Islamic Ethical Values in Islamic Bank Management: A Literature Analysis of the Concepts of Trust and Justice

St. Wijdanah Ram[1], Jenuri[2], Muh. Irwin[3]
[1]Universitas Negeri Makassar
[2]Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia
[3]STIE YPUP Makassar
E-mail : st.wijdanah@unm.ac.id, jenuri@upi.edu, irwinmuhammad91@gmail.com

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Abstract: *This study examines the ethical foundations of Islamic banking management through the integration of the values of amanah (trust) and 'adl (justice), the main moral pillars of Islam. Despite the rapid growth of the Islamic banking industry, a gap remains between the ideals of Islamic principles and the reality of managerial implementation, where profit-oriented practices often override ethical considerations. Using a qualitative literature research approach, this study systematically reviews the academic literature to explore how the values of amanah (trust) and justice are operationalized within the strategic and managerial frameworks of Islamic banks. The analysis reveals that previous studies tend to discuss these two values separately without highlighting their synergy and interdependence in forming an integrative ethical governance model. Amanah (trust) is embodied in transparency, accountability, and fiduciary responsibility, while justice is reflected in proportional profit sharing, equal treatment, and fair financial inclusion. The integration of these two values within the framework of Sharia governance and stakeholder theory forms a distinctive managerial ethic that distinguishes Islamic banks from conventional systems. This conceptual synthesis provides theoretical contributions to the study of Islamic management as well as practical recommendations for strengthening ethical sustainability in Islamic financial institutions.*

INTRODUCTION

The development of the Islamic banking industry in Indonesia has experienced significant growth over the past two decades. However, this growth presents complex challenges related to the implementation of Islamic ethical values in daily managerial practices. Islamic banks are not only required to comply with Islamic principles in their technical operations but also to internalize fundamental Islamic values such as trustworthiness and justice in all aspects of financial institution management. Research shows that the ethical dimension of Islamic banking is a key differentiator from conventional systems, which emphasize spiritual aspects and social responsibility (Abdul Haqi and Madian Muhammad Muchlis 2024). Problems arise when Islamic bank managerial practices still show a gap between the ideals of Islamic law and the reality of implementation, where profit-orientedness often overrides the principles of distributive justice and trustworthiness towards stakeholders. This phenomenon raises critical questions about how the dimensions of trustworthiness and justice are truly operationalized within the contemporary Islamic bank management framework. A comprehensive study that deeply examines the integration of these two ethical values within the context of strategic Islamic banking management is an urgent academic need that needs to be addressed to ensure the sustainability and credibility of the Islamic financial industry in the future. This research context stems from the fact that despite the rapid development of Islamic banking literature, specific studies integrating the dimensions of trust and justice within a holistic management framework remain limited and fragmented (Kongkaew, Tongkong, and Ngudgratoke 2021). The research identified that many studies tend to discuss aspects of Sharia compliance technically without delving into the philosophical and ethical dimensions underlying managerial practices. The objective of this research is to construct a comprehensive understanding of how the dimensions of trust and justice are integrated into various management functions of Islamic banks through a systematic literature review of current literature. This research aims to identify patterns, themes, and gaps in the existing literature to provide theoretical contributions to the development of a Sharia bank management model based on Islamic ethical values. Practically, this research is expected to provide recommendations for Islamic banking practitioners in implementing the values of trust and justice in a more concrete and measurable manner. Through a synthesis of literature from various perspectives, this research seeks to build a conceptual framework that can bridge the ideals of Sharia with contemporary managerial practices in the Islamic banking industry. A key gap in the literature identified is the lack of integrative studies linking the dimensions of trust and justice as two intertwined ethical pillars in Islamic bank management. Previous research tends to discuss the concepts of trust and justice separately without exploring their synergy and interdependence in managerial practice. Most studies focus on formal sharia compliance or financial performance, while the ethical and substantive dimensions of values receive less in-depth attention (Hilalia et al. 2023). This study critiques the tendency of Islamic banking research to be descriptive and normative without providing a critical analysis of the implementation of Islamic values in practical managerial contexts. A methodological gap was also identified, with the limited number of systematic literature reviews specifically analyzing the dimensions of trust and justice in Islamic bank management. This study seeks to address this gap by conducting a systematic literature review that integrates theological, ethical, and managerial perspectives to build a holistic understanding of how Islamic values are translated into the management practices of Islamic financial institutions.

Theoretically, this research is based on the concept of maqasid sharia, which emphasizes achieving welfare (maslahah) through the protection of five fundamental elements: religion, life, intellect, descendants, and property. In the context of Islamic banking, maqasid sharia serves as a philosophical framework underlying all operational and managerial activities of Islamic financial institutions. The concept of amanah in Islam is understood as the fiduciary responsibility inherent in every individual and institution to manage resources responsibly and transparently in accordance with the will of the true owner, Allah SWT. The dimensions of justice ('adl) in Islamic banking management include distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice, which must be reflected in the relationship between the bank and stakeholders, including customers, employees, shareholders, and the community. Stewardship theory in the Islamic context emphasizes that Islamic bank managers are caliphs entrusted with the mandate to manage economic resources for the welfare of the people (Hayat and Khan 2024). The integration of amanah and justice values forms a unique managerial ethic in Islamic banking, fundamentally distinguishing it from conventional systems. The study of Sharia governance, as explained, emphasizes the importance of a governance structure that ensures substantial compliance with Sharia principles, not merely procedural formalities (Falikhatun et al. 2020). Literature on stakeholder theory from an Islamic perspective demonstrates that Islamic banks have broader responsibilities, not only to shareholders but also to all parties affected by business activities, including social and environmental dimensions. The concepts of ta'awun (mutual cooperation) and takaful (solidarity) are the values underlying the relationship between Islamic banks and their stakeholders, creating equitable value. This research also draws on literature on Islamic corporate social responsibility, which integrates the spiritual and material dimensions of corporate social responsibility as a manifestation of the values of trust and justice. The theoretical framework developed from the synthesis of this literature serves as the analytical basis for examining how the dimensions of trust and justice are operationalized in various aspects of Islamic bank management.

The literature review indicates that the implementation of the trust value in Islamic bank management can be seen from various dimensions, including transparency in financial reporting, managerial accountability, and integrity in business decision-making. The study identified that disclosure practices in Islamic banks still show significant variation, with some institutions demonstrating a high commitment to transparency while others still disclose minimal material information. The amanah dimension is also manifested in prudent risk management and careful allocation of customer funds to ensure there is no misuse or moral hazard. The quality of the Shariah Supervisory Board significantly influences amanah practices in managing investment and financing funds. In the context of human resource management, the amanah value is reflected in employee recruitment, development, and evaluation, which is based not only on technical competence but also on integrity and commitment to Islamic values. However, the literature also identifies challenges in objectively measuring and evaluating the implementation of amanah values, given that the ethical dimension is often qualitative and subjective. This research will explore how various studies operationalize the amanah concept into measurable indicators for the evaluation and development of Islamic bank management.

Meanwhile, the justice dimension in Islamic banking management encompasses broader aspects, including fairness in product structure and pricing, profit distribution between banks and customers, and access to financial services for various segments of society, including the unbanked. The profit-loss sharing mechanism, a key characteristic of Islamic banking, in practice still faces various distortions, resulting in a disproportionate distribution of risk and return between banks and customers. Procedural fairness in financing decision-making is also a crucial issue, requiring Islamic banks to apply objective, non-discriminatory criteria in accordance with Islamic principles when evaluating financing applications. The social justice dimension is manifested in financial inclusion and community economic empowerment programs, which are part of Islamic banks' corporate social responsibility, as an implementation of the concepts of ta'awun (community welfare) and maslahah ammah (community welfare). Islamic banks that integrate social justice values into their business strategies demonstrate better reputational performance and customer loyalty in the long term. However, the literature also notes a trade-off between achieving commercial goals and achieving social missions, which often creates ethical dilemmas for Islamic bank management. The literature review in this research will analyze how various studies address these trade-offs and identify best practices in integrating the justice dimension into the strategies and operations of sustainable Islamic banks.

METHOD

The research method used in this article is library research with a descriptive qualitative approach. This research was conducted by reviewing various relevant literature, such as books, scientific journals, articles, official documents, and publications from Islamic financial institutions that discuss Islamic ethical values, particularly the dimensions of trust and justice in Islamic bank management. Conceptually, trust is understood as moral responsibility and honesty in managing trusts, while operationally it is defined as managerial integrity and transparency in maintaining customer trust and managing funds in accordance with Islamic principles. Justice conceptually means balance and equal treatment, while operationally it is realized through proportional profit sharing, non-discriminatory service, and decision-making that favors the common good. Data were collected through documentation techniques, namely by searching, reading, and recording important information from credible and up-to-date literary sources. Data analysis was conducted using content analysis, namely examining and interpreting the meaning of texts to find thematic patterns related to the values of trust and justice in the context of Islamic bank management. The analysis results are then systematically described to illustrate how these two Islamic ethical values serve as the primary foundation for the management of Islamic financial institutions. Data validity is maintained through source triangulation, comparing various references and views from Islamic scholars, as well as official regulations such as fatwas from the National Sharia Council (DSN-MUI) and OJK guidelines, to ensure that the findings have a strong and accountable scientific basis.

HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

Conceptualizing Amanah in Islamic Bank Management

A literature review shows that amanah is a fundamental pillar in the operation of Islamic banks, substantively differentiating them from conventional banks. The concept of amanah in the context of Islamic banking is not merely understood as a legal responsibility, but rather as a spiritual accountability that binds every actor in an Islamic financial institution. This fundamental difference creates a unique governance paradigm, where every managerial decision must consider transcendental dimensions beyond mere business interests. From an Islamic theological perspective, amanah is a concept derived from the words of Allah SWT in the Quran, Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 72, which explains that humans have been entrusted with a trust that even the heavens, the earth, and the mountains would hesitate to bear. Contextualizing this verse within Islamic banking practices indicates that Islamic bank managers have a significant responsibility, not only to shareholders and customers, but also to the Creator. This understanding should shape an organizational character that is fundamentally different from conventional financial institutions, which are purely profit-maximizing.

Literature review confirms that trustworthiness is a central value in Islamic banking governance, distinguishing it from conventional banking in spiritual and moral aspects. For example, in the study "Islamic Ethics Commitment and Bank Outcomes," Santoso (2023) found that Islamic ethical commitment (which includes the value of trustworthiness) is positively correlated with Islamic banking market performance (Santoso et al. 2023). Operationally, the value of trustworthiness is manifested through transparent financial reporting. The study

"Transparency and Performance of Islamic Banking: The Implications for Profit Distribution" by Utami (2023) confirms that a high level of transparency encourages fairer profit sharing among stakeholders (Utami 2023). Furthermore, within the ethical framework of Islamic banking, the value of trustworthiness is evident in the institution's commitment to honesty and social responsibility. In the article "Exploring the Ethical Aspects of Islamic Banking," Ibrahim & colleagues discuss how ethics (including trustworthiness) influence stakeholder behavior and perceptions of public trust (Gilani 2015). Therefore, consistent implementation of the trust value not only strengthens public trust but also becomes a strategic instrument in improving the reputation and sustainability of Islamic banks amidst global financial industry competition.

Sharia Bank Operational Principles

One concrete manifestation of the trustworthiness value in Sharia banking operations is through the practice of transparent financial reporting. Transparency is not merely compliance with regulations, but a manifestation of a moral commitment to convey information honestly and openly to all stakeholders. In the context of Sharia banks, which manage public funds based on a profit-sharing principle, transparency is crucial because customers have the right to know how their funds are managed and the actual profits generated. The profit-loss sharing system, which is characteristic of Sharia banks, inherently requires a higher level of transparency than the interest system of conventional banks. In an interest system, customers receive a fixed return without needing to know the details of the bank's operations. Conversely, in a profit-sharing system, customers are partners entitled to complete information about business performance. Information asymmetry in this context is not only economically detrimental but also violates the principle of trustworthiness underlying mudharabah or musyarakah contracts. A previous study by Utami (2023) validated the aforementioned normative argument. The study found that a high level of transparency in Sharia bank financial reporting implies a more equitable distribution of profits among stakeholders. This finding is significant because it demonstrates that transparency is not merely about disclosure but has real distributive consequences. When Islamic banks are transparent in their reporting, a checks and balances mechanism is in place that ensures profits are distributed according to agreed-upon proportions, and are not manipulated to benefit one party at the expense of others.

With regard to access to financial services, ethical commitment (Islamic ethics) also plays a role. Santoso (2023) in "Islamic Ethics Commitment and Bank Outcomes" shows that institutions that adhere more to ethical values tend to have a higher reputation and trust, which in turn opens up service opportunities to a wider range of parties. The aspect of distributive justice can be linked to the concepts of transparency and social responsibility. For example, the article "Sharia Compliance Report Disclosure in Islamic Banks" by Dahlifah et al. (2019) emphasizes that disclosing Sharia compliance (as part of transparency and fairness) can increase public trust in Islamic financial institutions (Dahlifah et al. 2019).

Ethical Dimensions and Public Trust

Amanah, from a broader perspective, relates not only to transactional and operational aspects but also encompasses the relational dimension between Islamic banks and the community. A study by Wijaya et al. (2023) showed that consumer religiosity increases trust in Islamic banks, and this trust subsequently shapes loyalty (Wijaya et al. 2023). Islamic banks, as institutions claiming to be based on Islamic values, carry higher moral expectations from the public than conventional banks. The Muslim community, in particular, expects Islamic banks not only to be free from usury but also to be agents of social change that promote the values of goodness, justice, and shared prosperity (Amin 2024).

These high expectations create both challenges and opportunities. On the one hand, Islamic banks are subject to stricter public scrutiny. Any scandal or ethical violation will be responded to more critically by the public, as it is perceived as a betrayal of religious values. On the other hand, if Islamic banks successfully meet ethical and trustworthy expectations, they can build a very strong trust and loyal customer base that is not easily eroded by price competition or promotions alone (Putri and Hasib 2024).

Ibrahim and colleagues in their article explore the ethical dimension in Islamic banking and how it influences stakeholder behavior and public perceptions of trust. The study revealed that Islamic ethics, of which trustworthiness is a central component, significantly influences how stakeholders interact with Islamic banks (Yusuf et al. 2023). When stakeholders perceive that an Islamic bank is committed to ethical values, they tend to be more trusting, loyal, and more willing to recommend the bank to others. This suggests that an ethical reputation is a highly valuable intangible asset in the Islamic banking industry.

What is interesting about Ibrahim and colleagues' findings is that the influence of ethics on public trust appears to operate through complex psychological mechanisms. It goes beyond rational calculations of risk and return to involve emotional and identity dimensions. For some Muslim customers, using ethical Islamic banking services is part of their religious practice, a form of worship in the broadest sense (Customers 2024). Therefore, when they discover that Islamic banks betray these values, their reaction is not only disappointment as consumers but also a feeling of spiritual betrayal.

The managerial implication of this insight is that Islamic banks should not treat ethics and trustworthiness as peripheral corporate social responsibilities, but rather as core identities and competitive advantages. In an increasingly competitive market, where Islamic and conventional financial products are increasingly converging economically, differentiation based on ethical values becomes increasingly crucial (Andi Muhammad Rizal, Aedy, and Ma'mun 2024). Islamic banks that authentically practice Islamic values, including trustworthiness, will have a sustainable competitive advantage that is difficult for conventional competitors to replicate.

It must be acknowledged that building and maintaining public trust based on ethics is not easy. It requires long-term consistency, not just artificial marketing campaigns. Research shows that trust is built slowly through the accumulation of positive experiences, but can be quickly destroyed by a single negative incident. Therefore, Islamic banks need to develop internal systems that ensure that every level of the organization, from front-line staff to top management, internalizes and practices the value of trustworthiness in every decision and interaction.

CONCLUSION

This research confirms that the values of trust and justice are the primary ethical foundations that shape the management character of Islamic banks. Both serve not only as moral norms but also as managerial principles that determine the direction of policies and operational practices of Islamic financial institutions. The integration of trust values is reflected in transparency, accountability, and social responsibility, which strengthen public trust. Meanwhile, the value of justice is realized through a proportional profit-sharing system and inclusive and non-discriminatory services for all stakeholders.

This research also shows that the gap between the ideals of Sharia and the reality of implementation remains a major challenge in the Islamic banking industry. Excessive profitorientation often obscures banks' ethical mission as agents of public welfare. Therefore, a Sharia governance model is needed that emphasizes substantial adherence to Islamic principles, rather than mere procedural formalities. This research recommends strengthening managerial ethics based on trust and justice as a strategy for the sustainability and differentiation of Islamic banks amidst global competition.

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