

Ethical values of public accountant: a critical perspective of rational-religious of Hamka

Erfan Muhammad,¹ Made Sudarma,² Ali Djamhuri,³
Noval Adib,⁴ Yasser Eliwa⁵

¹Universitas Trunojoyo Madura, Indonesia

^{2,3,4}Universitas Brawijaya Malang, Indonesia

⁵Loughborough University, United Kingdom

email: erfan_muhammad_utm@outlook.com

Abstract

Purpose - This study explores business practices in public accounting firms, particularly in East Java, along with ethical issues raised by the practices.

Method - This study applied a qualitative approach in which data were collected through in-depth interviews with 12 public accountants from various public accounting firms. Then, the data were analysed based on a rational-religious perspective as suggested by Buya Hamka.

Result - The findings of this study indicated many ethical concerns in public accountant practices, despite they comprehend about ethical standards contained in the professional code of ethics. All those problems were actuated by the financial fulfillment of the public accountant, which deviated from ethical values as signified by Hamka.

Implication - Public accountants should implement Hamka's virtues in professional practices as a reflection of Islamic principles.

Originality - This research is the first study that used the virtues of Buya Hamka in public accountant practices.

Keywords: ethical issues; public accountant; rational-religious; Hamka



Introduction

The ethical concept is developed based on a logical relation between professionals (i.e., auditors) and other parties (such as users of audit reports) that is closely related to the responsibility of the auditor to protect the public interest. A critical facet affecting the auditors' adherence to this responsibility is the auditors' spiritual aspect or religion. The tradition in a religion strongly encourages the implementation of the code of ethics (Espinosa-pike & Barrainkua-aroztegi, 2014).

The discussion concerning ethical issues on public accountants is still an interesting topic to explore, as a public accountant has double roles. One side gives assurance regarding the fairness of financial reporting to the public. On the other hand, safeguarding management that has paid the audit fee. Those roles raise ethical dilemmas for auditors as they must maintain their independence ((Richard, 1988); (Philomena & Barry, 1995); (T. Lee, 1993); and (Parker, 1994)). The ethical dilemma causes many ethical transgressions by the auditors (Tuanakotta, 2007: 13).

Commercialization of accounting is regarded as one of the sources of low ethical reasoning of an accountant (Roberts, 2001). Consequently, the public accountants office makes an excessive effort to profit from the audit assignment or find profitable business opportunities (Mitchell, A. and Sikka, 1993). Robert (2001) argued that the commercialization of accounting had changed someone who is supposed to be a public service to become a businessman and profit-oriented. Their pursuit of wealth and financial gain can lead them to breach ethical boundaries.

Ethical issues lay on an individual public accountant because of the low comprehension of professional code ethics (Richard, 1988). Therefore, ethical education for auditors is required (Saravanamuthu & Tinker, 2006), and a deep understanding of ethics through various methods such as emotional and spiritual (Ludigdo, 2005). Consequently, a holistic awareness can be developed and strengthened through love, sincerity, and surrender to God's will. Implementing this concept will enable public accountants to attain divine

consciousness and refrain from engaging in unethical behavior (Triuwono, 2015).

Research related to the importance of a code of ethics in the practice of the public accounting profession includes the results of research Hasan & Alamsyah (2009), which reveal that professional ethics have a very special and fundamental place in the professional life of an accountant. If the professional ethics that are the basis for public accountants are not carried out properly, it will have an impact on the emergence of problems in the form of public distrust of the professional services provided. Ethics has a significant effect on the performance of the Public Accounting Firm (M Ibidunni et al., 2018)

Research by Duska, Duska, & Ragatz (2011) revealed that the code of ethics is an important principle that accounting professionals must adhere to improve their profession, honesty and fairness, and maintain public trust. Ethics and proper ethical behavior are very important in accounting for various motives. Research Adeyemi & Olamide (2011) revealed that the need for auditors to ensure compliance and enforcement of high ethical standards.

Regarding ethical issues, ethical problems lie within (individual) public accountants due to the low understanding of public accountants on the professional code of ethics (Richard, 1988). Hence, ethics education is needed for auditors (Saravanamuthu & Tinker, 2006), and a deep understanding of ethics is needed through various methods both Emotional and Spiritual Individuals (Ludigdo, 2005).

This study explores the ethical issues related to the individual of public accountants and analyses it from the perspective of rational-religious as prescribed by Buya Hamka. It is triggered by the importance of individual commitment to ethical behavior to suppress ethical violations by public accountants. The ethical perspective of Buya Hamka is employed in this study because it offers a different perspective than the current ethical perspective that relies on materialism-rationalism. Buya Hamka's perspective is focused on controlling and being responsible to God and humans, which will make an

individual more committed and ethical (Hamka, 2017). The idea is derived from Islamic ethical values that uphold humanity's conception, good life patterns, fraternity, social justice, and balance of mental and physical (Rice, 1999). According to Hamka, happiness is not in the wealth or money we have, but happiness is in us, in our hearts. If happiness in modern conception is the achievement of accumulation of wealth or materialism. Then in Islam, according to Hamka (2016, p.36), happiness is the achievement of the elements of wisdom, courage, firmness and justice. These four components are the source of *akhlakul kharimah* (good character) (Hamka, 2017).

Table 1. Ethical Misconduct in Indonesia Public Accountant

No	Name of Public Accountant	Sanctions
1	AKB	Suspension for 12 months, since 16 June 2018
2	HM	Suspension six months, since 22 November 2018
3	Ar	Suspension for 12 months, since 3 January 2019
4	A	Suspension for eight months, since 27 January 2019
5	HS	Suspension for 12 months, since 27 January 2019
6	IS	Suspension for six months, since 7 February 2019
7	AHS	Suspension for 12 months, since 7 February 2019
8	AS	Suspension for 12 months, since 5 May 2019
9	IGA	Suspension for 12 months, since 30 May 2019
10	SMT	Suspension for 12 months, since 10 March 2020
11	SW	Suspension for 12 months, since 30 April 2021
12	BA	Suspension for 12 months, since 26 May 2021
13	SC	Revoking of operating license since 21 June 2021

Source: From many sources

The focus of this study is Indonesia, which has the largest Muslim community in the world. The country is expected to uphold Islamic ethical values. However, there is still widespread ethical misconduct, especially among public accountants. This is evident in various occurrences from 2018 to 2021. This study focuses on exploring these phenomena from the perspective of individual public accountants. It aims to analyze their perception based on ethical values, specifically the rational-religious values developed by Buya Hamka. The ultimate goal is to construct a model that depicts the interaction among factors in the rational-religious values.

Literature Review

The Conception of Islamic Ethics

In Islam, the conception of individual lives in a society cannot be separated from Islamic law, which has three objectives, i.e., purification of the soul, enforcement of justice in a society, and embodiment of human benefits (Zahroh & Muhammad, 1999). Referring to Mahdavikhou & Khotanlou (2012), there are three critical things in the conception of Islamic ethics. The first concept emphasizes on the quality of earnings coming from legal sources. The second is the concept that God always watches over every single human action. Third, believe in the day of reckoning against all actions, and they have to take responsibility for all their behaviors when they live in the world.

The Conception of Hamka's Rational – Religious in Refinement Professional Code Ethics

Code ethics, organizational profession, and watchdog are material matters. When the material is not in place, a person will have the opportunity to do unethical. This condition will be different for a person who uphold God's command and always remembers His existence. As part of physical control (material), the person still has non-material control. Therefore, professional ethics can be refined by material and non-material control. The conception formulated in this study applies the perspective Hamka concerning the value rational – religious as the representation of material and non-material to refine the ethical commitment of an individual as a public accountant.

From the perspective of Hamka, ethical commitment can be developed from the concept of "true blissfulness" that will generate "physical and spiritual happiness" by acquiring a common sense; hence, a person will get a more profound knowledge of God (Hamka, 2016a: 27). Furthermore, Hamka urged that happiness and contentment cannot be realized when heart and dreams are related to mundane things valued based on their desire (Hamka, 2016a: 29). Hamka also pointed out that a sensible person has a broad view of something that might hurt or please others; then, he can choose

something that benefits and avoid harming someone else. He prioritizes the afterlife rather than worldly virtues by avoiding useless works (Hamka, 2016a: 33).

To attain blissfulness, Hamka suggested that someone needs virtues of common sense which can be perfected by (*ilm*) knowledge, (*iffah*) maintain self-respect, (*wara'*) self-control towards worldly seduction, (*syaja'ah*) standing on righteousness, (*hikma*) wisdom, and equitable. In addition, eminency of ingenuity can be acquired by love (*mahabbah*), piety (*taqwa*), hope (*raja'*), apprehension (*khauf*), be grateful, submission (*tawakkul*), and contemplating (*tafakkur*) (Hamka, 2016b: 88-157). In order to gain blissfulness, someone needs to be sincere (*ikhlas*) (Hamka, 2016b: 151) because sincerity will make someone honest and heartfelt. Also, blissfulness requires submission to God's will, in which everything is surrendered before God (Hamka, 2016b: 285).

Furthermore, Hamka suggested that blissfulness can be obtained by will (*iradat*) instead of common sense merely (Hamka, 2016a: 30). *Iradat* is a passion in life; the stronger the intention in life, the stronger the *iradat*. Hence, he can overcome any outside influences; the stronger *iradat* will make him happier. Therefore, *iradat* is required to gain blissfulness. The meaning of life is blissfulness that arises from thoughts and can be realized through will / *iradat* (Hamka, 2016a: 34).

Hamka perceived that blissfulness does not rely on property or money we have, but it is laid on to ourselves, in our hearts. Happiness in modern conception is perceived as achieving wealth or materialism based on personal interest and rational reasoning (Anderson, 2000). Otherwise, in Islam, blissfulness is perceived by the realization of (*hikma*) wisdom, bravery, determination, and justice (Hamka, 2016a: 36) that can be regarded as the source of *akhlakul karimah* (righteousness) (Hamka, 2017). In congruence with Ibnu Khaldun stated that blissfulness is attained when someone is submissive and obeys God's provisions and upholds humanity. Also, Imam Al Ghozali asserted that blissfulness is realized when people always remember

God, holding back their anger and lust and controlling his knowledge (Hamka, 2016a: 14).

The concept of rational-religious proposed by Hamka can be summarized in the following diagram, illustrating how the concept influences the ethical understanding of public accountants.

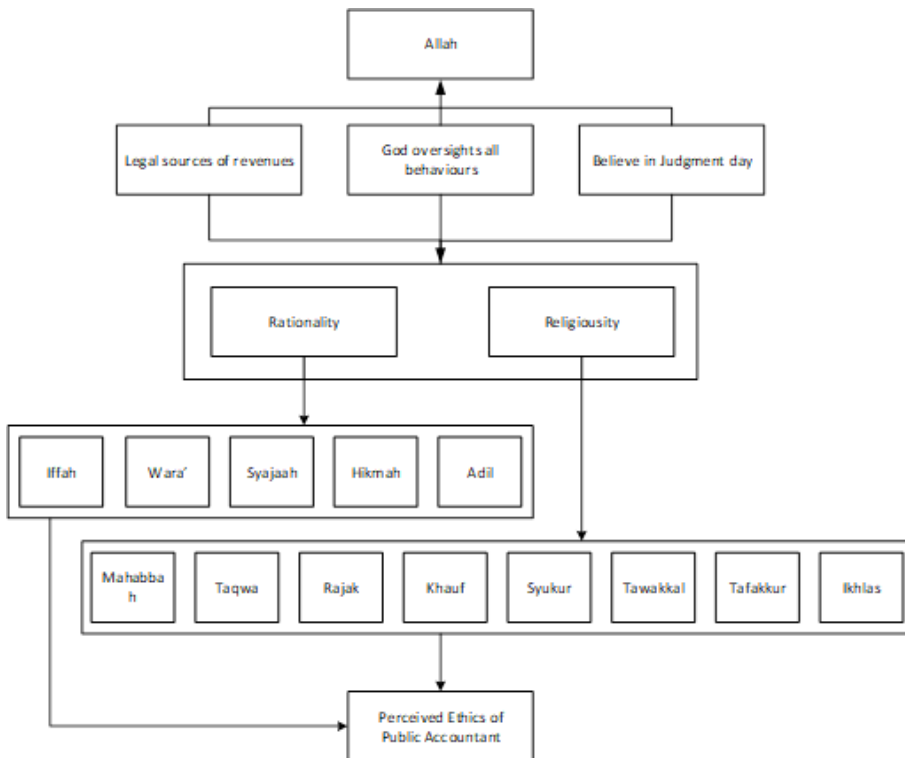


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

Research Methods

Types of Study and Informants Selection

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This study is qualitative research that applies a critical religious paradigm (Muhajir, 2011: 288-292). The researchers participate directly in the natural setting of the research site, which is the public accountant firm in this study. The selected informants represent particular ages, i.e., the apprentice public accountant (25 to 35 years old); 36 – 45 years old; 46 – 55 years old; 56 – 65 years old; and above 65 years old. Public accountants aged 56 – 65 and above 65 years old are expected to fully comprehend *akhlakul karimah* (a noble character). By employing those criteria, this study is expected to give a comprehensive perspective on ethical issues and the perfection of ethics into *akhlakul karimah*. The researchers chose 12 public accountants according to the criteria mentioned above, which are described in Table 2.

Data Analysis

Creswell suggested seven stages for data analysis, i.e., managing the data, reading, describing, classifying, interpreting, and visualizing (Creswell, 2007: 156-157). In this study, the stages can be applied as follow. The first stage, the researchers review and interpret ethical values, consisting of the rational-religious concept of Hamka. The second stage is the researchers interviewing the informants concerning their public accountant office practices. The third stage identifies the ethical issues in public accountants. The fourth stage explores further related to apprehension of the public accountants concerning code ethics and the importance of code ethics in public accountant practices. The fifth stage is the researchers investigating the roles of professional associations and regulators to enhance the ethics of public accountants. The sixth stage elaborates on the ethical issues referring to the conception of Hamka's rational-religious. Finally, suggestions to improve the ethical commitment of public accountants by employing the values of rational-religious Hamka.

Table 2. List of Interviewees

No	Name of Informant	Background of the Informant
1.	DF, CPA (AP 1)	50 years old, public accountant with experience of more than 20 years.
2	BT, CPA (AP2)	53 years old, public accountant with experience of more than 15 years, and works as a lecturer in a state university.
3	P, CPA (AP3)	65 years old, public accountant with experience as a state internal auditor for more than 30 years, and as a public accountant for more than 14 years.
4	AD, CPA (AP4)	39 years old, public accountant with experience of more than 20 years and, also works as a lecturer in a state university.
5.	H, CPA (AP5)	47 years old, public accountant with experience of more than 20 years, works as a lecturer in a state university, and serves as a mosque administrator.
6	R, CPA (AP6)	39 years old, public accountant with more than 15 years of experience.
7	Hy, CPA (AP7)	45 years old, public accountant with experience more than 20 years.
8	MS, CPA (AP8)	31 years old, public accountant with experience more than 5 years.
9.	RMK, CPA (AP9)	31 years old, public accountant with experience more than 5 years.
10.	FAK, CPA (AP10)	43 years old, public accountant with experience of more than 18 years
11	HP, CPA (AP11)	A public accountant with experience more than 20 years and works as a lecturer in a state university.
12.	K, CPA (AP12)	A public accountant with more than 10 years of experience.

Results and Discussion

The result of the interview with informants, all of whom are auditors in public accountant firms, indicates several essential aspects:

Pursuing material benefit from public accountant services.

Financial motives in public accountant firms have been identified a long time ago, as indicated that commercializing of public accountant services had started since 1970 in America (Windsor & Warming-Rasmussen, 2009).

"We do not deny that profit is our main motive in the public accounting firm, like any other business. If we do not want to pursue profit, why we get into this business." (AP 2)

"From my perspective, when I opened the public accounting firm, my main consideration is whether this business profitable or not. Besides, with this business, I can provide a job for the others" (AP 3)

"to be profitable is a must as I need to provide for my family's needs. It is a private business and our income comes from this business. If we want to expand our business, it comes from the profit. That is why profit is our priority" (AP 4)

"I can't judge it's a greed, sir. Yes, I don't think it's greed, it's just ambition. Getting many clients, can get rich quickly" (AP 7)

Making a profit in a business is a common thing in a business. However, it is prohibited if the profit is obtained by violating the rules and ethics, decreasing independence and integrity, and decreasing audit quality.

Freelancers for efficiency

An attempt of public accounting firms to get more profit is by recruiting freelance auditors. There are many types of freelancers. The first is a freelancer who also gives a client to a public accounting firm. The freelancer will do all the assignments until the assignments are done, then the public accounting firms will sign and give an opinion to the audit report.

"Frequently, hiring a freelance is at the beginning of an office. They will find a public accounting firm that fits them and might cooperate with them for a long time. For an assignment, they will get 60% and the rest 40% for me" (AP1)

The second type is the freelancer that brings a client to the public accountant firm, but the assignments are carried out together with the staff of the public accounting firms. In this condition, the payment fee depends on a mutual agreement between the freelancer with the public accounting firm.

"Percentage of the freelance auditors it depends on condition. Any works related to government institutions and licenses have to be handled by our staff. The percentage is about 60:40, 60% is the freelance auditors, and 40% is our permanent staff" (AP3)

"if we experience a shortage of auditors, we will hire the freelance auditor as long as in accordance with the SPAP and have to be well supervised" (AP2)

"We used to recruit freelance auditors and collaborate it with our team" (AP8)

The third type is that freelancers act as the marketing of the public accounting firm. The freelancer brings a client to a public accounting firm, and all assignments will be performed by the staff of the public accounting firm.

"So, freelance is needed especially to support marketing staff. Ethically, it is not allowed, but we need them as other businesses that get a new customer quite difficult. The main tasks of the freelance are to find customers or clients, and later we will use our staff to do the assignments. If we have known better the freelancer and he has experience; we can let him do the assignment" (AP4)

"yes, sure, we employ freelancers because quite hard to get a new client. Our freelancer is our friend and works as a public official. I think it is okay (to employ them) as long as the freelancer upheld the code ethics" (AP9)

A public accounting firm employs this strategy to reduce the operational cost of the public accounting firm compared to hiring permanent auditors. Moreover, the freelancer can generate income or bring new clients without the public accounting firms necessarily hiring marketing personnel; hence, the public accounting firms run more efficiently.

"Basically, the freelance auditor can be accommodated with regulation as a non-permanent auditor. Especially for the small public will get many benefits for employing non-permanent auditor (freelance)" (AP1)

"Employing non-permanent auditor (freelancer) is more profitable because we do not need to pay monthly whether they are assigned or not. It is different with the freelancer; we only pay them when they are assigned" (AP3)

"yes, that is more profitable because there are no fixed costs and routine salary" (AP9)

"I think this practice is a detriment. if we are too reliant on or cooperate with the freelancer, they can control us. If we employ freelance, there will be no fixed cost, and income of the firm relies on the existence of freelance" (AP8)

The lowered fee to get a client

The issue of low fee audit and audit quality is considered a classical issue in the profession of a public accountant. The lower audit fees are associated with the lower audit quality.

"The most important is mutually beneficial, and we get a client" (AP3)

"It is a common practice, especially in the small public accounting firms. Getting a client is not easy. Sometimes, the client does not want an expensive fee. Even, another public accountant has offered a smaller fee" (AP4)

"We gave low fee because we think our client is still small and has limited capabilities" (AP5)

"Many public accountants think as long as do not suffer from loss. They will accept the offered fee" (AP6)

"Auditee considers the fee is cheap, but auditee is not necessarily meet audit fee as regulated by the association" (AP9)

This condition will become a price war phenomenon amongst public accounting firms and unsafe practice as the lower fee impacts audit quality that tend to be lower.

Accommodate the client's interests to be appointed in the following assignment

Practically, public accountant firms become a servant of a company. Many respondents indicate this practice as an attempt to survive. Therefore, the public accounting firms tend to accommodate the client's interests to get another assignment in the following year, and the cash flow of the public accounting firms can be assured and stable.

"Actually, we wanted to check a project, but the company's representative did not allow us. So, we did not check it. Later, we got a warning and suspended (from regulator) because our working paper is not complete." (AP3)

"Accommodate client interest is to maintain good relation with the manager, which we expect to be appointed in the following assignment" (AP4)

"It gives opportunity to be appointed in the next assignment. once, in a discussion of audit findings, the manager asked to omit several findings as we hope to be assigned in the following year" (AP9)

Also, provide an audit opinion quickly without thorough investigation, as it is urgently needed for project tenders, credit applications, or other immediate interests.

"We are often provided financial statements that have not been fully prepared, but asked to be accomplished as fast as possible. We have to meet his request" (AP1)

"It is unreasonable providing an audit opinion in 3 days. Before deciding on an opinion, it has to go through a long and complicated stage. However, we skip those stages with procedures we have prepared before. Although I feel guilty for the first time, after a long time I got used to" (AP4)

Another way to accommodate the client's interest is by alleviating audit findings that are supposed to be reported to the stockholder and used as the object of evaluation and improvement. These findings sometimes are objected to by the management because they are afraid that the stockholder to assess their performance as poor, and they will be fired from their position in management.

"Apart from the audit opinion, we often accommodate our audit findings by eliminating several audit findings. We try to maintain good relation with the manager by accommodating the manager's interests for continuity of our office" (AP4)

"Mostly omitting several the audit findings because the manager asks for it" (AP6)

"We did when the manager asked us to omit several audit findings with the expectation to get an assignment in the following year" (AP9)

Use of staff from other public accountant firms

This finding indicates that a public accountant has a client and do all the assignment from the client, but audit opinion is given by another public accountant.

" Sure we had, we asked for auditors from another public and vice versa" (AP4)

" When the first time I joined the public accounting firm, for efficiency reasons, we asked for help from other public accounting firms or cooperated with other public accountants. But now, we do not do that again" (AP6)

" We asked for an expert from other public accounting firms, but our quality assurance has been regulated concerning independence and supervision. The team leader was coming from public accounting firm signing audit reports. We did that because of limitation of expertise, a part of that reason we never did that" (AP8)

This practice often occurs due to audit regulations, such as a public accounting firm being limited to auditing a client for five consecutive years. Therefore, to circumvent this condition, a public accounting firm applies this rule.

Beatitude to have profession as a public accountant

However, some informants indicate that happiness arises because they can give employment to other people and feel blessed as they can provide benefits for their surroundings.

"We glad because we can give benefit to our surroundings and give positive impact" (AP6)

"Alhamdulillah, I am glad as a public accountant because I provide a job for anyone else. As a human, I am also happy because I can get a financial advantage" (AP11)

The perception of public accountants to the professional code of ethics

Most public accountants have comprehended about ethics and code ethics of the profession of a public accountant. A few of them do not know in detail about the ethical principles. However, most public accountants perceive that integrity is required to perform well in an audit.

"as I said before, employing freelance auditor is not right and unethical. Concerning my position, I have to take a risk as I need marketing staff" (AP1)

"following what client request is against my principle and has big responsibilities" (AP6)

"in the early of year when we did an audit, we used to recruit internship students or fresh graduate with a contract for four months, and we put it in the initial agreement (to reduce costs)" (AP12)

“Actually, it (the low fee) will make unfair competition, but there is no standard for that. So, as long as it does not negatively impact our office, it may help our friend or client. It is not a problem at all” (AP2)

“Firstly, the regulation must be strengthened, because this regulation is what makes someone trust the integrity aspect. Secondly, the ethical commitment must be strengthened as well” (AP10)

Concerning supervision of code ethics of the profession, there is still a lack of control on implementation of the code ethics of the profession.

Ethical Profession From Perspective Ethical-Religious Hamka

The most prioritization is personal financial reasons ((Willmott, 1986) ; ((T. A. Lee, 1995)) and sometimes it makes public accountants lose independence and objectivity in audit assignments (Chi et al., 2012). The financial motives for public accountants beget commercialization of accounting (Mc Phail, 2007), in which audit services are used to get more assignments on non-attestation services. This attempt is achieved through market orientation, customer orientation, and works orientation of public accountants (Broberg et al., 2018). The behaviour of public accountants to get paramount profit is characteristic of the capitalist economic system in which individual is free to accumulate wealth in business (Anderson, 2000).

The pursuit of happiness through the accumulation of wealth via the commercialization of audit services is seen as a mutually beneficial arrangement between management and public accountants. On one hand, public accountants gain financial rewards, while on the other hand, they cater to management's interests. However, this role as "wealth guards" for management often conflicts with moral values (Mahdavikhou & Khotanlou, 2012). According to Hamka, true happiness and fulfillment cannot be achieved if our hearts and minds are solely focused on material possessions that align with our desires (Hamka, 2016a: 29).

Accommodating Ethical Values of Rational-Religious Hamka

Referring to those findings, the researcher emphasizes the behavior of public accountants in seeking to maximize profit through the commercialization of audit services. This is done in various ways, such as

hiring freelance auditors, bringing in auditors from other public accounting firms, offering low fees, prioritizing clients' interests, and providing audit opinions as quickly as requested by the client. All of these efforts are aimed at serving the personal interests of public accountants.

The current realities have led public accountants to distance themselves from their professional responsibilities. Hamka's perspective suggests that individuals need to have a passion for their profession. When they lose this passion, they tend to prioritize their own interests, which can be detrimental to others. As a result, they fail to uphold their honor as professional members and fulfill their social responsibilities. This failure to maintain honor can blind them to risks and lead them to disregard wisdom as a foundation of commitment. Subsequently, the lack of wisdom can cause a public accountant to be unable to demonstrate trustworthiness, which in turn makes it impossible for them to uphold righteousness as specified in the professional ethics of a public accountant. When a public accountant prioritizes their own and their client's interests over the public interest, it indicates hypocrisy in carrying out their profession. Such behavior makes the public accountant more susceptible to commercialization and creates distance from receiving God's blessings.

From the point of view of assessing the meaning of happiness, public accountants see that there are 3 types of happiness in public accounting practice: first, happiness because of material. Second, happiness because providing work for others. The third is happiness because of blessings. Of the 3 types of happiness that surround the practice of public accountants, what dominates the practice of public accountants is happiness because of material or property.

Regarding the need for moral ethics in the practice of public accountants, both public accountants and religious leaders view that moral ethics are needed for someone who is undergoing a profession. Furthermore, related to spiritual values in the practice of public accountants, it is revealed that public accountants who have *iffah* (maintaining honour) will always be honest and objective. Those who have wisdom will always be guided to the truth, those

who have *shaja'ah* will always stand firm, away from accommodating client interests, and those who are fair will always place interests and truth.

Additionally, public accountants who embrace the ethical principle of *mahabbah* in their professional and business activities will always follow His commands and refrain from all His prohibitions. Working sincerely will also cultivate the work ethic that work is performed solely to worship Allah SWT. With the consciousness of upholding the attitude of *raja'*, a public accountant will consistently adhere to the principles of independence and integrity. Instilling the attitude of *khauf* in a public accountant will raise awareness that all work activities he is engaged in will always be supervised and held accountable by Allah SWT as the giver of life. Public accountants who are devout to Allah SWT will always be content with the sustenance provided by Allah SWT and not excessively pursue material gain. Being grateful for the benefits or income obtained will keep public accountants away from commercializing audit services, thus ensuring more integrity and independence.

The implication of a public accountant's *tawakal* attitude will lead to an objective approach towards the client's financial statements. Instilling the concept of *tafakkur* in a public accountant will bring inner peace and lead them to reject any actions or work that is disliked by Allah SWT.

Conclusion

This study investigates practices in public accountants, including business reality, ethical violations, and comprehension of public accountants to professional ethics, which later is analysed with ethical rational-religious Hamka as an attempt to refine the ethical commitment of public accountants. The findings of this study indicate a lack of ethical commitment by public accountants, as most of the informants of this study suggest that they use freelance auditors, have low audit fees, and even arrange audit opinions to accommodate the client's will.

In this study, researchers suggest that Hamka's ethical perspective is to refine the professional ethics of public accountants by applying true

blissfulness. In order to achieve blissfulness, a public accountant needs to have virtues of mind which are reflected in behaviours, such as: (*iffah*) maintain self-respect, (*wara'*) self-control towards worldly seduction, (*syaja'ah*) stand on righteousness, eminency of ingenuity can be acquired by love (*mahabbah*), sincere (*ikhlas*), apprehension (*khauf*), hope (*raja'*), piety (*taqwa*), be grateful, submission (*tawakkul*), and contemplating (*tafakkur*).

The limitation of this study is that some senior public accountants whom the author tried to contact initially agreed but later declined to provide input and opinions on accountant ethics for various reasons. Additionally, religious leaders lack understanding and object to giving their opinions about the professional ethics of accountants. These limitations make the results of this study less than optimal. With these limitations in mind, it is suggested that the next researcher delve deeper in the next study, especially in relation to religious leaders who understand accounting issues and religious science.

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