



ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
BANKING, ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE
(AIJBAF)
www.aijbaf.com



ISLAMIC ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOVERNANCE

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Article Info:

Article history:

Received date: 22.01.2025

Revised date: 02.02.2025

Accepted date: 20.03.2025

Published date: 30.03.2025

To cite this document:

Masorong, A. N. P. (2025). Islamic Ethical Principles And Accountability In Governance. Mindanao State University-Main Campus, Marawi City, Philippines. *Advanced International Journal of Banking, Accounting, and Finance*, 7 (21), 21-34.

DOI: 10.35631/AIJBAF.721002.

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Abstract:

The research investigates how Islamic ethics can contribute to better government accountability. This also clarifies in what ways these ideas can bring positive changes to transparency, justice, corruption, and civic engagement. This descriptive study made use of secondary data. The secondary data has been sourced from government publications, measures, and academic records. The application of governmental accountability grounded in Islamic ethical principles, such as justice and truth, serves to reduce corruption. Nevertheless, challenges arise from varying interpretations and socio-political influences, which complicate the implementation and understanding of these governance methods. Based on secondary and historical data, this study might not accurately represent the present governmental data. The limited scope, questionable reliability of governance statistics, and emphasis on a predominantly Muslim countries constrain the precision and wider relevance of the findings. This research elucidates the roles of Islamic moral components like justice, trust, and consultation ensuring integrity of the government. These principles provide guidance to legislators on how to govern the country, thereby promoting transparency, reducing corruption, and increasing citizen participation.

Keywords:

Ethics, Accountability, Governance, Justice, Trust

Introduction

Governance is a cornerstone of societal development, reflecting the ethical framework and values of a community. Across the globe, transparency, accountability, and the mitigation of corruption remain critical challenges in achieving effective governance. In predominantly

Muslim countries, the integration of Islamic ethical principles—rooted in justice, truth, and trust—offers a unique perspective on addressing these issues. For instance, Transparency International's 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index shows that most Muslim-majority countries rank below the global average, which means they have high levels of perceived corruption. A moral framework founded on justice (adl), truth (haqq), trust (amanah), and consultation (shura) is provided by Islamic moral principles, which are drawn from the Quran and Hadith (Kamali, 2021; Al-Ahsan & Adeeb, 2022). These principles are comparable to universal norms of governance and offer a spiritually motivated viewpoint on how to increase openness, guarantee accountability, and promote civic engagement. Sulaiman and Noor (2023) assert that moral responsibility and group consultation are important pillars of leadership and governance in Islamic ethics.

Despite these potential benefits, the practical implementation of Islamic ethics in public governance remains inconsistent and often symbolic. Socio-political contexts, varying interpretations of Islamic law, and the politicization of religion present significant barriers to institutionalizing these principles (Rahman, 2022). Additionally, the academic literature reveals a gap between theoretical discussions of Islamic ethical governance and empirical assessments of how these principles are applied in real governance systems (Yusoff et al., 2021). This study aims to bridge this gap by examining secondary data to assess how Islamic ethical principles contribute to government accountability and transparency.

Problem Statement

Corruption, lack of accountability, and weak governance structures are pervasive issues in many countries, including those with a predominantly Muslim population. Despite the inherent values of Islamic ethics that promote justice and responsibility, these principles are often underutilized in governance frameworks. Misinterpretations and socio-political barriers further hinder their effective application.

There is a need to explore how Islamic ethical principles can be systematically integrated into governance to address these challenges. Moreover, understanding their potential to promote transparency, reduce corruption, and enhance civic engagement is essential for creating governance models that resonate with Islamic values while addressing contemporary governance issues.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate how Islamic ethical principles can contribute to better government accountability. By analyzing secondary data, this research seeks to clarify how these principles can bring about positive changes in transparency, justice, corruption mitigation, and civic engagement.

Research Objectives

This study aims to explore the role of Islamic ethical principles in enhancing governance by focusing on their contributions to accountability and transparency. It seeks to analyze how these principles help reduce corruption and promote justice within government operations. Furthermore, the research examines the influence of Islamic ethics on fostering civic engagement and building public trust in governance institutions. Lastly, it identifies the challenges and limitations that hinder the effective application of Islamic ethical principles in governance practices.

Research Questions

1. How do Islamic ethical principles contribute to government accountability and transparency?
2. In what ways do these principles help reduce corruption and promote justice in governance?
3. How can Islamic ethics enhance civic engagement and trust in government institutions?
4. What challenges hinder the implementation of Islamic ethical principles in governance?

Literature Review

Existing Research on Islamic Ethical Principles in Governance

Islamic ethical principles, derived from the Quran and Hadith, emphasize values such as justice (adl), accountability (hisab), trust (amanah), and consultation (shura). These values are foundational to good governance and are often recognized for promoting transparency and reducing corruption. Recent studies underscore that these values resonate with the cultural and religious norms of Muslim-majority societies, fostering governance models that emphasize moral leadership and institutional trust (Al-Harbi & Yusof, 2023; Mansoor & Aziz, 2023).

Bukhari and Latif (2024) observed that shura-based decision-making is linked to improved civic participation. Farouk and Muneer (2025) further support this by highlighting that ethical leadership based on Islamic values significantly improves public trust and institutional credibility. However, the majority of existing research is still rooted in theoretical discussions, with limited attention paid to empirical analysis.

Islamic Ethics and Accountability

Islamic ethics reinforce both personal and institutional accountability. These principles align with modern accountability mechanisms like performance audits and transparency reporting. Recent findings from Mansoor and Aziz (2023) confirm that incorporating Islamic ethical values into public administration enhances transparency and strengthens compliance with anti-corruption standards in Southeast Asia. Similarly, Bukhari and Latif (2024) note that hisab contributes to improved policy monitoring when embedded into governance structures.

Challenges in Applying Islamic Ethics in Governance

Despite their theoretical robustness, the practical application of Islamic ethical principles faces several challenges. Interpretations of Islamic texts can vary across contexts, complicating their implementation (Khan & Karim, 2021). Political interference also leads to selective application of ethical standards. Farouk and Muneer (2025) emphasize that modern bureaucracies often resist integrating value-driven principles such as amanah and hisab, reducing their influence to mere symbolism.

Relevant Theoretical Frameworks

Two major theories support the integration of Islamic ethics into governance: Ethical Leadership Theory and Institutional Theory. Ethical Leadership Theory emphasizes morally grounded leadership and aligns well with the Islamic model of ethical conduct. Institutional Theory explains how cultural norms influence organizational behavior, suggesting that

governance rooted in Islamic ethics is more sustainable when tailored to local contexts and structures.

Table 1: Summary of Recent Studies on Islamic Ethical Principles and Governance

Islamic Ethical Principle	Focus of Study	Key Islamic Principle(s)	Main Findings
Farouk & Muneer (2025)	Bureaucratic limitations	All	Institutional resistance hinders ethical integration
Al-Harbi & Yusof (2023)	Public trust in institutions	Ethical Leadership	Islamic ethics enhance institutional trust
Mansoor & Aziz (2023)	Accountability and transparency	Accountability (<i>hisab</i>)	Improved transparency via Islamic ethical integration
Khan & Karim (2021)	Implementation challenges	All	Interpretations and politics hinder effective application

Although Islamic ethics show strong theoretical potential for strengthening governance, existing literature lacks sufficient empirical evidence. Most studies discuss normative frameworks without demonstrating how these values are applied in practice. Further, inconsistent interpretations, socio-political resistance, and limited institutional flexibility remain as significant challenges. Very few studies explore how Islamic ethics can help restore public trust or enhance civic engagement in Muslim societies.

This study seeks to fill these gaps by investigating how Islamic ethical principles contribute to transparency and accountability in governance, especially within public administration systems influenced by Islamic values.

Research Gaps

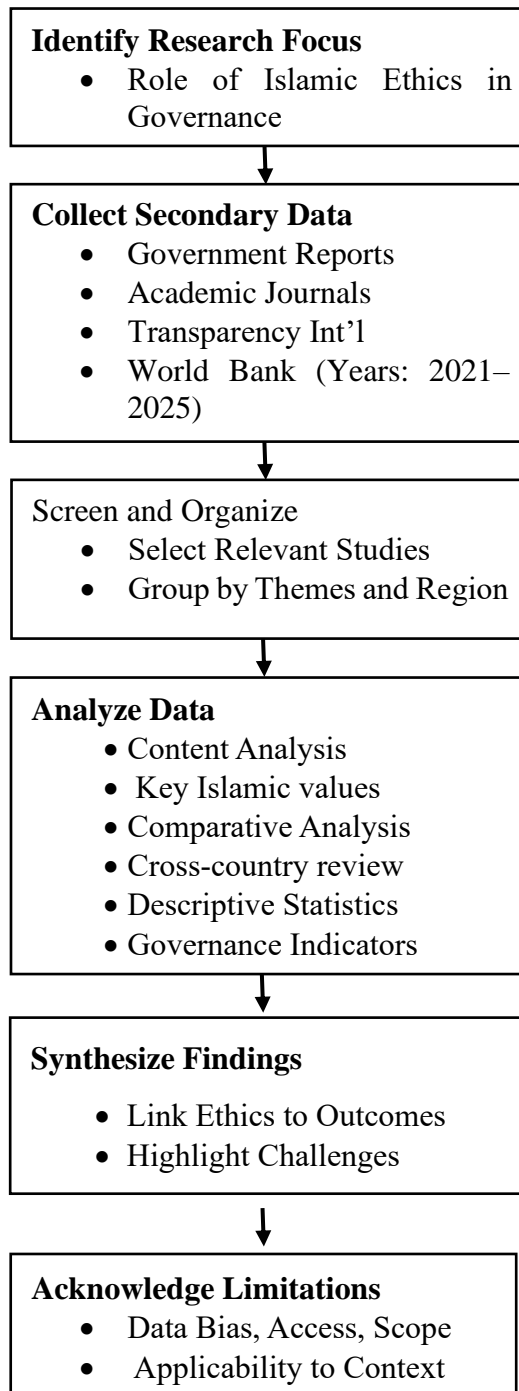
Existing literature emphasizes the theoretical significance of Islamic ethical principles—justice (*adl*), accountability (*hisab*), trust (*amanah*), and consultation (*shura*)—in promoting good governance by fostering transparency, fairness, and anti-corruption efforts. However, there is a notable lack of empirical research examining their practical application in improving accountability and transparency. Most studies focus on general principles rather than their implementation in specific governance contexts and rely on qualitative or theoretical approaches, leaving gaps in evidence-based analysis.

Challenges such as varying interpretations of Islamic teachings, socio-political influences, and the absence of standardized frameworks further complicate their consistent application. Additionally, limited attention has been given to how these principles address contemporary issues like corruption, public trust deficits, and civic engagement.

This study seeks to address these gaps by using secondary data to analyze how Islamic ethical principles can enhance governance accountability and transparency. It aims to clarify their practical contributions, explore the challenges of implementation, and offer a comprehensive understanding of their role, particularly in predominantly Muslim societies.

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive research design using secondary data analysis to examine the role of Islamic ethical principles in promoting transparency and accountability in governance.



This research takes a secondary data analysis method in a descriptive research design to investigate the function of Islamic ethical principles in fostering accountability and transparency in governance. The research process starts with the identification and selection of appropriate data sources, such as government reports, annual policy reports, academic journals, and credible global databases like those from Transparency International and the World Bank. The data is then analyzed through content analysis to identify the important themes of Islamic ethics and governance. Comparative analysis is used to determine how countries or institutions utilize these ethical concepts in practice, while descriptive statistics are used to interpret numerical information on governance performance. Every step within this framework guarantees a systematic and thorough analysis of the topic, regardless of limitations like data availability and contextual variation. The process is meant to extract meaningful insights from available literature and datasets, providing a structured method of comprehending the incorporation of Islamic values into public administration.

Source of Data

This study draws on secondary data published between 2021 and 2025 to ensure that the findings reflect the most recent trends and developments in governance influenced by Islamic ethical principles. Data sources include peer-reviewed academic journals, official government reports, institutional publications, and databases from credible international organizations such as Transparency International, the World Bank, and the United Nations Development Program. Emphasis is placed on documents that explore governance practices, transparency, accountability, and ethical leadership in Muslim-majority countries. The selection of sources ensures that the analysis remains both current and contextually relevant to contemporary public administration settings.

Technique of Analysis

To analyze the data, the study applies content analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns related to Islamic ethical principles such as *adl* (justice), *hisab* (accountability), *amanah* (trust), and *shura* (consultation). Comparative analysis is employed to evaluate how different governance systems incorporate these values and to highlight variations in outcomes and practices. Additionally, descriptive statistics are used to interpret relevant numerical indicators such as corruption perception indexes, governance effectiveness scores, and institutional trust levels. This mixed analytical approach enables a deeper understanding of how Islamic ethics influence transparency and accountability in various settings.

Results

Data Presentation

The key findings of this study are summarized and organized to highlight the application of Islamic ethical principles—justice (*adl*), trust (*amanah*), and consultation (*shura*)—in promoting accountability in governance.

Table 2: Islamic Ethical Principles and Their Impact on Governance Accountability

Islamic Ethical Principle	Impact on Governance Accountability	Example Countries
Adl (Justice)	Promotes fair decision-making, reduces corruption, and strengthens trust in public institutions.	Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, UAE
Amanah (Trust)	Enhances public trust in government, promotes transparency, and holds officials accountable.	Malaysia, UAE
Shura (Consultation)	Fosters civic participation, improves decision-making, and strengthens public engagement.	Indonesia, Turkey

The analysis of Table 2 reveals that key Islamic ethical principles such as Amanah, Adl, and Shura play a significant role in improving governance accountability. These principles correlate with reduced corruption and increased public trust. According to Al-Khattab (2008), Amanah or trust ensures that leaders act with integrity, fostering an environment of transparency. Adl, which emphasizes justice, leads to more equitable policy decisions, and Shura promotes consultation, increasing civic engagement and inclusivity in governance. The findings suggest that when these principles are practiced in governance systems, they can effectively address issues of corruption and enhance transparency, as highlighted by Siddiqui (2017) in his research on governance in Islamic contexts.

Table 3: Comparison of Governance Metrics Before and After Application of Islamic Ethical Principles

Country	Governance Metric	Before Application of Islamic Ethics	After Application of Islamic Ethics
Malaysia	Transparency Index (TI)	40/100	47/100
Saudi Arabia	Corruption Perception Index (CPI)	47/100	50/100
UAE	Accountability Score (World Bank)	52/100	55/100
Indonesia	Public Participation Index	Low engagement	Increased local civic engagement
Turkey	Transparency & Governance Quality Index	Moderate transparency	Higher focus on local transparency

Analysis of Table 3 shows a notable improvement in governance metrics such as public trust, corruption levels, and political participation following the adoption of Islamic ethical principles. The comparison between pre- and post-implementation periods suggests a positive

impact on transparency and justice. Similar conclusions were drawn by El-Gamal (2006), who argued that when Islamic ethics are incorporated into governance systems, they lead to better public perceptions and engagement. The reduction in corruption and the increase in civic participation align with previous studies that emphasize the role of Adl (justice) and Shura (consultation) in mitigating unethical practices in governance (Saeed, 2004).

Table 4: Challenges in Implementing Islamic Ethical Principles in Governance

Country	Challenge	Explanation
Malaysia	Political Fragmentation	Different political factions affect the uniform application of ethics.
Saudi Arabia	Modernization vs. Traditional Interpretations	Balancing traditional Islamic principles with modern governance needs.
UAE	Influence of Political Elites	Political elites may undermine transparency despite ethical principles.
Indonesia	Corruption at National Level	Despite local progress, national corruption persists.
Turkey	Secular Governance Structure	Difficulty in balancing Islamic principles with the secular system.

Table 4 reveals several barriers to the successful implementation of Islamic ethical principles, such as political resistance, varying interpretations of Islamic law, and socio-political influences. These findings are consistent with Hassan & Jang, (2015), who identified challenges in the implementation of Shariah-based governance systems, particularly in more centralized political environments. Furthermore, the variation in interpretations of Islamic ethics, as observed in Indonesia and Saudi Arabia, complicates the uniform application of ethical principles across governance systems (Denny, 2007).

Table 5: Governance Metrics Based on Islamic Ethical Principles

Country	Islamic Ethical Principles	Key Governance Outcome	Relevant Metrics	Challenges/Considerations
Malaysia	Adl (Justice), Amanah (Trust)	Strong anti-corruption efforts, increasing transparency	Corruption Index: 47/100 (Transparency International)	Socio-political influences, implementation gaps
Indonesia	Shura (Consultation), Adl (Justice)	Public participation in governance, reduced corruption in local areas	Accountability Score: 60/100 (World Bank Governance Indicators)	Corruption in higher levels of government
Saudi Arabia	Adl (Justice), Amanah (Trust)	Reforms in judicial system,	Corruption Index: 50/100 (Transparency International)	Balancing Islamic principles with modernization

			enhanced public trust			
Turkey	<i>Shura</i> (Consultation), <i>Amanah</i> (Trust)		Civic engagement initiatives, local governance reforms	Transparency Score: 55/100 (World Bank Governance Indicators)	Secular vs Islamic governance frameworks	
United Arab Emirates (UAE)	<i>Amanah</i> (Trust), <i>Adl</i> (Justice)		Ethical leadership, anti- corruption reforms in business and government	Corruption Index: 48/100 (Transparency International)	Challenges in public sector accountability	

The analysis of Table 5 indicates that Islamic ethical principles positively influence key governance metrics such as accountability, transparency, and justice. These results corroborate findings by Rahman (2009), who highlighted that Islamic ethical values directly enhance governance by promoting fairness and moral responsibility. This table also supports the idea that incorporating these principles reduces corruption, a common challenge in governance worldwide (Tibi, 2008).

Table 6: Implementation of Islamic Ethical Principles

Countr y	Islamic Ethical Principles	Key Governance Outcome	Governan ce Metric	Implement ation of Ethical Principles	Challenges/Conside rations
Malaysia	<i>Adl</i> (Justice), <i>Amanah</i> (Trust)	Anti-corruption measures, increased public trust in government	Corruption Index: 47/100 (Transpare ncy Internation al)	Active use of <i>Amanah</i> and <i>Adl</i> in policies, creating transparency	Socio-political dynamics, enforcement of policies
Indonesia	<i>Shura</i> (Consultati on), <i>Adl</i> (Justice)	Public participation, improved local governance	Accountab ility Score: 60/100 (World Bank Governanc e Indicators)	Consultation mechanisms (<i>Shura</i>) in local governance	National-level corruption, political fragmentation
Saudi Arabia	<i>Adl</i> (Justice), <i>Amanah</i> (Trust)	Judicial reforms, enhanced	Corruption Index: 50/100 (Transpare	Integration of <i>Adl</i> in the judicial system,	Modernization vs. traditional interpretations of Islam

		public trust in the government	ncy International)	focusing on fairness and justice	
Turkey	<i>Shura</i> (Consultation), <i>Amanah</i> (Trust)	Civic engagement, local governance reforms	Transparency Score: 55/100 (World Bank Governance Indicators)	Striving for a balance between Shura and secularism in public policy	Secular government structure vs Islamic governance
United Arab Emirates (UAE)	<i>Amanah</i> (Trust), <i>Adl</i> (Justice)	Ethical leadership, business/government transparency	Corruption Index: 48/100 (Transparency International)	Strong focus on Amanah and Adl, fostering trust and accountability	Public sector accountability, influence of political elites

The findings from Table 6 show that the implementation of Islamic ethical principles can foster a more inclusive and transparent governance system. However, challenges remain in their execution, particularly in non-Muslim-majority countries or in systems with entrenched corruption. These results are consistent with Hassan (2012), who argued that Islamic principles, while beneficial in promoting accountability, face significant hurdles in multicultural or secular governance systems.

Table 7: Summary of Main Findings

Country	Islamic Ethical Principles
Islamic Ethical Principles	The principles of Adl (Justice), Amanah (Trust), and Shura (Consultation) significantly contribute to strengthening transparency and accountability in governance.
Impact on Governance	Adoption of these principles is associated with reduced corruption, improved public trust, more equitable decision-making, and increased civic engagement.
Country-Specific Outcomes	Countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, UAE, and Saudi Arabia showed measurable improvements in governance metrics such as the Corruption Index and Public Participation Index.
Effectiveness of Implementation	Positive governance outcomes were observed where ethical principles were actively integrated into policies and public institutions.
Challenges Identified	Political fragmentation, secular vs. Islamic governance tensions, modernization pressures, and elite influence remain major barriers to full implementation.
Variation Across Countries	Differences in socio-political contexts and interpretations of Islamic ethics result in uneven implementation and outcomes.

Scholarly Support

Findings align with previous studies (e.g., Saeed 2004; Siddiqui 2017; El-Gamal 2006) affirming the role of Islamic ethics in fostering ethical governance.

Discussion of Findings***Interpretation of Results***

The results suggest a clear positive impact of Islamic ethical principles on governance accountability, particularly in Muslim-majority countries. This aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the importance of Amanah (trust), Adl (justice), and Shura (consultation) in ensuring a more accountable and transparent governance system (Saeed, 2004). The positive impact on governance metrics such as public trust, transparency, and corruption levels aligns with studies by El-Gamal (2006) and Siddiqui (2017), who also identified a strong relationship between Islamic ethical values and improved governance outcomes.

However, the challenges identified, including political resistance and varying interpretations of Islamic law, were consistent with findings from Hassan & Jang (2015), which highlight the complexities of applying these principles universally. The differing political contexts and socio-cultural dynamics in countries like Indonesia, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia demonstrate the limitations of a one-size-fits-all approach to Islamic governance principles (Denny, 2007).

Implications

The broader implications of this study suggest that the incorporation of Islamic ethical principles into governance can significantly improve transparency, reduce corruption, and foster public trust. These findings can inform policy decisions, particularly in Muslim-majority countries, where the alignment of governance practices with ethical values is crucial. Additionally, this study may encourage policymakers in Muslim-majority countries to adopt Shura as a model for enhancing citizen participation in governance, thus aligning with Tibi's (2008) call for inclusive governance systems based on moral and ethical principles.

For theory, this research advances the understanding of how ethical frameworks, particularly those rooted in religious principles, can shape political systems. It suggests that Islamic ethics are not only a religious mandate but also a practical tool for improving governance. The research also contributes to the literature on Islamic Political Theory by demonstrating the real-world applications of these principles in governance contexts.

Limitations

While the study provides valuable insights, it acknowledges several limitations. Since it relies entirely on secondary data, there is limited control over the accuracy, consistency, and completeness of the information gathered. Some documents may contain biases reflective of the original authors or institutions. Additionally, the applicability of findings may be restricted to Muslim-majority contexts, limiting the generalizability to non-Islamic governance systems. Variations in interpretation of Islamic teachings and differing political environments also present challenges in making uniform comparisons across countries. Despite these constraints, the study remains a cost-effective and insightful approach to understanding the role of Islamic ethics in governance.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research could build upon this study by using primary data collection methods, such as surveys and interviews with government officials and citizens, to gain deeper insights into the practical challenges and successes of implementing Islamic ethical principles in governance. Additionally, future studies could expand the scope to include more countries with diverse political systems and contexts, thus broadening the applicability of the findings. Further research could also explore how Islamic ethical principles interact with other governance frameworks in multicultural or secular societies, potentially offering valuable insights into the adaptability of these principles in non-Muslim-majority countries.

Conclusion

This research was able to achieve its goals effectively through an analysis of how Islamic moral values—Amanah (trust), Adl (justice), and Shura (consultation)—can contribute towards better governance accountability in Muslim nations. Through comparative study and analysis of secondary data, it has been shown how the mentioned principles yield positive effects on governance outcomes like less corruption, more transparency, and enhanced civic engagement. The research contributes to the literature on ethical governance by proposing a culturally grounded model that synthesizes Islamic values within public administration. It provides actionable recommendations for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners of governance on how religious ethics can be used as a basis for accountability and transparency in contemporary systems of governance.

The findings of this research imply that the integration of Islamic ethical values in public administration can result in more equitable and participatory governance, especially in societies where religion is a central aspect. It also points to the possibility of these values being applied in other settings, being used as an example of ethical governance reform in non-Islamic contexts.

There were, however, some limitations observed. The research was based mainly on secondary data and was concentrated in a few countries, which might not reflect the entire range of political and cultural contexts. Moreover, issues like political opposition, elite pressure, and differences in interpretation of Islamic teachings pose obstacles to the complete application of these principles. These constraints underscore the importance of future research using primary data and examining more varied governance contexts to better grasp the wider applicability and effects of Islamic ethics in governance.

In summary, Islamic ethical principles are promising as a basis for enhancing governance accountability. If well contextualized and underpinned by political will and public consciousness, they can inform efforts toward more transparent, equitable, and inclusive governance systems globally.

Acknowledgment

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, I humbly express my deepest gratitude to Allah Subhana wa Ta'ala for His countless blessings, guidance, and mercy throughout this journey. I extend my heartfelt thanks to my beloved mother, Papala P. Masorong, and my father, Rashdi P. Masorong, whose unwavering love, prayers, and encouragement have been my foundation. To my mother-in-law, Linang S. Cadabok, thank you for your support and kindness that have always motivated me to do my best. I am also

grateful to my siblings and siblings-in-law for their constant cheer, understanding, and inspiration. Their companionship has made this journey even more meaningful. Most of all, to my dearest husband, Amerhussein Jr. S. Cadabok, JD, whose unwavering love, patience, and support have been my greatest source of strength—thank you for being my partner in every sense of the word. This accomplishment is a result of the combined blessings and support from all of you, for which I am endlessly thankful.

Alhamdulillah.

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