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Innovation through Delivery of Tacit-Explicit Knowledge: A Maqasid Approach

Arman Hj. Ahmad^{1*}, Ridzuan Masri², Rana Altounjy³, Siti Haryani Mat Yusoff⁴, Normy Rafida Abdul Rahman⁵, Mohd. Farid Shamsudin⁶

Universiti Kuala Lumpur Business School, MALAYSIA^{1, 6}

Asia e University, MALAYSIA¹

Manipal International University, MALAYSIA^{2, 3, 4}

Management & Science University, MALAYSIA⁵

Corresponding author: arman@unikl.edu.my

Abstract

Innovation plays an important role in generating progress through transformation and improvement. It begins at the earliest stage of the process, which is knowledge delivery. Explicit knowledge is the most significant knowledge delivered before innovation can take place. While tacit knowledge has no significant role due to its nature of being very difficult to measure its effectiveness. Tacit knowledge is identified as one of the main elements for the delivery of knowledge towards innovation. However, innovation through the most efficient tacit-explicit knowledge can still leave the adverse effect, if no boundary lines are determining how innovations take place. The present study has employed a qualitative research design using the hermeneutic approach to propose Islamic innovation through the maqasid shari'ah approach in the context of knowledge delivery, as the initial process in innovation.

Keywords: Maqasid, Al-Ghazali, Tacit, Explicit, Knowledge, Innovation

1.0 Introduction

Innovation, from a modern perspective, is an effort of implementing a new idea that adds value to the organization. These organizations are likely to provide consequent support towards a more dynamic state of affairs (Hussain et al., 2017). The process of innovation involves the effort to create innovation

in services, systems, processes, and improve the operational aspects. Rogers (2003) defined innovation as an idea, practice, or object perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption. Islam does not reject innovation, rather it continuously promotes innovation in many aspects for worldly purposes, except in matters of worship based on the hadith (sayings of the prophet). The

meaning of “worldly affairs” refers specifically to matters or knowledge in the context of affairs, which does not relate to worship being delineated by Shari’ah.

In Islam, innovation in worldly affairs is highly encouraged in business and social sustainability. Therefore, the pressures on competition and productivity in today’s challenging and borderless world can be overcome. However, innovation should not infringe the limits set by the Shari’ah, rather it should be for the betterment of the people (ummah) at large. In Quran, it has been stated that;

and seek from the bounty of Allah, and remember Allah often that you may succeed [QS62:10].

This verse implies that man is called upon to seek the necessities to fulfill his obligations by remembering Allah. Persuasion must always be in tandem with the guidance of Shari’ah in seeking the bounty of God for worldly success and the hereafter. Sadeq (1990) stated the context of this verse included exploring and exploiting resources. In other words, man is urged to search and look into the necessary needs to preserve for the next generations. Man, always revive and innovate through the available resources to preserve the public interest (maslahah) and ensure the sustainability of human lives. Ultimately, this innovation leads to universal goodness, which is not

intended to accumulate wealth for oneself alone but to prosper the earth.

The Muslims are likely to become more sustainable in line with the ever-evolving globalized world following the changes and developments in the world economy, technology, politics, and other related affairs. Innovation in worldly matters is very significant in the lives of Muslims, as narrated by Musa bin Talha. He reported that once Prophet Muhammad (SAW) came across some people performing artificial pollination of palm trees. Prophet (SAW) disliked the idea and commented that it would be better not to do any pollination at all. Nevertheless, the harvest was poor the following year. When the Prophet (SAW) came to know about this, he admitted his limitation of knowledge regarding worldly affairs and said: “If a question relates to your worldly matters, you would know better about it, but if it relates to your religion, then to me it belongs” (Musnad Ahmad, no. 12086; and Sunan Ibn Maja, no. 2462). This signals that the Prophet (SAW) does not reject innovation. Instead, it is permissible and highly encouraged to preserve the public interest (maslahah), gain economic benefits, and ensure the long-term sustainability of the business and society. There are some verses in the Qur’an that urge innovation as a highly recommended attempt. For instance, it is stated in Ar-Ra’d “Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves”

(QS13:11). Others have been stated in al-Ĥadīd “and We sent down iron, wherein is great military might and benefits for the people” (QS57:25). These two verses indicate a call to mankind to always strive to innovate in the field according to their capacities and capabilities to lift up the level of their lives. Mankind needs to explore new opportunities through the resources to obtain their benefits, thereby building lives towards a stable yet sustainable society. These innovations are likely to be possible through economic and muamalah activities within the context of the relationship between man to God (habluminallah), between man to man (habluminannas), and subsequently shaping holistic civilizations.

2.0 Conceptual Framework

Islam recognizes both tacit and explicit knowledge as long as it does not violate the Shari’ah; however, it becomes fardh kifayah (obligatory duty) to Muslims so that they can preserve various benefits and avoid damages within the framework of muamalah. Western scholars have suggested that tacit-explicit knowledge in Islam does not merely come from life experience, observation, imitation, and printed material sources, rather it is complemented by multiple spectrum of knowledge and sources. Explicit knowledge is not solely carried out without the presence of tacit knowledge, rather tacit and explicit knowledge are combined. Tacit knowledge is not

merely knowledge gained from work experience, cultural facets, and hidden skills. Inevitably, an example of the greatest tacit knowledge in the history of Islamic civilization is the history of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) himself. It is narrated in Quran;

Surely there was a good example for you in the Messenger of Allah, for all those who look forward to Allah and the Last Day and remember Allah much (QS33:21).

The moral character and personality of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) have been followed and emulated by the Muslims, since his appointment as Prophet and Apostle. His teachings have been followed by the four great Caliphs of Islam, the Khulafa al-Rashidin, and other Islamic leaders including scholars and theologians, scientists, philosophers, literary experts. This has resulted in Islam shaping a great and holistic human civilization. True believers have placed their life activities based on the principle of tawheed, devotion to God, strengthening the relationship among man by taking care of each other, and adoption of good manners and moral values, since the time of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). All of this is incessantly inherited from the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as the most important and greatest exemplary throughout the era. Islamic civilization is rooted throughout the world through the amalgamation of habluminallah (the

relationship between man to God) and habluminannas (the relationship between man to man) with innumerable worldly advances and continuous innovation processes in technology, management and administration, enterprises, and leadership. Islam also recognizes human worldly activities as one of the many ways of devotion, as long as it is following the principles of Shari’ah. Al-Ghazali’s assertion suggested the integration of Ghairul Syariah and the knowledge of fiqh would have a good and effective monitoring system. However, humans

do not transcend the limits set by the Shari’ah. This assertion is very significant to many of the modern innovation initiatives that potentially harm the people, which are still wide-spreading without proper checks and balances in place. Figure 1 has suggested the key inputs to innovation from the context of the delivery of knowledge to adapt Islamic innovative behaviors that is the basic guide for further research on Islamic-based innovation, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

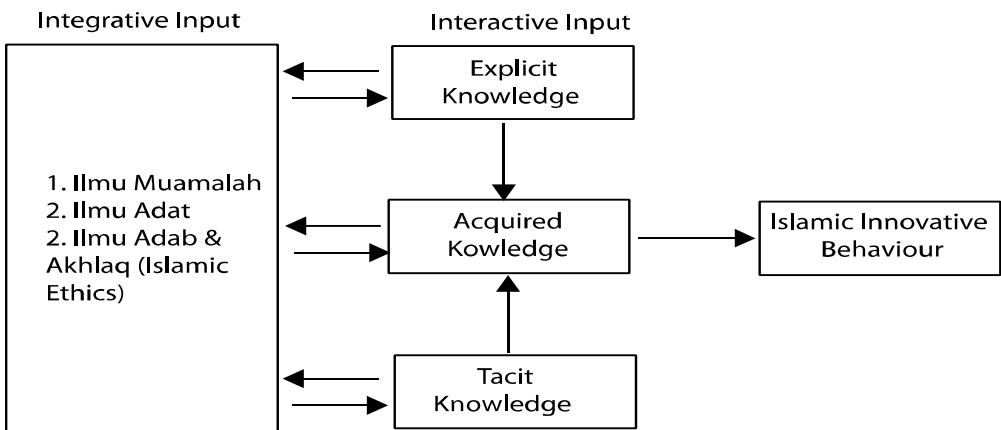


Figure 1: The Tacit-Explicit Knowledge Framework of Islamic based Innovation

3.0 Issues on Knowledge in Modern Innovations

The majority of the studies in the innovation process indicated that explicit knowledge is the most significant knowledge conveyed to innovators because of its modifiable and measurable characteristics. While, it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of tacit knowledge (Zhi, Junlong, Xingzi,

Gaoyue, 2016) and modify it (Kogut and Zander, 1992) because of its abstract nature, which is personal and hidden (Nonaka, 1991). The tacit knowledge can only be realized when the implementation process of innovation is ongoing because it lies in the intuitive realm derived from experience sharing, observation, and imitation (Hall & Andriani 2002; Polanyi, 1966). It is

undeniable that some innovations bring predicaments, especially innovations that are not based on moral values and innovations. These types of innovations pursue profitability and wealth; while, most innovations lead to goodness. The financial crisis around the year 2007-2008 was a surprise and warning sign to banks and financial institutions around the world that there are various dubious innovations on financial instruments (Bhaduri, 2017). Massive exposure to the market of mortgage debt securities by loosening credit terms and loan facilities to promote demand for home-based loans started in the United States and led to a sub-prime crisis. This crisis affected the world financial system, causing the failure of many banks around the world including Europe and Asia. There was a severe downturn in stock markets and commodities around the world, which was experienced to the extent that the banks' rescue packages were forced by their respective governments (The Economist, 2013).

In the context of ethics in innovation, the underlying knowledge of moral requirements in the innovation process is mostly rhetorical, neither difficult to measure nor benchmark. Ethics is not a document bound by legislation, rather it is a guide in the form of policies and good practices of the organization. Therefore, the innovation often has adverse effects on the organization itself and the public that should benefit the organization's performance. In fact,

often innovation becomes a failure, where its impact is much greater than the money invested in it. It has also been a big surprise when some world-renowned organizations have always supported innovation through R&D being sued millions of dollars because its scientific data and evidence were manipulated to maximize profit (Bhaduri, 2017). For instance, GlaxoSmithKline, a British global pharmaceutical company, was sued for \$ 3billion by a court in the US in 2012 for allegations of bribery to medical doctors for positive testimonials, failure to report drug-related safety data, unapproved drugs, and many other offenses (Philips & Cohen, 2012).

According to economists in the US, 86% of jobs lost in the US between 1997-2007 were due to increased productivity, as compared to 14% of jobs lost due to some other commercial factors. The adverse impact of using technology in the workplace is likely to increase over the coming decades not only in the manufacturing sector but also in the non-manufacturing sector. Human labor is likely to be replaced by non-manufacturing sector and agricultural segments in line with the progress in the development of machinery equipment and advanced machines, robotic and sensor equipment including artificial intelligence (AI) technology. The Oxford Martin School's report in 2013 indicated that 47% of the US job market faces the risk

of automation; while, the OECD ranks the risk at 9% in 2016. In 2015, McKinsey's study showed that 45% of the worker's activity can be replaced with full automation (WEF, 2017).

The reports on social damages obtained from uncontrolled innovations and the impact of massive job losses indicated that the concept of modern innovation needs to be reassessed and reevaluated. This issue can be looked upon from the perspective of Maqasid Shari'ah. It must begin with the delivery of knowledge before the full implementation of innovation is progressed to the next level to confirm the innovation initiatives in regards to the principles delineated in the Maqasid.

4.0 Maqasid Shari'ah in the Context of the Delivery of Knowledge in the Innovation Process - Problem of Dichotomy in Tacit and Explicit Knowledge

In the modern approach of innovation, explicit knowledge can be transmitted to the early recipient. The explicit knowledge involves know-how that can be transferred in a formal form. It has a systematic language, which does not require direct experience of such explicit knowledge, and can be channeled through certain formats such as manual or 'blueprint' paper (Howells,

2002). Whereas the tacit (implicit) knowledge is the unwritten, unspoken, and hidden language that is acquired and developed by every normal individual resulting from the intrinsic emotion, experience, insight, intuition, and intrinsic information readily embedded in individual thinking (internalized information) (Polanyi, M., 1966; Kikoski and John, 2004). This tacit knowledge can only be detected through its application that has been readily available in the minds of an individual as an organized operational system. This system cannot be codified and is difficult to transfer from one place to another, or from one person to another person (Kogut and Zander, 1992).

The tacit knowledge has a greater contribution to the achievement of organizational competitiveness and it covers 90% of the total knowledge available in the organization (Smith, 2001). The employees are reluctant to share their tacit knowledge with others, resulting in barriers to knowledge sharing (Ma, Qia, and Wang, 2008). This type of sharing requires a high trust element among fellow workers working as a team (Casimir, Lee, & Loon, 2012). There are separate positions of explicit and tacit knowledge in the innovation process. The tacit-explicit dichotomous position has been illustrated in Figure 2

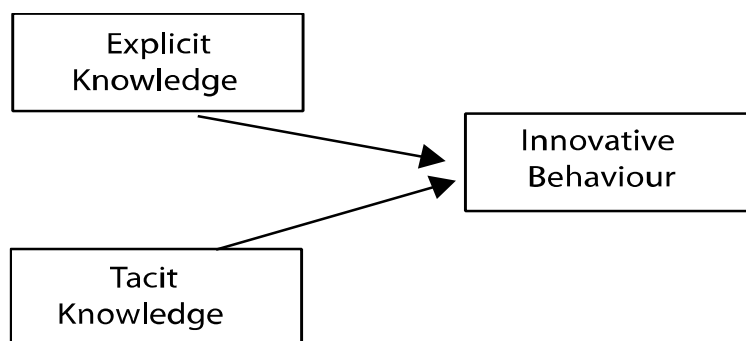


Figure 2: Dichotomy of Tacit-Explicit Knowledge in Innovation Process

The delivery of knowledge has evolved as an issue focusing on the innovation process in the context of the tacit-explicit dichotomy. The innovation process includes two categories;

- Explicitly through the physical and formal form
- Tacitly via the assessment of the mind, emotion, value, experience, and thinking that already exist in the individual self

The ability of this tacit knowledge can only be ascertained when the implementation of innovation is taking place. Moreover, this implementation relies solely upon the ability of the individual to think rationally and the capability to identify the threats and potential damage created by innovation. However, the problem arises when not all individuals have similar rational thinking capabilities and motives.

5.0 Maqasid in the Innovation Process

Knowledge holds an important position in Islam. At the beginning of revelation, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) hinted knowledge as the foundation of human civilization through surah (chapter) al-'Alaq. He stated that with knowledge, man is obliged to know God, who has created man and the universe. The facts found in surah discussing scientific facts about human birth from al-'alaq (a clot) (QS 96:2) and teaching through al-kalam (pen) (QS 96:4) imply that man needs to discover knowledge. The individuals need to rely on such discovery of knowledge, which would enable them to know and recognize God in the pursuit of worldly knowledge and progress. Such discovered knowledge is then diffused to others for the progress of life and civilization under the boundaries delineated by religion. In the beginning surah, this verse praises knowledge, but the subsequent verses (QS 96:6-7) denounce those who transcend the limits of knowledge. It

also signals that human beings should not go beyond the boundaries and commit cruelty against fellow beings to build civilization. They should use knowledge to build and fulfill the *maslahah* (public interest) as outlined in the *maqasid*.

Islam emphasizes the principle of equilibrium in all aspects of human life, that include economics, social, politics, education, *muamalah*, family, or any other purpose. The main aim is to achieve *al-falah* (success) not only in worldly life but also hereafter. However, the equilibrium in the context of worldly attainment and hereafter can only be fulfilled if man aims to fulfill the obligations of *ubudiah* (servitude) to God as vicegerent (QS 2:30). However, for Muslims, it contains obligations of devotion to God including the duty of seeking a livelihood, while being obedient to God and following His messenger to obtain His blessings. This means that worldly affluence, well-being, and prosperity are not meant for mere worldly life, but are used as *wasilah* (means) to approach God when performing His command, protecting the *maslahah* (public interest), and restricting the damages that may arise from human negligence or selfishness. This account is in line with this verse;

“But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world. And do good as

Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters” (QS 28:77).

Islam expects its believers to perform four core activities which are drawn in the principle of *Shari’ah* to fulfill this God’s command;

- Attaining the importance of life (*Jalb al-Masalih*)
- Eliminating the damages (*dar ‘al-mafasid*)
- Preventing the major harm (*sadd al -dhara’i ‘*)
- Not disregarding the factors of change in time or age (*taghayyur al-zaman*).

Islam divides the basic human needs into three levels within the framework of *Maqasid Shari’ah* namely the levels of *daruriyyat* (essentials requirement), *hajiyyat* (supports/needs requirement), and *tahsiniyyat* (desirable requirement) (Al-Raysuni, 1991). *Daruriyyat* is a basic necessity or an elementary need, which will pose threat to human security in five aspects namely religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth, if not fulfilled. *Daruriyyat* is the absolute thing that must be present in human life and it contains the main interest (*maslahah*). Human life will be prone to massive destruction if it is not fulfilled. Likewise, if any of the aspects in *Hajiyyat* are not attained, it will also pose major threats to human living systems. *Hajiyyat* is a secondary

necessity that does not threaten human security in its absence; however, it brings difficulties and hitches to human life. Whereas, tahsiniyyat is also a requirement that gives pleasure, convenience, and spaciousness to humans (Jasser, 2007). These three levels of needs are related to each other. If the daruriyyat level is damaged, then hajjiyyat and tahsiniyyat level will also be damaged and the maslahah of the people will be distracted. However, the damage occurring in hajjiyyat and tahsiniyyat would not disturb or damage daruriyyat, but most of daruriyyat will also be damaged, if the damage occurs in hajjiyyat or tahsiniyyat (Jasser, 2007).

In the context of maqasid and its relationship to innovation, the precedence for innovation leads to maslahah as the most important principle that makes innovation as a necessity to be prioritized and implemented. Qur'an (31:20) has signaled that human beings need to innovate and benefit from the innovation to preserve and uphold their religion; while at the same time building a prosperous life based on the comprehensive understanding of the concept of Tawheed (oneness). Likewise, the innovation which originally led to maslahah would be an entirely restricted innovation to be implemented (Ridzwan, 2008). Inevitably, there is a need to seek the idea and knowledge that fulfills the purpose of attaining the maslahah to

fulfill the requirements of Shari'ah and make an innovation that conforms to the concept of maqasid at the very early stage. It is characterized as the level of knowledge delivery communicated at each stage of the innovation.

6.0 Delivery of Tacit-Explicit Knowledge in the Context of Innovation Based on Maqasid

From the Islamic viewpoint, the definition of knowledge is not merely epistemology but includes ethical aspects of its truth and validity, as well as the objective of such knowledge (Muhammadul, 2011). The basis for the delivery of knowledge in Islam is based on the fulfillment of the needs in the Maqasid Shari'ah itself which include;

- The objective of daruriyyat is protecting religion (deen) and faith (iman), life (nafs), intellect (aql), lineage (nasl), and wealth (mal)
- The objective of al-hajjiyyat that facilitate and eliminate the hassle
- The objective of al-tahsiniyyat is to use the correct things to preserve honor, glory, dignity, and magnificence

In fact, the discussion of knowledge in Islam is classified in the more specific context of innovation (bid'ah) in worldly matters. This is reflected in the writing of al-Ghazali's magnum opus, *Ihya* in the first chapter of the first

volume. Imam al-Ghazali has divided the knowledge into certain classifications. In the context of worldly matters, al-Ghazali classified this aspect in the context of fardh kifayah (communal duty) knowledge.

According to Imam al-Ghazali, the purpose of fardh kifayah knowledge is to uphold worldly affairs. In some cases, al-Ghazali stated that fardh kifayah knowledge can become the knowledge of fardh ayn (individual duty) that must be learned if there are no or very few members of the society with the knowledge necessary to preserve the benefit of its members. In certain circumstances, the innovation of the knowledge is applied for maslahah such as business, economic, or scientific knowledge. However, the absence of such knowledge leads to disadvantages and destruction that ruin society. Al-Ghazali exemplifies fard kifayah such as medical, mathematics, and weaving knowledge that always require innovative undertakings from time to time to meet the urgent needs of the community. In a modern context, the continuous knowledge and research development on biological preparation to produce vaccines against infectious diseases became a must to prevent epidemics and death as a matter of daruriyat. Innovation can also be critical in non-scientific contexts such as innovation in financial and banking industries to protect the economy from the exploitative gains causing massive

social destruction. Al-Ghazali classified knowledge intending to strengthen the position of the matter towards a certain level of expectation. The context of modern innovation is a process of creating an added value; for instance, if there is no innovation, it does not hurt or destroy the knowledge, but still provides convenience to the society. For subsequent classification, al-Ghazali divided the knowledge of fardh kifayah into two parts namely the knowledge of Shari'ah (ulum Shari'ah) and Ghairu Shari'ah (non-Shari'ah – based on reason). Under the classification of the knowledge of Shari'ah, al-Ghazali stated that ilm furu' (knowledge of the branch) is very important and must be mastered by the fuqaha' (Islamic jurists), who understands the usul fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence) methodology well. Al-Ghazali stated that the furu' knowledge is a branch of knowledge, which is widely found in the books of fiqh regarding matters of maslahah of worldly affairs and hereafter. In the context of modern innovation, the knowledge of furu' becomes an important branch of knowledge that needs to be constantly integrated with innovative activities and undertakings.

The matters concerning usul and fiqh in innovation-related activities have been overlooked by the majority of modern innovations. Al-Ghazali in this issue stresses the role of fiqh that is indispensable in the context of muamalah and requires the continuous

process of *ijtihadiah* (discretionary judgment) in the worldly *bid'ah*. It can be understood in the modern context that the process of innovation especially involving *masalah* has the probability of bringing *mafsadah* to the people on various scales as practiced in the Islamic banking system or in the production of halal products industry. This procedure requires experts in the field of *fiqh* to cooperate with the experts in the field of *fardh kifayah* related knowledge.

Meanwhile, modern innovation can be understood as knowledge related to the innovation itself such as engineering and biology, economics, environmental science, law, management, marketing, finance, etc. that equals to *fardh kifayah* knowledge, in the context of *Ghairu Shari'ah* knowledge. The innovations carried out from the perspectives of *fardh kifayah* knowledge are interconnected with each other in the context of *Maqasid*. For instance, the use of DNA elements from pigs for cardiovascular purposes requires the views of Islamic jurists, biologists, chemists, pharmacologists, and social scientists to consolidate and integrate the exchange and sharing of information and knowledge about the use of such DNA is against the heart patients among Muslims.

Innovation requires knowledge; while, innovations are based on scientific output without the knowledge of *muamalah* from an Islamic perspective.

It may even lead to damages (*mafsadah*) because no boundary line determines the status of such innovations such as *fardh* (obligation), *mubah* (permissible), *mustahabb* (recommended), and *makrooh* (dislike) or *haram* (prohibited). According to al-Ghazali's views depicted from his magnum opus, *Ihya Ulumuddin*, knowledge of *muamalah* consists of knowledge of human relation to God (*ibadah*), knowledge of man relation to man (*adah*), and knowledge of good and bad qualities of the souls (Umaruddin, 2005).

The knowledge about the human relationship with God is the main purpose the Prophets are sent to this world (QS 21:25 and QS 51:56-58). The prophets teach mankind to always uphold the principle of Oneness of God with the fullest conviction of the heart and soul. The innovators carry out innovative activities for no showing off the greatness and strength of knowledge they possess, which is not comparable to the knowledge that God possesses. However, linking the innovation by thinking and appreciating the greatness and magnificence of God is exhibited from their personal ability to fulfill the responsibility of prospering this world as God's *Khalifah* (vicegerent) in this world. The knowledge on the relationship of man with the others through *muamalah* activities is bounded to *aqidah* as worship to God alone. Man is prohibited to innovate religion because it is the absolute right of God

and His Apostles, who are assigned to convey it. However, man is given the freedom to innovate, create new things, and improvise worldly matters through communal affiliation that are dependent upon each other with certain limitations and prohibitions. The instructions need to be maintained to ensure the *maslahah* to be benefitted collectively as a blessing endowed by God. The knowledge needs to be acquired and delivered that is beneficial for the people at large and perform innovation in the context of the relationship between man to man.

Finally, knowledge within the framework of Islamic-based innovation must be communicated and cascaded from an Islamic perspective. In the context of Islam, moral and ethical values cannot be implemented in innovation without the presence of knowledge that forms the morality and good conduct of an individual. This may include knowledge of *adab* (manners) and *akhlaq* (morals) that are already embodied in the knowledge of *muamalah* itself. According to Imam al-Ghazali, the *muamalah* knowledge includes the knowledge of *ibadah* (man relation to God), the knowledge of *adab* (man relation to man), and the knowledge of good and bad qualities of the soul. While in the western context, the knowledge that forms the individual morality to implement innovation is just modern knowledge ethics based on the philosophical value and rewards to

govern human conduct in innovation. The difference in the knowledge of *adab* (manners) and *akhlaq* (morals) from the contexts of Islamic ethics and the modern knowledge of ethics has a clear dichotomy, where the knowledge of *adab* and *akhlaq* in Islam is based on *naqliyah* (authoritative source of Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet) and *aqliyah* (rational and scientific). While modern ethics is based merely on theoretical and rational philosophy. Both knowledges of *naqliyah* and *aqliyah* are very crucial to guide the innovators to innovate the right things and avoid erroneous consequences in every innovation undertaken from the perspective of religion, morals, manners, custom, and the like.

7.0 Conclusion

Explicit knowledge that only touches the methods and processes of innovation coupled with the tacit knowledge, makes modern innovation prone to deviate from the original purpose outlined in modern ethics. Hence, it leaves a very important gap, which is the knowledge of ethics that includes the issues of *adab* and *akhlaq* in innovation. It is this knowledge that should be communicated before any innovation takes place so that there will be a clear guideline to the innovator to ensure that the innovation does not derail from the moral foundation. This assertion also emphasizes that the tacit knowledge owned by only individual-self has a holistic ethical assessment in line with

the goals of the maqasid shari'ah itself. Dealing with issues of maslahah and mafsadah is more complicated and greater in the fiqh framework at the very basic level of innovation to meet the goals of Shari'ah. This is because the issues and problems in the context of maslahah and mafsadah at every level of human needs enable innovation to be implemented without violating any of the Shari'ah provisions. It is likely to be understood and translated in the form of ethics in innovation by the majority of the laypersons, who lack preponderance to one evidence over another (tarjih) and issuing decisions (instinbat) of the Shari'ah related law in the context of modern innovation.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Arman Ahmad
Universiti Kuala Lumpur Business
School, Malaysia &
Asia e University, Malaysia
arman@unikl.edu.my

Ridzuan Masri
Manipal International University,
Malaysia
ridzuan.masri@miu.edu.my

Rana Altounjy
Manipal International University,
Malaysia
rana.altounjy@miu.edu.my

Siti Haryani Mat Yusoff
Manipal International University,
Malaysia
siti.haryani@miu.edu.my

Normi Rafida Abdul Rahman
Management & Science University,
Malaysia
normy_rafida@msu.edu.my

Mohd Farid Shamsudin
Universiti Kuala Lumpur Business
School, Malaysia
mfarid@unikl.edu.my