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The Distribution of Accountants' and Sharia Supervisory Board (SSB) *Akhlaq* and Behavior in Strengthening Good Corporate Governance: Evidence from Indonesian Sharia Financial Institutions

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Keywords*— *Akhlaq, Professional Behavior, Sharia Supervisory Board, Good Corporate Governance, Islamic Financial Institutions.

Abstract*— *This study investigates how the distribution of accountants' and Sharia Supervisory Board (SSB) akhlaq and professional behavior strengthens good corporate governance in Indonesian Sharia financial institutions. Drawing on a distribution perspective, the study conceptualizes akhlaq as an ethical resource distributed across governance actors rather than as an individual moral attribute. It emphasizes the role of ethical distribution in enhancing accountability, transparency, and Sharia compliance within institutional governance structures. This study adopts a qualitative interpretive approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with accountants and SSB members from Indonesian Sharia financial institutions, supported by an analysis of governance documents, ethical guidelines, and Sharia compliance reports. The akhlaq construct is adapted from Islamic ethical frameworks integrating faith (akidah), normative obedience (sharia), and moral consciousness (ihsan). Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns of ethical distribution, professional behavior, and governance mechanisms. The findings show that akhlaq is distributed through formal mechanisms, such as governance structures, standard operating procedures, and supervisory routines, as well as informal mechanisms, including role modeling, ethical deliberation, and moral self-regulation. This distribution shapes professional behavior among accountants and SSB members, strengthening accountability, transparency, and Sharia compliance, and thereby reinforcing good corporate governance. This study contributes to the accounting behavior by extending the concept of distribution to ethical and behavioral dimensions within Sharia governance. It offers a novel perspective on how intangible ethical resources can be systematically distributed to enhance governance quality in Islamic financial institutions.

I. INTRODUCTION

Sharia financial institutions have experienced rapid growth in many Muslim-majority countries, including Indonesia, accompanied by rising public expectations regarding ethical governance, accountability, and transparency. Beyond financial performance, these institutions are required to demonstrate compliance with Islamic ethical values while maintaining effective corporate governance systems. As Islamic finance expands and becomes increasingly complex, governance challenges related to accountability, supervision, and ethical consistency have become more prominent, particularly within dual regulatory and Sharia governance frameworks (Haniffa & Hudaib, 2021; Yusoff & Adnan, 2023). In this context, good corporate governance is no longer viewed solely as a regulatory obligation but as a moral and institutional foundation for sustaining trust and legitimacy in Islamic financial systems (Khalid et al., 2023).

Despite the formal establishment of governance mechanisms such as boards, audits, and Sharia Supervisory Boards (SSB), governance weaknesses persist in many Sharia financial institutions. Prior studies indicate that governance failures often stem not from the absence of regulations, but from inconsistencies in ethical enforcement and professional behavior across organizational roles (Napier, 2020; Bechihi & Nafti, 2025). Accountants and SSB members occupy strategic positions in ensuring transparency, Sharia compliance, and accountability. However, when ethical values are unevenly practiced among these actors, governance mechanisms tend to operate mechanically, resulting in compliance without substantive integrity (Tashkandi, 2022; Rahim & Fauzi, 2023).

From a distribution science perspective, governance can be understood as a process through which critical resources are disseminated across institutional actors to achieve coordinated and accountable outcomes. Recent studies in the *Journal of Distribution Science* emphasize that distribution extends beyond physical goods and financial flows to include intangible resources such as knowledge, work ethics, and behavioral norms that shape organizational performance (Oktaroza et al., 2022; Chantarat & Ratanamaneesakul, 2022). Applying this perspective to corporate governance suggests that ethical values should be conceptualized as distributed institutional resources rather than individual moral attributes. Uneven distribution of ethical values weakens coordination and reduces governance effectiveness, even when formal structures are in place (Zailani et al., 2020).

In Islamic thought, *akhlaq* represents a stable moral disposition that guides behavior consistently across situations. Classical Islamic scholars, particularly Al-Ghazali, conceptualize *akhlaq* as an integration of faith-based conviction (*akidah*), normative obedience (*sharia*), and moral consciousness (*ihsan*). Contemporary Islamic accounting and ethics literature has adopted this framework to explain ethical behavior in organizational contexts, emphasizing accountability before both society and God (Haniffa & Hudaib, 2021; Dusuki, 2021). Empirical studies have operationalized *akhlaq* primarily at the individual compliance level, demonstrating its influence on ethical decision-making and behavioral consistency (Bulutoding et al., 2020; Khalid et al., 2023). However, its role as an institutional and distributable ethical resource within corporate governance remains underexplored.

Although a growing body of literature examines Sharia governance, board characteristics, and disclosure practices in Islamic financial institutions, limited attention has been paid to how ethical values are distributed across governance actors and enacted through daily professional behavior. Most governance studies focus on structural compliance and formal oversight mechanisms, while overlooking the ethical processes that underpin governance effectiveness (Tashkandi, 2022; Bechihi & Nafti, 2025). Consequently, the distributional dimension of *akhlaq* within corporate governance systems, particularly the interaction between accountants and SSB members remains insufficiently theorized and empirically examined, especially in the Indonesian context.

Addressing this gap, this study investigates how the distribution of accountants' and Sharia Supervisory Board (SSB) *akhlaq* and professional behavior contributes to strengthening good corporate governance in Indonesian Sharia financial institutions. Adopting a qualitative interpretive approach, this study examines how ethical values are distributed through formal and informal governance mechanisms and how they shape accountability, transparency, and Sharia compliance. By integrating Islamic ethical concepts with distribution science, this study contributes to the Science literature by extending the notion of distribution to ethical and behavioral domains within corporate governance, offering insights relevant to both scholars and practitioners in Islamic finance.

Objective Study

a. OS1: To study *akhlaq* distributed among accountants and Sharia Supervisory Board (SSB) members within Indonesian Sharia financial institutions?

b. OS2: To study formal and informal mechanisms facilitate the distribution of *akhlaq* and ethical behavior in corporate governance practices?

c. OS3: To study the distribution of *akhlaq* and professional behavior contribute to strengthening good corporate governance?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Distribution Perspective in Corporate Governance

Distribution science traditionally examines how goods, services, and resources are allocated across markets and institutions. However, recent studies in the *Journal of Distribution Science* have expanded this concept to include the distribution of intangible resources such as knowledge, work ethics, and organizational values that shape coordination and performance (Oktaroza et al., 2022; Chantarat & Ratanamaneesakul, 2022). From this perspective, governance can be understood as a distributional process in which responsibilities, authority, and ethical norms are disseminated among organizational actors to ensure accountability and effective control.

In corporate governance contexts, the distribution of ethical values plays a critical role in aligning individual behavior with institutional objectives. When ethical norms are unevenly distributed, governance mechanisms tend to rely excessively on formal controls, which may result in symbolic compliance rather than substantive accountability (Flynn et al., 2021; Zailani et al., 2020). Distribution-oriented governance emphasizes that ethical consistency across roles is essential for sustaining transparency, coordination, and trust within organizations.

Within Islamic financial institutions, this distributional view of governance becomes particularly relevant due to the presence of dual accountability systems, regulatory and Sharia-based. Governance effectiveness therefore depends not only on structural arrangements but also on how Islamic ethical values are distributed and enacted across governance actors (Awang et al., 2023).

2.2. *Akhlaq* as an Islamic Ethical Foundation

Akhlaq constitutes the core of Islamic ethical thought and refers to a stable moral disposition that guides human behavior consistently across contexts. Classical Islamic scholarship, particularly the works of Al-Ghazali, conceptualizes *akhlaq* as an integration of three interrelated components: faith-based conviction (*akidah*), normative obedience (*sharia*), and moral consciousness (*ihsan*). This framework emphasizes that ethical behavior arises not merely from external enforcement but from internalized moral awareness (Dusuki, 2021).

Contemporary Islamic accounting and governance literature has adopted *akhlaq* as a foundational concept to explain ethical accountability and moral responsibility in organizational settings. Haniffa and Hudaib (2021) argue that Islamic ethics extend the scope of accountability beyond shareholders to include social and spiritual dimensions. Similarly, Khalid et al. (2023) highlight that *akhlaq*-based accountability promotes justice, transparency, and sustainability in corporate decision-making.

Empirical studies have operationalized *akhlaq* primarily at the individual level, demonstrating its influence on ethical decision-making and compliance behavior (Bulutoding et al., 2020). However, these studies tend to conceptualize *akhlaq* as a personal attribute rather than an institutional resource, leaving limited understanding of how *akhlaq* functions within organizational governance systems.

2.3. Accountants, Sharia Supervisory Board, and Ethical Behavior

Accountants and Sharia Supervisory Board (SSB) members serve as key governance actors in Islamic financial institutions. Accountants are responsible for ensuring transparency, accuracy, and accountability in financial reporting, while SSB members oversee Sharia compliance and ethical legitimacy. Prior studies suggest that the effectiveness of Sharia governance depends heavily on the ethical competence and behavioral consistency of these actors (Tashkandi, 2022; Rahim & Fauzi, 2023).

Research on Sharia governance indicates that the presence of an SSB alone does not guarantee ethical governance outcomes. Instead, governance quality improves when SSB members actively engage with management and accounting functions to ensure that ethical principles are embedded in operational practices (Bechihi & Nafti, 2025). This interaction underscores the importance of professional behavior as a mechanism through which ethical values are translated into governance outcomes.

Behavioral governance literature further emphasizes that ethical behavior operates as a mediating mechanism between institutional values and governance effectiveness. When ethical values such as *akhlaq* are internalized and consistently practiced, professional behavior reinforces accountability and reduces opportunistic actions within organizations (Napier, 2020; Yusoff & Adnan, 2023).

2.4. Distribution of *Akhlaq* and Good Corporate Governance

Good corporate governance in Islamic financial institutions encompasses principles of accountability, transparency, fairness, and Sharia compliance. While structural governance mechanisms such as boards, audits, and regulations are necessary, they are insufficient in the absence of ethical consistency across governance actors. Recent studies indicate that governance failures often arise from behavioral gaps rather than regulatory deficiencies (Hussain et al., 2024).

From a distribution perspective, *akhlaq* can be conceptualized as an ethical resource that must be distributed across governance structures to ensure effective control and coordination. When *akhlaq* is unevenly distributed, governance practices tend to become fragmented, resulting in compliance-oriented behavior without moral substance (Othman & Rahman, 2022). Conversely, when ethical values are systematically disseminated through governance mechanisms, organizations exhibit stronger accountability and institutional integrity.

Empirical evidence suggests that ethical governance frameworks grounded in Islamic values enhance stakeholder trust and organizational legitimacy (Awang et al., 2023; Khalid et al., 2023). However, limited research has examined how the distribution of *akhlaq* among accountants and SSB members shapes professional behavior and governance outcomes, particularly in emerging Islamic financial markets such as Indonesia.

2.5. Conceptual Framework

Based on the reviewed literature, this study proposes a conceptual framework that positions *akhlaq* as a distributed ethical resource within corporate governance systems. The framework emphasizes the process through which ethical values are disseminated among accountants and SSB members, shaping professional behavior and, ultimately, strengthening good corporate governance.

The conceptual logic of the study can be summarized as follows:

Institutional Context → Distribution of *Akhlaq* → Professional Behavior → Good Corporate Governance

This framework guides the qualitative inquiry by focusing on how ethical values are distributed through formal and informal governance mechanisms and how they influence governance practices in Sharia financial institutions.

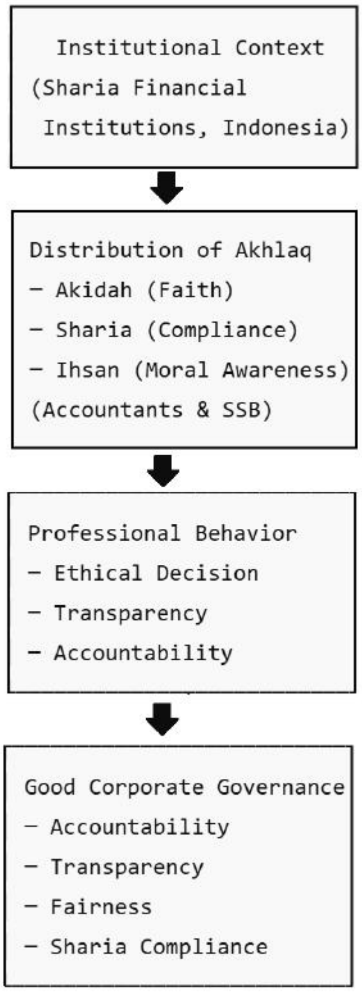

Fig.1. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of the study, which positions *akhlaq* as a distributed ethical resource embedded within institutional governance structures. The framework explains how the distribution of *akhlaq* among accountants and Sharia Supervisory Board members shapes professional behavior and ultimately strengthens good corporate governance.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative interpretive research design to explore how the distribution of accountants' and Sharia Supervisory Board (SSB) *akhlaq* and professional behavior strengthens good corporate governance (GCG) in Indonesian Sharia financial institutions. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the study seeks to understand processes, meanings, and mechanisms through which ethical values are distributed and enacted within governance structures, rather than measuring causal relationships between variables (Flynn et al., 2021; Othman & Rahman, 2022).

Consistent with the perspective of distribution science, this study conceptualizes distribution as a social and institutional process through which intangible resources such as ethical values and behavioral norms are disseminated among organizational actors (Oktaroza et al., 2022). The interpretive approach enables an in-depth examination of how *akhlaq* operates as a distributed ethical resource embedded in both formal governance mechanisms and informal professional practices within Sharia financial institutions.

3.2 Data Collection

Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with key governance actors in Indonesian Sharia financial institutions. The informants included:

a. professional accountants,

b. members of the Sharia Supervisory Board (SSB),

c. compliance and governance officers.

A purposive sampling strategy was employed to ensure that participants possessed relevant experience and direct involvement in governance and Sharia compliance processes (Yusoff & Adnan, 2023). This approach is consistent with prior qualitative studies on Islamic governance and distribution management that emphasize information-rich cases over representativeness (Awang et al., 2023).

In addition to interviews, document analysis was conducted on:

a. corporate governance reports,

b. Sharia compliance guidelines,

c. ethical codes and internal control documents.

The triangulation of interviews and documents enhances the credibility of the findings and allows the study to capture both espoused values and enacted practices (Haniffa & Hudaib, 2021).

3.3 Operationalization of *Akhlaq*

The *akhlaq* construct in this study is adapted from Islamic ethical frameworks, particularly the integration of:

a. akidah (faith-based conviction),

b. sharia (normative obedience),

c. ihsan (moral consciousness and self-regulation).

Rather than treating *akhlaq* as an individual psychological trait, this study operationalizes *akhlaq* as a distributed ethical capacity manifested through governance routines, professional standards, and ethical decision-making practices. This operationalization aligns with contemporary Islamic accounting and governance literature that emphasizes moral accountability as an institutional phenomenon (Dusuki, 2021; Khalid et al., 2023).

3.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, following an iterative and reflexive process (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The analysis involved three main stages:

a. Open coding, to identify references to ethical values, *akhlaq* components, and professional behavior.

b. Axial coding, to examine patterns of ethical distribution across governance actors and mechanisms.

c. Selective coding, to integrate themes related to ethical distribution, behavior, and governance outcomes.

This analytical strategy enables the identification of distribution mechanisms through which *akhlaq* shapes governance practices, consistent with the distribution science perspective adopted in JDS studies (Oktaroza et al., 2022).

3.5 Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

To ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative findings, several strategies were employed, including:

a. data triangulation across interviews and documents,

b. peer debriefing during the coding process,

c. reflexive memo writing to minimize researcher bias.

Ethical approval was obtained prior to data collection, and all participants provided informed consent. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured throughout the research process. These procedures align with ethical standards commonly applied in qualitative governance research (Flynn et al., 2021).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Distribution of *Akhlaq* among Accountants and SSB Members

The findings indicate that *akhlaq* is not uniformly embedded among governance actors but is distributed through a combination of formal institutional arrangements and informal professional practices. Accountants and Sharia Supervisory Board (SSB) members internalize *akhlaq* through continuous exposure to Sharia principles, organizational norms, and ethical expectations embedded in governance routines. Informants emphasized that ethical conduct is shaped not only by formal Sharia guidelines but also by everyday interactions, deliberations, and shared moral narratives within the organization.

From a distribution perspective, this finding supports the view that ethical values function as distributed institutional resources, rather than as individual moral traits. When *akhlaq* is consistently distributed across governance actors, ethical expectations become shared and normalized, reducing ethical ambiguity in professional decision-making. This aligns with prior studies in distribution science, which highlight that intangible resources such as ethics and work values must be disseminated across organizational roles to support coordinated outcomes (Oktaroza et al., 2022).

The results also resonate with Islamic governance literature, which emphasizes that *akhlaq* emerges from the integration of *akidah*, *sharia*, and *ihsan*, shaping moral consistency across professional roles (Dusuki, 2021; Haniffa & Hudaib, 2021). However, this study extends prior research by demonstrating that *akhlaq* operates at an institutional level when it is effectively distributed through governance mechanisms.

4.2. Mechanisms of Ethical Distribution: Formal and Informal Processes

The analysis reveals two primary mechanisms through which *akhlaq* is distributed: formal mechanisms and informal mechanisms. Formal mechanisms include governance structures, standard operating procedures, ethical codes, and Sharia supervision routines. These mechanisms provide explicit guidance and boundaries for ethical behavior, particularly in financial reporting and compliance-related activities.

Informal mechanisms play an equally critical role. These include role modeling by senior accountants and SSB members, ethical discussions during governance meetings, and moral self-regulation driven by internalized Sharia values. Informants noted that informal ethical interactions often shape behavior more effectively than formal rules, especially in situations involving ethical dilemmas.

This finding supports behavioral governance research suggesting that ethical consistency cannot be achieved solely through formal controls but requires shared values and behavioral norms (Napier, 2020; Rahim & Fauzi, 2023). From a distribution standpoint, informal mechanisms serve as channels through which ethical values are continuously circulated and reinforced, ensuring that *akhlaq* remains embedded in daily governance practices.

4.3. Professional Behavior as a Mediating Governance Mechanism

The results indicate that the distribution of *akhlaq* directly influences **professional behavior**, which acts as a mediating mechanism between ethical values and governance outcomes. Accountants and SSB members who internalize *akhlaq* demonstrate higher levels of transparency, accountability, and consistency in applying Sharia principles. Professional behavior manifests through ethical decision-making, accurate reporting, and proactive Sharia compliance oversight.

This finding reinforces prior empirical evidence that ethical behavior serves as a conduit through which institutional values translate into governance effectiveness (Tashkandi, 2022; Khalid et al., 2023). Importantly, the study shows that professional behavior is not merely an individual response but a collective outcome shaped by the distribution of *akhlaq* across governance actors.

In distribution science terms, professional behavior represents the **operationalization of distributed ethics**, transforming ethical resources into observable governance practices. When *akhlaq* is unevenly distributed, professional behavior becomes fragmented, leading to inconsistencies in governance implementation.

4.4. Implications for Good Corporate Governance in Sharia Financial Institutions

The findings demonstrate that the effective distribution of *akhlaq* and professional behavior strengthens key dimensions of good corporate governance, including accountability, transparency, fairness, and Sharia compliance. Institutions with well-distributed ethical values exhibit stronger governance coherence, where formal structures and ethical practices mutually reinforce one another.

This result aligns with recent studies emphasizing that governance failures in Islamic financial institutions often stem from behavioral and ethical gaps rather than regulatory deficiencies (Bechihi & Nafti, 2025; Hussain et al., 2024). By framing *akhlaq* as a distributed ethical resource, this study offers a nuanced explanation of how governance quality is shaped by ethical processes embedded within institutional practices.

From the JDS perspective, the findings extend distribution analysis into governance and ethics, illustrating that ethical distribution enhances coordination and reduces opportunistic behavior among governance actors. This reinforces the argument that distribution science provides a valuable lens for understanding governance effectiveness in complex institutional environments.

4.5. Theoretical and Practical Discussion

Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature by integrating Islamic ethical concepts with distribution science and governance theory. By repositioning *akhlaq* as an institutional resource, the study advances understanding of how ethical values are distributed, enacted, and sustained within corporate governance systems.

Practically, the findings suggest that Sharia financial institutions should move beyond compliance-based governance and focus on strengthening ethical distribution mechanisms. This includes continuous ethical training, active engagement between accountants and SSB members, and the cultivation of ethical leadership that reinforces shared moral values across governance roles.

V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

This study examines how the distribution of accountants' and Sharia Supervisory Board (SSB) *akhlaq* and professional behavior contributes to strengthening good corporate governance (GCG) in Indonesian Sharia financial institutions. Adopting a qualitative interpretive approach and a distribution perspective, the study conceptualizes *akhlaq* as a distributed ethical resource embedded within institutional governance practices rather than as an individual moral attribute.

The findings demonstrate that *akhlaq* is distributed through both formal governance mechanisms such as governance structures, standard operating procedures, and Sharia supervisory routines and informal mechanisms, including role modeling, ethical deliberation, and moral self-regulation. This ethical distribution shapes professional behavior among accountants and SSB members, which in turn strengthens accountability, transparency, fairness, and Sharia compliance. The study confirms that governance effectiveness in Sharia financial institutions depends not only on formal regulatory frameworks but also on how ethical values are disseminated and enacted across key governance actors.

By positioning *akhlaq* as an institutional and distributable ethical resource, this study extends the concept of distribution beyond economic and material dimensions into ethical and behavioral domains. In doing so, it contributes to the Journal of Distribution Science literature by demonstrating that ethical distribution plays a critical role in shaping governance quality within complex institutional settings.

5.2. Theoretical Implications

This study offers several theoretical contributions. First, it advances distribution science by extending the notion of distribution to include ethical values and professional behavior as intangible institutional resources. This perspective enriches existing distribution theories that predominantly focus on physical goods, financial flows, or knowledge sharing.

Second, the study contributes to Islamic governance and accounting literature by reconceptualizing *akhlaq* as an institutional phenomenon rather than a purely individual moral trait. By integrating Islamic ethical theory with governance and distribution perspectives, the study provides a more holistic framework for understanding ethical accountability in Sharia financial institutions.

Third, the findings highlight the mediating role of professional behavior in translating distributed ethical values into governance outcomes. This insight bridges behavioral governance theory and Islamic ethics, offering a nuanced explanation of how ethical values become operationalized within organizational governance systems.

5.3. Practical Implications

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that Sharia financial institutions should move beyond compliance-oriented governance and prioritize the systematic distribution of ethical values across governance roles. Strengthening good corporate governance requires institutional mechanisms that disseminate *akhlaq* among accountants and SSB members through continuous ethical training, integrated governance routines, and active ethical leadership.

Regulators and policymakers may also benefit from incorporating ethical distribution considerations into Sharia governance frameworks. Rather than relying solely on formal supervision, governance effectiveness can be enhanced by encouraging ethical interaction and collaboration between accountants and SSB members, thereby reinforcing shared moral responsibility.

For practitioners, the study underscores the importance of aligning professional behavior with Islamic ethical principles in daily governance practices. Ethical consistency across governance actors can reduce opportunistic behavior, improve transparency, and strengthen stakeholder trust in Sharia financial institutions.

5.4. Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations that provide avenues for future research. First, the qualitative design limits statistical generalization; however, the findings offer analytical insights that may be transferable to similar institutional contexts. Second, the study focuses on Indonesian Sharia financial institutions, which may differ from those in other jurisdictions with distinct regulatory and cultural environments.

Future research may employ comparative cross-country designs, mixed-method approaches, or quantitative testing to further examine the role of ethical distribution in governance outcomes. Additionally, future studies could explore how ethical distribution interacts with technological governance mechanisms, such as digital reporting systems and Sharia compliance technologies.

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