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Introduction: Market Interdependence, Digital Governance, and Strategic Value in Contemporary Finance.

Muhammad Syauqi Armia

Editor in Chief

The contemporary financial landscape is increasingly defined by interconnected markets, rapidly evolving technologies, and changing patterns of risk transmission. Financial institutions that operate within the same regulatory or sectoral environment do not necessarily behave as homogeneous market actors, while technological innovation and globalisation continue to reshape how value, information, and financial shocks move across institutions and borders. Against this background, the third edition of *SUKUK: International Journal of Banking, Finance, Management and Business* (Vol. 5, No. III, 2026) brings together five empirical and analytical contributions examining market segmentation, banking interconnectedness, digital financial governance, corporate acquisition strategies, and the relationship between Islamic equities and global commodity markets. Together, these studies reflect an increasing scholarly emphasis on understanding finance not merely through institutional classifications, but through the dynamic relationships that determine market behaviour, valuation, and resilience.

A distinguishing feature of this edition is its attention to heterogeneity within apparently similar financial environments. Islamic banks sharing a common Shariah identity may exhibit markedly different equity-price dynamics; state-owned banks may share a long-run equilibrium while responding asymmetrically to shocks; digital payment scholarship may expand rapidly without equivalent development in governance theory; and international acquisitions or commodity exposures may produce effects that vary across transactions, periods, and investment horizons. Collectively, the contributions therefore challenge static interpretations of financial markets and emphasise that institutional identity, ownership, technology, and geography interact with market-specific conditions in complex ways.

Banking Market Integration, Segmentation, and Shock Transmission

The first thematic cluster examines the internal structure of Indonesia's banking equity market through two complementary perspectives. *Same Market, Different Stores: Market Segmentation among Indonesian Islamic Bank Equities* investigates whether Bank Syariah Indonesia, Bank BTPN Syariah, and Bank Panin Dubai Syariah share a common long-run equity-market trajectory. Despite operating within the same national economy and Islamic banking framework, the evidence does not establish a stable long-run equilibrium among the three stocks. Instead, the results reveal a segmented market in which BRIS and BTPS display limited common short-run exposure while PNBS follows a substantially more idiosyncratic price process. The study therefore demonstrates that a common Shariah classification does not automatically translate into homogeneous market valuation or price discovery.

The companion study on Indonesia's major state-owned banks reaches a contrasting but equally important conclusion. Bank Mandiri, BNI, and BRI exhibit evidence of a common long-run relationship, yet this integration is distinctly asymmetric. BNI provides the clearest equilibrium-correcting response, while cross-bank shocks propagate differently across institutions and forecast horizons. The findings portray state-owned banking equities neither as perfectly homogeneous nor independent, but as an interconnected financial subsystem characterised by common long-run forces and heterogeneous adjustment mechanisms. Together, these two articles demonstrate that institutional similarity—whether arising from Islamic identity or state ownership—must be distinguished from actual market integration. For investors and regulators alike, understanding how information and shocks travel across banking equities is therefore essential for assessing diversification, price discovery, and systemic interconnectedness.

Digital Finance Governance, Innovation, and Strategic Value Creation

The second thematic cluster turns from banking-market structure to the governance and valuation consequences of technological and strategic transformation. *From Adoption to Governance: A Bibliometric Review of Digital Payment and FinTech Research* maps the rapid expansion of digital payment scholarship and identifies an important transition in its intellectual development. While the literature remains strongly anchored in financial inclusion, technology acceptance, digital wallets, consumer behaviour, and innovation diffusion, emerging research increasingly addresses artificial intelligence, blockchain, cybersecurity, digital currencies, sustainability, and institutional regulation. The study argues that digital payments are evolving from individual financial products into critical infrastructures whose significance increasingly depends on interoperability, platform organisation, competition, regulatory oversight, and data governance.

This concern with strategic transformation is complemented by the study of Microsoft's domestic and cross-border mergers and acquisitions. Examining acquisition announcements between 2014 and 2019, the article finds that geography alone does not produce a statistically robust difference in shareholder wealth effects. Domestic and cross-border transactions follow different short-run return trajectories, yet their cumulative outcomes remain remarkably similar. The evidence suggests that investors may place greater weight on transaction-specific strategic characteristics—such as technological capabilities, platforms, talent, and complementary resources—than on target nationality alone.

Viewed together, these articles highlight a broader principle: innovation creates value only within institutional and strategic contexts. Digital technologies require governance structures capable of managing platform power, access, trust, and regulation, while corporate acquisitions require strategic coherence beyond simple geographic categorisation. Financial transformation should therefore be understood through the interaction between technological possibilities, institutional organisation, and market expectations.

Islamic Equities, Commodity Exposure, and Dynamic Diversification

The third thematic cluster extends the discussion of interconnectedness into global Islamic capital markets. *When Does Oil Matter for Islamic Equities*? investigates the relationship between Brent crude oil and developed and emerging Islamic equity markets from 1996 to 2025. Its principal contribution lies in demonstrating that static correlations conceal substantial variation across both historical periods and investment horizons. Developed and emerging Islamic equities become more strongly integrated over medium and longer horizons, meaning that diversification benefits between them tend to weaken as holding periods lengthen.

The relationship with oil is even more conditional. Although unconditional correlations between Brent and Islamic equities remain relatively low, wavelet analysis reveals episodes in which dependence strengthens considerably. Oil therefore cannot be treated as a permanently independent diversification asset for Shariah-compliant portfolios. Moreover, developed and emerging Islamic markets respond differently to oil shocks despite sharing a common Shariah-compliant investment identity. This contribution reinforces a central theme running throughout the edition: financial relationships are rarely fixed. Market identity, whether Islamic, state-owned, technological, or international, interacts with time, structure, and institutional context in determining actual financial behaviour.

Conclusion

Taken as a whole, this edition of SUKUK Journal advances a dynamic understanding of contemporary finance. Across banking equities, digital payment infrastructures, corporate acquisitions, and Islamic capital markets, the contributions demonstrate that common institutional labels do not guarantee uniform market outcomes. Integration can coexist with asymmetric adjustment, segmentation can persist within a shared financial system, and apparently weak relationships can become economically significant under market regimes or investment horizons.

The studies featured in this volume therefore encourage academics, practitioners, investors, and policymakers to move beyond static classifications toward more contextual analyses of interconnectedness, governance, valuation, and risk. By combining banking-market econometrics, bibliometric mapping, event-study analysis, and time–frequency methods, this edition reflects SUKUK Journal's continuing commitment to empirically grounded and internationally relevant financial scholarship. It is our hope that these contributions stimulate further research into how modern financial systems transmit information, allocate value, absorb shocks, and evolve under conditions of technological and institutional change.

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Dato' Dr. Muhammad Syauqi Armia, MBA, CSAA