemporary policy:

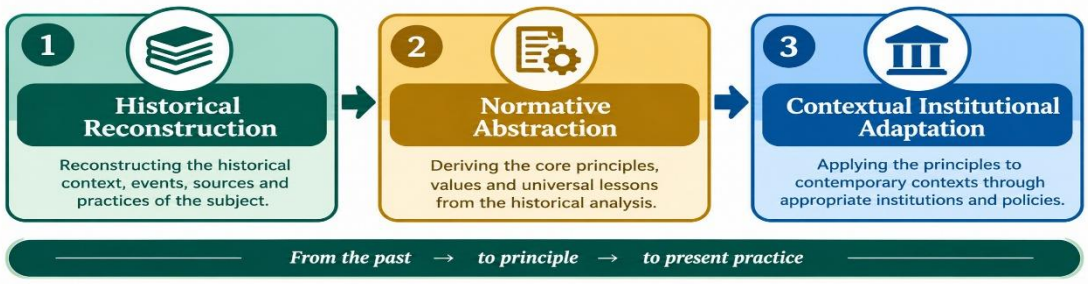


Figure 2. A Three-stage for Translating Islamic Principles into Contemporary Policy

This approach avoids two extremes. The first is romanticised historical imitation, which assumes that institutions developed in a very different social and constitutional environment can simply be reproduced. The second is complete separation between Islamic normative thought and contemporary governance. The theoretical contribution of the framework is consequently an integrated continuum:

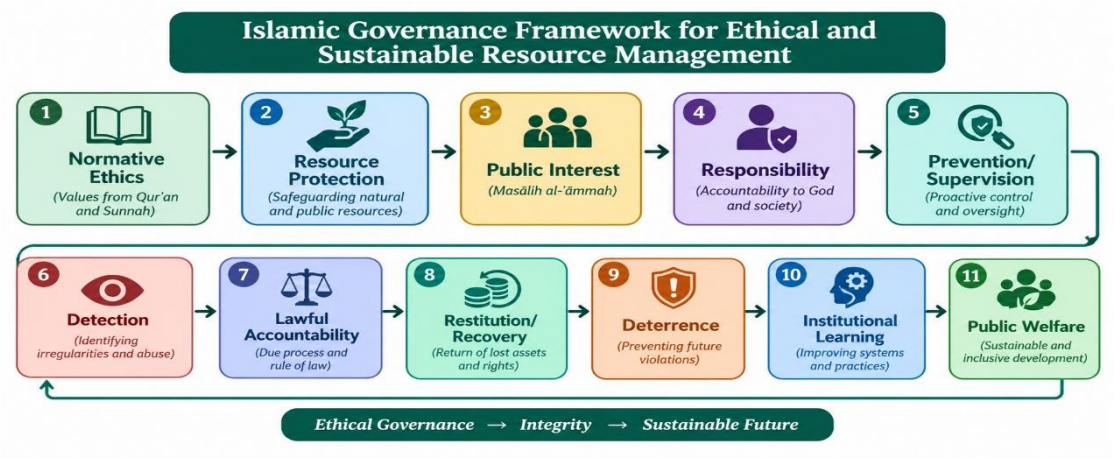


Figure 3. The Islamic Framework for Ethical and Sustainable Resources Management

This continuum provides a broader analytical lens than approaches that focus exclusively on corruption offences or enforcement agencies.

Nevertheless, the framework has limitations. Historical evidence concerning ʿUmar is uneven, and some narratives require cautious interpretation. The proposed model is conceptual rather than causally validated. Nigeria's federal structure also means that institutional conditions vary across jurisdictions. Finally, contemporary economic crime increasingly involves digital technologies, transnational networks, cryptocurrencies, and complex financial structures that did not exist in the historical setting examined.

The study therefore does not claim that Islamic governance principles provide a uniquely sufficient solution to Nigeria's economic and financial crime problem. Rather, it argues that these principles can provide an additional normative and institutional lens through which prevention, accountability, public-resource protection, and recovery can be strengthened.

CONCLUSION

This study examined governance principles associated with the administration of ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and their relevance to contemporary economic and financial crime governance in Nigeria. The findings indicate that economic and financial crime constitutes a multidimensional governance challenge involving public-resource protection, institutional integrity, prevention, accountability, enforcement, and public welfare. Although Nigeria possesses an extensive legal and institutional architecture for addressing these challenges,

persistent weaknesses in preventive controls, institutional coordination, internal oversight, and asset recovery demonstrate that the effectiveness of governance depends not merely on the existence of laws and enforcement agencies but also on their implementation and institutional integrity.

The analysis further established that the governance tradition associated with ʿUmar offers relevant normative principles for addressing these challenges, particularly *amānah* (trustworthiness), *ʿadl* (justice), *ḥifẓ al-māl* (protection of wealth), *masʾūliyyah* (accountability), and *maṣlaḥah* (public welfare). These principles emphasise the ethical exercise of public authority, responsible management of public resources, preventive supervision, impartial accountability, and the restoration of unlawfully diverted wealth (Mustafa & Assaf, 2021; Muttaqin et al., 2024). Their contemporary relevance, however, lies in their functional adaptation rather than the direct transplantation of historical Islamic institutions into Nigeria's modern constitutional and religiously plural environment.

The comparative analysis also demonstrates that economic and financial crime governance requires an integrated approach connecting ethical leadership, prevention, supervision, detection, accountability, restitution, deterrence, and institutional learning. Investigation and punishment remain important, but they cannot independently address the institutional weaknesses that create opportunities for financial misconduct. Effective governance must therefore combine preventive controls, credible enforcement, protection of public resources, and systematic institutional learning.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to Islamic governance scholarship by developing the Islamic Economic and Financial Crime Governance Framework for Contemporary Nigeria (IEFCGF-Nigeria), which integrates Islamic ethical principles with contemporary institutional mechanisms for preventing and addressing economic and financial crime. It operationalises *ḥifẓ al-māl* as an institutional objective encompassing public-resource protection, financial controls, accountability, and asset recovery. The study further demonstrates how principles associated with ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb can inform existing Nigerian institutions through context-sensitive adaptation that respects constitutional legality, human rights, due process, and religious pluralism. The framework provides a conceptual foundation for integrating ethical responsibility with institutional effectiveness, although its practical effectiveness requires future empirical validation.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should empirically evaluate the IEFCGF-Nigeria framework through comparative case studies of Nigerian public institutions, examining ethical leadership, preventive controls, financial intelligence, accountability, and asset recovery. Interviews with relevant stakeholders could assess the feasibility of integrating its principles into existing governance systems.

Quantitative studies should develop measurable indicators of institutional integrity, financial accountability, preventive capacity, and public-resource recovery. Longitudinal analyses could investigate associations between institutional coordination, preventive controls, and governance outcomes while distinguishing correlation from causation.

Comparative research across jurisdictions could assess the framework's transferability, while further historical and doctrinal studies should critically evaluate the reliability of reports concerning ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb's administration. Research should also explore its applicability to emerging threats involving digital transactions, cryptocurrency, corporate structures, and transnational illicit financial flows.

Ultimately, empirical validation and contextual adaptation are necessary to establish the framework's practical value. Its central proposition is that effective economic and financial crime governance requires not only punishment but also prevention, protection of public wealth, recovery of diverted resources, and continuous institutional learning.

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