

Tawhid String Relation and Itsar Concept of Islamic Bank in Information Technology and Competitive Advantage Issues

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ABSTRACT

The industrial revolution 4.0 has impacted the use of technology in various fields. Therefore, this research aims to find out how Islamic banks use technology based on an Islamic perspective and how it impacts increasing competitive advantage. The method used in this research is qualitative, which is to understand and explain the phenomenon of the current use of technology by Islamic banks based on an Islamic perspective. Furthermore, the discussion in this study is limited by the formulation of the problem consisting of (i) How Itsar and Tawhid String Relationship can support the development of technology; (ii) How Itsar can support the use of technology in Islamic banks; (iii) How Itsar can increase the competitiveness of Islamic banks. The results of this study are as follows (i) The Itsar principle encourages individuals and Islamic banks to develop knowledge and innovation processes so that technological development in Islamic banks becomes a vital and inseparable part of their business activities; (ii) The Itsar principle can be applied by individuals and Islamic banks so that it can have a positive impact on technological development that can increase operational efficiency; (iii) The Itsar Principle can increase competitiveness because Itsar can encourage continuous innovation, help improve the quality of superior products and services, increase efficiency and high productivity, and strengthen collaboration and synergy. The implication of this conceptual paper is to provide information and references to related parties who have concerns about the development of Islamic economics. The novelty of this research is the application of the Itsar principle in Islamic banks so as to increase competitiveness.

Keywords: Itsar, Tawhid String Relation, Islamic Bank, Information Technology, Competitive Advantage

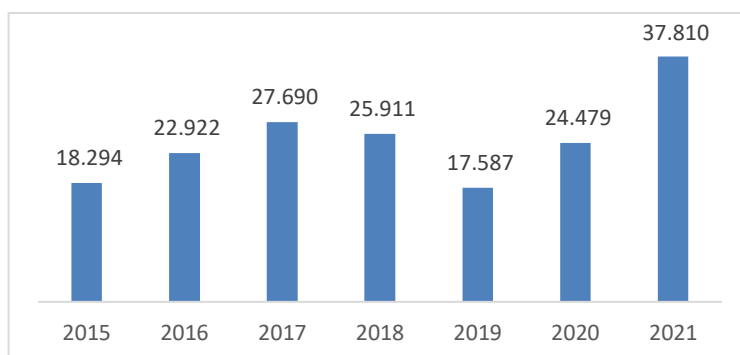


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INTRODUCTION

The financial sector at this time, including the banking industry, must be able to follow the needs and desires of the market, where the digitalization process in business and financial transactions is a must (Imani et al., 2023; Maria et al., 2022; Pardede et al., 2022; Sukarno et al., 2022). The development of information technology, computers, and the internet in everyday life is the cause of digitalization in all aspects of human life. The high penetration of internet users in Indonesia is one indicator that the use of information technology, computers, and the internet in Indonesia has become part of people's life activities (Fauza et al., 2023; Jihad et al., 2022; Kamal et al., 2022; Rhenaldy et al., 2022). Referring to the information provided by Lavinda (2023), internet users in Indonesia at the beginning of 2023 had reached 215.62 million people, or 78.19% of Indonesia's total population of 275.77 million.

On the other hand, the financial sector, namely Islamic banking, which operates based on Sharia principles, directly impacts economic growth by driving the real sector to become one of Indonesia's fastest-growing financial industries. This is indicated by the increase in Islamic bank assets for a year from 2021 to 2022, which reached IDR 90.69 trillion or grew 15% (Rizaty, 2022). Of course, the development of Islamic banks in Indonesia is inseparable from the large Muslim population in Indonesia, even though Indonesia is a country with the largest Muslim population in the world (Imani et al., 2022; Muthmainnatun et al., 2022; Nugroho, Nugraha, et al., 2022; Siti Nur Alfiah et al., 2022). Islamic banks are the locomotive of the growth of other financial sectors, such as Islamic insurance, Islamic capital markets, and Islamic pawn shops (Bahari et al., 2021; Jannah & Nugroho, 2019; Lestari et al., 2022; Utami et al., 2022; Vania et al., 2018). Therefore, the existence of Islamic banks has a vital role in economic growth and needs to be maintained both its continuity and sustainability (Akram et al., 2021; Nasfi, Aden Sutiapermana, et al., 2022; Nugroho, 2022b). Furthermore, the development of Islamic banks in Indonesia must be supported by appropriate technology so that they can have better competitiveness compared to conventional banks where the existence of conventional banks has been earlier when compared to Islamic banks (Diantanti et al., 2021; Ihwanudin et al., 2020; Karyanto et al., 2021; Labetubun et al., 2021). The growth of Internet banking and mobile banking transactions in Indonesia is shown in the figure below:



Source: Ahdiat (2022)

Figure 1. Internet Banking and Mobile Banking Transactions from 2015 to 2021

Following Figure 1 above, it is known that internet banking and mobile banking transactions over the past seven years have increased by 19,516 users or grown by 106.7%. This is because the number of internet and mobile banking users in 2015 only reached 19,294, and in 2021 it was 37,810 users. The phenomenon of transaction growth using internet banking and mobile banking shows an increase in the use of digital financial and business transactions in society.

Under the phenomenon of the growth of the use of information technology, computers, and the internet in society and the urgency of the existence of Islamic banks in Indonesia, the problem formulation in this conceptual paper includes (i) How Itsar and Tawhid String Relationship can support technological development; (ii) How Itsar can support the use of technology in Islamic

banks; (iii) How Itsar can increase the competitiveness of Islamic banks. Furthermore, the objectives of this study include (i) Knowing the sharia perspective of Itsar and Tawhid String Relationship can support technological development; (ii) Knowing the role of Itsar principles can support the use of technology in Islamic banks; (iii) Knowing the principle of Itsar can increase the competitiveness of Islamic banks. The implication of this conceptual paper is to provide information and references to related parties concerned about the development of Islamic economics. This research's novelty is applying the Itsar principle in Islamic banks to increase competitiveness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Islam is comprehensive because it covers all aspects of human life (Afoukane et al., 2021; Mahliza et al., 2021). Islam encompasses religious, social, economic, moral, and intellectual dimensions in a comprehensive guide so that Muslims are obliged to carry out the commands of Allah SWT and stay away from His prohibitions. The comprehensive religion of Islam implies that every Muslim is obliged to practice his religion in totality (Mahliza et al., 2020; Nugroho, 2019; Nugroho, Nugraha et al., 2020a; Sukmadilaga et al., 2021). Practicing Islam in totality involves a deep commitment as a Muslim to carrying out his life activities in both ritual and social worship. Therefore, practicing Islam in its totality means living consistently with religious principles, integrating Islamic values in every aspect of life, and striving to be an obedient and responsible servant of God in all actions and interactions (I. Fasa et al., 2020; Nugroho et al., 2020; Nugroho, Suganda, et al., 2020).

Human obedience in practicing the Qur'an and Hadith, which are the primary sources of Islamic law, will affect the welfare of humanity itself (Akram et al., 2021; Nasfi, Sutiapermana et al., 2022; Nugroho et al., 2017). Therefore, a company, institution, or organization that holds sharia principles as its foundation must carry out all its business activities based on the primary sources of Islamic law. Also, understanding and obedience to and implementing the provisions of the Al-Qur'an and Hadith, along with the origins of Islamic law, are insufficient. Still, they must also be equipped with adequate knowledge. Knowledge in Islam has a vital position, even the Qur'anic verses that Allah first revealed to the Prophet relating to the mastery of knowledge, namely those contained in Q.S Al-Alaq verses 1-5: "Recite in the name of your Lord who created, Created man from a clinging substance, Recite, and your Lord is the Most Generous, Who taught by the pen, Taught man that which he knew not." Knowledge is the basis of every activity carried out by humans that can provide added value and contribute to the welfare of society. This valuable knowledge is in the form of innovations that can benefit the ummah, aiming to carry out religious orders and avoid Allah's prohibitions. Therefore, religious people must be equipped with adequate knowledge, and knowledgeable people must be balanced with religion. Apart from the Qur'an, Hadith, and knowledge, the essential element in the TSR concept is time. Change and the dynamics of development are inevitable. Therefore, update knowledge is needed in interpreting the verses in the Al-Qur'an according to the phenomena that occur today (Nugroho et al., 2020; Nugroho & Mariyanti, 2021). This knowledge is also helpful for planning and anticipating future events through evaluation and finding solutions to events that have been passed (Ahmadin et al., 2023).

In Islam, there is a principle that the best people are those who can provide benefits to humans and other creatures or can provide benefits. The principle of benefit in Islam places the public interest and welfare of society as a priority in decision-making. It aims to achieve justice, goodness, and harmony in the lives of individuals and society under the teachings of Islam (Arafah & Nugroho, 2016; Nugroho, 2014; Nugroho & Chowdhury, 2015). Furthermore, the principle of benefit is implemented with the principle of Itsar. The principle of Itsar is to integrate all Muslim activities as part of worship. In Islamic teachings, Itsar is seen as a way to get closer to Allah and get His blessings (Nugroho et al., 2023). In addition, the impact of applying the principle of Itsar in daily life, Muslims are expected to create a society that empathizes, supports each other, and cares about the needs of others. Itsar is also an integral part of the social and humanitarian values emphasized in Islam (Diantanti et al., 2021; Hidayati, 2016).

Technology has a vital function in business activities that can make the company's operations more efficient and increase productivity (Nugroho, 2020, 2022a). Therefore, the current operations of

Islamic banks must always follow technological developments so that Islamic banks have competitiveness and can maintain the sustainability and sustainability of Islamic banks.

METHODS

This conceptual paper deployed a content analysis approach, a research approach that focuses on an in-depth investigation of the research problems. This conceptual paper's research problems establish Islamic banks' competitive advantage and technology from a TSR perspective. The data were obtained by purposive sampling technique to focus on concept development based on the existing literature related to the purpose of the study. The obtained data were then analyzed using an interactive analysis model. This model consists of three stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion (Napitupulu et al., 2020; Oktris et al., 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Itsar and Tawhid String Relationship (TSR) Can Support The Development of Technology

Islam encourages its followers to actively seek knowledge, develop knowledge, and combine knowledge with spiritual and ethical values. Islam sees science as a means to get closer to Allah SWT so that by using science to see Allah SWT's creation, humans increase the gratitude and increase piety, and faith of Muslims (Herliansyah et al., 2020; Hidayah et al., 2020; Soekapdjo et al., 2018). In the concept of TSR, the Quran is the source of knowledge, which is the holy book of Muslims that not only guides in terms of spiritual and moral life but also contains instructions about the universe, history, ethics, and various aspects of human life (Nugroho, Miglietta, et al., 2022; Nugroho, Nugraha, et al., 2020b; Nugroho & Nugraha, 2020). Moreover, the Quran invites Muslims to study, contemplate, and develop knowledge based on its teachings (Hiyanti et al., 2019; Nugroho et al., 2020; Nugroho, Melzatia, et al., 2022). In addition, Islam also encourages its followers to seek knowledge and learn throughout life.

Nevertheless, the Prophet Muhammad emphasized the importance of science and learning. Muslims are therefore expected to develop their intellectual potential, contemplate the universe, and acquire knowledge about the world and life. Furthermore, if it is connected to Itsar, seeking and developing knowledge is part of worship so that knowledge and innovation are used to achieve the public good and improve the quality of life in society (Nugroho et al., 2020). Thus, science and innovation from the Islamic perspective are essential elements in daily life for Muslims (Nugroho et al., 2023). Even a hadith states that whoever is better today than yesterday is a lucky person, (and) whoever is the same today as yesterday is a loser, and even whoever is worse today than yesterday is a wretch (Hadith Al-Hakim).

Knowledge is the basis for technological development, while innovation is the process of applying knowledge to create new solutions or improve something for the better. Furthermore, the relationship between knowledge, innovation, and technology can be explained as follows:

- **Knowledge as the foundation of technology development**
Knowledge gained through research, study, and observation is the foundation for technological development. Therefore, knowledge includes principles, theories, concepts, and facts from data collection and research. Knowledge is the basis for understanding how something works and how it can be improved or changed through innovation (McEvily & Chakravarthy, 2002; Nonaka & Konno, 1998).
- **Innovation is the process of applying knowledge.**
Innovation involves the creative process of applying knowledge to develop or improve new solutions. Innovation occurs when knowledge is used creatively to overcome challenges or meet new needs. Therefore, innovation involves critical thinking, experimentation, and exploration of new ideas to create positive change (Edvinsson et al., 2004; Popadiuk & Choo, 2006).
- **Technology as a Result of Innovation**
Technology is the product of successful innovation. When innovations are successfully implemented, the result is either the development of new technologies or the improvement of

existing technologies. Technology includes tools, devices, systems, or processes that utilize knowledge and innovation to provide solutions or improve performance in various fields, such as communication, information, medicine, finance, and so on (Overall, 2015).

Itsar Can Support The Use of Technology in Islamic Banking

Applying the Itsar principle in Islamic banks is closely related to productivity with human resources because it encourages them to innovate. Itsar will encourage human resources to positively impact organizational development, namely human resources who have the Itsar principle and are committed to making contributions more significant than their interests. They are ready to sacrifice their time, energy, and resources for the organization's and society's good. They have a strong social conscience and see their work as a calling to benefit others. Furthermore, the intense awareness of human resources on the concept of Itsar in innovating will impact the development of adequate technology in Islamic banks. The impacts of the use of technology in Islamic banks include:

- Technology can automate banking processes that were previously done manually. This reduces reliance on error-prone manual work and improves operational efficiency. For example, systems that automate transaction processing, data processing, and financial records can reduce the time and effort required to perform these tasks (Garg et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2020);
- Technology allows banking institutions to serve customers in the broader area without building physical branches. Electronic banking services such as online banking and mobile banking applications allow customers to access banking services anytime and anywhere. This expands the geographical reach and enables access to banking services for those living in remote areas (Kudama et al., 2021; Malladi et al., 2021);
- Technology provides opportunities for the banking industry to develop new products and services. For example, financial technology or fintech has enabled the emergence of various platforms such as digital payments, online lending, and online investment (Broby, 2021; Nguyen, 2016);
- Technology plays an essential role in enhancing the security of banking transactions. Robust security protocols, data encryption, and dual authentication systems help protect sensitive customer information from unauthorized access. Technology is also used to detect and prevent fraudulent activities, thereby increasing customer confidence in banking services (Asadi et al., 2017; Vinoth et al., 2022);
- Technology enables better and more responsive customer service. For example, customers can use chatbots or automated service systems to get quick answers to their questions. In addition, technology allows customers to track and control their financial activities, transfer funds quickly, and manage their accounts (Yousafzai & Yani-de-Soriano, 2012).

Itsar Can Increase The Competitive Advantage of Islamic Banks

Itsar has the potential to provide a competitive advantage for individuals and organizations. Therefore, Itsar can increase the competitiveness of Islamic banks due to the following things:

- Through Itsar, innovation-oriented individuals or organizations can generate new ideas, introduce better products or services, or develop more efficient processes, thereby increasing the competitiveness of Islamic banks;
- Itsar can also help improve the quality of products and services. By committing to providing the best, individuals or organizations that practice Itsar tend to prioritize quality in every aspect of their business. Superior quality can improve customer perception, build trust, and differentiate them from competitors, which in turn increases the competitiveness of Islamic banks;
- Itsar involves sacrificing time, energy, and other resources to achieve a greater goal. In a business context, it can promote high efficiency and productivity. Individuals or organizations that practice Itsar tend to focus on the optimal use of resources, looking for ways to improve work processes, reduce costs and increase productivity. High efficiency and productivity are essential factors in achieving strong competitiveness in a competitive business environment;
- Itsar also strengthens collaboration and synergy between individuals or organizations.

Effective collaboration and synergy between various stakeholders can create a competitive advantage in the context of competitiveness. Through Itsar, individuals or organizations can encourage cooperation, share knowledge, and leverage shared expertise to achieve common goals. Strong collaboration and synergy can increase adaptability, improve operational effectiveness, and provide a competitive advantage.

By applying Itsar in the context of competitiveness, individuals, organizations, or countries can develop sustainable innovation, produce high-quality products and services, improve efficiency and productivity, and strengthen collaboration and synergy. All this can help them gain a competitive edge and perform better in a competitive environment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion in this conceptual paper, it can be concluded that:

- The Itsar principle encourages individuals and Islamic banks to develop knowledge and innovation processes so that technological development in Islamic banks becomes a vital and inseparable part of their business activities.;
- The Itsar principle can be applied by individuals and Islamic banks so that it can have a positive impact on technological development that can increase operational efficiency; expand reach; increase product and service innovation; increase transaction security, improve the quality of service to customers for the better;
- The principle of Itsar can enhance competitiveness because Itsar can foster continuous innovation, help improve the quality of superior products and services, increase efficiency and high productivity, and strengthen collaboration and synergy.

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