

Islamic Banking & Finance Review (IBFR)

Volume 12 Issue 1, Spring 2025

ISSN(P): 2221-5239, ISSN(E): 2413-2877

Homepage: <https://journals.umt.edu.pk/index.php/IBFR>



Title: Advancing Islamic Art Through Islamic Financial Institutions: A Case Study of Innovative Promotion Strategies

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/ibfr.121.01>

History: Received: January 02, 2025, Revised: March 19, 2025, Accepted: June 14, 2025, Published: June 30, 2025

Citation: Zahra, F., Usman, M., & Shahir, S. (2025). Advancing Islamic art through Islamic financial institutions: A case study of innovative promotion strategies. *Islamic Banking & Finance Review*, 12(1), 01-17.
<https://doi.org/10.32350/ibfr.121.01>

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Conflict of Interest: Author(s) declared no conflict of interest.



A publication of

Dr. Hasan Murad School of Management (HSM)
University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

Advancing Islamic Art through Islamic Financial Institutions: A Case Study of Innovative Promotion Strategies

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Abstract

This research scrutinizes the vital role of Islamic Financial Institutions (IFIs) in perpetuating and preserving Islamic art; a paradigmatic expression of Islamic culture distinguished by its intricate geometric patterns, calligraphic nuances, and spiritual leitmotifs. Despite its millennia-long significance, contemporary promotion and preservation of Islamic art are beset by formidable challenges precipitated by globalization, commercialization, and shifting cultural paradigms. IFIs, operating in consonance with *Shariah* principles, occupy a unique position to foster the advancement of Islamic art through ethical and socially responsible practices. By providing financial support, guidance, and infrastructure, they can help artists, artisans, and cultural institutions to preserve and promote Islamic art. Hence, this qualitative research undertakes a comprehensive examination of the strategic initiatives employed by IFIs to promote Islamic art, evaluates their efficacy, and identifies the challenges encountered by the IFIs. Through a methodological framework incorporating in-depth interviews and data triangulation, this study provides nuanced insights into their potential contributions to the preservation and promotion of Islamic art in the contemporary era, thereby illuminating the intersections between Islamic finance, art, and culture.

Keywords: Islamic art, Islamic culture, Islamic Financial Institutions (IFIs), preservation, promotional strategies

Introduction

Islamic art incorporates a wide and heterogeneous tradition of visual arts in different fields including different materials, such as architecture, calligraphy, painting, ceramics, and textiles. The given artistic expressions manifest the spiritual and cultural values of Islam, as they are their

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distinctive features, in contrast to the western artwork. It is mostly represented by an interest in abstracts and forms, complex geometrical shapes, and a conscious refusal to make any type of representational images, especially with reference to religious issues. The works of art produced in the Islamic world not only have aesthetic value but also bear the symbolic meaning of the spiritual and religious paradigm of this culture (Safavi, [2020](#)). This unique artistry tradition is indicative of the Islamic spirit that values the representation of divine unity and transcendence more than individual and realistic artistic expressions.

The promotion and protection of Islamic art in the modern era faces many obstacles created by the forces of globalization. These forces have introduced new cultural paradigms which may overshadow the culture of artistic expression (Gharib, [2017](#)). In addition, the economization of art has created a paradigm in which the cultural and spiritual context of Islamic art is often bargained with the requirements of the market, compromising its inbuilt value.

It is given that Islamic Financial Institutions (IFIs) acting according to the ethical and moral law of the *Shariah* provide a unique opportunity of promoting Islamic art as a part and parcel of their overall responsibility of contributing to social betterment and preservation of culture (El-Hawary, [2007](#)). Over the past years, however, Islamic art has had to contend with a number of issues, such as globalization, commercialization, and cultural homogenization. Being involved in such efforts, IFIs can become crucial in meeting these challenges and encouraging the preservation of Islamic art and its further development.

There is a considerable lack of knowledge concerning how the IFIs have been promoting Islamic art, as well as how effective such efforts have been in delivering outcomes and what challenges they face. Such gap needs bridging, leading to the formulation of enlightened policies and adoption of best practices which can maximize the role of IFIs to uplift Islamic art. This paper strives to fill this gap by doing a holistic analysis of the approaches adopted by IFIs to foster Islamic art, as well as an evaluation of the effects of their efforts and the challenges met by them with a long-term aim of augmenting their contribution in the development of Islamic art.

The main goals of the study include discussing the role IFIs can play in the promotion of Islamic art, investigating the strategies utilized by them in

assisting Islamic art, evaluating the effects of these strategies on the conservation and propagation of Islamic art, and determining the challenges they face in the promotion of Islamic art.

Hence, the current study aims at answering the following research questions: How do IFIs help to promote Islamic art? How do their practices affect the preservation and promotion of Islamic art? What are the impediments for IFIs in marketing Islamic art?

The current study is significant since it can introduce a new aspect on how the IFIs can facilitate the promulgation of Islamic art. This has so far not received much attention in scholarly publications. The results of the study will have important implications for various stakeholders including policymakers, financial institutions, and cultural agencies interested in preserving and marketing Islamic art. Moreover, it will enhance the nascent academic debate on the intersection of finance, culture, and social responsibility in Islamic paradigm, extending the boundaries of knowledge in this important field.

Literature Review

Islamic Art: An Overview

The term Islamic art is complex and denotes the various types of art created in the Islamic world. These types of art are strongly cemented onto the cultural and religious ethos of Islam and portray the views of Islam with respect to beauty, order, and spirituality (Grabar, [1987](#)). Islamic art is not limited to religious themes but covers all spheres of life, that is, architecture, textiles, ceramics, and decorative art (Ettinghausen et al., [2003](#)). Moreover, it is highly abstract in its nature and concentrates on geometric patterns, calligraphic inscriptions, and abstract forms, all of which specifically aid in transmitting religious and spiritual messages.

Cultural, religious, and political factors contributed in different ways to the historical evolution of art in Islam (Shaw, [2012](#)). The early Islamic influence gave birth to a different artistic style, much influenced by other artistic traditions, such as that of the Byzantine and Sassanian empires. Gradually, an original Islamic style was formed with its unique aesthetics of geometric variety, arabesque ornamentation, and the versatile use of calligraphy. All these were not only used in religious art but also in secular spheres, which included palaces, textiles, and household items (Necipoglu, [2012](#)).

Islamic art is more than the expression of aesthetic values; with it, there is a way of getting the spiritual and religious message across (Erzen, [2007](#)). The application of calligraphy is one example that is closely related to the Quran and remains significant in the Islamic culture. The Islamic worldview, accentuating the unity and order of the universe, can also be viewed through these geometric patterns and arabesque structures that are specific to Islamic art. In such a manner, Islamic art can be taken as the visual satisfaction of the spiritual and religious concepts of Islam.

Role of Islamic Financial Institutions

Islamic financial institutions (IFIs) rely on the provisions of the *Shariah* law that eschew interest (*riaba*) and encourage responsible and ethical investment (Hassan, [2013](#)). These institutions have expanded especially in the recent past and their operations have spread to different sectors, which include banking, insurance (*takaful*), and investments. Although they mainly concentrate on financial operations, the IFIs are also becoming involved in encouraging social welfare and the practice of cultural preservation, such as encouraging Islamic art (Tatiana et al., [2015](#)).

The aspect of IFIs engaging in the promotion of Islamic art is based on the overall principles of the Islamic financial system, which insists on the significance of social justice, ethical principles, and communal benefit (El-Hawary et al., [2007](#)). These principles are embodied in the different methods through which the IFIs finance Islamic art. These include the financing of arts exhibitions, sponsoring of artists, and incorporating Islamic art in their marketing and branding strategies.

IFIs have a rare chance to sell Islamic art in a manner that conforms to the ethical and moral values of Islam (Sairally, [2007](#)). These institutions can both preserve the cultural heritage and advance social integration by supporting Islamic art. Nevertheless, the role of IFIs in the development of Islamic art cannot be without its difficulties (Grassa, [2013](#); Tatiana et al., [2015](#)) as discussed in the subsequent sections.

For instance, Islamic arties, projects, and initiatives can be financed with the help of IFIs by providing funding and grants to Islamic art exhibitions, events, and projects, as well as providing microfinance options to the artists, artisans, and small enterprises related to Islamic art. Moreover, crowdfunding solutions for Islamic art projects and initiatives are also viable. IFIs can also provide artistic advice and mentorship to Islamic

artists, artisans, and entrepreneurs by collaborating with experienced artists and art experts to offer artistic guidance and mentorship. Further, they may also offer business mentorship and training to help artists and artisans develop sustainable business strategies and planning,

This paper seeks to explore the possible overlapping areas between Islamic art and Islamic finance in order to develop a model that would do justice to the extent of synergy between the two areas. Islamic art is of different types, such as calligraphy, miniature painting, and geometric design and it has seen a drastic rise in its commercial value over the past years. In this regard, IFIs have a great potential to make meaningful contribution to the growth and sustainability of the Islamic art sector through the creation and roll out of *Shariah*-compliant financial mechanisms.

Recommended Framework

Charity Promotion of Non-Profit Art Projects

IFIs can utilize the money offered as *zakat* or *sadaqah* to facilitate non-business artistic activities. Such activities can include educational activities, projects in communities, and exhibitions dedicated to Islamic art. This new strategy would enable artists to continue with their artistic efforts without the burden of commercial viability. At the same time, these would encourage the preservation of Islamic values and Islamic cultural heritage.

Project Financing-Commercial Art Ventures under Shariah Compliance

In the case of capital generating projects in arts, there are possibilities under Islamic financial principles, including *Murabaha* (cost and plus financing) and *Ijarah Mausufa fil Zimmah* (forward lease contracts). This would help artists and art businesses raise funds to undertake certain ventures including the production of art, art exhibitions, and cultural shows, whilst remaining congruent with the concept of Islamic finance.

Art Studio and Gallery Ijarah Financing

Through *Ijarah* (leasing) contracts (repayment and repurchasing), living space can be made available by Islamic banks, as the physical resource is leased to an artist or an art organization. Through this model, essential facilities and equipment are made available without putting the financial burden of capital expenditure on the artist, thus promoting creativity under a *Shariah* friendly financial system.

***Musharakah*-based Art Investment Funds**

The formation of investment funds based on the principles of *Musharakah* (joint venture) would allow public investment in Islamic artworks and in other similar or related projects. Investors would also experience accumulating gains due to the increase in the value of these assets, hence providing the Islamic art asset a *Shariah*-compliant way to purchase portfolio diversification.

Cases in Point: Case Study

One of the cases that could be discussed is the one where a *Musharakah*-based Islamic art investment fund is established in cooperation with an IFI. This fund would purchase Islamic art pieces including calligraphic works or miniature paintings and provide returns to the investors depending on the value increase of these works. This type of an Islamic art preservation and promoting visibility model, in addition, creates a new ethical investment where the stated Islamic jurisdiction applies.

With the help of these new financial mechanisms, the given study emphasizes the possible contribution of the IFIs to the progress of Islamic art, maintenance of cultural identity, and promotion of creative economy. It also seeks to give an overall assessment of the positive and negative issues involved and to expound a strategic proposal as how to implement it in the future and the policy to be made towards its implementation.

Islamic Art Promotion via IFIs

IFIs can promote Islamic art in the following ways:

Investment in Art Exhibitions

IFIs should sponsor art exhibitions that display Islamic art. Islamic art exhibitions can be organized in different places, such as museums, galleries, and cultural centers.

Funding Artists

IFIs may sponsor artists by offering grants, scholarships, and they may also offer a residence. Such programs may enable artists to practice their talent, produce new works of art, and fame their way into the art world.

Incorporating Islamic Art in Branding and Marketing

IFIs can integrate Islamic art in their branding and marketing activities. This may involve incorporating predominantly the Islamic geometrical patterns, calligraphy, and other designs into their advertisement and promotions, as well as their corporate identity.

CSR Initiatives

IFIs can use Islamic art in some of their CSR initiatives, such as promoting educational campaigns, financing historic Islamic art restoration, and sponsoring community artwork. Such efforts may facilitate the spreading of Islamic art values and aid the preservation of cultural heritage.

Partnership with Cultural Organizations

IFIs should engage in partnership practices with museums, galleries, and other cultural institutions to market Islamic art. It can be in the form of joint exhibitions, educational programs, and research studies that center on the history and meaning of Islamic art.

Setting up of Dedicated Art Funds

IFIs may also setup dedicated funds to facilitate the preservation and promotion of Islamic art. This money can be utilized in recommending art works, sponsoring artists, and assisting in the conservation of cultural heritage sites.

Difficulties in Propagating Islamic Art

IFIs may boost the development of Islamic art. However, there remain a number of issues faced by them in this regard.

Commercialization of Art

The commercialization of art occasionally goes about face with the spiritual and cultural values of the Islamic art works. Hence, IFIs are left juggling between the need to advance art as a cultural and spiritual manifestation and answering the demands of the market.

Insufficient Awareness and Value

Islamic art is not well known and commercially valued, especially outside the Muslim world. This is a challenge for the IFIs when it comes to selling Islamic art in the global marketplace.

Limited by Financial Resources

Although the IFIs offer significant contribution to the development of Islamic art, their efforts might be restricted due to their limited finances. This is especially true in light of economic downturns or financial crises that affect the availability of funds to be directed towards cultural projects.

Cultural Homogenization and Globalization

The art market has become globalized. This raises the issue of how the genuineness of Islamic art can be preserved and safeguarded. IFIs should make sure that when they make a move to promote Islamic art, it does not effectively lead to the homogenization of the expression of cultures.

Equity between Modernity and Tradition

IFIs should maintain a balance between the aim to promote the traditional Islamic art and the necessity to cover the modern artistic manifestations. This might not be easy but contemporary art forms might not agree to the traditional sense of Islamic art.

Regulatory and Legal Challenges

IFIs might encounter challenges related to regulatory and legislative issues while promoting Islamic art, especially in a country where a good cultural-legal environment to sponsor religious or culturally specific forms of art does not exist.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study uses the qualitative research approach to discuss whether the IFIs can encourage Islamic art. The qualitative method is deemed appropriate to the current research because it allows a realistic view of the strategies, challenges, and effects of the works of Islamic art through the lens of the financial institutions that promote it. In the current research design, it would incorporate a mixture of interviews, case studies, and content analysis, so as to obtain extensive information about the topic.

The qualitative research approach is used to provide the detailed and sophisticated understanding of the experiences related to stakeholder activities in IFIs and the Islamic art industry, as well as their perceptions and strategies.

Through the qualitative case study research design, this study produces descriptively thick, contextually grounded data about the role of IFIs in the promotion of Islamic art. In addition, the research attempts to reveal innovative *Shariah*-compliant solutions applicable in upgrading the use of Islamic finance to support creative and cultural industries.

Information Gathering

This research mainly uses in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, such as the representatives of IFIs, the artists, and cultural organizations to gather the primary data. The interviews were held in a semi-structured form, which allowed the respondents to speak in an open-ended way. The interviews were complemented by the case studies of particular IFIs engaged in the promotion of Islamic art.

Secondary data was collected by means of surveying and reading literature (scholarly articles, reports, and institutional papers) related to the topic. The literature review served as the basis of establishing the history and cultural background of Islamic art and how IFIs have played a significant role in propagating the same.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Thematic analysis was used to interpret the collected data. This method entails the identification, analysis, and reporting the patterns (themes) present in the data. Thematic analysis was selected because of its open-ended character and possibility to offer a comprehensive and nuanced interpretation of the data. The analysis also aimed to determine the strategies applied by IFIs, their effects, and the problems experienced in marketing Islamic art.

The following are some of the steps in thematic analysis.

Familiarization with the Data

It started with reading and re-reading the interview transcripts, case studies, and literature for a complete understanding of the data.

Coding

The database was coded. Certain codes were provided to various themes and sub-themes. The coding scheme is an iterative process in which codes are refined and modified as themes appear.

Identification of Themes

Major themes reflecting principal trends in the data were identified. The themes were further classified into broader categories, with the strategies on building Islamic art being one topic, challenges to the IFIs being another topic, and the effects of these strategies being the last topic.

Reviewing Themes

The identified themes were checked and improved so as to make them reflect the data appropriately. The process was that of validating the consistency and coherence of the themes and that they were backed by the provided information.

Defining and Naming Themes

The last step concerned defining and naming the themes and each theme was elaborated on. The interpretation of the themes based on the research questions and objectives was also done in this step.

Ethical Considerations

This study was guided by ethical motives, especially concerning the privacy of interviewees and the sensitivity of cultural and religious matters. A signed informed consent was used with all the subjects and the data was anonymized so as to conceal the identity of the interviewees. The study was carried out ethically and the rights and well-being of the participants were not hurt in the process of conducting the research.

Results and Discussion

Role of Islamic Financial Institutions in Supporting Islamic Art

The results of this inquiry show that Islamic banks are very instrumental in financing Islamic art in different ways. These activities involve sponsoring the exhibitions of art, funding of artists, and incorporation of Islamic art within their branding and marketing. As an example, some Islamic banks have adorned their campaigns with the use of Islamic art, thus enhancing their exposure and popularity among people. Moreover, there are also some IFIs which have deployed special funds to help in the preservation and popularization of Islamic art (Santoso et al., [2019](#)).

The study also establishes that IFIs are becoming aware of the need to preserve the culture as a part of their social responsibility. In advocating the

Islamic art, these organizations not only perform their part in the conservation of the cultural heritage but also improve their image and reputation as they act responsibly towards the society.

Policies Adopted by Islamic Financial Institutions

The strategies used by the IFIs to foster the Islamic art are as follows:

Sponsorship and Funding

Contributing funds to the cost of art exhibitions, residence of artists, and cultural events which present the Islamic art. The initiatives aid in achieving greater interest in Islamic art and the various resources that artists require to make new works.

CSR Initiatives Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

The inclusion of Islamic art in CSR initiatives, including the sponsorship of educational campaigns about Islamic art and financing the restoration of historical Islamic art. Such activities serve to popularize Islamic art and they even assist in the preservation of cultural heritage (Litardi et al., [2019](#)).

Branding and Marketing

The introduction of Islamic art in the process of branding and marketing including the use of Islamic geometric patterns, Islamic calligraphy, and other design features in adverts, promotional items, and corporate identity. This contributes to the popularity of Islamic art and the cultural and religious orientation of the brand image of the institution.

Alliances with Cultural Institutions

Working with museums, galleries, and cultural institutions and associations to market Islamic art. These partnerships may involve common exhibits, training systems, and research work which focuses on the history and importance of Islamic art.

Establishing Special Art Funds

The establishment of special funds to facilitate the preservation and propagation of Islamic art. Such funds may be utilized to finance art projects and to support artists, as well as to help sustain cultural heritage sites.

Community Engagement

Connecting with local communities to enhance the appreciation of Islamic art. This may involve hosting community-based art activities, encouraging local artists, and dissemination of information about Islamic art.

Influence of Islamic Financial Institutions on Islamic Art

There have been significant effects of the strategies used by IFIs toward the marketing of Islamic art. The current study also discovered that such institutions help in the proliferation of the awareness and value attached to Islamic art, not only in the Muslim world but also in the world at large. Funding by these institutions has helped artists to keep producing and maintaining Islamic art and to ensure that this cultural world remains accessible to the next generation (Zain et al., [2015](#)).

The study also revealed that the participation of IFIs in supporting Islamic art has also given them a positive impression in terms of brand image and reputation. By associating their brand with the values and practices of culture and religion, these institutions are capable of gaining a level of credibility and trustworthiness among their customers and stakeholders.

Nevertheless, the study found obstacles as well, such as the fact that there should be more interaction between financial institutions and cultural organizations and that the authenticity of Islamic art needs to be maintained in a commercialized art market.

Promotional Issues of Islamic Art

IFIs face some significant challenges in financing Islamic art. Some of these are as follows:

Commercial versus Cultural Interests

A major challenge is how the IFIs can monetize Islamic art and operate within this realm, yet generate sufficient revenue to become financially viable entities. It is not always easy because in some cases, the commercialization of art undermines its value as a cultural and spiritual activity.

Ensuring Authenticity

The internationalized market and marketplace of Islamic art cause difficulties in sustaining its authenticity and integrity. Through their willingness to stimulate Islamic art, IFIs are bound to ensure that the latter does not lead the homogenization of cultural expressions.

Financial Constraints

Despite the ability to give substantial support to Islamic art, IFIs may yet be subject to financial constraints. Thus, the end result of their efforts may be downsized. This is especially true during economic decline or financial crisis as it may be, which affect the availability of funds concerning cultural projects.

Deficiency in Consciousness and Value

Islamic art is not well-known and appreciated, especially by people in non-Muslim countries. This may make it difficult for IFIs to popularize Islamic art globally.

Regulatory and Legal Risks

IFIs can have regulatory and legal issues when it comes to promoting Islamic art, especially in countries where the cultural and legal environment is not favourable to promote religious art or art culture.

Synergy of Modernity and Tradition

Balancing the promotion of traditional Islamic art and the necessity of supporting the contemporary forms of art requires the IFIs to weigh between these two. This is not easy though because the contemporary modes of art are not necessarily compatible with conventional Islamic art values.

Conclusion

This study assessed the role of IFIs in the promotion of Islamic art using a qualitative research approach. The results showed that such institutions contribute greatly to the promotion and betterment of Islamic art by applying different strategies, such as sponsorship, CSR, branding, and collaboration with various cultural organizations. The study further identified the problems encountered by the IFIs when it comes to encouraging Islamic art, such as trying to balance their commercial and

cultural objectives, staying true to the authenticity of Islamic art, and playing by financial and acceptance rules.

Suggestions

Based on the results, the following recommendations are made.

Collaboration

IFIs need to collaborate more with cultural organizations, artists, and educational institutions to create more awareness about Islamic art. Such collaborations may assist in addressing some of the issues identified in this study, such as financial constraints and ignorance.

Create More Awareness

Islamic art has to be made more well-known and appreciated in both the Muslim world and the rest of the world. Islamic funds have a great role here by sponsoring educational programs, art exhibitions and participate in the local communities.

Promote Contemporary Art Forms

IFIs should also promote contemporary art forms that do not contravene Islamic beliefs. This would be more beneficial as IFIs work towards the preservation of traditional Islamic art.

Do Not Degrade Islam in the Name of Promoting Islam

IFIs should ensure that when they promote Islamic art, their actions do not degrade it. This involves being cautious so as to avoid the commercialization of art, as well as the influences of globalization with regard to cultural expression.

Use Technology

Beloved IFIs must utilize technology to popularize Islamic art. This may involve the use of internet to display art, sponsoring online galleries, and the use of social media to reach more people around the world.

Create Clear Guidelines

IFIs ought to create clear guidelines on how to promote Islamic art in a way that it suits their moral and ethical guidelines. This set of rules would assist them in aligning their actions with the principles of Islamic finance and to preserve cultural heritage.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

The data associated with this study will be provided by the corresponding author upon request.

Funding Details

This research did not receive grant from any funding source or agency.

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