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Corporate social responsibility in Islamic bank: review of one decade of research and future directions

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Abstract

Purpose - This study aims to systematically review the literature on corporate social responsibility in Islamic banks over the past decade, identifying key trends, determinants, impacts, and future research directions.

Method - The systematic literature review methodology followed the PRISMA protocol to ensure a rigorous selection and evaluation process. The study analysed 25 papers from the Scopus database.

Result - Findings suggest that CSR disclosure, governance structure, and regulatory support significantly influence the effectiveness of CSR in Islamic banks. While some studies show a positive relationship between CSR and financial performance, others show that the impact is context-dependent, varying across regulatory environments and socio-cultural dynamics. This study also highlights the methodological diversity in CSR research, with content analysis, regression analysis, and surveys being the most frequently used approaches.

Implication - This study enhances academic and practical understanding of CSR in Islamic banking by analysing key internal and external determinants, synthesising CSR trends and challenges, and suggesting avenues for future research.

Originality - This study integrates a holistic view of CSR trends and outlines a future research agenda. The findings provide valuable guidance for academics, practitioners, and policymakers on improving CSR implementation in Islamic banking.

Keywords: Islamic bank; corporate social responsibility; systematic literature review

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Introduction

The development of the Islamic banking industry over the past decade has demonstrated significant growth in terms of assets, number of institutions, and geographical reach (Avdukic & Asutay, 2024). As financial institutions founded on Islamic principles, Islamic banks are not only expected to achieve profitability but also bear a higher moral and social responsibility toward society and the environment. In this context, corporate social responsibility (CSR) emerges as a crucial aspect that reflects the commitment of Islamic banks to the values of justice, balance, and social welfare, as advocated in Islam (Jan et al., 2021; Mahmuda & Muktadir-Al-Mukit, 2023).

Unlike conventional banks, the implementation of CSR in Islamic banks encompasses spiritual and ethical dimensions that reflect Islamic values such as justice, balance, and accountability (Di Bella & Al-Fayoumi, 2016; Zaman et al., 2018). CSR practices should ideally align with *maqashid shariah* (the objectives of Islamic law), emphasizing the social function of financial institutions. As such, it is important to understand how CSR has been conceptualized, implemented, and studied within the context of Islamic banking.

Over the past decade, various studies have explored CSR practices in Islamic banks across different jurisdictions. The literature has examined dimensions such as CSR disclosure, financial Performance, governance, and regulatory challenges (Abu Al-Haija & Kolsi, 2021; Harun et al., 2020; Jaiyeoba et al., 2018; Probohudono et al., 2022). However, these studies tend to be fragmented and focused on isolated aspects, lacking a unifying perspective that integrates Islamic ethical principles into CSR research. Moreover, inconsistencies remain in empirical findings—for instance, while some studies show a positive relationship between CSR disclosure and financial Performance (Menassa & Dagher, 2020; Probohudono et al., 2022), others find no significant effect or emphasize context-specific outcomes (Shahwan & Habib, 2023a).

Despite the growing body of research, a clear gap persists in the literature regarding the alignment between CSR practices and the foundational principles of Islamic finance. Some concerns remain regarding transparency, governance structures, and the gap between CSR claims and actual practices (Ali Aribi & Arun, 2015; Darus et al., 2017; Zafar & Sulaiman, 2021). There is also a lack of empirical studies assessing the actual social impact of CSR, a scarcity of longitudinal analyses capturing the evolution of CSR in Islamic banks, and an underutilization of qualitative approaches that could uncover deeper normative and ethical dimensions.

The increasing awareness of corporate sustainability and stakeholder engagement worldwide is driving a demand for improved CSR reporting. A recent ESG survey in June 2024 showed that 77% of companies now publicly report their ESG Performance, up from 56% in October 2023. Firms report an average of 10.8 ESG metrics, indicating a sharp rise in CSR activity and expectations(Maroun, 2020).

Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by providing a systematic literature review (SLR) of CSR research in Islamic banking over the past decade. It explicitly focuses on evaluating the degree of alignment between CSR practices and Islamic principles, identifying underexplored themes, and mapping future research directions. This review employs the PRISMA protocol to ensure a rigorous selection and analysis process (Bukair & Abdul Rahman, 2015; Nugraheni & Muhammad, 2024).

By consolidating insights from 25 peer-reviewed studies, this paper aims to identify research trends, theoretical frameworks, methodological patterns, and underexplored dimensions in CSR research in Islamic banking. The goal is to enrich the theoretical development of CSR aligned with *maqashid shariah* and provide practical insights for scholars, practitioners, and regulators. This comprehensive approach is expected to enhance the effectiveness and transparency of CSR initiatives, contributing to the stability and reputation of Islamic banks (Alamer et al., 2015; Hassanein & Tharwat, 2024; Tasnia et al., 2023)

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

RQ1. What are the main trends in CSR research in Islamic banking over the past decade?

RQ2. What are the main factors that influence the implementation and disclosure of CSR in Islamic banks?

RQ3. What is the CSR impact of Islamic banks?

RQ4. What methodological approaches have been used in CSR research on Islamic banking?

RQ5. What gaps exist in the current literature, and which direction should future research take?

This systematic literature review (SLR) significantly contributes to both academic literature and industry practice. First, by analyzing a decade's worth of research, it provides a comprehensive synthesis of CSR in Islamic banking, offering a structured and valuable overview for academics, policymakers, and practitioners. Second, the study identifies the key determinants and impacts of CSR in Islamic banking, distinguishing between internal factors—such as corporate governance, Shariah compliance, and stakeholder engagement—and external factors—such as the regulatory framework and socio-cultural dynamics (Hassan & Syafri Harahap, 2010; Zafar & Sulaiman, 2021b)

In addition, the study offers methodological insights by categorizing and evaluating the research approaches used in previous CSR studies, thereby highlighting best practices and limitations within the Islamic banking sector (Ali Aribi & Arun, 2015; Bukair & Abdul Rahman, 2015; Wan Jusoh & Ibrahim, 2020).

Most importantly, this study sets a clear agenda for future research by outlining critical gaps and suggesting specific directions, such as longitudinal studies tracking CSR evolution in Islamic banks, comparative analyses between Islamic and conventional CSR practices, deeper investigations into the alignment of CSR with *maqashid shariah*; and contextual studies of stakeholder perceptions in different Islamic banking jurisdictions. Through these contributions, the study not only enriches the theoretical understanding of CSR in Islamic banking but also lays a solid foundation for future academic exploration and policy development in the Islamic financial industry (Darus et al., 2017; Hassan & Syafri Harahap, 2010; Zafar & Sulaiman, 2021).

Literature Review

CSR in Islamic banking is a complex concept that includes ethical, social, and environmental responsibilities in its business operations. It is based on Islamic teachings, emphasizing justice, transparency, and social welfare. The ethical and religious foundation of CSR in Islamic banking is rooted in the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah, which emphasize the importance of maintaining harmony with stakeholders, the environment, and society at large (Bakar & Yusof, 2016; Fitrarahmasari & Fadah, 2018). This principle ensures that the bank's operations are always Shariah compliant and aim to provide broader social benefits.

One key aspect of implementing CSR in Islamic banks is the relationship with stakeholders. Islamic banks view stakeholders as partners engaged in profit-sharing and risk-sharing mechanisms at the core of the Islamic financial system. This perspective aligns with the Stakeholder Theory developed by Freeman (1984), which suggests that companies are not only accountable to shareholders but also to all parties with an interest in the company (Davila, 2024). In the context of Islamic banking, this theory supports the notion that CSR is not merely an external obligation but a moral and theological responsibility toward all stakeholders (Awa et al., 2024).

Social and environmental responsibility is a fundamental aspect of CSR in Islamic banking. These banks are active in supporting social projects, providing educational assistance, and engaging in environmental sustainability initiatives (Fitrarahmasari & Fadah, 2018; Selim, 2023). Furthermore, Islamic banks' approach to CSR is holistic, covering various social, educational, and environmental areas. This holistic approach ensures that CSR is not just limited to one particular aspect but contributes broadly to the well-being of society (Fitrarahmasari & Fadah, 2018; Selim, 2023). Thus, CSR in Islamic banking is an obligation and a strategy to achieve broader long-term benefits. It is deeply embedded in *maqashid al-shariah*, which emphasizes the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth (Alfaisaly, 2024). This makes CSR not only an ethical commitment but also a means of fulfilling the higher objectives of Islamic law.

In the context of sustainable development, Islamic banking plays an important role in supporting economic and social welfare. This is realized through the provision of Qard Hasan (interest-free loans) and the allocation of funds for zakat as a form of sustainable social contribution (Hadi, 2016; Kotb Abdelrahman Radwan et al., 2023). In this way, Islamic banks operate financially and become agents of positive social and economic change.

Managerial guidelines are a crucial aspect of Islamic banking to ensure the effectiveness of CSR. The management of CSR initiatives should be done with systematic planning based on the principle of Tawhid (oneness of God) and the rules of Sharia (Bakar & Yusof, 2016). CSR in Islamic banks is not only a matter of regulatory compliance but is embedded in the religious obligation to promote justice, welfare, and accountability. Unlike conventional banks, which may use CSR primarily as a branding strategy, Islamic banks are often driven by theological commitments and moral imperatives.

Over the past decade, research on CSR in Islamic banks has developed significantly. Several studies have explored the differences in CSR motivations and disclosures between Islamic and conventional banks. While conventional banks tend to emphasize reputation and profitability, Islamic banks frequently highlight religious compliance and socio-ethical obligations as their primary CSR drivers. The literature also shows that most CSR reporting by Islamic banks is done through annual or sustainability reports, but there is a need for a deeper assessment of the actual implementation of CSR principles aligned with Shariah. Therefore, the use of the SLR approach in this study helps map these developments, identify dominant trends, and reveal methodological and theoretical gaps in previous research.

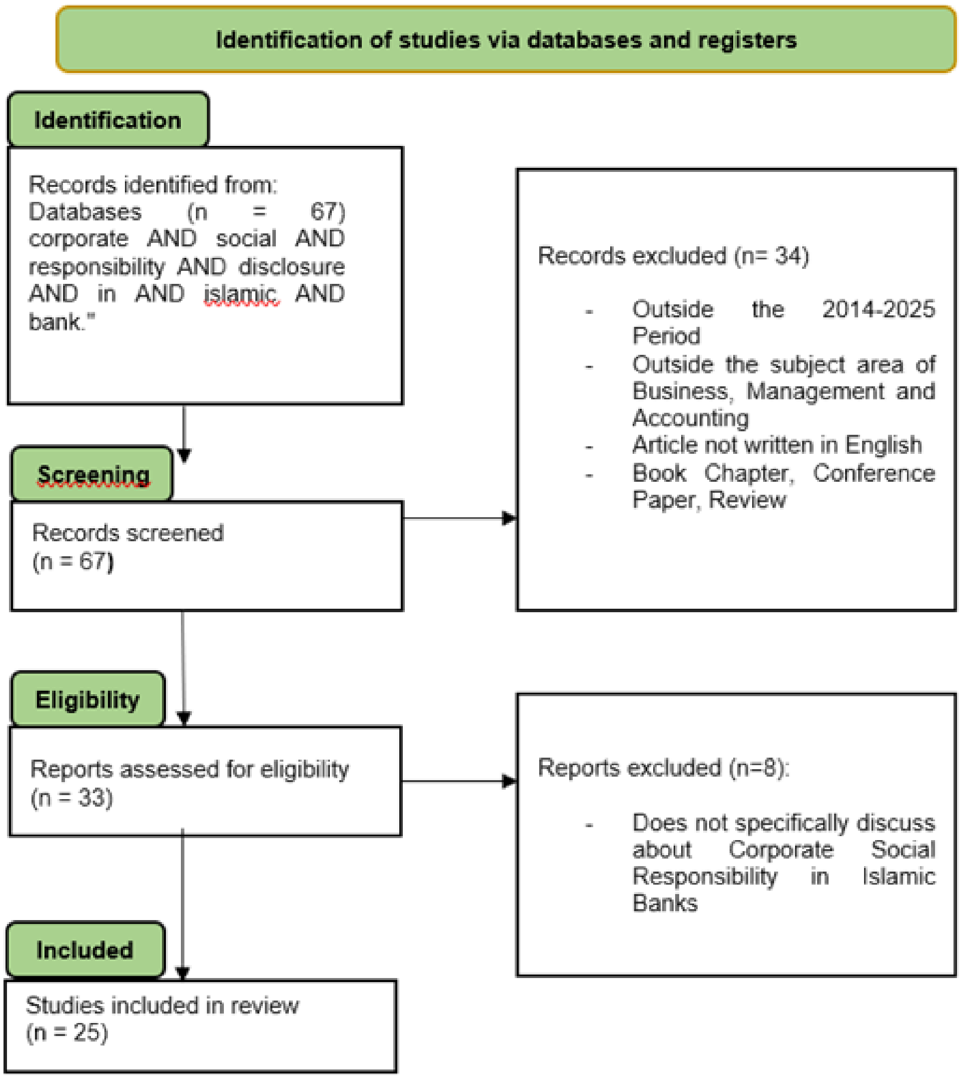
Research Methods

This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to identify, evaluate, and analyse research related to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Islamic banking over the past decade. The SLR process followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews (PRISMA) guidelines Moher et al., (2009) outlined. A comprehensive search was conducted on the SCOPUS database using the terms 'corporate AND social AND responsibility AND disclosure AND in AND Islamic AND bank.' The search was restricted to studies published between 2014 and 2025 to ensure relevance to the latest research developments. The inclusion criteria for this SLR were: (1) Research articles published in Scopus-indexed journals; (2) Articles that focus on Corporate Social Responsibility in Islamic banking; (3) Articles written in English; (4) Articles that discuss

Corporate Social Responsibility in the context of Islamic banking; (5) Articles published between 2014 and 2025. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria are: (1) Articles published outside the 2014-2025 period; (2) Articles that do not belong to the fields of Business, Management, and Accounting; (3) Articles that are not written in English; (4) Book chapters, conference papers, or reviews; (5) Articles that do not specifically discuss Corporate Social Responsibility in Islamic banking. Figure 1 shows the process of identifying reviewed articles based on the PRISMA protocol.

Figure 1

PRISMA flow diagram



Technical search and filtering in the Scopus database is carried out with the following procedure: TITLE-ABS-KEY (corporate AND social AND responsibility AND disclosure AND in AND Islamic AND bank) AND PUBYEAR > 2014 AND PUBYEAR < 2025 AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , 'BUSI')) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , 'ar') AND (LIMIT-TO (EXACT KEYWORD, "Corporate Social Responsibility") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Islamic Banks") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Islamic Banking") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "CSR Disclosure")).

The initial search identified 67 articles from the SCOPUS database. After applying inclusion and exclusion filters, 25 records were assessed for eligibility. The selected articles were further evaluated through a two-stage process. In the first stage, articles were screened by title and abstract to evaluate their relevance. In the second stage, articles that passed the initial screening were read in full to ensure suitability to the research objectives. Researchers collaborated in selecting articles and discussed any discrepancies until an agreement was reached. The final 25 articles included in this review were selected based on their contribution to understanding the development of Corporate Social Responsibility in Islamic banking.

Results and Discussion

Research trends on CSR in Islamic banking

Research trends on CSR in Islamic banking show significant developments in several key aspects, such as CSR disclosure, its determinants, and its impact on bank performance. Most studies highlight the importance of CSR disclosures and the relationship that exists between these disclosures and bank financial performance. Research in Bangladesh shows a significant negative relationship between CSR disclosure and the financial performance of Islamic banks, indicating that better CSR practices and more transparent reporting can improve performance and increase stakeholder confidence (Mahmuda & Muktadir-Al-Mukit, 2023). In contrast, studies conducted in the UAE, Kuwait, and Turkey show that higher CSR disclosure is associated with positive financial performance improvement, suggesting that CSR can contribute to achieving socio-economic goals (Probohudono et al., 2022).

In addition, many studies have also identified various determinants that affect CSR implementation in Islamic banking. An important factor often discussed is Islamic corporate governance (ICG), including the role of the Islamic supervisory board and ownership structure, which can influence the level of disclosure and success of CSR practices (Jan et al., 2021). Other studies also suggest that the influence of Islamic religious values such as zakat and waqf can strengthen CSR implementation in Islamic banking (Aribi & Gao, 2011; Zaman et al., 2018).

Although several studies compare Islamic banks with conventional banks, the results show that the difference in technical efficiency between the two is not very significant. Research in Egypt found that although CSR practices positively affect technical efficiency in Islamic banks, the difference is not significant enough compared to conventional banks (Shahwan & Habib, 2023a). This result suggests that although CSR has excellent potential to improve bank performance, the difference between Islamic and conventional banks may not be huge.

However, research has also highlighted a large gap between Islamic banks' claims regarding CSR and the actual disclosures made. For example, studies in Pakistan show that while many Islamic banks claim to practice CSR, the actual level of disclosure is very low, with CSR policies deemed inadequate and needing revision (Hassan & Syafri Harahap, 2010; Zafar & Sulaiman, 2021a). This result reflects the challenges faced in implementing CSR principles that comply with Islamic ethical principles in banking.

In addition, many studies emphasise legislative support's importance in strengthening CSR practices. Research in Egypt suggests that more substantial legislative support can increase the effectiveness of CSR implementation, especially for society and customers (Shahwan & Habib, 2023a). Despite progress in CSR research in Islamic banking, challenges remain in reporting the quality and consistency of CSR disclosures. Future research needs to focus more on improving transparency and accountability, considering Islamic corporate governance's influence and religious values in strengthening CSR implementation. Thus, a more effective framework must be developed to optimise Islamic banks' social and economic contributions to society.

Factors Affecting CSR in Islamic Banking

Various factors, including Islamic corporate governance, Shariah values, government regulations, and stakeholder engagement, influence the implementation of CSR in Islamic banking. Islamic corporate governance (ICG) ensures that Islamic banks implement CSR transparently and with accountability. Banks with suitable governance structures, including effective Shariah supervisory boards (SSBs), tend to have higher levels of CSR disclosure. Studies show that supervisory boards with larger sizes and diverse compositions can increase transparency and accountability in CSR practices (Jan et al., 2021; Mallin et al., 2014). With good governance, Islamic banks can ensure that their operations comply with Shariah principles and carry out their social responsibilities more responsibly.

In addition to governance aspects, Sharia values are a significant factor in shaping CSR practices in Islamic banking. Principles such as the prohibition against usury and mafsadah and the obligation of zakat contribute to determining the direction of Islamic banks' CSR policies. The prohibition against usury and harmful economic practices emphasises the importance of ethics in financial management, while the obligation of zakat is a key element in the bank's social contribution (Zaman et al., 2018). These principles direct the economic activities of banks and shape CSR programmes that include community empowerment and social assistance.

Furthermore, government regulations and policies play a significant role in implementing CSR in Islamic banking. In some countries, such as Bangladesh, policies governing CSR disclosure can encourage banks to increase transparency in their social responsibility practices. However, if the policies implemented are unclear or inconsistent, CSR disclosure may be hindered (Harun et al., 2020; Mahmuda & Muktadir-Al-Mukit, 2023). Therefore, clear and comprehensive regulations on CSR reporting are needed for banks to be more open in communicating their activities' social and environmental impacts.

Finally, stakeholder engagement also affects the effectiveness of CSR in Islamic banking. Banks that communicate actively and transparently with stakeholders, such as customers, employees, and communities, tend to have more effective CSR programmes. Studies show that stakeholder involvement in CSR planning can increase public trust in banks and strengthen their credibility in the market (Probohudono et al., 2022; Wan Jusoh & Ibrahim, 2020).

Interestingly, the SLR results also revealed that while Shariah compliance and ethical considerations were consistently emphasized, there is still limited empirical evidence showing a direct relationship between the depth of religious adherence and the sophistication of CSR strategies. This unexpected finding suggests that, in some cases, external pressures such as regulatory enforcement and market competition may play a stronger role than internal religious motivation in shaping CSR practices. Moreover, the lack of standardized CSR frameworks tailored for Islamic financial institutions emerged as a critical gap, potentially limiting consistent implementation across jurisdictions. These findings highlight the need for integrating both normative (Shariah-based) and pragmatic (regulatory and stakeholder-driven) approaches in developing CSR strategies within Islamic banking to ensure both compliance and social impact.

Impact of CSR in Islamic Banking

The implementation of CSR in Islamic banking has significant impacts in terms of financial performance, operational efficiency, social and environmental sustainability, corporate image, and reputational risk. In terms of financial performance, effective CSR can increase bank profitability. Research shows that transparency in CSR disclosure correlates with increased Return on Assets (ROA) in Islamic banks in countries such as the UAE, Kuwait, and Turkey (Probohudono et al., 2022). This result confirms that integrating CSR in banking strategies improves corporate image and provides financial benefits.

In addition to financial performance, operational efficiency also benefits from implementing CSR. A study in Egypt found that Islamic banks that effectively implement CSR practices have better technical efficiency, especially in customer service and community empowerment (Shahwan & Habib, 2023a). Thus, CSR not only contributes to the social aspect but also helps banks optimise their internal processes, improving efficiency and reducing operational costs.

Social and environmental sustainability are important impacts of CSR programmes in Islamic banks. CSR activities focusing on poverty reduction, community empowerment, and sustainable environmental management benefit the community and the environment (Darus et al., 2017; Jaiyeoba et al., 2018). This result shows that CSR in Islamic banking fulfils business objectives and contributes to sustainable development.

In addition to the sustainability aspect, the image and reputation of Islamic banks are also affected by the implementation of CSR. Banks that implement CSR well tend to have a more positive reputation in the eyes of the public and stakeholders. For example, during the financial crisis, some banks in the UAE increased their CSR disclosures to maintain market confidence (Menassa & Dagher, 2020). A strong reputation in the competitive banking industry is a valuable asset in maintaining customer and stakeholder trust.

However, reputational risk can also arise if CSR disclosures are inaccurate or excessive. Several studies have shown that excessive CSR information can create uncertainty among investors, negatively affecting banks' stock performance and valuation (Harun et al., 2020). Therefore, Islamic banks need to find a balance in CSR disclosure, ensuring sufficient transparency without creating excessive or misleading perceptions.

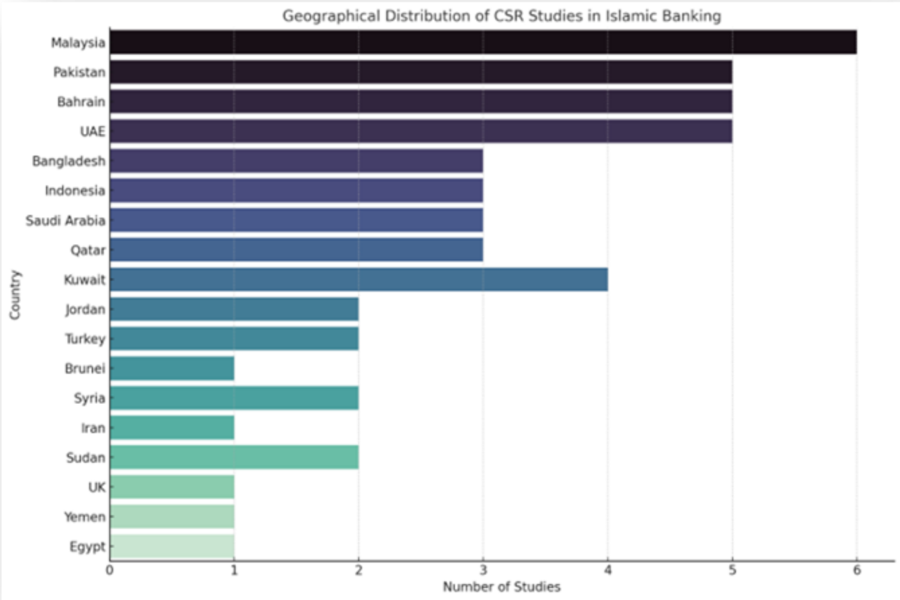
Overall, CSR in Islamic banking has far-reaching impacts, ranging from improved financial performance and operational efficiency to social and environmental sustainability. In addition to strengthening the bank's image and reputation, well-managed CSR can also minimise reputational risks that could harm the company. With a balanced and transparent approach, Islamic banks can maximise the benefits of CSR to achieve business and social objectives simultaneously.

Geographical Analysis

Out of the 25 articles reviewed, 16 explicitly identified the geographical location of their studies, while nine did not specify any location (Abd Samad & Said, 2016; Darus et al., 2017; Di Bella & Al-Fayoumi, 2016; Hanic & Smolo, 2023; Harun et al., 2020; Jan et al., 2021; Nugraheni & Muhammad, 2024; Shahwan & Habib, 2023b).

Figure 2

The Distribution of Research Sample Locations



1. South and Southeast Asia

Pakistan featured prominently across multiple studies (Farook et al., 2011; Grassa et al., 2018; Mallin et al., 2014; Zafar & Sulaiman, 2021b; Zaman et al., 2018), underscoring its significant role in Islamic banking and CSR research. Bangladesh was noted in (Farook et al., 2011; Mahmuda & Muktadir-Al-Mukit, 2023; Mallin et al., 2014). Indonesia appeared as a study location in (Grassa et al., 2018; Hassan & Syafri Harahap, 2010; Mallin et al., 2014; Probohudono et al., 2022). Malaysia emerged as a particularly dominant country, as cited in (Farook et al., 2011; Grassa et al., 2018; Mallin et al., 2014; Probohudono et al., 2022; Wan Jusoh & Ibrahim, 2020). Brunei was included in one study (Grassa et al., 2018). This regional concentration suggests that South and Southeast Asia are the most represented areas in the literature, reflecting both the maturity of the Islamic banking sector and the academic output from these regions.

2. Middle East and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries

Several GCC countries, namely the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, and Kuwait, were consistently mentioned across numerous studies (Abu Al-Haija & Kolsi, 2021; Ali Aribi & Arun, 2015; Aribi & Gao, 2011; Bukair & Abdul Rahman, 2015; Farook et al., 2011; Grassa et al., 2018; Hassan & Syafri Harahap, 2010; Mallin et al., 2014; Menassa &

Dagher, 2020; Probohudono et al., 2022). Bahrain was especially prominent due to its role as a global hub for Islamic finance. Qatar and Kuwait were also frequently included in comparative regional studies. The Middle East, particularly the GCC, is the second most researched region, highlighting its institutional strength and regulatory advancements in Islamic finance.

3. Other Regions

The United Kingdom and Yemen (Farook et al., 2011; Mallin et al., 2014) were each mentioned once, primarily as part of cross-country analyses. Other countries such as, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Iran, Sudan, and Turkey appeared only in the context of multi-country studies (Farook et al., 2011; Grassa et al., 2018; Mallin et al., 2014). While (Khan, 2013; Salma Sairally, 2013) referenced global Islamic financial institutions, they did not provide specific country-level details. Regions such as continental Europe (excluding the UK), North America, Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, and East Asia were notably absent, indicating significant potential for future research in underexplored contexts.

The majority of CSR research in Islamic banking is geographically concentrated in countries with established Islamic financial sectors, particularly in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Gulf region. Malaysia, Pakistan, Bahrain, and the UAE were the most frequently studied locations. However, a clear geographical gap exists in the current literature:

- Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g., Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa) is not represented at all, despite emerging interest in Islamic finance in the region.
- The reviewed studies also lack information on Central and East Asia (e.g., Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and China).
- Regions with significant Muslim minorities, such as continental Europe (outside the UK) and North America, remain unexplored, even though Islamic banks and Muslim communities are growing in these areas.

A Critical Discussion on the Varied Definitions of CSR in Diverse Contexts

CSR is a multifaceted concept whose meaning evolves across temporal, geographic, and institutional contexts. An examination of selected literature reveals significant heterogeneity in defining CSR, particularly within Islamic banking frameworks, underscoring the interplay between conventional CSR theories and Islamic ethical principles.

1. CSR as Ethical and Religious Accountability

In numerous studies (Abu Al-Haija & Kolsi, 2021; Di Bella & Al-Fayoumi, 2016; Grassa et al., 2018; Harun et al., 2020; Nugraheni & Muhammad, 2024; Zafar & Sulaiman, 2021b), CSR is deeply intertwined with Islamic principles, where social responsibility extends beyond stakeholder expectations to encompass accountability to God. This perspective emphasizes charitable instruments such as *zakah* and *careful hasan*, aligning CSR with social justice, community welfare, and moral conduct as prescribed by Shari'ah. Such interpretations reflect a theological foundation in CSR, unique to Islamic financial institutions (IFIs), positioning CSR as a dual commitment, both spiritual and societal.

2. CSR as Stakeholder Engagement and Sustainability

Other contributions (Khan, 2013; Mahmuda & Muktadir-Al-Mukit, 2023; Probohudono et al., 2022; Shahwan & Habib, 2023a; Zaman et al., 2018) adopt a broader and more contemporary stakeholder-based model of CSR. Here, CSR is defined as a self-regulating framework that incorporates environmental, social, and governance (ESG) dimensions into business operations. These views align with global sustainability agendas and emphasize ethical behaviour, transparency, and long-term value creation for a wide range of stakeholders. Notably, this view supports the integration of CSR into corporate strategy and governance structures.

3. CSR as Compliance with Legal and Ethical Standards

Several papers (Ali Aribi & Arun, 2015; Hassan & Syafri Harahap, 2010; Jaiyeoba et al., 2018; Menassa & Dagher, 2020; Probohudono et al., 2022) highlight CSR as a legal and ethical obligation. In this conceptualization, CSR activities must comply with both statutory regulations and moral expectations, reinforcing the notion that responsible business conduct is a prerequisite for legitimacy and public trust. This normative approach suggests that CSR is not merely discretionary but a necessary part of institutional integrity and competitive advantage.

4. CSR as an Evolving and Context-Specific Construct

Some studies (Farook et al., 2011; Hanic & Smolo, 2023; Jaiyeoba et al., 2018; Salma Sairally, 2013) reflect on the evolving and context-dependent nature of CSR, acknowledging that no universally accepted definition exists. These papers emphasize the influence of cultural, social, political, and economic environments on how CSR is understood and operationalized. Particularly in Islamic banking, the blend of global CSR norms with local religious and social values necessitates a contextualized framework.

5. CSR Disclosure and Communication

Across multiple articles (Aribi & Gao, 2011; Farook et al., 2011; Mahmuda & Muktadir-Al-Mukit, 2023; Menassa & Dagher, 2020), CSR is associated with corporate disclosure practices, where transparency and narrative reporting are crucial for stakeholder trust and decision-making. This reflects a shift towards accountability mechanisms that require organizations to communicate their social and environmental impacts effectively.

The diversity in CSR definitions highlights both the complexity and the richness of the concept, particularly within Islamic banking contexts. While conventional CSR focuses on stakeholder theory, ethical behaviour, and sustainability, Islamic interpretations introduce a distinct moral and religious dimension. This duality presents both opportunities and challenges: the opportunity to enrich CSR theory with ethical and spiritual insights and the challenge of harmonizing religious values with global CSR standards. Future research should aim to develop integrative frameworks that accommodate both Islamic and universal CSR principles, facilitating comparative studies across different financial systems. Moreover, the establishment of standardized CSR metrics, particularly for Islamic Financial Institutions, would enhance the credibility and comparability of CSR disclosures.

A Critical Discussion on the Measurement of CSR in Islamic Banking Contexts

The measurement of CSR is critical to understanding how Islamic Financial Institutions (IFIs) translate their social, ethical, and religious commitments into tangible outcomes. A systematic review of the literature reveals a diverse array of CSR measurement approaches, reflecting differing theoretical orientations, methodological preferences, and institutional contexts.

1. Index-Based Measurement: Normative and Empirical Approaches

A predominant method in CSR measurement is the construction of CSR disclosure indices, which serve as tools to assess the breadth and depth of disclosed CSR practices. These indices are either weighted or unweighted and typically structured across several dimensions, such as environment, employees, community, and customers (Farook et al., 2011; Harun et al., 2020; Hassan & Syafri Harahap, 2010; Mahmuda & Muktadir-Al-Mukit, 2023; Shahwan & Habib, 2023a; Zafar & Sulaiman, 2021b). For example, Mahmuda & Muktadir-Al-Mukit, (2023) follow the AAOIFI standards, comprising 75 items across nine dimensions, while Shahwan & Habib, (2023a) develop a simpler four-dimensional index specific to Egyptian banks. These indices provide quantifiable metrics, often using dichotomous scoring (1 for disclosed, 0 for non-disclosed) to facilitate comparative analysis across institutions. This index-based approach supports transparency and accountability, yet its effectiveness hinges on the comprehensiveness and contextual relevance of the items included. Moreover, unweighted indices may obscure the relative importance of certain CSR dimensions, calling for more nuanced weighting or stakeholder-informed scoring schemes.

2. Islamic-Specific Measures: Zakah, Qardhul Hasan, and Maqasid Shariah

In contrast to the universalist models, several studies adopt Islamic-specific indicators such as *zakah* contributions, *Qardhul Hasan* (benevolent loans), and alignment with maqashid Shariah (Grassa et al., 2018; Khan, 2013; Nugraheni & Muhammad, 2024; Probohudono et al., 2022). These measures reflect the theological underpinnings of CSR in Islamic banking, emphasizing religious obligations and moral imperatives. Notably, Paper 1 proposes a Performance framework focusing on *Qardhul Hasan's* management as a key social accountability tool, while Paper 21 advocates a faith-based CSR framework grounded in Islamic economics. Such religiously grounded approaches offer a culturally embedded alternative to secular CSR models, though their lack of standardization and difficulty in comparison across systems present methodological challenges.

3. Financial Performance Linkages: Integrating CSR and Corporate Outcomes

Another stream of literature explores the relationship between CSR practices and Financial Performance, using indicators like ROA, ROE, EPS, and Tobin's Q as proxies for CSR effectiveness (Mahmuda & Muktadir-Al-Mukit, 2023; Mallin et al., 2014; Probohudono et al., 2022). While such measures provide practical utility and appeal to corporate strategists, they risk instrumentalizing CSR, potentially downplaying its intrinsic ethical and social motivations. Nonetheless, these measures facilitate the inclusion of CSR in broader discussions on firm value and competitive advantage.

4. Content Analysis and Narrative Reporting

Content analysis, both quantitative and qualitative, remains a core methodology for CSR measurement, particularly in assessing disclosure practices in annual and sustainability reports (Abu Al-Haija & Kolsi, 2021; Ali Aribi & Arun, 2015; Darus et al., 2017; Menassa & Dagher, 2020; Zafar & Sulaiman, 2021b). These studies analyze the presence, nature, and depth of narrative CSR reporting, sometimes augmented with dummy codes to reflect partial or full disclosure (Jan et al., 2021). While offering flexibility and adaptability, content analysis is inherently limited by the subjectivity of coding and the voluntary nature of CSR disclosures, which may lead to reporting bias or selective transparency.

5. Stakeholder and Perception-Based Metrics

An emerging approach focuses on stakeholder perceptions and satisfaction as proxies for CSR Performance (Di Bella & Al-Fayoumi, 2016; Jaiyeoba et al., 2018; Wan Jusoh & Ibrahim, 2020; Zaman et al., 2018). These studies utilize surveys, Likert scales, or multiple-choice instruments to capture how stakeholders, ranging from employees to customers perceive CSR motives, outcomes, and effectiveness. Jaiyeoba et al., (2018) for instance, apply confirmatory factor analysis to validate its CSR construct. Such perception-based tools provide insight into CSR legitimacy and stakeholder trust, albeit at the cost of standardization and cross-sectional comparability.

6. Composite and Theoretical Frameworks

Some papers (Mallin et al., 2014; Salma Sairally, 2013) attempt to develop composite frameworks that integrate multiple dimensions of disclosure quality, responsiveness, and Social Performance (CSP). These frameworks incorporate both normative CSR definitions and practical reporting elements, thereby striving for conceptual rigour and empirical relevance. However, their theoretical complexity and reliance on robust data often limit their applicability in diverse institutional settings.

The literature reflects a multiplicity of approaches to CSR measurement, which broadly cluster into disclosure-based, faith-based, performance-linked, and perception-oriented models. Each offers unique insights and trade-offs:

- Disclosure indices provide comparability but may lack depth.
- Islamic-specific measures ensure contextual fidelity but are less standardized.
- Performance linkages integrate CSR into financial discourse, yet risk reducing CSR to instrumental outcomes.
- Stakeholder and perceptual measures foreground legitimacy and trust but face reliability issues.

Given this diversity, future research should prioritize hybrid measurement frameworks that combine quantitative disclosure data, faith-based ethical commitments, and stakeholder evaluations. Additionally, the development of internationally recognized CSR standards tailored to Islamic finance (e.g., through AAOIFI or IFSB) is essential to harmonize reporting and enable meaningful benchmarking.

Methods Used in Previous Research

Based on a review of the methodologies applied, some of the most used approaches are content analysis, regression analysis, and surveys, each with a different purpose and focus. Content analysis is the most frequently used method in CSR research in Islamic banking. A total of 16 out of 25 studies (Abu Al-Haija & Kolsi, 2021; Ali Aribi & Arun, 2015; Aribi & Gao, 2011; Farook et al., 2011; Harun et al., 2020; Hassan & Syafri Harahap, 2010; Jan et al., 2021; Mahmuda & Muktadir-Al-Mukit, 2023; Mallin et al., 2014; Menassa & Dagher, 2020; Nugraheni & Muhammad, 2024; Probohudono et al., 2022; Zafar & Sulaiman, 2021a) used content analysis to evaluate CSR disclosures in Islamic banks' annual reports. This method allows researchers to analyse the content of financial and sustainability reports to assess how much and how Islamic banks disclose their CSR activities. (Mahmuda & Muktadir-Al-Mukit, 2023; Probohudono et al., 2022) developed CSR disclosure indices involving various dimensions and items to systematically measure the extent to which Islamic banks implement CSR principles in their reports. Harun et al., (2020) use a dichotomous coding method to assess whether CSR items are disclosed. In contrast, (Aribi & Gao, 2011) use a coding instrument to ensure reliability in the coding process and minimise differences between researchers.

In addition to content analysis, regression analysis assesses the relationship between CSR and bank financial performance. At least seven studies (Ali Aribi & Arun, 2015; Bukair & Abdul Rahman, 2015; Harun et al., 2020; Jan et al., 2021; Mahmuda & Muktadir-Al-Mukit, 2023; Mallin et al., 2014; Probohudono et al., 2022) used regression analysis as the primary method. Papers 5 and 18 use least squares regression (OLS) to test the relationship between CSR disclosure and financial performance, such as Return on Assets (ROA). PAPER 20 adopts a more complex approach by using simultaneous systems of equations, two-stage regression (2SLS), and three-stage regression (3SLS) to address the endogeneity issue between CSR and financial performance. These methods are used to delve deeper into the influence of CSR on bank performance, given that CSR may interact with bank performance in more complex ways, and to ensure more accurate results in statistical models.

Survey methods are also widely applied in Islamic banking CSR research, particularly in (Jaiyeoba et al., 2018; Wan Jusoh & Ibrahim, 2020; Zaman et al., 2018), utilising questionnaire-based surveys to collect stakeholder data. Paper 11 combines semi-structured face-to-face interviews with data triangulation to increase the robustness of the findings. These surveys often involve Likert scales to measure perceptions of CSR practices in Islamic banks. Zaman et al., (2018) also use conceptual models tested with structural equation modelling (SEM) to test hypotheses related to the influence of CSR.

Several studies use a qualitative approach in addition to the quantitative approach to explore more about CSR in Islamic banks. Darus et al. (2017) used semi-structured interviews to gather opinions from waqf experts to understand their views on CSR in Islamic banking. In addition, (Ali Aribi & Arun, 2015) combined interviews with content analysis to gain deeper insights into CSR practices in Islamic financial institutions.

Recommendations for Future Research on CSR in Islamic Banking

The research on CSR in Islamic banking has generated several important recommendations for future research. These recommendations cover various aspects related to CSR practices, the factors that influence them, and their impact on the performance of Islamic banks. In general, these recommendations focus on developing a deeper understanding of the relationship between CSR and various variables in Islamic banking and the need to develop more comprehensive and applicable CSR models.

One key recommendation is the need for further exploration of the long-term impact of CSR practices on Islamic banks' financial and operational performance. Several studies, such as those in (Mahmuda & Muktadir-Al-Mukit, 2023; Shahwan & Habib, 2023a) propose further research to assess how CSR can affect banks' technical efficiency and financial performance in the long run, particularly in emerging markets. In addition, (Probohudono et al., 2022) propose expanding the sample size in future studies to cover more countries, thus providing a more comprehensive picture of CSR practices in Islamic banking.

Furthermore, there are suggestions for developing and applying a more consistent and comprehensive Islamic CSR model. Hanic & Smolo, (2023) propose that future research empirically validate existing Islamic CSR models and explore their applicability in non-Muslim countries, given Islamic banks' internationalisation challenges. This result also includes exploring Islamic ethical principles that can be integrated into CSR practices to create more precise guidelines for Islamic banks (Wan Jusoh & Ibrahim, 2020).

Furthermore, future research is expected to investigate the influence of corporate governance on CSR implementation in Islamic banks. Some research, as suggested by (Jan et al., 2021), suggests that the role of the Shariah Supervisory Board be further explored to strengthen the sustainability performance of Islamic banks and assess how the integration of sustainability committees can improve accountability and transparency in Islamic banking.

(Harun et al., 2020; Menassa & Dagher, 2020) also recommend expanding the research sample size beyond the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region to explore CSR practices in Islamic banks in other regions. This research also needs to examine how social and cultural factors may influence the acceptance and disclosure of CSR in different contexts. In addition, PAPER 19 emphasises the importance of further research on stakeholder engagement in CSR in Islamic banking and how CSR initiatives can influence public and investor perceptions.

Other suggestions also include research on CSR disclosure. Some studies propose evaluating the differences between actual and ideal CSR disclosure and analysing how these differences affect a firm's reputation and performance (Hassan & Syafri Harahap, 2010). This research is also fundamental to improving CSR reporting standards in Islamic banks, which are still low in some countries.

Further research is needed to understand the challenges of internationalizing Islamic banks in non-Muslim environments, including regulation and global market acceptance (Aribi & Gao, 2011). On a cross-country basis, research should compare perceptions of

CSR in different Islamic countries and analyse governance factors that influence the effectiveness of CSR in Islamic banking (Di Bella & Al-Fayoumi, 2016).

Conclusion

This SLR provides a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of CSR in Islamic banking over the past decade. The review highlights key trends, influencing factors, impacts, methodological approaches, and future research directions in CSR research in Islamic banks. The SLR conducted on previous research reveals that CSR disclosure, governance structure, and regulatory support significantly impact the effectiveness of CSR initiatives in Islamic banks. Despite significant progress, significant challenges remain regarding transparency, consistency in CSR disclosure, and alignment between CSR claims and actual implementation. This review underscores that while some studies show a positive relationship between CSR and financial performance, others show a more nuanced relationship influenced by contextual factors such as regulatory frameworks and socio-cultural dynamics.

This study has two main limitations. First, the exclusive focus on articles indexed in Scopus and published in English may lead to publication bias, as it excludes valuable insights from grey literature, regional journals, and sources in other languages. While this approach ensures methodological rigour, it may narrow the diversity of perspectives. Second, the reviewed literature shows a geographical concentration, with most studies focused on South and Southeast Asia (e.g., Malaysia, Pakistan, Indonesia) and the GCC countries (e.g., Bahrain, UAE). Regions like Sub-Saharan Africa, Central and East Asia, continental Europe, and North America are notably underrepresented, limiting the generalizability of findings and highlighting areas for future research.

Several methodological approaches have been used in CSR research in Islamic banking, including content analysis, regression analysis, and surveys. Content analysis dominates CSR research, as it effectively assesses CSR disclosure practices, while regression analysis explores the impact of CSR on financial performance. Qualitative methods like interviews provide insights into stakeholder perceptions and institutional challenges.

Future research should focus on expanding comparative studies across different regions, exploring the long-term impact of CSR on financial performance and operational efficiency, and developing a more standardized framework for CSR implementation in Islamic banks. In addition, further research is needed to examine how stakeholder engagement, regulatory intervention, and governance mechanisms shape CSR effectiveness. In conclusion, CSR remains an important aspect of Islamic banking, which requires continuous improvement in transparency, regulatory oversight, and alignment with Shariah principles. By addressing the identified gaps and improving CSR practices, Islamic banks can further strengthen their role in promoting sustainable economic and social development.

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