



RMU 4U

Volume 4 (2025)

Research Management Unit
Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Kedah

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eISSN : 2805-47 5X

Published by : Universiti Teknologi MARA
08400 Merbok, Kedah Malaysia

Printed by : Perpustakaan Sultan Badlishah
Universiti Teknologi Mara Cawangan Kedah
08400 Merbok Kedah

e ISSN 2805- 47 5X



9772805 475 000

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RECTOR'S NOTE



Prof. Dr Roshima Said
Acting Rector

"Together we advance knowledge with integrity, creativity, and purpose—many voices united to shape a brighter, sustainable future."

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh,

Alhamdulillah, with gratitude to Allah SWT, I am pleased to welcome you to the fourth volume of RMU4U e-Bulletin. This publication continues to serve as a reflection of our vibrant intellectual community at UiTM Kedah, bringing together voices from diverse disciplines and perspectives. In this issue, with 42 insightful contributions, we witness not only the richness of research topics but also the strength of our shared purpose. While the papers range from sustainability in fashion and design, digital literacy, and artificial intelligence to law, economics, and cultural heritage, they are united by a common aspiration: to advance knowledge that is meaningful, ethical, and impactful for society.

Our academic journey is significant because of this harmony amid diversity. Whether addressing contemporary challenges in technology and governance or celebrating the timeless values of culture and tradition, our scholars demonstrate that knowledge is most powerful when it is connected, when different fields meet at the crossroads of innovation, integrity, and service to the community.

As Rector, I am profoundly inspired by the dedication, innovation, and scholarly excellence demonstrated by our academics and researchers. You are not only advancing knowledge within our university but are also fulfilling UiTM's noble mission, creating impactful ideas that serve the nation and uplift the ummah.

Your work reflects a deep commitment to relevance, integrity, and service. Let us continue to nurture a culture of collaboration, creativity, and excellence, ensuring that our contributions remain forward-looking, transformative, and rooted in the needs of society. Together, we are shaping a brighter, more sustainable future through education, research, and innovation.

Congratulations to all the dedicated contributors whose passion and perseverance have brought this volume to life. My heartfelt appreciation goes to the Research Management Unit for their steadfast leadership and solid commitment in making this achievement possible. May RMU4U continue to shine as a beacon of knowledge, uniting diverse voices in a shared mission of discovery and excellence. Together, may we be inspired to reach even greater heights in the pursuit of impactful research and innovation.

One purpose. One vision. Many voices, one future.

Sincerely,
Prof. Dr Roshima Said
Acting Rector,
Universiti Teknologi MARA Keda

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EDITOR



Dr Azyyati Anuar
Chief Editor,
RMU4U E-Bulletin

"RMU4U Volume 4 celebrates diverse scholarship, uniting research, innovation, and culture to inspire collaboration, sustainability, and inclusive growth."

We are pleased to present Volume 4 of RMU4U, a platform dedicated to showcasing research, innovation, and thought leadership across diverse academic disciplines. This issue reflects the dynamic intellectual ecosystem we strive to cultivate, highlighting contributions that bridge theory and practice while addressing pressing contemporary challenges. In the Business, Accounting, and Finance section, we feature 15 insightful papers that explore the evolving landscape of global markets, financial resilience, sustainable accounting practices, and digital transformation in business operations.

These works not only provide empirical findings but also propose actionable frameworks for industry adoption, underscoring the vital role of research in shaping competitive and ethical enterprises. The Designer Thoughts segment presents 6 stimulating papers that merge creativity with problem-solving. From design thinking methodologies to innovation in product aesthetics and usability, these contributions remind us that design is not merely about form but about crafting meaningful user experiences.

This section will be of particular interest to those who value the intersection of artistry, functionality, and human-centered solutions. Our IR 5.0 category brings together 6 pioneering papers examining the fusion of automation, artificial intelligence, and human capital development in the context of the Fifth Industrial Revolution. The authors challenge readers to consider how technology can be harmonized with ethical and inclusive practices, ensuring that digital progress translates into equitable societal benefits. In the Law and Policy section, 7 comprehensive papers analyze legal reforms, governance frameworks, and policy innovations that respond to shifting socio-economic realities.

The breadth of topics from regulatory compliance in emerging industries to community rights in a globalized economy reflects the critical role of law as both a safeguard and an enabler of change. The Literature and Culture segment enriches this volume with 8 thought-provoking papers that delve into narratives, identities, and cultural dialogues shaping societies today.

Whether revisiting classic literature through modern lenses or exploring contemporary cultural phenomena, these works invite readers to appreciate the role of the humanities in fostering empathy, critical thinking, and cultural continuity. Collectively, these 42 scholarly contributions affirm the breadth and depth of academic engagement within our community. They underscore our commitment to advancing knowledge that is relevant, impactful, and forward-looking. This volume is not only a testament to our contributors' dedication but also a resource for policymakers, practitioners, educators, and learners who seek informed perspectives and innovative solutions. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all authors, reviewers, and editorial team members whose collective efforts have made this publication possible. We hope that RMU4U Vol. 4 will spark dialogue, inspire collaboration, and contribute to the enrichment of both academic scholarship and practical application.

Let us continue to explore, innovate, and contribute, together shaping a future where knowledge serves as the foundation for sustainable and inclusive growth.

Warm regards,
Dr Azyyati Anuar
Chief Editor,
RMU4U E-Bulletin

SUSTAINABLE BY FAITH: BRIDGING ESG, SDG, AND MAQASID SHARIAH IN CORPORATE MALAYSIA

***Mohd Faizal Jamaludin**

Faculty of Accountancy, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Kedah, Kampus Sungai Petani, Kedah, Malaysia

*mfaizaljeuitm.edu.my (*corresponding author)

Mohd Fahmee Bahaudin

Accounting Research Institute, UiTM Shah Alam



The ESG Gap

ESG scores evaluate non-financial performance across dimensions such as environmental responsibility, social equity, and governance effectiveness. Based on Refinitiv data, Shariah-compliant firms in Malaysia consistently record lower ESG scores than conventional firms. This gap signals underlying challenges: limited structural governance, inadequate risk oversight, and insufficient board diversity.

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia stands at a critical juncture between economic growth and sustainability. With over 80% of capital market firms in Malaysia designated as Shariah-compliant, one would expect their Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) performance to reflect the ethical foundations of Islamic principles. Yet, many of these firms lag behind their non-Shariah counterparts in ESG scores. This paradox underscores a missed opportunity to align Maqasid Shariah—the Islamic objectives of justice, welfare, and stewardship—with global sustainability frameworks such as the ESG standards and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

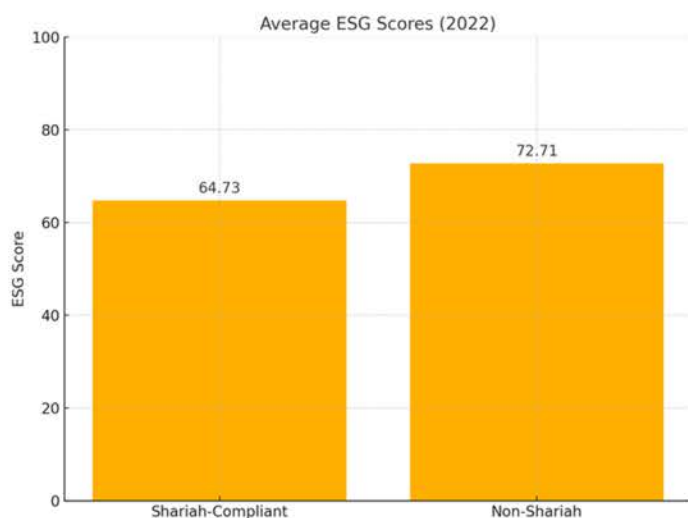


Figure 1: Average ESG Scores (2022)





Reflection

“Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: The example of a good companion is like that of a musk seller.” (Sahih al-Bukhari)

Figure 1 presents average ESG scores for the top 100 public listed companies in Malaysia in 2022. Shariah-compliant firms recorded an average score of 64.73, while non-Shariah firms scored 72.71. Despite their ethical underpinnings, Shariah-compliant firms may lack robust ESG frameworks, systematic reporting practices, or strategic emphasis on sustainability. This gap highlights the need to integrate Maqasid Shariah more effectively with contemporary ESG benchmarks. Enhancing board governance, strengthening director networks, and institutionalising ESG reporting are essential steps toward closing this performance gap.

Why Maqasid Matters

Maqasid Shariah prioritises the preservation of life, intellect, wealth, lineage, and faith—principles that closely mirror the aims of ESG and SDG frameworks. Concepts such as social justice, environmental protection, and ethical governance are inherently embedded in Islamic law. Realigning corporate strategies with Maqasid Shariah can thus enable firms to bridge the ESG gap while remaining spiritually grounded and ethically responsible.

Board Networks and Risk Oversight

Empirical research affirms that firms with diverse, well-connected boards and independent Risk Management Committees (RMCs) consistently outperform others in ESG ratings. Board networks encourage knowledge exchange, benchmarking, and strategic collaboration. Unfortunately, many Shariah-compliant firms lack the informal and formal networks that catalyse innovation and adaptive sustainability governance.

Policy Implication

Malaysia’s regulatory landscape must take the next step by embedding Maqasid Shariah and ESG into the Malaysian Code of Corporate Governance. Firms should be encouraged to institutionalise board diversity across gender, ethnicity, and religiosity—backed by proactive and independent RMCs. Regulators should provide incentives for ethical disclosures, risk transparency, and ESG literacy, while mandating directors’ upskilling in sustainability governance.

Like a good companion, an effective board influences its organisation toward goodness. By harmonising faith with sustainability metrics, Malaysia’s corporate sector can emerge as a regional leader in ethical, resilient, and inclusive economic development.

Note: This article is adapted from an ongoing research study on director networks, ESG performance, and Shariah governance in Malaysia’s public listed companies.

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e ISSN 2805-475X



9772805475000

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RMU *4U*
e-Bulletin

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