



THE DECLINE OF MORAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE INDONESIAN ADVOCATE PROFESSION: CAUSES, IMPACTS, AND REFORMS

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Advocate; Advocate Ethics; Code of Ethics; Integrity Decline; Legal Profession Reform; Moral Intelligence.

ABSTRACT

Indonesia's rule-of-law framework recognizes advocates as law enforcers, yet declining integrity appears when defending guilty clients without justice values. This research arises from ethical violations that reflect a moral crisis and the weakening of moral intelligence among advocates. The purpose of this study is to analyze the factors causing the decline of advocates' integrity, assess the effectiveness of the professional code of ethics in maintaining morality, and propose solutions to strengthen the integrity of the legal profession in Indonesia. This study employs an interdisciplinary legal research method with a descriptive-analytical approach. Primary data were obtained through interviews with legal practitioners, while secondary data were derived from laws, legal literature, and the advocates' code of ethics. Data were analyzed qualitatively by applying legal system theory, legal culture theory, morality theory, and legal certainty theory. The findings indicate that the main factors behind the decline in advocates' integrity include misinterpretation of client loyalty, weak enforcement of the code of ethics, commercialization of the profession, and a permissive legal culture. The conclusion emphasizes that moral intelligence must be the foundation of the advocate profession. Reform in legal education, strengthening of the code of ethics, and regulatory renewal are required to restore advocates' role as *officium nobile*.

A. INTRODUCTION

The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia firmly establishes that Indonesia is a state based on law.¹ This principle requires equality before the law, guaranteeing recognition, protection, fair legal certainty, and equal treatment for every individual. In realizing these principles, the role of

¹ Jimly Asshiddiqie, *Konstitusi dan konstitusionalisme Indonesia* (Jakarta: Sinar Grafika, 2021), 12.

advocates as a free, independent, and responsible profession stands alongside the judiciary and other law enforcement institutions as essential pillars of justice.²

Advocates are part of Indonesia's *catur wangsa* (four pillars) of law enforcement, alongside the police, prosecutors, and judges. As a free, independent, and responsible profession, advocates play a vital role in promoting justice.³ Their function providing legal services and resolving clients' disputes through both litigation and non-litigation needs stronger recognition and broader support within the legal framework.

Humans, as social beings, live in groups that require moral and ethical rules to guide behavior.⁴ In law enforcement, the profession demands education, standards, and responsibility, as it carries prestige and influence. Therefore, advocates must uphold ethics and morality, act professionally, and follow established standards. To ensure this, a code of ethics is essential.⁵ Law enforcement is the process of ensuring that legal norms function effectively as guidelines for social and state life. Law enforcement officials refer both to legal institutions in general and, in a narrower sense, to the police, prosecutors, judges, and advocates.

The enactment of Law Number 18 of 2003 on the Advocate Organization provided a framework for advocates united under the Indonesian Advocates Association (*Perhimpunan Advokat Indonesia*/PERADI), established on December 21, 2004.⁶ Under this law, PERADI is tasked with organizing

² Herning Setyowati, and Nurul Muchiningtias, "The Role of Advocates in Providing Legal Assistance to the Community in the Perspective of Human Rights," *Lex Scientia Law Review* 2, no. 2 (2018): 157. See too, Fauziah Lubis, Andli Arya Harahap, Angga Wira Yuda Tarigan, Audi Mutia Adrivia Nst, Azura Tasya, Da Cahara, and Muhammad Kaharuddin, "The Role Of Advocates In Upholding The Principles Of Justice In Judicial Institutions," *Fox Justi: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 15, no. 02 (2025): 179.

³ Andika Rahmad Siregar, Boy Keke Syahriadi, Tagor Indra Mulia Lubis, Zaidan Azmi, and Idham Kholiq Hasibuan, "Peran Advokat Sebagai Penegak Hukum Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmiah Nusantara* 2, no. 2 (2025): 637.

⁴ Herdy Nadwan, Nata Sundari, Richa Rahma Purnama, and Siti Nurewah Yuni Shaputri. "Moral, etika dan kode etik profesi advokat," *Das Sollen: Jurnal Kajian Kontemporer Hukum Dan Masyarakat* 1, no. 01 (2022): 543.

⁵ I. Dewa Agung Gede Mahardhika MARTHA, "Enforcement of The Advocate Code of Ethics in Cases of Contempt of Court in Indonesia," *Journal of Tourism Economics and Policy* 5, no. 4 (2025): 965. See too, Muten Nuna, Dince Aisa Kodai, and Roy Marthen Moonti, "Code of ethics and the role of advocates in providing legal aid to the poor," *Indonesian Journal of Advocacy and Legal Services* 1, no. 2 (2020): 263; Muhammad Hafiz Fajar Hidayah, Rohikim Mahtum, Fiarinda Putri Syahrani, and Faiz Nayla Chasnun, "Peran kode etik advokat dalam menjamin penegakan keadilan di Indonesia," *Media Hukum Indonesia (MHI)* 2, no. 4 (2024): 32.

⁶ Frangky Jonatan, Natashya Natashya, Cindy Laurencia, Edward Jonathan, Gabriel Yericho Damanik, and Jeane Neltje Saly, "Kajian Hukum Terhadap Pelanggaran Kode Etik Advokat Menurut Undang-Undang Nomor 18 Tahun 2003," *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan* 9, no. 17 (2023): 295. See too Maslon Hutabalian, and Maria Ferba Editya, "Tinjauan Hukum Terhadap Dualisme Kepengurusan Organisasi Perhimpunan Advokat Indonesia (Peradi) Berdasarkan Uu No. 18 Tahun 2003 Tentang Advokat," *Iuris Studia: Jurnal Kajian Hukum* 2, no. 1 (2021): 15.

advocate professional education, conducting professional exams, regulating internships, appointing advocates nationwide, enforcing the code of ethics, and supervising advocate conduct. The advocate's profession is regarded as honorable, as its main duty in court is to present facts and arguments on behalf of clients, enabling judges to deliver fair decisions.

The enforcement of law depends not only on public legal awareness but also on the role of law enforcers. As part of this system, advocates carry moral and ethical responsibility.⁷ Although often viewed as manipulating the law due to their litigation work, their true role is crucial: assisting individuals facing legal issues, even against powerful authorities. Beyond the courtroom, advocates also serve to represent citizens' interests in relation to the government.

The function of law and the role of legal experts are closely related, though not necessarily dependent on each other. Advocates, as graduates of law, significantly influence legal development. This requires consistent enforcement, fair legal substance, and a supportive legal culture.⁸ While advocates are essential instruments in legal development, their role is often questioned due to perceptions that they neglect legal principles. However, many advocates in Indonesia uphold high integrity and credibility in carrying out their duties.

The dual role of advocates in legal development arises from their duty to defend clients' interests while also upholding law and justice consistently.⁹ As independent and responsible professionals, advocates serve as agents of legal transformation, alongside other law enforcers, protected by law to safeguard the rule of law.¹⁰ The success of legal development depends on their ability to uphold justice with integrity, affirming the advocate's status as an *officium nobile*.

If advocates fail to perform their role properly, the law cannot function effectively.¹¹ Their contribution to legal development depends on how their

⁷ Nadia Maharani, Zico Junius Fernando, and Bagus Satrio Utomo Prawiroharjo, "A Study of Advocate Immunity Rights, Professional Ethics, and Obstruction of Justice in Corruption Cases Based on The Criminal Verdict of Fredrich Yunadi," *Knowledge on Sustentive Order, Litigation, Decree, Arbitration, Statute, & Imperatives* 1, no. 1 (2025): 19.

⁸ Roger Cotterrell, *Law, culture and society: Legal ideas in the mirror of social theory* (Routledge: Routledge, 2006), 94.

⁹ Herning Setyowati, and Nurul Muchiningtias, "The Role of Advocates in Providing Legal Assistance to the Community in the Perspective of Human Rights," *Lex Scientia Law Review* 2, no. 2 (2018): 156. See too, Piero L. Frattin, "The Role of the Advocate," *The Catholic Lawyer* 12, no. 1 (2016): 8.

¹⁰ Iskandar Khalil, "Overview of The Advocate Profession and Its Role in Supporting the Rule of Law," *JLAST: Journal of Law and Social Transformation* 1, no. 1 (2023): 54.

¹¹ Nadia Maharani, Zico Junius Fernando, and Bagus Satrio Utomo Prawiroharjo, "A Study of Advocate Immunity Rights, Professional Ethics, and Obstruction of Justice in Corruption Cases Based on The Criminal Verdict of Fredrich Yunadi," *Knowledge on Sustentive Order, Litigation, Decree, Arbitration, Statute, & Imperatives* 1, no. 1 (2025): 23.

role is shaped, with both positive and negative impacts influenced by key factors. According to Soerjono Soekanto¹², these include, the law itself, law enforcers, facilities and infrastructure, society, and culture. The relationship between law and development remains a central issue in legal studies, as both are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. As Harold J. Berman noted, law is "one of the deepest concerns of all civilized men everywhere."

The study of legal issues in Indonesia today cannot be separated from the framework of national development, as both are interdependent. Hence, modern legal studies often link law with development, known as "law and development studies" or "development law." Indonesia's national development is a deliberate effort of planned growth and transformation by the nation and government, aimed at modernization and nation-building.

In other words, national development can be seen as an effort toward modernization, transforming traditional life into a modern one supported by science and technology. Within this framework, law appears in two roles: as an object of development needing enforcement, growth, and improvement and as a tool to support and shape national development in Indonesia.

Development law is a legal system responsive to national growth, encompassing substantive law, legal institutions, and the expertise of legal scholars in supporting development. It includes actions to strengthen infrastructure such as legal institutions, professional organizations, legal education, and other professions, as well as addressing specific problems of development.¹³

As an instrument of development, law has three main functions: first, it serves as a regulatory tool that provides a framework for political decision-making, dispute resolution, and legitimizing the use of power. Second, it serves as a balancing tool that maintains harmony between the interests of the state, the public, and the individual. Finally, law serves as a catalyst that facilitates change through legal reform with the support of legal professionals.¹⁴

Advocates contribute to shaping legal norms, a process that may arise from society or from powerful groups. Law, seen as an ongoing process, requires constant monitoring to assess the effectiveness of regulations. In this

¹² Soerjono Soekanto, *Faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi penegakan hukum* (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 1983), 34.

¹³ Abdullah Emile Oemar Alamudy, Idzam Fautanu, and Fauzie Yusuf Hasibuan, "Legal Responsibilities of the Advocate Professional Organization for Members Who Confront the Law in Carrying Out Their Profession," *Russian Law Journal* 11, no. 11S (2023): 258.

¹⁴ Jeffrey W Stempel, "Legal ethics and law reform advocacy," *Mary's J. on Legal Malpractice & Ethics* 10 (2019): 244.

context, advocates play a key role in legal reform, with feedback serving as an essential mechanism for improving laws.¹⁵

In many developing countries, including Indonesia, advocates often distance themselves from development, even when serving as ministers, government officials, or legal educators. They are sometimes seen as defending narrow interests rather than acting as creative and innovative contributors to new legal frameworks.

A profession is essentially a permanent occupation of service, carried out with expertise in a specific field, embraced as a calling, and bound by values of dedication, respect, and commitment to human dignity for the public good. The judiciary is an institution and process, while courts are its organizational structure. Judiciary functions as a societal institution to resolve disputes impartially, applying positive law in an organized, objective, and consistent manner.¹⁶

Legally, an advocate is a professional who provides legal services, both inside and outside the court, as regulated by Law Number 18 of 2003 on Advocates.¹⁷ These services include consultation, assistance, representation, defense, and other legal actions for clients. Broadly, the functions and roles of advocates include upholding human rights and the rule of law, observing the Advocate's Code of Ethics and oath, defending justice, truth, and morality, and protecting the independence, dignity, and honor of the profession (*officium nobile*).¹⁸ Advocates are also responsible for ensuring quality legal services through continuous education, maintaining professionalism and collegial relations, and providing legal advice, consultation, opinions, legal information, drafting, litigation, representation, and *pro bono* legal assistance.

The advocate's profession carries responsibilities guided by a code of ethics and conduct, enforced through ethical commissions. This code serves as both a guideline for advocates' behavior and a safeguard of their moral

¹⁵ Andika Rahmad Siregar, Boy Keke Syahriadi, Tagor Indra Mulia Lubis, Zaidan Azmi, and Idham Kholiq Hasibuan, "Peran Advokat Sebagai Penegak Hukum Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmiah Nusantara* 2, no. 2 (2025): 638.

¹⁶ Abdullah Emile Oemar Alamudy, Idzam Fautanu, and Fauzie Yusuf Hasibuan, "Legal Responsibilities of the Advocate Professional Organization for Members Who Confront the Law in Carrying Out Their Profession," *Russian Law Journal* 11, no. 11S (2023): 259.

¹⁷ Frangky Jonatan, Natashya Natashya, Cindy Laurencia, Edward Jonathan, Gabriel Yericho Damanik, and Jeane Neltje Saly, "Kajian Hukum Terhadap Pelanggaran Kode Etik Advokat Menurut Undang-Undang Nomor 18 Tahun 2003," *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan* 9, no. 17 (2023): 297.

¹⁸ Muhammad Hafiz Fajar Hidayah, Rohikim Mahtum, Fiarinda Putri Syahrani, and Faiz Nayla Chasnun, "Peran kode etik advokat dalam menjamin penegakan keadilan di Indonesia," *Media Hukum Indonesia (MHI)* 2, no. 4 (2024): 35. See too, Iskandar Khalil, "Overview of The Advocate Profession and Its Role in Supporting the Rule of Law," *JLAST: Journal of Law and Social Transformation* 1, no. 1 (2023): 57.

integrity in society, closely linking professional conduct with ethical principles.¹⁹

Ethics is moral philosophy that provides guidance through noble values and social norms. However, in practice, some provisions in the Advocate's Code of Ethics often conflict with these ethical principles.²⁰ The certainty of the Advocate's Code of Ethics lies in its sanction system.²¹ It provides measures for violations, ranging from warnings and suspensions to permanent dismissal from the professional organization, depending on the severity and frequency of the offense.

The analysis shows that the current Advocate's Code of Ethics may not fully address the professional values needed to strengthen advocates' roles in the legal system and society.²² Its effectiveness is also influenced by the culture of Indonesian advocates. The strong "Spirit of the Corps" often hinders enforcement, as solidarity encourages defending peers over upholding ethics. Moreover, skepticism and distrust of a corrupt judicial system foster apathy, discouraging advocates from acting individually. As a result, many prefer practicing outside the courts or forming their own groups.

Morality and ethics appear similar but differ: morality refers to values of good and bad in human actions, while ethics is the study of those values. Morality concerns right and wrong, whereas ethics provides the standards guiding human behavior. Both are essential in any profession.

Advocates must first strengthen moral awareness to uphold their code of ethics, supported by strict oversight, as they can influence court rulings.²³ Their main challenges lie in personal integrity, professional solidarity, and responsiveness to societal issues. Political conditions also limit their role, making public awareness of advocates' functions essential. These challenges grow more complex when professional skills and continuous learning, including foreign language proficiency, fail to keep pace with global demands. In modern

¹⁹ Pratolo Saktiawan, Rommy Hardiansah, Didit Darmawan, and Arif Rachman Putra, "Ethical Principles in Indonesian Legal Advocacy: Sustaining Justice in Adversarial Systems Through Professional Integrity," *Journal of Social Science Studies* 1, no. 2 (2021): 242.

²⁰ Muhammad Hafiz Fajar Hidayah, Rohikim Mahtum, Fiarinda Putri Syahrani, and Faiz Nayla Chasnun, "Peran kode etik advokat dalam menjamin penegakan keadilan di Indonesia," *Media Hukum Indonesia (MHI)* 2, no. 4 (2024): 38.

²¹ Novandi Ardiansyah, Zihan Oktaviani, Yufiyandini Adiningsih, and Imad Aqil Muhammadi, "Sanksi Kode Etik Advokat Sebagai Sarana Penegakan Integritas," *Das Sollen: Jurnal Kajian Kontemporer Hukum Dan Masyarakat* 1, no. 02 (2023): 435.

²² I. Dewa Agung Gede Mahardhika MARTHA, "Enforcement of The Advocate Code of Ethics in Cases of Contempt of Court in Indonesia," *Journal of Tourism Economics and Policy* 5, no. 4 (2025): 966. See too, Amelia Putri Rizkyta, and Mahmud Umar Dhani, "A Discourse of Professionalism of Advocates in Providing Legal Assistance in Indonesia." *The Indonesian Journal of International Clinical Legal Education* 5, no. 1 (2023): 124.

²³ Andika Rahmad Siregar, Boy Keke Syahriadi, Tagor Indra Mulia Lubis, Zaidan Azmi, and Idham Kholiq Hasibuan, "Peran Advokat Sebagai Penegak Hukum Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmiah Nusantara* 2, no. 2 (2025): 639.

law, many legal scholars view secular morality, rooted in ethical relativism, as primary and beneficial to society. Religion as a source of ethics is seen as irrelevant, with some arguing it should remain separate from law.

Another challenge is society's lack of support for professionalism, which wastes time and discourages advocates' professional spirit. Advocates must uphold honesty, courage, intelligence, persistence, and patience to handle cases with dignity. As an independent profession committed to justice, they bear moral and professional responsibility to sharpen legal analysis and adapt to global legal developments. The advocate's mission is to pursue justice. Lawrence M. Friedman²⁴ notes that law enforcement depends on the professionalism of its actors, as law responds to external social pressures and reflects both personal interests and moral or social motives.

This cannot be achieved if Indonesia's legal system remains disorganized without reforms in structure, substance, and legal culture. As representatives of society, advocates play a vital role in balancing state and government interests while upholding law and justice for those seeking it.

Ethics teaches what is right and wrong, as well as moral duties. In law, ethical issues could be addressed if universal religious values were adopted, especially in Indonesia's religious society. In business, three models of ethical management are recognized: immoral management, which completely ignores morality by exploiting weaknesses for personal or group interests and viewing the law as an obstacle; amoral management, where managers act unethically either unintentionally due to lack of awareness of ethical impacts or deliberately by prioritizing efficiency and profit while separating business from ethics, as reflected in Widyahartono's view that "business is business, ethics is ethics"; and moral management, which places ethics at the highest standard by combining legality with values such as justice, honesty, and fairness, viewing the law as the minimum ethical requirement and striving to exceed it in business conduct.²⁵

Religious values effectively foster philanthropic responsibility because they go beyond material gain. To understand ethical relativism, one must first grasp relativism itself rejection of universal truths. All forms of relativism share the belief that knowledge or morality is relative to certain principles, denying absolute validity.²⁶ If ethical relativism holds true, studying legal ethics becomes pointless, as ethical judgments in law cannot be evaluated when all views are considered equally valid.

²⁴ Lawrence M. Friedman, *American law: An introduction* (2nd ed.) (New York City: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 35.

²⁵ Erikson Sihotang, Ngakan Ketut Acwin Dwijendra, H. Nurianto RS, and Ni Ketut Wiratny, "Improving the Morals and Ethics of Law Enforcement in Indonesia," *Law and Humanities Quarterly Reviews* 1, no. 2 (2022): 54.

²⁶ Emile Durkheim, *The elementary forms of religious life* (Washington: Free Press, 1912), 43.

Religion provides a strong foundation for morality and ethics, teaching what is right and wrong, integrity, and good conduct. Moral values are reflected in behavior, while norms guide actions. Without religion, ethics may lack the firm motivation to act.²⁷ In diverse workplaces, universal values shared across religions such as honesty, justice, and responsibility can shape positive ethics. Integrating religious values into national law and social culture can help address ethical violations, even before they escalate into legal breaches.²⁸

Frans Hendra Winarta²⁹ identifies common violations of the advocates' code of ethics, including unfair competition among lawyers such as client poaching, improper advertising, discrediting peers, or intimidation. He also notes poor client service, including collusion without client consent, guaranteeing victory, neglecting clients, or discriminating based on payment, as well as fraudulent practices such as using false data or colluding with court staff.

Such violations often arise from limited knowledge and resources regarding national and international codes of ethics for advocates.³⁰ Moreover, the Indonesian code lacks clear sanctions, creating obstacles to enforcement. According to Syamsuddin Pasamai³¹ in Sociology and Legal Sociology, legal effectiveness depends on proper application, implementation, and enforcement to achieve justice, meaning law must function philosophically, juridically, and sociologically. Ineffectiveness should also be examined through factors influencing the law-applying process.

This research aims to explore new dimensions of the degradation of morality intelligence, particularly factors less examined in previous studies, such as the influence of social media, digital technology, and global dynamics on advocates' behavior. It also seeks to analyze and propose innovative solutions to strengthen professional integrity by developing preventive and corrective measures through policy, training, and structural reforms. Ultimately, law enforcement should ensure legal certainty, usefulness, and justice, which requires grounding in professional ethics and morality, as law inherently governs human relations and justice.

²⁷ Herdy Nadwan, Nata Sundari, Richa Rahma Purnama, and Siti Nurewah Yuni Shaputri. "Moral, etika dan kode etik profesi advokat," *Das Sollen: Jurnal Kajian Kontemporer Hukum Dan Masyarakat* 1, no. 01 (2022): 549.

²⁸ Liza Arlina, Luthfi Alfarizi Nasution, Muhammad Rizky Khoir, Nurul Miftahul Jannah, and Fauziah Lubis, "Tinjauan Hukum Pelanggaran Kode Etik Advokat: Studi Kasus Roy Rening," *Judge: Jurnal Hukum* 6, no. 01 (2025): 256.

²⁹ Frans Hendra Winarta, *Advokat Indonesia: Citra, idealisme, dan keprihatinan* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2009), 65.

³⁰ Jasmine, Yoana Ledy Mutiara, Mufid Muhammad, and Haris Haunan, "Implementasi kode etik profesi advokat dalam praktik sehari-hari," *Das Sollen: Jurnal Kajian Kontemporer Hukum Dan Masyarakat* 3, no. 01 (2025): 53.

³¹ Syamsudin Pasamai, *Sosiologi dan sosiologi hukum* (Prenadamedia Group, 2012), 23.

Based on the background explained above, the role of advocates as a respected profession (*officium nobile*) is closely related to the enforcement of law, ethics, and morality within the legal system. However, various challenges, such as weak enforcement of ethics and professional solidarity, and shifting moral values, have raised concerns about the integrity and responsibility of advocates in carrying out their duties. Therefore, it is important to examine how law enforcement within the legal profession operates and how moral degradation can impact the realization of justice. The following are the research questions to be addressed in this study:

1. How is law enforcement implemented within the legal profession of advocates?
2. How does the decline of advocates' integrity manifest in the practice of defending guilty clients without regard to the values of justice?

B. RESEARCH METHODS

Research on the advocates' code of ethics highlights problems arising from the interaction between human resource and legal approaches, requiring an interdisciplinary perspective. Interdisciplinary legal research integrates knowledge and methods from other fields social, political, economic, and cultural so that law is not studied in isolation. As Sulistyowati Irianto explains, this approach combines concepts and theories across disciplines to better understand legal phenomena. Since law enforcement is influenced not only by legal factors but also by human resources and other non-legal aspects, a purely legal approach cannot fully address these challenges.

Interdisciplinary research offers the potential to shift perspectives, reshape academic structures, and create outcomes born from project synergy. Method refers to the processes and principles for solving problems, while research is a scientific activity of analysis and construction carried out methodologically, systematically, and consistently.

This study employs a descriptive-analytical approach, chosen to address the issues and objectives related to the advocates' code of ethics. Descriptive research analyzes data within the scope of the problem, applying general legal theories to explain or compare relevant data. Its purpose is to describe ethical issues faced by advocates and provide recommendations for improvement. As noted by M. Solly Lubis, descriptive-analytical research tackles problematic issues through hypotheses later verified by study. The discussion is limited to matters of the advocates' code of ethics, analyzed through legal system theory, legal culture theory, morality theory, and legal certainty theory.

The research data sources consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data includes facts obtained directly from field research, such as information from respondents related to the object of study. Secondary data comprises primary legal materials in the form of fundamental norms and

regulations, including the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Law Number 18 of 2003 on Advocates, and the Indonesian Advocates' Code of Ethics. It also includes secondary legal materials such as literature on morality, human resources, legal culture, and works discussing the role of advocates and their code of ethics in legal development, as well as tertiary legal materials including articles, scholarly journals, and English dictionaries.³²

Primary data was obtained through interviews with selected respondents. The results of these interviews were compiled, organized, and then analyzed. Secondary legal materials were gathered through documentation and library research, focusing on laws and regulations relevant to the study. The researcher conducted an inventory, classification, interpretation, and analysis of these materials, linking them to legal theories related to the role of advocates. These materials served as the foundation for examining and analyzing the issues, exploring fundamental theories and concepts, and following developments in the field to provide a broader and more holistic orientation while avoiding research duplication.

Primary data collected from the field was inventoried and analyzed using an inductive qualitative approach to provide a general overview of the research object. This was then combined with secondary data from legal literature. Both primary and secondary data were classified according to the research problems and analyzed through various interpretations, including grammatical, systematic, historical, functional, futuristic, and legal hermeneutics.

The analysis applied inductive logic, beginning with specific observations and moving toward general conclusions, to identify relationships between social and legal facts. The research emphasized empirical observation and analysis, while the juridical aspect focused on doctrinal studies of applicable legal regulations.

C. DISCUSSION

1. Law Enforcement in the Legal Profession of Advocates

Law enforcement ensures fairness, equality, and transparency so that society understands its rights and responsibilities. It creates a just, safe, and prosperous society through clear and consistent legal standards. Advocates, as legal professionals, provide legal services inside and outside the courtroom

³² I. Dewa Agung Gede Mahardhika MARTHA, "Enforcement of The Advocate Code of Ethics in Cases of Contempt of Court in Indonesia," *Journal of Tourism Economics and Policy* 5, no. 4 (2025): 967.

under statutory provisions. They act as defenders, advisors, and representatives of clients while upholding the rule of law and human rights.³³

According to Law Number 18 of 2003, an advocate is a person who provides legal services, whether in court or outside, as a practicing lawyer or legal consultant, provided they meet the legal requirements.³⁴ Law enforcement is the effort to realize the aspirations of the law, reflecting the intentions of lawmakers in legal regulations. Its purpose is to protect human interests by ensuring laws are applied fairly and consistently. While law may function peacefully, violations require enforcement to make the law a reality.

Law enforcement must be guided by three key components: justice, legal certainty, and utility. Justice reflects society's demand for fairness, even though justice and law are not identical, as law applies equally while justice remains subjective; in transitional democracies, this often creates tension between the supremacy of law and the dominance of power, giving rise to concepts of transitional justice. Legal certainty requires laws to be applied consistently so that people can rely on predictable outcomes, protecting against arbitrariness while still considering social, cultural, and governmental factors influencing enforcement. Utility emphasizes that law exists for the benefit of society, meaning enforcement should promote social good rather than unrest, as highlighted by Satjipto Rahardjo's³⁵ view that law enforcement seeks to realize justice, certainty, and social usefulness.

Law enforcement is the effort to harmonize values expressed in legal norms and social views, translating them into attitudes and actions to ensure peaceful social interaction. It requires balance between social morality, institutional morality, and civic morality based on prevailing societal values. Law enforcement succeeds when legal principles align with the conduct of law enforcers, and fails when there is a gap between legal ideals and practice. This demands collective commitment, not only in setting legal standards but also in applying them. Codes of conduct serve as benchmarks to assess professional malpractice, defined as actions below professional standards that cause harm to others. Ultimately, law enforcement ensures that legal norms function as real guidelines for behavior in social and state life.

Law enforcement is the effort to make law both in its narrow formal sense and broad material sense a guideline for behavior, applied by legal subjects and law enforcers mandated by law to ensure the functioning of legal

³³ Iskandar Khalil, "Overview of The Advocate Profession and Its Role in Supporting the Rule of Law," *JLAST: Journal of Law and Social Transformation* 1, no. 1 (2023): 59.

³⁴ Frangky Jonatan, Natashya Natashya, Cindy Laurencia, Edward Jonathan, Gabriel Yericho Damanik, and Jeane Neltje Saly, "Kajian Hukum Terhadap Pelanggaran Kode Etik Advokat Menurut Undang-Undang Nomor 18 Tahun 2003," *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan* 9, no. 17 (2023): 298.

³⁵ Satjipto Rahardjo, *Masalah penegakan hukum* (Bandung: Sinar Baru, 1983), 21.

norms in society and the state. According to Soerjono Soekanto³⁶, law enforcement is the application of law in behavior, aimed at creating and maintaining social peace by aligning legal values with social reality. Satjipto Rahardjo emphasizes that law enforcement is not limited to formal rules, but also about fulfilling society's need for justice, making law responsive to its social context.³⁷ In practice, law enforcement means applying positive law as it should function, delivering justice by deciding cases through the proper use of substantive and procedural law.

Law enforcement in a broad sense covers the implementation of law, addressing violations through judicial and non-judicial mechanisms such as arbitration and dispute resolution. Narrowly, it refers to legal action against violations, especially through court processes, turning legal ideals into reality. Scholars note that defining law perfectly is nearly impossible, yet law enforcement remains central to social order. In Indonesia, however, it often faces criticism as selective, corrupt, or serving power rather than justice, reflecting a dominance of legal positivism that overlooks sociological dimensions.

Ultimately, law enforcement ensures that legal norms function as binding rules in society. Its effectiveness depends on three inseparable components: legal structure, legal substance, and legal culture. According to Sudikno Mertokusumo³⁸ and A. Pitlo, law enforcement must balance three elements: legal certainty, utility, and justice. The essence of law lies in values of fairness, truth, and social benefit, and its enforcement aims to turn these ideals into reality. It serves both preventive and repressive functions by ensuring government actions comply with legal norms and restoring order when violations occur.

In Indonesia, however, law enforcement remains weak, marked by a gap between legal expectations (*das sollen*) and practice (*das sein*). Major corruption cases often remain unresolved, while ordinary citizens face harsher treatment, reflecting deep inequalities. Philosophical reflection highlights these distortions, stressing the need for justice-oriented values.

Historically, Indonesian law shifted through three phases: pre-colonial moral-based law, colonial legal transformation, and post-independence adaptation of colonial systems. Yet, as Sidharta notes, a "legal gap" persists because lawmakers cannot foresee every future case, leading to overly rigid or ambiguous norms that fail to address concrete realities.

³⁶ Soerjono Soekanto, *Faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi penegakan hukum* (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 1983), 32.

³⁷ Satjipto Rahardjo, *Masalah penegakan hukum* (Bandung: Sinar Baru, 1983), 23.

³⁸ Sudikno Mertokusumo, *Penemuan hukum: Sebuah pengantar* (Springville; Liberty, 2005), 47.

Law enforcement is the implementation of law by authorized officials or individuals within their respective powers, guided by legal norms that shape proper behavior to maintain peace. Law protects human interests, and when violations occur, enforcement ensures law becomes a reality. Its effectiveness depends on social, political, and cultural forces within society. Therefore, legal institutions must consider these dynamics so that enforcement is efficient and truly delivers substantive justice for those seeking it.

Law enforcement theory emphasizes that its purpose is to realize justice, legal certainty, and social utility. According to Soerjono Soekanto³⁹, this objective is supported by three main pillars: the legal structure, which includes law enforcers such as the police, prosecutors, judges, and lawyers; the legal substance, consisting of applicable rules and norms; and the legal culture, reflected in public awareness and societal attitudes toward the law.

Effective enforcement requires all three working together. Satjipto Rahardjo⁴⁰ adds that law must serve humanity, prioritizing substantive justice over rigid formalism. Law is not an end in itself but a means to meet people's needs and guide a humane state. In theory, law enforcement transforms written rules into social reality, adapting to moral, cultural, and social contexts. Drawing from Roscoe Pound's⁴¹ view of law as a tool of social engineering, Indonesian legal thought develops this into the idea of law as a means of social reform, shaping institutions and processes to reflect national values while upholding universal principles of justice. Sudikno Mertokusumo⁴² later broadened this idea: law should not only drive reform but also empower society and bureaucracy, placing law at the forefront of national development.

The weakness of law enforcement in Indonesia stems largely from its enforcers, from top officials to judicial institutions, where corruption and poor integrity undermine justice. Improving the mindset and professionalism of law enforcers requires reform in legal education and mental development from early stages.

According to Soerjono Soekanto⁴³, five main factors shape law enforcement. First, the law itself often contains a tension between legal certainty and justice, requiring continuous adaptation to Indonesia's cultural values and social realities. Second, the role of law enforcers is essential, as integrity, honesty, and professionalism determine whether justice can be

³⁹ Soerjono Soekanto, *Faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi penegakan hukum* (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 1983), 36.

⁴⁰ Satjipto Rahardjo, *Hukum progresif: Sebuah sintesa hukum Indonesia*, (Yogyakarta: Genta Publishing, 2009), 56.

⁴¹ Roscoe Pound, *An introduction to the philosophy of law* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), 54.

⁴² Sudikno Mertokusumo, *Penemuan hukum: Sebuah pengantar* (Springville; Liberty, 2005), 48.

⁴³ Soerjono Soekanto, *Faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi penegakan hukum* (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 1983), 39.

properly realized. Third, adequate facilities are necessary, including sufficient resources, organizational support, and funding to ensure that the legal system functions effectively. Fourth, society plays an important role, since public legal awareness strengthens compliance with the law and enhances its legitimacy. Finally, culture also influences law enforcement, as societal values and traditions shape how legal norms are interpreted and applied in everyday life.

These factors form an interdependent system; failure in one weakens enforcement overall. Reform demands abandoning rigid legal positivism, fostering integrity in law enforcers, and ensuring responsiveness to social realities. Mochtar Kusumaatmadja⁴⁴ emphasized law as both a tool for maintaining order and a means of social reform, aligning with Roscoe Pound's⁴⁵ concept of law as social engineering. For effectiveness, Indonesia must pursue targeted legal reform: updating regulations, improving competence, strengthening legal culture, and modernizing legal infrastructure. Only then can law enforcement uphold justice and order in building a true state of law.

Effective law enforcement is a key pillar of democracy and justice, yet in Indonesia it faces serious challenges. Internal issues such as weak judicial systems, corruption, and lack of impartiality are compounded by external pressures including political influence, cultural factors, and widespread corruption. These undermine public trust and damage the integrity of the legal system. Key obstacles include: poorly drafted regulations, corruption and politicization of justice, resource shortages, unequal access to legal aid, low legal awareness in society, and weak professional competence among law enforcers.⁴⁶ Integrity defined as honesty, consistency, and moral courage is essential but often lacking.

Addressing these barriers requires comprehensive reform: strengthening integrity and professionalism, improving legal education, modernizing infrastructure, ensuring adequate funding, and enhancing public legal literacy. Strategic improvements in resources, transparency, and oversight will not only restore public confidence but also create a fairer, more effective, and inclusive legal system.

According to Satjipto Raharjo⁴⁷, law cannot stand on its own; it only has meaning when enforced. Although Indonesia has a comprehensive legal system and institutions, enforcement still faces serious challenges. Evaluation of law enforcement aims to assess whether laws are applied fairly and consistently, and to identify obstacles at legislative, institutional, and societal

⁴⁴ Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, *Konsep-konsep hukum dalam pembangunan* (Alumni, 2002), 34.

⁴⁵ Roscoe Pound, *An introduction to the philosophy of law* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), 57.

⁴⁶ Chairani Azifah, "Pro Bono Legal Aid by Advocates: Guarantee of Justice for the Poor," *The Indonesian Journal of International Clinical Legal Education* 3, no. 4 (2021): 539.

⁴⁷ Satjipto Rahardjo, *Masalah penegakan hukum* (Bandung: Sinar Baru, 1983), 19.

levels. In practice, the principle of equality before the law often fails, with justice seen as favoring the wealthy while disadvantaging the poor. Corruption, lengthy and costly legal processes, weak institutional independence, and limited access to justice for marginalized groups remain persistent problems. Public trust is further undermined by inconsistent professionalism and political influence among law enforcers.

Experts highlight the need for reforms that strengthen accountability, transparency, and professionalism within the police, prosecutors, and judiciary. Law enforcement must prioritize substantive justice—ensuring real protection and benefits for citizens—rather than mere procedural compliance. Integrity, honesty, and ethical conduct are essential qualities for legal officials, supported by improved education, training, and fair welfare. Ultimately, evaluating law enforcement in Indonesia is vital to ensure that the legal system upholds justice, strengthens reform, and fulfills its role in protecting society's interests.

Law is a set of binding rules enforced through sanctions to achieve its purpose ensuring peace and order for all. In social, national, and state life, law is essential; without it, society risks conflict, injustice, and disorder. Law functions to regulate, balance, protect rights, uphold justice, and guide people toward shared goals. It is not only applied after conflicts arise but also serves to prevent them. Differences in interests are natural in society; law provides a fair way to resolve them. However, if laws are poorly applied or created against core principles, they can instead generate conflict.

Law exists to manage conflicts and maintain order. Since conflicts are inevitable, rules are needed to minimize them.⁴⁸ Punishments only serve their purpose if laws function effectively in society. According to Achmad Ali, law serves two main functions, first, As a tool of social control, Law restricts deviant behavior by imposing prohibitions, penalties, and compensation. It operates alongside other social institutions and passively adapts to social conditions. second, As a tool of social engineering, Law actively drives planned social change, helping restructure society in line with national development goals. Change agents trusted individuals or groups use law to guide transformation.

Law also serves a symbolic function, simplifying complex events into understandable rules, making communication between law enforcers and citizens clearer. There are two key aspects, namely the passive function as a form of social control and the active function as an instrument of social engineering. Carl von Savigny's historical theory adds that law develops naturally from society (*Volkgeist*), reflecting its values and culture. Thus, effective laws must align with social realities; otherwise, they lose meaning

⁴⁸ Andrii Tsygankov, and Diana Nazarenko. "Functions of the Rules of Advocates' Ethics in the Proceedings to Protect Advocates' Rights and Interests," *Law Ukr.: Legal J.* (2019): 221.

and legitimacy. Ultimately, the goals of law are justice, legal certainty, and social benefit.

Law regulates relationships between individuals, and its effectiveness depends on public compliance. People obey law either out of fear of sanctions (normative validity) or because they recognize its benefits (sociological validity). Thus, legal awareness strongly influences law's real impact in society.

According to Sudikno Mertokusumo⁴⁹, legal awareness means knowing what one should or should not do toward others. Zainuddin Ali⁵⁰ outlines several key factors that influence this awareness. First is knowledge of the law, based on the assumption that citizens are aware of laws that have been enacted. Second is understanding of the law, which goes beyond mere knowledge, requiring individuals to comprehend the purpose and benefits of legal rules. Third are the reasons for compliance, which may include fear of sanctions, the desire to maintain good relations with authorities or peers, or alignment with personal principles, with the latter considered the most important. Fourth are expectations of the law, where people tend to value legal systems that provide safety and social order. Finally, legal education plays a vital role, as outreach and public education are necessary to build a legal culture grounded in justice, certainty, and ethical values.

From a sociological perspective, law is both social control and social engineering. It reflects society's values, adapts passively to existing norms, and actively drives change. Scholars like Soerjono Soekanto⁵¹ and Satjipto Raharjo⁵² stress that sociology of law examines the gap between the ideal legal order and reality. Social structures family, friendships, work groups, and communities shape human interaction. As society changes, law must adapt to regulate behavior, resolve conflicts, and guide development. Legal awareness enables people to distinguish right from wrong, while law provides stability, justice, and direction for collective life.

In an ideal rule-of-law state, law not politics or economics should guide national life. Law enforcement is not only the duty of official authorities but also of all citizens, since it embodies justice and truth. Criminal law enforcement involves three main stages. The first is the formulation stage (legislative stage), in which lawmakers define crimes and determine sanctions so that the law reflects societal values and principles of justice.⁵³ The second is the application stage (judicial stage), where police, prosecutors, and courts

⁴⁹ Sudikno Mertokusumo, *Penemuan hukum: Sebuah pengantar* (Springville; Liberty, 2005), 49.

⁵⁰ Zainuddin Ali, *Filsafat hukum* (Jakarta: Sinar Grafika, 2007), 32.

⁵¹ Soerjono Soekanto, *Pengantar penelitian hukum* (Depok: UI Press, 1986), 59.

⁵² Satjipto Rahardjo, *Masalah penegakan hukum* (Bandung: Sinar Baru, 1983), 29.

⁵³ Novandi Ardiansyah, Zihan Oktaviani, Yufiyandini Adiningsih, and Imad Aqil Muhammadi, "Sanksi Kode Etik Advokat Sebagai Sarana Penegakan Integritas," *Das Sollen: Jurnal Kajian Kontemporer Hukum Dan Masyarakat* 1, no. 02 (2023): 438.

enforce the law in practice and ensure that it is applied fairly. The third is the execution stage (administrative stage), during which the relevant authorities carry out court decisions and implement punishments in accordance with the principles of justice.

Law itself derives from both material sources (public opinion, religion, custom, political policy) and formal sources (laws and regulations enacted by the state). Thus, law cannot be separated from society it both shapes and is shaped by social values. Effective reform in Indonesia requires not only new legal structures and institutions but also integrity among officials and a supportive legal culture. Genuine reform ensures democracy, justice, and public trust through corruption-free and dignified law enforcement.

Law enforcement institutions include the police, prosecutors, judges, lawyers, and correctional officers. Their functions range from investigation and prosecution to trial, sentencing, and rehabilitation. However, public trust is low due to widespread reports of corruption and misconduct, including collusion between judges, prosecutors, and lawyers.

Each institution should supervise the other through functional separation and horizontal oversight. Yet, systemic weaknesses persist, rooted in poor legal education and a lack of integrity.⁵⁴ Reform must begin with legal education that produces not only technicians of law but also professionals with integrity, justice, and humanity, as noted by Mochtar Kusumaatmadja⁵⁵ and Satjipto Rahardjo⁵⁶.

Effective law enforcement requires three interconnected elements: legal structure, legal substance, and legal culture. Legal structure refers to the institutions and officers responsible for implementing and enforcing the law. Legal substance consists of the laws, norms, and customs that regulate behavior within society. Meanwhile, legal culture relates to the values, attitudes, and level of public trust in the legal system, which influence how the law is understood, respected, and applied in everyday life. If one element fails, enforcement becomes reactive, inconsistent, and ineffective. Current education often emphasizes positivism over moral and ethical formation, producing "legal mechanics" instead of just and humanist lawyers.

Character building is essential. According to Satjipto Rahardjo⁵⁷, law officers must first be virtuous humans before becoming legal professionals. Character formation is lifelong but begins early, shaped through instilling values, habits, boundaries, and role models. Strengthening these foundations

⁵⁴ Jeremy Waldron, "The rise and decline of integrity," *NYU School of Law, Public Law Research Paper* 19-49 (2019): 35.

⁵⁵ Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, *Konsep-konsep hukum dalam pembangunan* (Alumni, 2002), 35.

⁵⁶ Satjipto Rahardjo, *Masalah penegakan hukum* (Bandung: Sinar Baru, 1983), 25.

⁵⁷ Satjipto Rahardjo, *Hukum progresif: Sebuah sintesa hukum Indonesia*, (Yogyakarta: Genta Publishing, 2009), 59.

is vital to form a generation of honest, professional, and nationally minded legal practitioners.

Advocates play a key role in promoting justice, transparency, and accountability. Through public advocacy, especially in corruption cases, they expand public access to legal information and encourage civic oversight. Advocates can also drive legal reform by contributing to legislation, strengthening professional ethics, and improving internal monitoring.⁵⁸

However, many Indonesian bar associations fail to sanction members involved in misconduct, including corruption, showing the need for stronger institutional reform. While advocates should safeguard fair and transparent trials, some act unethically as intermediaries between clients and law enforcers.

As respected officers of the court, advocates deserve equal authority with judges, prosecutors, and police to protect their independence and prevent abuse of power. Granting such authority would reduce conflicting interpretations of their role. Geery Spence reminds us that lawyers must first be virtuous humans before becoming professionals; otherwise, they risk becoming “monsters” rather than protectors of justice. This highlights a pressing question: can Indonesia’s legal education system truly produce lawyers who are professional, ethical, and nationally minded?

Law Number 18 of 2003 on Advocates does not clearly define their authority, creating a legal gap.⁵⁹ Yet, advocates should be recognized as state actors equal to the police, prosecutors, and judiciary. Their role extends beyond the courtroom they defend justice, human rights, and act as agents of positive change in Indonesia’s legal system.

Challenges include public misunderstanding of advocates’ roles and the limited number of highly competent, ethical professionals. Strengthening integrity, transparency, and efficiency requires collaboration between advocates, legal institutions, and government.⁶⁰

Advocates help balance public and state interests by representing clients while safeguarding the legitimacy of the justice system. They also provide legal education, consultation, and awareness to the wider community. With deep knowledge of law and procedure, they can improve efficiency in

⁵⁸ Wilhelmina Setia Atmadja, Elizabeth Prima Ratrisasi, Jason Marvin Wijaya, Maheswari Queena Dewani, Shintia Januarita, Abu Thalhah Al Anshari, Yuni Prisilla Ginting, and Pietro Grassio Eko Yulio, “Examination of Evidence in Civil Cases by Advocates from the Perspective of Professional Ethics,” *Indonesia Law College Association Law Journal* 4, no. 1 (2025): 9.

⁵⁹ Frangky Jonatan, Natashya Natashya, Cindy Laurencia, Edward Jonathan, Gabriel Yericho Damanik, and Jeane Neltje Saly, “Kajian Hukum Terhadap Pelanggaran Kode Etik Advokat Menurut Undang–Undang Nomor 18 Tahun 2003,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan* 9, no. 17 (2023): 299.

⁶⁰ Jeremy Waldron, “The rise and decline of integrity,” *NYU School of Law, Public Law Research Paper* 19-49 (2019): 37.

trials without sacrificing justice. Historically, the role of advocates has grown alongside law and society, ensuring individuals have guidance in seeking justice and resolving disputes.⁶¹ As defenders of fairness, advocates not only assist clients but also support judges in uncovering the truth, affirming their place as essential law enforcers.

Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility advocate According to Law Number 18/2013, Article 26(2), every advocate must obey the professional code of ethics, which requires honesty and responsibility toward clients, courts, the state, society, and God. The code serves as social control, prevents abuse, and ensures integrity and professionalism. Ethics guide behavior based on moral values, both individually and socially, and act as self-control for advocates. Challenges in implementation include weak enforcement, differing interpretations, and institutional resistance. Despite this, the code remains vital for upholding justice, accountability, and public trust in the legal profession.

A profession, according to Bartens, requires advanced expertise, continuous development, and responsible institutions. Roscoe Pound⁶² defines it as a learned calling rooted in public service. The Indonesian Advocates Association outlines seven principles, including independence, public interest, client trust, ethical codes, and service to the poor.

Advocates hold dual roles: as professionals serving clients and as equal actors in law enforcement alongside judges, prosecutors, and police. Their duty is not blind defense but ensuring justice, fairness, and truth. Misconduct such as corruption or prioritizing client victory over justice undermines public trust.

Advocates must be independent, ethical, and socially responsible. Their key roles include ensuring the proper and fair application of law, safeguarding judicial neutrality and independence, providing legal aid, advice, and representation to clients, and serving as both internal and external watchdogs of justice.⁶³ Ultimately, advocates are not merely defenders of clients but guardians of law, justice, and human dignity.

Advocates play a dual role in the legal system: defending the interests of their clients while simultaneously upholding justice and professional integrity. However, they face various significant challenges in carrying out

⁶¹ Fauziah Lubis, Andli Arya Harahap, Angga Wira Yuda Tarigan, Audi Mutia Adrivia Nst, Azura Tasya, Da Cahara, and Muhammad Kaharuddin, "The Role Of Advocates In Upholding The Principles Of Justice In Judicial Institutions," *Fox Justi: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 15, no. 02 (2025): 181.

⁶² Roscoe Pound, *An introduction to the philosophy of law* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), 58.

⁶³ O. I Popov, "The role of the advocate in the ensuring the unity of the judicial practice in civil cases," *Probs. Legality* 154 (2021): 122.

these responsibilities. One major issue is limited resources, including heavy workloads, time pressure, and financial burdens that affect their professional performance. In addition, technology gaps make it difficult for some advocates to adapt to digital tools increasingly used in legal practice. Public perception also poses a challenge, as negative media coverage and limited public understanding of the advocate's role can damage professional credibility. Furthermore, issues related to education and quality remain significant, since high educational costs, lengthy study periods, and inadequate training systems may reduce the number of competent and ethically grounded advocates.

Advocates must also deal with regulatory complexity, as frequent legal changes require continuous learning and adaptation. Emotional strain is another concern, as handling difficult cases and assisting vulnerable clients can affect advocates' mental health. Finally, increasing professional competition creates additional pressure, requiring advocates to develop not only legal expertise but also business and marketing skills to remain competitive in the profession. These issues ranging from resource shortages to public mistrust affect the quality of legal aid.⁶⁴ Addressing them is essential to ensure effective, ethical, and sustainable advocacy.

2. The decline of advocates' integrity in defending guilty clients without regard to the values of justice

The case of Stefanus Roy Rening drew major attention in Indonesia's legal community as it revealed the darker side of the legal profession.⁶⁵ As the lawyer for Lukas Enembe, he was charged with obstruction of justice in a corruption case. His actions included influencing witnesses not to give truthful statements and arranging false scenarios to obscure legal facts. The court's decision confirmed that his conduct fulfilled the elements of Article 21 of the Anti-Corruption Law.

This case illustrates how a lawyer can misuse the authority of their profession. Instead of serving as a guardian of justice, the lawyer became entangled in practices that shielded the client's interests by breaking the law. Such conduct undermines the image of the lawyer as *officium nobile*—a noble profession meant to uphold justice.

Furthermore, this case set a dangerous precedent for law enforcement in Indonesia. The public perceived an attempt to justify unlawful acts in the name of client defense. As a result, trust in the legal profession and the judicial

⁶⁴ Chairani Azifah, "Pro Bono Legal Aid by Advocates: Guarantee of Justice for the Poor," *The Indonesian Journal of International Clinical Legal Education* 3, no. 4 (2021): 541.

⁶⁵ Liza Arlina, Luthfi Alfarizi Nasution, Muhammad Rizky Khoir, Nurul Miftahul Jannah, and Fauziah Lubis, "Tinjauan Hukum Pelanggaran Kode Etik Advokat: Studi Kasus Roy Rening," *Judge: Jurnal Hukum* 6, no. 01 (2025): 257.

system eroded, raising serious concerns about the ethical boundaries of a lawyer's role.⁶⁶

From the perspective of criminal law, Roy Rening's actions clearly violated anti-corruption statutes. Article 21 of Law Number 31 of 1999 in conjunction with Law Number 20 of 2001 stipulates that anyone who deliberately obstructs or frustrates an investigation, prosecution, or trial may be punished.⁶⁷ The formal elements of this offense are satisfied without requiring concrete consequences. By influencing witnesses and directing false testimonies, Roy knowingly obstructed the investigation.

From the standpoint of professional ethics, his conduct represented a serious breach of the Indonesian Advocates' Code of Ethics.⁶⁸ Lawyers bear a moral duty to defend clients within the framework of the law, not by misleading or breaking it. Roy should have carried out his duties in good faith, preserving the dignity of the legal profession, rather than exploiting his position to justify unlawful acts.⁶⁹

This failure to uphold professional ethics demonstrates the blurred understanding among some lawyers between loyalty to the client and responsibility toward justice. Professional ethics are not merely complementary but foundational, ensuring the public's trust in the legal profession. This case underscores the urgent need to reinforce ethical standards so lawyers do not fall into rationalizations that distort justice.

From a socio-legal perspective, the lawyer's conduct reflected a conflict between formal legal norms and social norms. In Papua, community solidarity and loyalty to local figures often outweigh adherence to state law. Roy's act of staging false testimonies in a house of worship not only distorted the truth but also exploited religious symbols to sway public opinion. This further deepened public distrust in the justice system.

⁶⁶ O. I Popov, "The role of the advocate in the ensuring the unity of the judicial practice in civil cases," *Probs. Legality* 154 (2021): 127.

⁶⁷ Douglas Jhon Fiter, Alpi Sahari, and Adi Mansar, "Pelaksanaan Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2001 Tentang Perubahan Atas Undang-Undang Nomor 31 Tahun 1999 Tentang Pemberantasan Tindak Pidana Korupsi (Studi Kejaksaaan Negeri Deli Serdang)," *Iuris Studia: Jurnal Kajian Hukum* 5, no. 2 (2024): 199. See too, Tengku Arif Hidayat, "Reformulasi tindak pidana korupsi dalam kaitan rendahnya realisasi keuangan negara dikarenakan pasal 3 Undang-Undang Nomor 31 Tahun 1999 jo Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2001 Tentang Pemberantasan Tindak Pidana Korupsi," *Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 7, no. 1 (2018): 62; Sabungan Sibarani, and Faisal Santiago, "Pertanggungjawaban Pidana Terhadap Korporasi Berdasarkan Uu No 20 Tahun 2001 Tentang Pemberantasan Tindak Pidana Korupsi," *Lex Librum* 7, no. 2 (2021): 127.

⁶⁸ Muten Nuna, Dince Aisa Kodai, and Roy Marthen Moonti, "Code of ethics and the role of advocates in providing legal aid to the poor," *Indonesian Journal of Advocacy and Legal Services* 1, no. 2 (2020): 263.

⁶⁹ Liza Arlina, Luthfi Alfarizi Nasution, Muhammad Rizky Khoir, Nurul Miftahul Jannah, and Fauziah Lubis, "Tinjauan Hukum Pelanggaran Kode Etik Advokat: Studi Kasus Roy Rening," *Judge: Jurnal Hukum* 6, no. 01 (2025): 261.

Socially, the involvement of lawyers from outside the region was sometimes seen as disrupting local community structures. Their presence could be viewed as conflicting with traditional values that emphasize familial dispute resolution. To the local community, preventing a witness from testifying could be perceived as maintaining social harmony, even though legally it was an obstruction of justice.

This phenomenon demonstrates dissonance between formal law and local cultural values. The Roy Rening case shows that law enforcement cannot be detached from its socio-cultural context. Laws that ignore local values risk resistance, while legal violations that hide behind social norms erode the integrity of the entire legal system.⁷⁰

Moral intelligence plays a crucial role in the legal profession. Immanuel Kant emphasized moral duty as the basis of action, while John Rawls⁷¹ highlighted justice as fairness. Yet, in Roy's case, the absence of moral intelligence was evident in his choice to defend his client by obstructing justice. His actions reflected the subordination of moral values to personal and client interests.

Moral intelligence should guide lawyers in distinguishing right from wrong and rejecting legal strategies that undermine the integrity of the judicial process.⁷² A lawyer must not only possess technical legal expertise but also high moral sensitivity. This ensures that legal defense remains a pursuit of justice, not merely procedural manipulation.

The lack of moral intelligence in this case seriously damaged the profession's reputation. When lawyers use their skills solely to exploit legal loopholes without moral consideration, the profession loses its meaning as a guardian of justice. Therefore, integrating moral and ethical education into legal training is an urgent necessity.

This case exposed a crisis of integrity in Indonesia's legal profession. The immunity granted to lawyers, meant to safeguard professional independence, was twisted into a shield for misconduct. When lawyers are allowed to exceed ethical boundaries without consequence, the public perceives double standards in law enforcement. This is dangerous for the legitimacy of the judiciary.

The causes of integrity violations are varied: misinterpreting loyalty to clients, weak enforcement of the code of ethics, and commercialization of the

⁷⁰ Tyur Reggina Dewanti, and Kayus Kayowuan Lewoleba, "Analisis pelanggaran kode etik advokat terhadap penanganan perkara klien dalam kasus advokat Biy Palembang," *Media Hukum Indonesia (MHI)* 3, no. 3 (2025): 34.

⁷¹ John Rawls, *A theory of justice (rev. ed.)* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 32.

⁷² Herdy Nadwan, Nata Sundari, Richa Rahma Purnama, and Siti Nurewah Yuni Shaputri. "Moral, etika dan kode etik profesi advokat," *Das Sollen: Jurnal Kajian Kontemporer Hukum Dan Masyarakat* 1, no. 01 (2022): 546.

legal profession that prioritizes winning cases over justice.⁷³ Lawyers often misinterpret client loyalty as absolute defense, when in reality it must never conflict with justice and law.

The long-term implication is declining public trust in the judiciary. The legal system appears vulnerable to manipulation by those with access to powerful lawyers. Structural reforms in legal education, ethical codes, and professional oversight are therefore essential to strengthen Indonesia's legal framework.

Restoring integrity in the legal profession cannot rely solely on criminal sanctions. An interdisciplinary approach is required, involving philosophy of education, moral psychology, professional ethics, and social sciences.⁷⁴ Legal education must emphasize ethical values from the outset so that lawyers are not only technically skilled but also morally mature.

Strengthening the code of ethics is equally crucial.⁷⁵ Ethical standards need to be reconstructed to meet contemporary challenges, supported by effective oversight and strict sanctions. Without proper monitoring, ethical violations will persist because there is no deterrent effect. Lawyers must be trained to balance loyalty to clients with responsibility to public justice.

Professional organizations also play a vital role.⁷⁶ Bodies such as Peradi must actively build a healthy legal culture, embedding integrity as the profession's identity. Restoring integrity is not just about improving individuals but about reforming education, institutions, and the legal culture to regain public respect for the legal profession.

The Roy Rening case reflects a deep crisis of integrity within the Indonesian legal profession.⁷⁷ His obstruction of justice highlighted how lawyers can become protectors of political and economic interests rather than

⁷³ I. Dewa Agung Gede Mahardhika MARTHA, "Enforcement of The Advocate Code of Ethics in Cases of Contempt of Court in Indonesia," *Journal of Tourism Economics and Policy* 5, no. 4 (2025): 965.

⁷⁴ Wilhelmina Setia Atmadja, Elizabeth Prima Ratrisasi, Jason Marvin Wijaya, Maheswari Queena Dewani, Shintia Januarita, Abu Thalhaf Al Anshari, Yuni Prisilla Ginting, and Pietro Grassio Eko Yulio, "Examination of Evidence in Civil Cases by Advocates from the Perspective of Professional Ethics," *Indonesia Law College Association Law Journal* 4, no. 1 (2025): 7. See too, Chusnul Qotimah Nita Permata, Ananda Haidarrani, and Eri Bambang Budi Sumbowo. "Professional Ethics of Legal Advisors or Advocates when Proceeding in Court," *Amsir Law Journal* 3, no. 2 (2022): 98.

⁷⁵ Muten Nuna, Dince Aisa Kodai, and Roy Marthen Moonti, "Code of ethics and the role of advocates in providing legal aid to the poor," *Indonesian Journal of Advocacy and Legal Services* 1, no. 2 (2020): 263.

⁷⁶ Abdullah Emile Oemar Alamudy, Idzam Fautanu, and Fauzie Yusuf Hasibuan, "Legal Responsibilities of the Advocate Professional Organization for Members Who Confront the Law in Carrying Out Their Profession," *Russian Law Journal* 11, no. 11S (2023): 258.

⁷⁷ Liza Arlina, Luthfi Alfarizi Nasution, Muhammad Rizky Khoir, Nurul Miftahul Jannah, and Fauziah Lubis, "Tinjauan Hukum Pelanggaran Kode Etik Advokat: Studi Kasus Roy Rening," *Judge: Jurnal Hukum* 6, no. 01 (2025): 263.

defenders of justice. This signaled a broader moral decline that undermines public confidence in the law.⁷⁸ The legal profession requires a stronger foundation in ethics, justice, and responsibility. Integrity should not be seen as optional but as the very core of the profession. A lawyer who loses integrity also loses legitimacy as a law enforcer.

Therefore, profound reforms in legal education and enforcement of professional ethics are urgently needed.⁷⁹ The legal profession must return to its essence as *officium nobile* a noble calling that upholds truth, justice, and the dignity of law. Without integrity, law risks devolving into a tool of power rather than an instrument of justice.

D. Conclusion

This research demonstrates a strong connection between the decline in the quality of law enforcement and the degradation of lawyers' moral intelligence. Lawyers who fail to uphold the principles of moral intelligence risk undermining justice, weakening the rule of law, and eroding public trust in the legal profession as a whole. Moral intelligence is essential as a foundation for lawyers in carrying out their professional duties and responsibilities, encompassing moral awareness, the ability to make ethical decisions, and a commitment to act in accordance with principles of justice.

The findings highlight that the most evident form of professional ethical decline lies in breaches of integrity, particularly through acts of obstructing investigations. Several key factors contribute to this erosion of integrity, including personal moral failings and misunderstandings of loyalty to clients, the absence of effective oversight and enforcement of professional codes of ethics, the commercialization of the legal profession coupled with enabling legal cultures, and vague regulations with weak sanctioning mechanisms.

The consequences are severe: the legal profession faces a loss of public confidence, a shift away from professionalism, and ethical fragmentation, while the legal system suffers from diminished judicial legitimacy, disruption of law enforcement functions, and the erosion of substantive justice. The case of Stefanus Roy Rening illustrates how a lawyer may misuse legal expertise to obstruct rather than uphold justice, setting a harmful precedent and underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive reform in the supervision and development of the legal profession in Indonesia.

⁷⁸ Erikson Sihotang, Ngakan Ketut Acwin Dwijendra, H. Nuriyanto RS, and Ni Ketut Wiratny, "Improving the Morals and Ethics of Law Enforcement in Indonesia," *Law and Humanities Quarterly Reviews* 1, no. 2 (2022): 58. See too, Jeremy Waldron, "The rise and decline of integrity," *NYU School of Law, Public Law Research Paper* 19-49 (2019): 34.

⁷⁹ Chusnul Qotimah Nita Permata, Ananda Haidarrani, and Eri Bambang Budi Sumbowo. "Professional Ethics of Legal Advisors or Advocates when Proceeding in Court," *Amsir Law Journal* 3, no. 2 (2022): 95.

This dissertation introduces the concept of moral intelligence into the analysis of the legal profession within Indonesia's justice system, marking a scientific advancement. It not only identifies forms of moral degradation in legal practice but also redefines lawyers as ethical agents rather than mere providers of legal services. By integrating perspectives from law, ethics, and moral psychology, the study offers a theoretical model to strengthen the moral character of the profession, with the aim of supporting ethical reform and legal education to enhance the quality and integrity of law enforcement in Indonesia.

This dissertation argues that breaches of integrity within the legal profession are not merely individual failings but part of a systemic weakness in building a profession grounded in justice. To restore the role and image of lawyers as an essential component of the criminal justice system, there must be a renewal of ethics, regulation, and public moral awareness. Justice requires not only written laws but also honest legal practitioners. Strengthening the enforcement of professional codes of ethics is crucial, with organizations such as the Indonesian Bar Association (Peradi) expected to adopt transparent, progressive, and accessible sanction mechanisms, while granting greater independence and authority to their Honorary Councils.

Equally important is the continuous integration of legal ethics education, beginning at the undergraduate and graduate levels and extending throughout professional practice. Reform in legal education must ensure that lawyers are not only technically competent but also firmly rooted in ethical principles and professional integrity. In addition, this study recommends revising the Advocates Law (Law Number 18 of 2003) to include more specific sanctions for serious violations such as obstruction of justice.

Finally, further research is needed using socio-legal and legal-anthropological approaches to better understand the permissive cultural patterns within the legal community and to formulate strategies for reshaping the culture of law. Such reforms will help build a profession that is more accountable, ethical, and aligned with the demands of justice.

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