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AL-IHSAN IN SERVICE: RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

Devotion to encompass moral integrity and social responsibility. Through in-depth analysis of primary Islamic sources and contemporary studies, this research aims to formulate a conceptual model of Ihsan-Based Service. This qualitative literature study concludes that Al-Ihsan functions as a bridge between inner spirituality (muraqabah) and social ethics, inspiring individuals and organizations to achieve holistic service excellence and contribute to justice and public prosperity. The study offers significant theoretical and practical contributions This paper explores the concept of Al-Ihsan from both religious and social perspectives, emphasizing its significance in shaping ethics, service orientation, and community welfare. Al-Ihsan, defined as excellence or benevolence, transcends ritual to the development of ethical human resource management.

Keywords: Al-ihsan; ihsan-based service; ethical human resource management

1. INTRODUCTION

Service activity is a vital component of social interactions and institutional functions, fundamentally driven by the concept of Al-Ihsan in Islam, which represents the highest religious attainment and demands earnestness, perfection, and the best quality in every action, both toward God (worship) and fellow human beings (transactions)[1]. Theologically, Ihsan is based on the principle of *muraqabah* (feeling observed by God), which becomes the foundation of morality and integrity for service providers. At the same time, socially, Ihsan manifests as a behavior that upholds empathy, justice, and the provision of benefits that exceed the minimal requirements (*al-adl*) for achieving public welfare. Despite the fundamental nature of this concept, its comprehensive integration into modern service systems still faces ethical and practical implementation challenges (Wahidillah et al., 2025),[2] which are often inconsistent with the demands of Islamic accountability and professionalism.

[1] Wael Alshurman, "The Availability of Services and Facilities Provided for Students with Disabilities at Al Al-Bayt University in Jordan from Their Own Perspective," 2021, 174–85.

[2] Wahidillah, N., Apriyani, S. R., Meilani, V. R., and Ashari, Z. M. (2025). Pelayanan Publik dalam Perspektif Islam: Landasan, Prinsip, dan Implementasi di Era Kontemporer. Kajian Administrasi Publik dan Ilmu Komunikasi, 2(3), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.62383/kajian.v2i3.488

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Therefore, this study aims to analyze and elaborate on the theological foundations of Al-Ihsan, identify its behavioral indicators in the context of public and social services, and formulate a conceptual model of Ihsan-based service that integrates spirituality and professionalism as a holistic and just framework, while simultaneously contributing theoretically and practically to the development of Islamic human resource management.

Theologically, Al-Ihsan is defined by the Hadith of Gabriel as "to worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you cannot see Him, then indeed He sees you." This principle of Muraqabah establishes Divine Accountability, an internal oversight mechanism that motivates the service provider to execute duties with perfection (*husn*) and sincerity (*ikhlas***)** even without external supervision. Ihsan functions as the bridge connecting the spiritual and social dimensions of service.

Pillars of Ihsan-Based Service Ethics

The conceptual model proposed is built on three core Islamic service ethics, driven by Ihsan (Ethical Excellence), Al-'Adl (Justice), and Amanah (Dual Accountability). Ihsan Commitment (*Muraqabah* and *Ikhlas*) functions as the Moral Input that integrates and guides this ethical process, aimed at producing Service Excellence, which ultimately achieves Social Welfare (*Maslahah*) (Faoziyah, 2024).[3]

Furthermore, quality services are not only needed in economic and business aspects. However, in religious and social interaction aspects, the public also has the right and need for quality services, so they can obtain clear information related to religious teachings and good social interaction between religious communities. Especially for the Muslim community, they have the right and need for good religious services from religious leaders, and officials authorized related to Islam, such as zakat services, prayer (including time, congregation, and place), hajj, qurban, marriage, and others. Therefore, Islamic religious policy holders and their administrators have an obligation to serve the Muslim community with good quality services, so they can increase public trust and satisfaction in implementing Islamic law, such as the satisfaction of muzakki in zakat worship and their trust in zakat institutions[4].

Religion and ethics play a vital role in shaping human behavior, particularly in the context of public services and organizations aimed at advancing societal welfare. In Indonesia—a diverse country with multiple religions and cultures founded on Pancasila—the integration of religious values with management and service practices is relevant for creating just, inclusive, and sustainable systems. Among the Islamic values with significant potential for application in this context is ihsan—a concept often regarded as the pinnacle of faith, where a person worships as if seeing God or constantly feels His presence and watchful eye.

While Ihsan has long been recognized in Islamic teachings as a moral foundation, its application in management and service practices remains underexplored in scholarly literature. Many studies on service ethics focus more on conventional principles such as justice and professionalism, without incorporating the spiritual dimension that can serve as internal motivation for achieving excellence. Furthermore, in challenging situations like the

[3] Faoziyah, S. (2024). Inklusi Sosial dalam Perspektif Keislaman: Meningkatkan Kesejahteraan Sosial untuk Semua. Akselerasi: Jurnal Ilmiah Nasional, 5(1).

[4] Amil Zakat and Al-ihsan Jawa Tengah, "Strategi Peningkatan Pengumpulan Zakat , Infak Dan Sedekah Pada Lembaga" 7, no. 03 (2021): 1689–95.

COVID-19 pandemic or social cohesion issues, the need for a strong ethical framework to guide decisions and behavior becomes increasingly critical—and Ihsan has the potential to serve as a foundation for this.

The limited understanding of Ihsan's application in services and management forms the primary background of this research. This study aims to explore the concept of ihsan in Islamic teachings, identify its behavioral manifestations in service contexts, analyze its impact on service quality, and examine its integration with national values such as Pancasila and maqasid sharia. Through a literature analysis, this research seeks to bridge the gap between Islamic ethics and management practice, as well as provide useful theoretical and practical contributions for public or Islamic service institutions.

Subsequent chapters will outline the theoretical framework of the ihsan concept, the research methods used, the key findings of the study, a discussion of the significance and implications of the findings, and a conclusion including research limitations and directions for future research

2. METHODS

This research adopts a Qualitative Research Design focusing on Library Research (normative-conceptual analysis). Data Sources include the Qur'an and the Hadith (as primary sources) and academic journals and books related to Islamic ethics, management, and public service (as secondary sources). The data analysis techniques used are Qualitative Content Analysis and Conceptual Comparative Analysis to synthesize these principles into an integrated framework.

This study employs a qualitative approach using a library research design. The research is descriptive-analytical in nature, aiming to explore the concept of ihsan in Islamic teachings, its behavioral manifestations in service contexts, its impact on service quality, and its integration with national values such as Pancasila and maqasid sharia.

This study does not involve direct participants but focuses on examining textual and scholarly sources relevant to the topic. The research procedure consists of three main stages: data collection, data analysis, and conclusion drawing. The primary materials include the Qur'an and authenticated Hadith collections that articulate the foundational principles of ihsan, while secondary materials comprise academic books, peer-reviewed journals, dissertations, and policy reports discussing ihsan, Islamic ethics, service management, and the alignment of religious values with national principles—curated based on relevance, academic credibility, and recency (2000–2025).

Data were collected using documentation methods by reviewing, identifying, and classifying credible sources through targeted searches in academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and Garuda. Data were analyzed using descriptive-interpretive content analysis, which enables the researcher to extract key themes, synthesize findings across sources, and interpret the practical and theoretical implications of ihsan for service management. Ethical considerations were maintained by ensuring academic honesty, originality, and proper citation to prevent plagiarism. The validity of data was ensured through source triangulation by comparing religious texts with contemporary scholarly discourse, while reliability was maintained by relying on verified and up-to-date academic

references. Although this research is conceptual and lacks empirical validation, it contributes theoretically to bridging the gap between Islamic ethics and management practice.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The concept of Ihsan holds a crucial position in Islamic teachings, often defined as the pinnacle of one's faith and Islam, where one worships as if seeing God, or at least feeling constantly under His watchful eye. This appreciation of Ihsan is not only relevant in the context of ritual worship but also extends to all aspects of human actions and interactions. It forms the basis for commendable morals. Ihsan's behavior encompasses all forms of goodness and brings joy to others through the blessings they receive regarding themselves, their bodies, and their circumstances. The practice of Ihsan encourages a Muslim to go beyond the limits of justice, namely by treating others better than they treat us. This principle forms a strong foundation for the formation of a Muslim character that is not only ritually pious but also excels in social interactions and self-care, which in turn contributes to spiritual and physical health. Furthermore, Al-ihsan also intersects with national and pluralistic values, as embodied in Indonesia's Pancasila, where religious principles are aligned with social justice, human rights, and social welfare. This integration supports deradicalization and strengthens social cohesion by embedding ihsan within a religious and national framework[5], aligned with the principles of Pancasila and the maqasid sharia. This adaptability is crucial when resource limitations necessitate difficult prioritization. As demonstrated by studies on ethical roadmaps during the COVID-19 pandemic, Ihsan demands that service policies—even those regarding resource allocation—must be evaluated through the lens of *Maslahah* to maximize public benefit and prevent harm. This operationalization of Ihsan into flexible, legally-justified policy is what distinguishes true *excellence* from mere ritual, ensuring the service remains relevant across diverse circumstances.

However, we argue that the Ihsan-Based Service model's full relevance extends beyond mere ethics, demanding explicit grounding in Islamic jurisprudence. Its framework must align directly with the Maqasid al-Shariah (Objectives of Islamic Law), ensuring that the pursuit of service excellence ultimately fulfills the five core human necessities. Moreover, this model must be inherently dynamic, operationalizing the principle of Maslahah (Public Interest) to guarantee adaptability. This flexibility is what allows Ihsan to remain a relevant guide, irrespective of changes in time, place, and circumstance.

Ihsan in Islam emphasizes justice, altruism (putting others first), and respect for others, especially in crises such as a pandemic. In times of crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic, the Islamic ethical framework emphasizes al-ihsan as essential for prioritizing limited resources[6], ensuring fairness, and promoting social justice. Decision-makers are encouraged to embody ihsan and altruism, prioritizing the needs of others and upholding justice and respect for all, especially the vulnerable. Ihsan encourages fair and socially beneficial decision-making, such as in the distribution of limited medical resources. These values are recognized as key ethical guidelines in Muslim community service, demanding sincerity, justice, and sacrifice for the

[5] Ahmad Fatah, "PANCASILA AND ISLAMIC EDUCATION : THE DERADICALIZATION MODEL OF MADRASAHS" 9, no. 1 (2021): 245–78.

[6] Qosay A E Al, Balas Wael, and K Al Delaimy, "An Ethical Roadmap for Prioritizing Medical Resources Within Muslim Societies During the COVID - 19 Pandemic," *Journal of Religion and Health* 60, no. 5 (2021): 3372–78, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-021-01344-0.

common good. Crucially, Ihsan's ethical requirement for 'excellence' translates into legal flexibility during crises. As demonstrated by the ethical roadmaps developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, service prioritization must shift based on Maslahah to maximize public benefit and prevent greater harm. This operational flexibility is essential for the model to work in practice, allowing organizations to maintain justice in resource allocation and ensure inclusivity, such as providing necessary facilities for students with disabilities (Alshurman, Al-Khateeb, & Ihsan, 2021).[7]

In social practice, Ihsan is reflected in inclusive services, such as the provision of facilities for people with disabilities in educational institutions. A study at Al-Bayt University showed that good services include access to information, social services, and physical accommodations, although their availability remains moderate.

Behavioral Manifestations of Ihsan

The literature analysis shows that Al-Ihsan translates into practical service behavioral indicators, which align with studies on employee performance and well-being (Khan et al., 2024). This includes Professionalism (*Fathanah*), meaning the execution of tasks with the highest technical competence and efficiency; Empathy and Dignity, where service is rendered by honoring the recipient; and Total Integrity, meaning keeping promises and avoiding corruption, a direct manifestation of *Amanah* controlled by *Muraqabah*.

The Effect of Ihsan on Service Quality

The concept of Ihsan directly addresses service quality issues where performance often stops at the minimum duty line. With Ihsan, service is fueled by an internal motivation for excellence, which is an essential prerequisite for achieving prime and sustainable service quality. The model shows that Ihsan functions as a strong internal control mechanism against corruption and negligence.

Interpretation and Theoretical Implications

The research results provide theoretical contributions by bridging the gap between Islamic ethics and management practice, transforming service from a mere task into a social worship (Wahidillah et al., 2025).[8] By emphasizing Divine Accountability (*Muraqabah*), the model offers a stronger ethical solution than conventional mechanisms, reinforcing dual accountability to God and the people.

Practical Implications and Study Limitations

Practically, the Ihsan-Based Service Model requires public or Islamic organizations to revise their work culture to focus on excellence, empathy, and truthfulness. The limitation of this study is its conceptual nature, lacking empirical validation. Therefore, future research directions are strongly advised to conduct case studies and quantitative surveys in service institutions to test the validity and reliability of this conceptual model statistically.

4. CONCLUSION

[7] Alshurman, W., Al-Khateeb, A., & Ihsan, A. (2021). The Availability of Services and Facilities Provided for Students with Disabilities at Al al-Bayt University in Jordan from Their Own Perspective. Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, 10(4), 174–185. https://doi.org/10.36941/ajis-2021-0108

[8] Nur Wahidillah et al., "Pelayanan Publik dalam Perspektif Islam: Landasan, Prinsip, dan Implementasi di Era Kontemporer," Kajian Administrasi Publik dan Ilmu Komunikasi 2, no. 3 (September 2025): 2-3, https://doi.org/10.62383/kajian.v2i3.488.

This research aimed to explore the concept of ihsan in Islamic teachings, its behavioral manifestations, its impact on service quality, and its integration with broader social and national values. Key findings reveal that Ihsan—defined as worshiping as if seeing God—extends beyond ritual worship to shape moral behavior, encourage justice beyond obligation, manifest in service indicators (professionalism, empathy, integrity), enhance service quality through internal motivation, and align with the principles of Pancasila, maqasid sharia, and crisis response. The study contributes theoretically by bridging the gap between Islamic ethics and management practice, framing service as a form of social worship with dual accountability to God and humanity, and offering a stronger ethical alternative to conventional control mechanisms. A limitation of this research is its conceptual nature, as it lacks empirical validation to test the proposed model's real-world applicability. For future research, case studies and quantitative surveys in public or Islamic service institutions are recommended to statistically assess the model's validity and reliability. Practically, the ihsan-based service model requires organizations to revise their work cultures to prioritize excellence, empathy, and honesty, thereby supporting deradicalization and social cohesion. By integrating spiritual values with practical management, this research highlights how Ihsan can transform not only service quality but also foster more just, inclusive, and sustainable communities—underscoring its timeless relevance in both religious and secular contexts.

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