

## **Embedding Facilities Management Epistemology into Mutawalli Competencies Training Module toward Sustainable Waqf Asset Performance**

**Huraizah Arshad<sup>1\*</sup>, Sharifah Nor Iswani Syed Hashim<sup>2</sup>, Sharifah Faigah Syed Alwi<sup>3</sup>,  
Siti Nadiyah Mohd Ali<sup>1</sup>, Nurul Sahida Fauzi<sup>1</sup>, Hidayatul Ihsan<sup>4</sup>**

*\*Corresponding Author*

<sup>1</sup> Department of Built Environment Studies and Technology, Faculty of Built Environment, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Seri Iskandar Campus, Seri Iskandar, 32610, Perak, Malaysia.

<sup>2</sup> Postgraduate Studies, Department of Built Environment Studies and Technology, Faculty of Built Environment, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Seri Iskandar Campus, 32610, Seri Iskandar Perak, Malaysia.

<sup>3</sup> Arshad Ayub Graduate Business School, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam. Malaysia

<sup>4</sup> Padang State Polytechnic, Indonesia.

hurai543@uitm.edu.my, sharifahnoriswani@gmail.com, shfaigah@uitm.edu.my, sitin190@uitm.edu.my, nurul839@uitm.edu.my, hidayatul@pnp.ac.id  
Tel: +60128809293

### **Abstract**

Waqf assets in Malaysia underperform due to a lack of strategic management competencies among Mutawallis. This study proposes integrating Facilities Management epistemology into Mutawalli training to enhance waqf asset sustainability. Qualitative interviews with seven experts identified nine essential FM components, including strategic alignment, IT integration, and accountability. Crucially, the framework blends these technical skills with Islamic principles, such as *Maqasid al-Shariah* and *Tawhidic* concepts. By adopting this interdisciplinary training module, waqf institutions can address operational inefficiencies, optimise socio-economic impact, and ensure long-term growth. This research provides a practical roadmap for policymakers to professionalise waqf management through systematic, performance-based strategies.

**Keywords:** Mutawalli; Competencies; Waqf Asset Performance; Facilities Management

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### **1.0 Introduction**

A mutawalli (waqf manager) is defined as an individual or institution entrusted by a sole trustee or board of trustees with the responsibility of managing and developing waqf assets. Waqf, an Islamic endowment dedicated to charitable or religious purposes, has historically played a critical role in the socio-economic development of Muslim communities. Modern Mutawalli roles encompass operations and maintenance, leadership, technology management, and stakeholder coordination (Peiris, S et al., 2025). In contemporary times, however, the performance of waqf assets, particularly immovable assets such as land and buildings, has often been suboptimal due to challenges in governance, maintenance, and sustainable utilisation (Abdul Karim, S., 2010). A key factor contributing to this

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underperformance is the limited competencies and knowledge of mutawallis in strategic asset and facilities management (Shaharudin, S. A et al., 2024; Mohsin, 2013). Additionally, the shortage of professional managers, funding constraints, inefficient reporting (Ghazali, N. A et al., 2021; Ihsan, H. et al., 2011), and a lack of structured training in built environment knowledge have led to inefficient use and poor maintenance of waqf properties. There is a lack of empirical research and integrated frameworks directly linking Mutawalli competencies to facilities and asset management practices (Arshad, H. et al., 2023).

### 1.1 Purpose and Scope of The Research

This research is grounded in the theoretical underpinnings of knowledge transfer and competency-based education. It proposes a conceptual framework that aligns the knowledge domains of Facilities Management (FM) with the operational, ethical, and strategic roles of mutawallis. The central argument is that embedding FM epistemology into structured, Shariah-compliant training modules will enhance the mutawallis' ability to sustainably, economically, socially, and environmentally manage waqf assets. FM principles such as life-cycle cost analysis, maintenance scheduling, space optimisation, and stakeholder engagement are directly applicable to waqf asset and property management (Amos, D et al, 2019). These principles are rarely embedded in mutawalli training programmes, which tend to focus narrowly on legalistic and religious obligations (Bakar, R., 2019). By proposing the FM epistemological integration, the study contributes to the discourse on waqf asset revitalisation and sustainable development. Therefore, this study explores mutawalli competencies through the lens of FM to enhance sustainable waqf asset performance by identifying the components of FM to be embedded in the mutawalli training module.

## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 Definition of Mutawalli, Competencies, Waqf Asset Performance and Facilities Management

A mutawalli or waqf manager is a person, group of individuals, or institution that the sole trustee appoints or a board of trustees to administer and develop waqf property (Zaweed, S., 2021; Hidayatul & Shahul, 2011; Muhammad, 2009). The mutawalli is the legally appointed trustee responsible for administering waqf assets in accordance with the waqf's stipulations and Shariah principles (Cizakca, 2011; Kahf, 2003). In Malaysia, this role is institutionalised under the authority of the State Islamic Religious Councils. In addition to protecting the waqf property and its profits, the mutawalli is responsible for maintaining the property in good condition (Arshad, H. et al., 2023). Such responsibilities require a set of competencies comprising knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviours that enable individuals to perform tasks effectively, thereby determining performance outcomes. In the context of waqf asset management, the competencies of the mutawalli significantly influence the efficiency, sustainability, and overall performance of waqf assets. Previous studies on mutawalli competencies reveal an integration of ethical and behavioural dimensions, traditional Islamic values, legal and financial dimensions, and governance aspects (Ayub, M. et al., 2025). The literature lacks explicit frameworks linking mutawalli competencies to modern FM, indicating a significant research gap (Ochieng, H. et al., 2025; Amos, D. et al., 2019).

Waqf asset performance refers to the extent to which waqf properties fulfil their dual mandate of *perpetuity preservation* and *socio-economic benefit generation* in accordance with Shariah and the waqf's stipulations. Unlike conventional real estate performance, which is typically assessed through financial indicators such as return on investment, net operating income, and capital appreciation, waqf asset performance is multidimensional, integrating financial sustainability, social impact, governance quality, and Shariah compliance (Hassana, S. H. M., et al., 2020; Mohsin, 2013). Facilities Management, defined as the integration of processes within an organisation to maintain and develop agreed services that support and improve the effectiveness of its primary activities (Tucker, M, 2024; IFMA, 2021), closely aligns with the mutawalli's mandate to safeguard, operate, and enhance waqf properties. Effective maintenance planning, life-cycle costing, space underutilisation, risk management, and sustainability practices directly influence occupancy rates, rental yield stability and long-term asset condition, core indicators of waqf asset performance (Peiris, S et al., 2025; Lavy & Shohet, 2010). From an epistemological perspective, applying FM principles transforms the mutawalli's function from passive custodianship to strategic asset stewardship, ensuring that waqf properties remain productive and resilient while fulfilling *maqasid al-Shariah* objectives of wealth preservation and social welfare. Empirical studies in Malaysia further indicate that weaknesses in technical management capacity and maintenance planning (Arshad, H. et al., 2023) often lead to underutilised or deteriorating waqf assets, undermining their performance and community impact (Musalib & Maamor, 2016).

### 2.2 Conceptual Framework for Mutawalli Competencies Training Module: Integrating FM Principles Towards Waqf Asset Performance

A conceptual framework was developed to guide this study, focusing on the competencies of Mutawalli, their roles and responsibilities, and the performance of waqf assets. In this ecosystem, underpinned by Human Capital Theory (Wuttaphan, N. (2017), the waqf asset is the "physical engine" or the input, the Mutawalli's competency is the "operator's skill," or the process, and sustainable waqf asset performance is the "output." A waqf asset is a unique form of social real estate. Unlike private property, its ownership is transferred to Allah, and its benefits are permanently dedicated to society (Hassana, S. H. M., et al., 2020; Cizakca, 2011). The unique nature of waqf assets as socially dedicated, perpetually endowed properties under divine ownership necessitates a distinct set of mutawalli competencies that extend beyond conventional property management. These include the Islamic principles, ethical accountability (*amanah*), strategic sustainability orientation, socio-economic responsiveness, and technical expertise. The alignment of these competencies is critical to ensuring that waqf assets are managed efficiently while fulfilling their intended religious and social objectives, thereby achieving sustainable waqf asset performance. Figure 1 explains the conceptual framework linking mutawalli roles and competencies to the sustainable performance of waqf assets. The figure conceptualises sustainable waqf asset performance as an outcome of effective mutawalli administration, which is significantly mediated by the level of competencies possessed by the mutawalli.

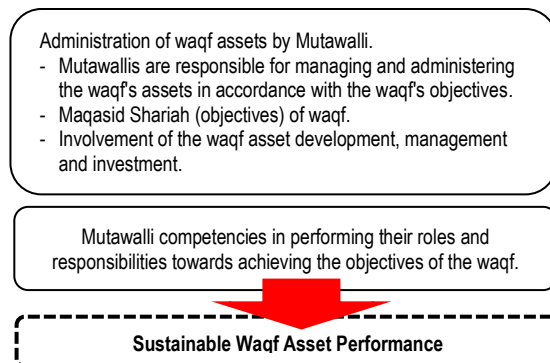


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework for Competencies of Mutawalli Towards the Sustainable Waqf Asset Performance

### 3.0 Qualitative Research Methodology

The qualitative methodology comprises three essential components: formulating research questions, structuring sampling strategies, and selecting data collection methods to ensure the research is targeted, comprehensive, and capable of yielding significant and valuable insights into the phenomenon under study (Tisdell, E. J., Merriam, S. B., et al., 2025). The research question (RO) is open-ended, aiming to explore meanings, experiences, and processes. In this research, the RO is: *What are the Facilities Management (FM) epistemology components to be embedded in Mutawalli competencies training modules to enhance sustainable waqf asset performance?* Based on this RO, the interview protocol has been prepared to interview seven (7) Mutawallis with extensive experience, each with more than 10 years in administering and managing waqf assets and development, comprising the government, institutional and corporate mutawalli in Malaysia. In this research, the purposive sampling strategy focuses on selecting participants with relevant knowledge and experience. The qualitative research approach is deemed appropriate for this study as it seeks to explore and identify the underlying components of Facilities Management (FM) epistemology to be embedded within mutawalli competency training modules. Given the exploratory nature of the research objective, which aims to generate an in-depth understanding rather than to test predefined hypotheses, qualitative methods enable the extraction of rich, context-specific insights from experienced practitioners (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This allows the research to capture best practices, institutional challenges, adaptive strategies, and leadership approaches that contribute to improved performance of waqf assets. The in-depth interview method is used to gather rich, detailed insights and valuable information from all informants (Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A., 2009).

Table 1. List of Informants Involved

| Expertise                     | Informant (M) | Designation             | Experience (Years) |
|-------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Mutawalli/ Waqf Asset Manager | M1            | Government Mutawalli    | 13                 |
|                               | M2            | Government Mutawalli    | 11                 |
|                               | M3            | Government Mutawalli    | 12                 |
|                               | M4            | Corporate Mutawalli     | 15                 |
|                               | M5            | Institutional Mutawalli | 13                 |
|                               | M6            | Institutional Mutawalli | 14                 |
|                               | M7            | Institutional Mutawalli | 11                 |

Source: Author, 2026

### 4.0 Data Analysis and Findings

#### 4.1 A Comprehensive Document Analysis

The data from document analysis (existing training modules) and interview transcripts were analysed using a systematic qualitative approach that combined thematic and content analysis, supported by an iterative coding process in NVivo 15. First, for the document analysis, existing training modules related to mutawalli competency development were examined using qualitative content analysis, as shown in Table 2. A review of the existing training module showed that the current practice among the Mutawalli encompasses Shariah and legal foundations, governance, accounting and audit, benefit distribution (*agihan manfaat*), asset development and istibdal, investment and Islamic finance, and leadership aspects. The current training curriculum lacks facilities, life-cycle, and technical management components.

Table 2 Existing Training Module Components

| Core module | Main learning outcomes | Key reference or tool used by SIRCs |
|-------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|-------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Syariah and Legal Foundations         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the fiqh of waqf, pillars, and conditions</li> <li>Map state enactment provisions, land code interfaces, fatwa rulings</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                  | <i>Pengenalan Kepada Konsep Wakaf and State Enactment</i>                            |
| Governance, Accounting and Audit      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply JAWHAR chart-of-accounts, cash-flow segregation</li> <li>Prepare annual trustee report, comply with Jabatan Akauntan Negara (AG) and JAWHAR audits, structure cash-waqf portfolios, sukuk-linked developments</li> <li>Apply risk-return filters and zakat/wakaf segregation</li> </ul> | <i>Manual Pengurusan Perakaunan Wakaf (2008)</i>                                     |
| Benefit Distribution (Agihan Manfaat) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Calculate usufruct vs corpus</li> <li>Execute beneficiary schedules</li> <li>Monitor KPI and social-impact metrics</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                 | <i>Manual Pengurusan Agihan Manfaat Wakaf (2019)</i>                                 |
| Istibdal and Asset Development Model  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feasibility studies, Joint Venture &amp; Public-Private Partnership models</li> <li>Risk registers, project-controls</li> <li>Shariah-compliant redevelopment (istibdal) workflow</li> </ul>                                                                                                  | <i>Manual Pengurusan Istibdal Wakaf (2010) and Pembangunan Tanah Wakaf by JAWHAR</i> |
| Digital Waqf Administration           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use state wakaf portals &amp; QR-donation rails</li> <li>GIS tagging of land, cloud document vault</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                 | Perbadanan Wakaf Selangor and Yayasan Wakaf Malaysia                                 |

Source: Author, 2026

#### 4.2 Thematic Analysis from Interview Transcribed Text

Second, the interview transcripts from the seven experienced mutawallis were analysed using thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The process involved:

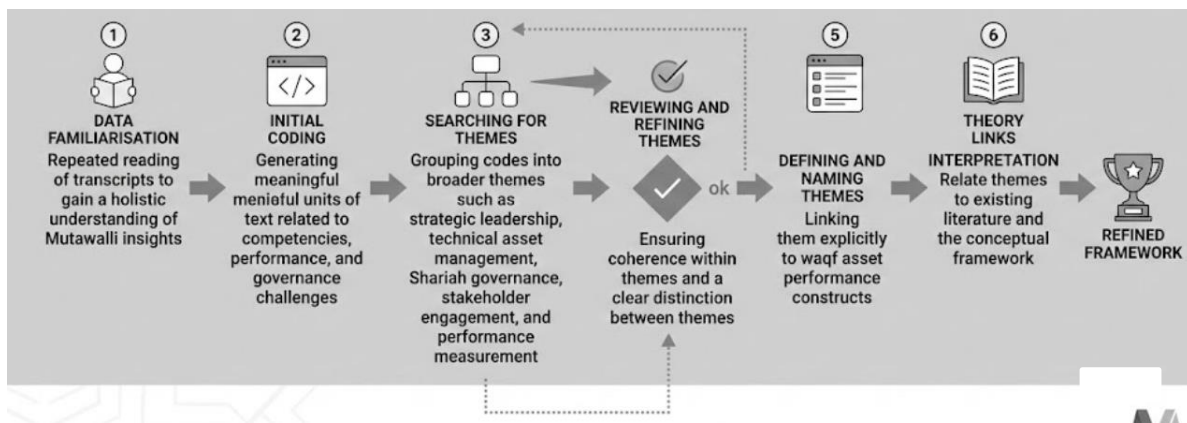


Figure 2 Thematic Analysis Process (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

To enhance credibility and trustworthiness, triangulation was conducted by comparing themes emerging from interviews with competency elements identified in the training modules. This cross-validation strengthens internal consistency and reduces researcher bias (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By collecting data from multiple experienced mutawalli across the government, institutional, and corporate sectors, the study incorporates diverse perspectives that enable cross-validation of emerging themes. This approach reduces potential bias and ensures that the identified FM epistemology components are not limited to a single context but reflect broader practices in waqf asset management. Consequently, triangulation strengthens the rigour of the analysis and supports the development of a more comprehensive and reliable competency training framework. Additionally, coding reliability was enhanced through iterative recoding and theme refinement to ensure alignment between empirical findings and theoretical constructs. Table 3 shows the transcribed text from the interview.

Table 3 Organisation of Interview Data

| Informants (M) | Transcribed Data from Interview                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| M1             | "In managing waqf, the tawhidic concept, derived from the Quran and Sunnah, plays a crucial role in shaping the management practices of waqf institutions. This holistic approach ensures that the management practices align with <b>Islamic principles</b> , promoting sustainability and ethical stewardship through the preservation of assets for future generations." |
| M2             | " <b>Efficient management</b> practices are critical for the sustainability of waqf institutions. Determinants of efficient waqf management, such as strategic leadership, in-depth knowledge of Islamic and waqf fundamentals, and a healthy mindset, positively influence the long-term growth and sustainability of waqf institutions."                                  |
| M3             | "Mutawalli has to ensure that the <b>engagement of the beneficiaries</b> in the management process is crucial. This ensures that the benefits of Waqf assets accrue to the intended recipients and that the management practices are <b>transparent and accountable</b> ."                                                                                                  |
| M4             | "According to my experience, there is a need to <b>integrate engineering expertise with business and financial principles</b> to address issues such as rental arrears, tenancy agreements, and tenant selection, which can improve the financial sustainability."                                                                                                          |
| M5             | "Based on my experience, Mutawalli has to <b>adopt a performance-based framework</b> through clearly defined KPIs and measurable indicators to enhance cost-effectiveness, asset productivity, and service delivery. I can say that FM knowledge spans the entire life-cycle of an asset, from construction to decommissioning."                                            |
| M6             | "The management of Waqf assets is deeply rooted in Islamic principles, particularly the <i>tawhidic</i> concept, which emphasises unity and the holistic integration of faith in all aspects of life. This concept guides the strategic leadership and mindset management. Additionally,                                                                                    |

the use of **information technology**, GIS and BIM systems was identified as essential for improving asset tracking, planning accuracy, and decision support."

M7

"In my opinion, effective waqf asset management **must be strategically aligned with the core objectives** of the institution and the broader maqasid al-Shariah, ... FM knowledge supports long-term socio-economic impact ..."

Source: Author, 2026

## 5.0 Discussion

### 5.1 Thematic Mapping Driven by Empirical Findings from Interviews

The themes derived from the transcribed interview data provide a comprehensive view of the need for FM epistemology to be embedded in mutawalli training modules to support the sustainable performance of waqf assets. The analysis summarises that the current training modules for mutawalli do not emphasise facilities management, life-cycle analysis, and technical management. Most mutawalli training programmes have traditionally focused on waqf management's legal and religious dimensions, often overlooking technical areas such as asset performance, risk management, and facilities maintenance. This limitation calls for a broader, interdisciplinary competency framework that includes elements of FM. FM encompasses strategic planning, space management, maintenance systems, stakeholder engagement, and sustainability practices (Peiris, S et al., 2025). Its epistemology combines knowledge from architecture, engineering, management, economics, and social sciences, making it particularly suited to managing waqf assets, which are often complex, multifunctional, and embedded in community structures (Ochieng, H. et al., 2025; Amos, D. et al., 2019). Embedding such knowledge in mutawalli training could close the competency gap and professionalise waqf administration. The following significant themes have been identified in the interview transcripts:

Theme 1: The extension of FM epistemology components suitable for embedding in the Mutawalli competencies training module.

Theme 2: Emphasises the integration of Islamic principles and the Maqasid Shariah.

The Islamic worldview stresses the principles of *amanah* (trust), *maslahah* (public interest), *ihsan* (excellence), and accountability (*hisbah*) in governance (Zaweed, S., 2021). These values align well with FM's emphasis on sustainability, life-cycle thinking, and user-centric service delivery. The concept of *Maqasid Shariah* is the higher objectives of Islamic law, which include the protection of religion (*din*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*'aql*), progeny (*nasl*), and wealth (*mal*). These objectives resonate with FM goals when waqf assets are managed to promote community welfare, economic resilience, and environmental stewardship. For instance, protecting wealth (*hifz al-mal*) through proactive maintenance and asset value preservation is an FM domain. This research finding aligns Shariah principles with modern management theories, thereby enhancing institutional efficiency without compromising religious mandates.

### 5.2 Integration of Data Findings and Evolution of the Conceptual Framework

The evolution of the conceptual framework can be achieved by incorporating data findings from content and thematic analysis. This integration enhances the trustworthiness and accuracy of research findings while advancing knowledge in waqf asset management. Figure 4 depicts the revised framework of the Mutawalli competencies by integrating the epistemology of FM with Islamic management principles and Maqasid Shariah.

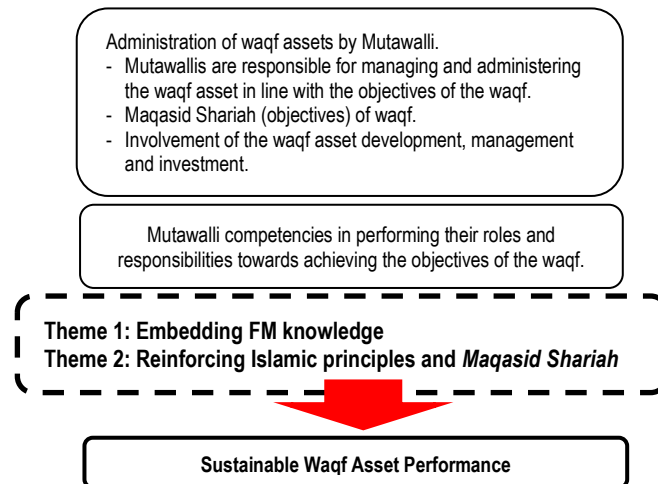


Figure 4 Revised Framework for Competencies of Mutawalli Towards the Sustainable Waqf Asset Performance

## 6.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

This research explores the components of FM epistemology in mutawalli competencies training modules toward sustainable waqf asset performance. While the importance of waqf reform and mutawalli training has been acknowledged, the integration of FM as a structured knowledge domain remains under-researched. The comprehensive analysis concludes that nine components of FM epistemology must be embedded in the Mutawalli competencies training module. It consists of **Strategic Alignment, Performance-Based Framework, Integration of Engineering & Business, Use of Information Technology, Accountability and Transparency, Community and Beneficiary Engagement, Sustainable and Productive Management, Ethical and Value-Based Management and Sustainable**

**Tenancy Management.** In addition, the Integration of Islamic Principles, the *tawhidic* concept, and *Maqasid Shariah* is an additional component to be included. By integrating these principles, Waqf institutions can overcome challenges such as underdeveloped properties and mismanagement, thereby achieving their objectives of equitable economic growth and social welfare. Additionally, while FM literature addresses public and commercial real estate, it has yet to explore its adaptation to Islamic philanthropic assets. This research paper addresses these gaps by proposing an epistemological synthesis grounded in both FM theory and Islamic principles.

Future research may extend this study by empirically validating the proposed mutawalli competency framework using quantitative approaches and larger samples to enhance generalisability. Additionally, the effectiveness of the developed training module can be tested through experimental or longitudinal designs to assess its impact on waqf asset performance. Comparative studies across different countries may provide insights into contextual variations in waqf governance and competency requirements. Furthermore, integrating emerging dimensions such as ESG principles, digital competencies, and stakeholder perspectives would enrich the understanding of sustainable waqf asset management. Such efforts would contribute towards a more comprehensive and globally relevant competency framework for mutawalli.

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## Paper Contribution to the Related Field of Study

This paper contributes to the field of waqf studies, Islamic social finance, and facilities management by proposing an integrated understanding of waqf asset performance grounded in mutawalli competencies. It advances theory by conceptualising waqf asset performance as multidimensional, encompassing financial sustainability, physical preservation, governance quality, Shariah compliance, and socio-economic impact. Unlike prior studies that examine governance or development issues separately, this research links asset performance directly to the professional competencies of the mutawalli, positioning leadership, financial, legal, and facilities management skills as critical determinants of sustainable outcomes. Methodologically, the study strengthens qualitative research in Islamic institutional contexts by combining document analysis with empirical insights from experienced practitioners. In practice, it bridges traditional waqf administration with contemporary asset- and facilities-management principles, offering actionable guidance to improve productivity and accountability. Overall, the paper supports the professionalisation of mutawalli roles and contributes to the development of a competency-based framework for sustainable waqf asset management aligned with the *maqasid al-Shariah*.

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