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The Ethics of the Judicial Profession in Islamic Law: A Normative Study of Judicial Integrity and Professional Responsibility

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Abstract

Judicial ethics constitutes a fundamental pillar in ensuring justice, integrity, and accountability within legal systems. In Islamic teachings, the judicial profession is regarded as an amanah (trust) that requires judges to uphold ethical and moral principles in carrying out their duties. This study aims to analyze the ethical principles that guide judicial conduct from an Islamic perspective and to examine their relevance to contemporary judicial professionalism. This study employed a normative juridical approach using statutory and conceptual approaches. Data were collected through library research from legal regulations, Islamic legal sources, academic books, and scholarly journal articles, and were analyzed qualitatively through descriptive and thematic analysis. The findings reveal that Islamic judicial ethics is fundamentally grounded in the prophetic values of shidiq (truthfulness), amanah (trustworthiness), tabligh (transparency), fatanah (competence and wisdom), and istiqamah (consistency). These ethical values provide a comprehensive framework for judicial conduct by integrating moral integrity, professional responsibility, and spiritual accountability. The study further finds that Islamic judicial ethics contributes significantly to the realization of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah through the protection of rights, prevention of injustice, and promotion of social welfare. Moreover, Islamic judicial ethics demonstrates substantial compatibility with contemporary judicial standards, particularly the principles of independence, impartiality, integrity, accountability, equality, and competence reflected in the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct. This study concludes that Islamic judicial ethics remains highly relevant as a normative and practical framework for strengthening judicial professionalism, enhancing public trust, and improving judicial governance in contemporary legal systems.

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Introduction

Human beings are social beings endowed by Allah SWT with reason and intellect, enabling them to distinguish between right and wrong and to organize social life through systems of norms and regulations. The existence of law is essential for maintaining social order, protecting individual rights, and ensuring justice within society. In every legal system, the implementation and enforcement of legal norms require competent institutions and individuals who possess not only legal expertise but also moral integrity. Among legal professionals, judges occupy a strategic position because they are entrusted with the authority to interpret the law, resolve disputes, and deliver justice through judicial decisions (Nurwandri et al., 2025; Garoupa & Ginsburg, 2021). Judicial integrity and accountability therefore constitute fundamental elements in maintaining public confidence in the legal system.

The judicial profession carries significant responsibilities because judges exercise authority that directly affects the rights and obligations of individuals and society. Consequently, judges are expected to uphold not only legal certainty but also substantive justice. Ethical conduct plays a crucial role in ensuring that judicial decisions are rendered fairly, impartially, and independently. Contemporary studies on judicial governance emphasize that integrity, accountability, and ethical professionalism constitute indispensable requirements for preserving the legitimacy of judicial institutions and strengthening the rule of law (Yoserwan & Dias, 2024; Dakolias, 2022; Voigt, 2021).

From an Islamic perspective, every profession constitutes an *amanah* (trust) that must be carried out with sincerity, responsibility, and accountability before Allah SWT. Islamic teachings emphasize that professional duties should be performed in accordance with moral and ethical principles derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah. The examples of Prophet Muhammad SAW and his companions demonstrate the importance of honesty, justice, trustworthiness, and responsibility in carrying out public duties. These values provide a moral framework that guides individuals in exercising authority for the benefit of society and in accordance with divine guidance (Qaradawi, 2013; Hashi, 2011; Mohammed, 2020).

Justice occupies a central position in Islamic teachings. Allah SWT commands believers to uphold justice and fulfill entrusted responsibilities, as stated in Surah An-Nisa verse 58 and Surah Al-Ma'idah verse 8. These verses emphasize that justice must be administered fairly and without discrimination, regardless of personal interests or external pressures. Therefore, the position of a judge is regarded as highly honorable in Islam because judges are entrusted with the responsibility of safeguarding justice and protecting the rights of society (Al-Mawardi, 2016; Kamali, 2008; March, 2021). The implementation of justice is not merely a legal obligation but also a religious duty that carries moral accountability before Allah SWT.

To ensure that judicial authority is exercised properly, judges are required to comply with professional ethics and codes of conduct. In Indonesia, ethical standards for judges are regulated through the Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Judicial Conduct (*Kode Etik dan Pedoman Perilaku Hakim—KEPPH*). These ethical principles serve as guidelines for maintaining judicial independence, impartiality, integrity, propriety, equality, competence, and diligence. Compliance with judicial ethics is essential because ethical violations may undermine public trust in the judiciary and weaken the legitimacy of legal institutions. The

Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct further reinforce these universal standards by emphasizing independence, impartiality, integrity, propriety, equality, and competence as the core pillars of judicial ethics (UNODC, 2002; UNODC, 2023).

The significance of judicial ethics has attracted increasing scholarly attention in recent years. Fahira and Fahmi (2022) argue that judicial ethics constitutes the moral foundation of judicial professionalism and serves as a mechanism for ensuring fair adjudication. Lumopa and Arifin (2024) found that compliance with judicial codes of ethics is essential for maintaining public trust and ensuring accountability in judicial decisions. Similarly, Nurwandri et al. (2025) emphasize that judicial integrity and accountability are inseparable from ethical conduct and professional responsibility. Furthermore, Kartikasari and Risky (2025) highlight the importance of strengthening ethical oversight institutions to reinforce judges' integrity and ethical behavior, while Parameswary et al. (2025) stress that effective judicial oversight mechanisms are necessary to maintain public trust and uphold judicial accountability.

Despite the growing body of literature on judicial ethics, most previous studies have concentrated on institutional oversight, accountability mechanisms, and the enforcement of professional codes of conduct. Relatively limited attention has been devoted to examining judicial ethics comprehensively from an Islamic perspective by integrating contemporary standards of judicial professionalism with ethical principles derived from the Qur'an, Hadith, and Islamic legal thought. Existing studies also rarely employ an integrative analytical framework that connects Islamic judicial ethics with contemporary global standards such as the Bangalore Principles and judicial governance models (Garoupa & Ginsburg, 2021; Voigt, 2021; International Commission of Jurists, 2022). Consequently, there remains a significant gap in understanding how Islamic ethical values can contribute to strengthening judicial integrity, accountability, and professionalism in contemporary legal systems.

Addressing this gap is particularly important because ethical violations committed by judges can significantly undermine public confidence in the judiciary and hinder the realization of justice. Recent studies indicate that strengthening ethical supervision, accountability mechanisms, and judicial integrity remains a major challenge in contemporary legal systems (Kadir et al., 2026; Transparency International, 2023; World Justice Project, 2023). Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of judicial ethics from an Islamic perspective is necessary to reinforce moral responsibility and professional integrity among judges.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to analyze the ethical principles that should guide judges in carrying out their professional duties from an Islamic perspective. Specifically, this study examines the ethical foundations of the judicial profession in Islamic teachings and explores their relevance for strengthening judicial integrity, accountability, professionalism, and justice in contemporary legal systems.

Method

This study employed a normative juridical research design to examine judicial ethics from the perspective of Islamic law and contemporary judicial governance. Normative legal research focuses on law as a system of norms, principles, doctrines, and ethical standards by analyzing legal texts, legal doctrines, and scholarly interpretations rather than empirical

social phenomena (Marzuki, 2017; Soekanto, 2006). This design was considered appropriate because the study primarily investigates the ethical and normative dimensions of the judicial profession, particularly the relationship between Islamic ethical principles and contemporary standards of judicial conduct.

To achieve the research objectives, this study employed three complementary analytical approaches. First, a statutory approach (*statute approach*) was used to examine legal regulations governing judicial authority and professional ethics in Indonesia. The analysis focused on Law Number 48 of 2009 concerning Judicial Power, Law Number 49 of 2009 concerning General Courts, and the Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Judicial Conduct (*Kode Etik dan Pedoman Perilaku Hakim—KEPPH*). These legal instruments were examined to identify normative standards related to judicial independence, accountability, integrity, and professional responsibility.

Second, a conceptual approach (*conceptual approach*) was employed to analyze theories and concepts related to professional ethics, judicial integrity, and Islamic legal ethics. This approach enabled the study to explore ethical concepts such as justice (*adl*), trustworthiness (*amanah*), truthfulness (*shidiq*), competence (*fatanah*), and consistency (*istiqamah*) as foundational principles of judicial conduct (Ballin, 2020; Mohammed, 2020).

Third, a comparative ethical approach was applied to examine the compatibility between Islamic judicial ethics and contemporary standards of judicial governance, particularly the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct. This approach was intended to identify convergences between Islamic ethical values and global judicial ethics standards, especially in relation to independence, impartiality, integrity, equality, and competence (UNODC, 2002; Voigt, 2021).

This study relied exclusively on secondary data sources, which were categorized into primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials. Primary legal materials consisted of statutory regulations related to judicial authority and ethics, as well as Islamic legal sources including the Qur'an and Hadith. Secondary legal materials included peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, legal commentaries, and scholarly works on Islamic law, judicial ethics, and judicial governance. Tertiary legal materials included legal dictionaries, encyclopedias, and supporting references used to clarify legal terminology and conceptual definitions (Ibrahim, 2006).

Data collection was conducted through library research by systematically identifying, reviewing, classifying, and documenting relevant legal and academic materials from books, scientific journals, legal documents, and institutional reports. This process enabled the researcher to gather comprehensive data regarding judicial ethics from both Islamic and contemporary legal perspectives.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis through three stages. First, legal texts and Islamic sources were classified according to major themes related to judicial ethics and professional responsibility. Second, thematic analysis was employed to identify key ethical principles underlying judicial conduct in Islamic teachings, including *shidiq*, *amanah*, *tabligh*, *fatanah*, and *istiqamah*. Third, comparative analysis was conducted to assess the relevance and compatibility of Islamic ethical principles with contemporary judicial governance standards. Through this analytical framework, the study developed a comprehensive understanding of judicial ethics as an integrative framework combining legal norms, ethical values, and judicial professionalism.

Results

The Concept of Ethics in Islam

Ethics refers to a system of moral values, norms, and principles that guide human behavior in both individual and social life. In general, ethics functions as a framework for distinguishing right from wrong and for regulating conduct according to accepted moral standards. In Islamic thought, ethics is closely associated with *akhlaq*, *adab*, and moral responsibility, all of which are rooted in divine revelation and prophetic guidance. Unlike secular ethical systems that primarily emphasize rational or social foundations, Islamic ethics integrates moral conduct with spiritual accountability before Allah SWT (Hashi, 2011; Sachedina, 2007).

The analysis of Islamic legal and ethical literature indicates that ethics occupies a central position in Islamic civilization. Ethical conduct is not merely a personal virtue but a foundational principle for social order, justice, and governance. The Qur'an consistently emphasizes noble character as an essential component of human excellence, as reflected in Surah Al-Qalam verse 4, where Prophet Muhammad SAW is described as possessing exemplary moral character. This demonstrates that ethics in Islam serves not only as an individual guideline but also as a normative foundation for public responsibility and institutional conduct (Mohammed, 2020; March, 2021).

Furthermore, Islamic ethics emphasizes the integration of moral responsibility and legal obligation. In this framework, legal compliance alone is insufficient if it is not accompanied by ethical integrity. Ethical values therefore function as preventive mechanisms against injustice, abuse of authority, and moral deviation. This position is particularly relevant for professions involving public trust and authority, including judicial institutions, where ethical failure may directly undermine justice and social order (Auda, 2021; Sulaiman et al., 2020).

Professional Ethics in Islam

The findings reveal that Islamic teachings establish a comprehensive ethical framework for professional conduct. Professional responsibility in Islam is not viewed merely as technical competence or occupational obligation but as part of *amanah* entrusted by Allah SWT. Consequently, every profession requires accountability, integrity, and commitment to justice.

Several ethical values consistently emerge as the core foundations of Islamic professional ethics. These include *shidiq* (truthfulness), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *tabligh* (transparency and effective communication), *fatanah* (competence and wisdom), and *istiqamah* (consistency and steadfastness). These values represent the prophetic ethical model and function as guiding principles for professional conduct across various institutional settings (Siswahyuningsih et al., 2025; Luthfiah et al., 2025).

The analysis shows that each ethical principle contributes significantly to professional governance. *Shidiq* ensures honesty in decision-making and communication. *Amanah* emphasizes responsibility and integrity in carrying out entrusted duties. *Tabligh* supports transparency and openness in communication and accountability. *Fatanah* highlights the necessity of intellectual competence and sound judgment. Meanwhile, *istiqamah* reflects consistency in maintaining ethical standards despite external pressures.

These ethical values collectively form an integrated framework of professional ethics in Islam. Importantly, this framework demonstrates strong compatibility with contemporary governance principles such as transparency, accountability, professionalism, and institutional integrity. Thus, Islamic professional ethics remains highly relevant in addressing modern governance challenges, including corruption, abuse of authority, and declining public trust in institutions (OECD, 2022; Transparency International, 2023).

Judges and Judicial Ethics in Islam

The judicial profession occupies a highly strategic and honorable position in Islamic legal thought because judges function as guardians of justice and protectors of public rights. In Islamic legal tradition, judges (*qadhi*) are entrusted with the authority to resolve disputes, interpret legal norms, and ensure justice within society. This judicial function historically dates back to the era of Prophet Muhammad SAW, who directly adjudicated disputes and appointed qualified companions to exercise judicial authority in different regions (Al-Mawardi, 2016; Kamali, 2008).

The findings indicate that Islamic legal scholarship establishes strict qualifications for judges. These qualifications include intellectual competence, legal expertise, integrity, maturity, fairness, and moral credibility. Such requirements reflect the understanding that judicial authority cannot be separated from ethical responsibility. A judge's legitimacy depends not only on legal knowledge but also on moral character and ethical consistency (Hidayah & Zarkasi, 2021; Hallaq, 2009).

Judicial ethics in Islam further requires judges to uphold justice, impartiality, independence, and accountability. Judges must treat litigants equally, avoid bias, remain free from external pressure, and ensure that judicial decisions are based on fairness and objective legal reasoning. Ethical principles therefore function as safeguards against arbitrary decisions, abuse of authority, and judicial misconduct (Meghdadi & Emami, 2018; UNODC, 2002).

The analysis also demonstrates substantial compatibility between Islamic judicial ethics and contemporary judicial ethics standards. Modern judicial governance frameworks, particularly the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct, emphasize six core values: independence, impartiality, integrity, propriety, equality, and competence. These principles strongly correspond with Islamic ethical values such as *amanah*, *adl*, *shidiq*, and *fatanah*. This compatibility suggests that Islamic judicial ethics provides a robust normative framework for strengthening judicial integrity and enhancing public trust in contemporary legal systems (UNODC, 2023; International Commission of Jurists, 2022; Voigt, 2021).

Overall, the findings confirm that judicial ethics in Islam extends beyond technical legal competence. It encompasses moral integrity, professional responsibility, and spiritual accountability before Allah SWT. As such, Islamic judicial ethics offers a comprehensive ethical framework for supporting judicial professionalism, institutional legitimacy, and the realization of justice in modern legal systems.

Discussion

Islamic Ethics as the Foundational Framework of Judicial Conduct

The findings demonstrate that ethics occupies a central position in Islamic teachings and serves as the foundation of judicial conduct. In Islam, ethics is not merely understood as a set of behavioral guidelines but as a comprehensive moral framework that governs the relationship between individuals, society, institutions, and Allah SWT. This ethical framework emphasizes that judicial authority is inseparable from moral responsibility and accountability in both worldly and spiritual dimensions.

This perspective distinguishes Islamic judicial ethics from purely secular legal frameworks. In secular systems, judicial ethics is commonly framed around institutional compliance, legal standards, and professional codes. By contrast, Islamic ethics introduces a deeper spiritual dimension in which judges are accountable not only to legal institutions and society but also to Allah SWT. This dual accountability strengthens ethical consciousness and encourages internal moral discipline in judicial practice (Hashi, 2011; Mohammed, 2020).

This finding supports previous studies by Hidayah and Zarkasi (2021), who argue that judicial ethics in Islamic law is fundamentally rooted in moral accountability and justice-oriented governance. It also extends the work of March (2021), who emphasizes that Islamic ethical reasoning integrates legal rationality with moral responsibility in public decision-making. Therefore, judicial ethics in Islam should be understood as both a legal and spiritual mechanism for ensuring justice.

Prophetic Ethical Values and Judicial Professionalism

The analysis reveals that the ethical principles of *shidiq* (truthfulness), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *tabligh* (transparency), *fatamah* (competence and wisdom), and *istiqamah* (consistency) form the core ethical foundations of judicial professionalism in Islam. These prophetic values collectively establish a comprehensive ethical model that regulates both personal morality and institutional conduct.

The significance of these ethical values lies in their practical implications for judicial decision-making. *Shidiq* ensures honesty and truthfulness in legal reasoning and verdicts. *Amanah* emphasizes integrity and responsibility in exercising judicial authority. *Tabligh* supports transparency and accountability in judicial communication. *Fatamah* requires intellectual competence and sound judgment. Meanwhile, *istiqamah* strengthens consistency in ethical conduct despite external pressures.

These findings reinforce the argument that judicial professionalism cannot be reduced to technical legal competence alone. Legal expertise without ethical integrity may lead to abuse of authority, corruption, or judicial misconduct. This finding aligns with Siswahyuningsih et al. (2025), who emphasize prophetic values as essential pillars of professional leadership, and with Lumopa and Arifin (2024), who identify ethical compliance as a major determinant of judicial legitimacy.

The integration of prophetic ethics into judicial professionalism therefore provides a more holistic model of judicial governance—one that combines competence, morality, and accountability.

Judicial Ethics and the Realization of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*

An important finding of this study is that judicial ethics contributes significantly to the realization of the objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*). Ethical judicial conduct strengthens justice and supports the protection of religion (*hifz al-din*), life (*hifz al-nafs*), intellect (*hifz al-'aql*), lineage (*hifz al-nasl*), and property (*hifz al-mal*).

From this perspective, judicial ethics should not be viewed merely as a professional requirement but as an essential instrument for achieving social welfare and preventing injustice. Fair judicial decisions protect rights, reduce oppression, and preserve social stability. Conversely, judicial corruption and ethical violations undermine public trust and threaten social justice.

This finding strongly supports Auda's (2021) argument that *maqāṣid*-oriented governance must prioritize justice, accountability, and public welfare. It also aligns with Sulaiman et al. (2020), who emphasize that Islamic governance fundamentally aims to promote justice and collective well-being.

Thus, the role of judicial ethics extends beyond procedural justice. It contributes directly to substantive justice and the broader objectives of Islamic law.

Compatibility Between Islamic Judicial Ethics and Contemporary Judicial Standards

Another important finding is the substantial compatibility between Islamic judicial ethics and contemporary standards of judicial governance. The Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct identify six core values: independence, impartiality, integrity, propriety, equality, and competence. These principles closely correspond with Islamic ethical values such as *amanah*, *adl*, *shidiq*, and *fatanah*.

This compatibility demonstrates that Islamic judicial ethics remains highly relevant within contemporary legal systems. Rather than being limited to classical Islamic legal traditions, these ethical values offer universal principles applicable to modern judicial governance. Independence corresponds with the Islamic obligation to remain free from external influence. Impartiality reflects the requirement to treat litigants equally. Integrity and competence align closely with the values of trustworthiness and wisdom.

This finding supports UNODC (2023) and International Commission of Jurists (2022), both of which emphasize that effective judicial systems require strong ethical foundations and institutional safeguards. It also reinforces Voigt's (2021) argument that judicial independence and accountability are critical to sustaining judicial legitimacy and institutional credibility.

Accordingly, Islamic judicial ethics should not be viewed as separate from global judicial standards, but rather as a complementary framework capable of strengthening modern judicial governance.

Judicial Ethics, Public Trust, and Contemporary Challenges

The findings further indicate that judicial ethics plays a crucial role in strengthening public trust and addressing contemporary challenges in judicial governance. Public confidence in legal institutions depends heavily on judicial integrity, fairness, transparency, and accountability. Ethical violations—including corruption, abuse of authority, and biased

decision-making—significantly weaken public trust and undermine the legitimacy of judicial institutions.

This issue remains highly relevant in many contemporary legal systems, where courts often face political pressure, institutional intervention, and corruption risks. Recent studies indicate that judicial integrity continues to be a major challenge in legal reform and governance (Parameswary et al., 2025; Kadir et al., 2026).

The present study argues that Islamic judicial ethics offers an important normative solution to these challenges. By internalizing ethical values rooted in revelation and prophetic teachings, judges can develop stronger moral resilience against external pressures and institutional corruption. Ethical compliance therefore functions not only as a professional requirement but also as a preventive mechanism for safeguarding judicial independence and institutional credibility.

Overall, this study demonstrates that Islamic judicial ethics provides a comprehensive ethical framework for contemporary judicial governance. It integrates legal competence, moral integrity, spiritual accountability, and institutional responsibility. The integration of Islamic ethical values with modern judicial standards may contribute significantly to strengthening judicial professionalism, enhancing public trust, and improving the effective administration of justice.

Conclusion

This study concludes that ethics occupies a fundamental position in Islamic teachings and serves as an essential foundation for the judicial profession. Judicial ethics in Islam extends beyond professional conduct and legal compliance, encompassing moral integrity and spiritual accountability before Allah SWT. The findings demonstrate that the ethical principles of *shidiq* (truthfulness), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *tabligh* (transparency), *fatamah* (competence and wisdom), and *istiqamah* (consistency) provide a comprehensive ethical framework for guiding judges in carrying out their duties fairly, responsibly, and professionally.

This study further reveals that Islamic judicial ethics contributes significantly to the realization of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* by protecting rights, preventing injustice, and promoting social welfare. Ethical judicial conduct strengthens substantive justice and supports the protection of fundamental human interests, including religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. In this regard, judicial ethics functions not only as a professional requirement but also as an important instrument for achieving justice-oriented governance.

Another important finding is the substantial compatibility between Islamic judicial ethics and contemporary standards of judicial conduct, particularly regarding independence, impartiality, integrity, accountability, equality, and competence. The ethical values embedded in Islamic teachings correspond closely with the core principles of modern judicial governance, including those reflected in the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct. This indicates that Islamic judicial ethics remains highly relevant in addressing contemporary challenges related to judicial reform, ethical misconduct, and declining public trust in legal institutions.

The main contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that Islamic judicial ethics should not be understood merely as a classical normative framework, but as a dynamic and relevant ethical system capable of strengthening contemporary judicial governance.

The integration of Islamic ethical values with modern judicial standards offers a more holistic framework for enhancing judicial professionalism, institutional legitimacy, and public trust.

Therefore, this study recommends strengthening the internalization of Islamic ethical values in judicial education, professional training, and institutional governance. Future research may further explore the practical implementation of Islamic judicial ethics in contemporary judicial institutions through empirical and comparative studies across different legal systems.

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