

Research Ethics in Islam: Principles, Practices, and Contemporary Case Reflections

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research ethics is essential for responsible knowledge production in today's globalized academic environment. While largely shaped by secular Western traditions, Islamic scholarship provides a deep ethical framework grounded in the Qur'an, Hadith, and jurisprudence. Core principles include truthfulness (sidq), justice (adl), intention (niyyah), public good (maslahah), and accountability (amanah). This chapter examines how these values guide research in theory and practice, using case studies from Muslim-majority contexts and global scholarship. It calls for an inclusive model that integrates Islamic ethics with international standards without compromising science. Addressing biomedical research, social sciences, and emerging technologies, it offers practical guidance for researchers and institutions worldwide.

INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of knowledge has been considered a cardinal value in the Islamic tradition. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was sent down the first revelation, and the command was Read! The pursuit of knowledge is a religious obligation based on the declaration of the pursuit of knowledge as a religious obligation (Qur'an 96:1). In the

history of Islam, scholars constructed sophisticated ways for obtaining, verifying, and transmitting knowledge, and thus elaborated what could be considered the first guidelines of research ethics (Al-Attas, 1993). However, ethical issues facing the modern research environment are new challenges that require a show of etiquette in how they are dissected using both the traditional Islamic standards and the contemporary ethical standards.

The word ethics in research has gained a modern meaning of the concept, including a set of principles and rules of conducting scientific research and academic studies, which are the basis for high integrity, human dignity, and social responsibility. Although Western models such as the Belmont Report (1979) and the Declaration of Helsinki have been the focus of the debate on research ethics around the world, there has been a growing realization that culturally and religiously sensitive methods appealing to diverse communities around the world are required (Padela et al., 2014).

Islamic ethics is an excellent platform to address the research problems of the day. Based on the concept of tawhid (the oneness of Allah (SWT)), Islamic ethics is based on the bond of human responsibility as the vicegerent to Allah (SWT) (*khalifah*) on the earth and one who is responsible in the worldly and spiritual aspects. The same is true for the research area where the quest for knowledge is to be within ethical boundaries, which are established in the Islamic law and morality (Iqbal, 2007).

The fact that Islamic ethics have been integrated into modern research paradigms is not only an academic project but an exigency in practice for a number of reasons. First, there are 1.8 billion Muslims worldwide with cultural and religious sensitivities that cannot be adequately addressed by scientific theories of ethics. Second, the Muslim-majority countries are also increasing their research and development activities and, therefore, need an ethical code based on their cultural and religious norms. Third, Islam has a rich ethical culture that provides valuable insights that could lead to the discussion of research ethics in the world and more specifically, research related to the areas of social justice, community welfare, and moral responsibility (Fadel, 2019).

The ethics of Islamic research are based on divine guidance, which balances the spiritual intention and the responsibility to society. These foundations are outlined in this chapter, which expresses the fundamental principles derived on the basis of the Holy Quran, the Hadith, and classical jurisprudence, and then explains how they apply to the modern research methods. Besides a theoretical exposition, the chapter provides practical tools- including ethical checklists and relevant guidelines- that can help scholars, ethics committees and institutional bodies to be ethical in various research situations.

The chapter is organized progressively from basic to functional levels. It starts by providing an overview of Islamic ethical principles (Table 1), moves on to a comparative analysis with Western frameworks to pinpoint areas of convergence

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