






“Investigating the influence of Islamic police work engagement and ethics on the performance of Sharia police: Moderating role of Islamic leadership”

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INVESTIGATING THE INFLUENCE OF ISLAMIC POLICE WORK ENGAGEMENT AND ETHICS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SHARIA POLICE: MODERATING ROLE OF ISLAMIC LEADERSHIP

Abstract

This study examines how Islamic work engagement, Islamic work ethics, and Sharia-based transformational leadership affect the performance of Sharia policing in Aceh, Indonesia – the only province in the country where Islamic law is formally implemented. While prior research often focused on the structural and legal frameworks of Islamic governance, limited empirical studies explore the internal psychological and ethical drivers of law enforcement performance in Islamic contexts. Addressing this gap, the study develops and tests a model of faith-based policing performance grounded in Islamic organizational behavior. A quantitative survey was conducted with 378 active Sharia police officers (Wilayah Hisbah) across 23 districts in Aceh. Respondents were selected through stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation by rank, region, and function. Data were collected between August and October 2024 using a validated Likert-scale questionnaire. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to test measurement and structural models, including moderation effects. Results show that Islamic work ethics ($\beta = 0.634$; $p < 0.001$) and Islamic work engagement ($\beta = 0.120$; $p = 0.001$) significantly and positively influence Sharia policing performance. Sharia-based transformational leadership also has a positive direct effect ($\beta = 0.261$; $p < 0.001$), but its moderating role is statistically insignificant. These findings emphasize the importance of intrinsic ethical values and personal motivation in shaping law enforcement outcomes. Leadership appears to have a greater direct than moderating impact. The study contributes empirical evidence for enhancing religiously inspired police performance and extends the literature on Islamic governance.

Keywords

Sharia policing, engagement, ethics, leadership, performance, Islamic governance, PLS-SEM

JEL Classification

H83, Z12, M14, D23

INTRODUCTION

The integration of Islamic principles into public governance has become an increasingly prominent theme in the discourse on faith-based administration and legal pluralism. In several Muslim-majority contexts, there has been a resurgence of interest in embedding religious values into the operations of state institutions. Among these, Aceh Province in Indonesia presents a uniquely institutionalized model. As the only region in Southeast Asia where Sharia law is formally implemented under a decentralized governance framework, Aceh occupies a significant position in debates on religious law, state legitimacy, and institutional performance.

Aceh's adoption of Sharia-based regulations (Qanun Syariah) followed decades of separatist conflict, the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, and a

subsequent peace agreement that granted the province special autonomy. This autonomy enabled local authorities to institutionalize Islamic legal norms across a wide spectrum of public functions – including the judiciary, education, and law enforcement. One of the most consequential developments was the establishment of Sharia policing units (*Wilayatul Hisbah*), tasked with enforcing Islamic moral and legal codes in accordance with the *Qanun*. Unlike conventional police forces, these officers are expected to uphold both formal legal standards and religious-moral obligations, reflecting a dual accountability that is both administrative and spiritual.

However, the performance of Sharia police remains a contested issue. Media reports, public perception surveys, and academic assessments have pointed to inconsistencies in enforcement practices, varying degrees of professionalism, and questions regarding the legitimacy of officers' moral authority. These concerns raise deeper questions about what actually drives the effectiveness of faith-based law enforcement institutions. While most existing studies emphasize macro-level structural, legal, or political variables, the scientific gap lies in the limited exploration of internal, micro-level determinants – particularly those rooted in psychological engagement, ethical motivation, and leadership dynamics within Sharia policing environments.

This gap presents both a theoretical and applied research problem. Theoretically, current models of law enforcement effectiveness – often derived from secular or Western public administration paradigms – fail to fully capture the nuances of religiously motivated public service. In religious governance systems like that of Aceh, officer performance may be shaped not only by institutional resources or legal clarity but also by internalized values and ethical worldviews. Practically, without a clear understanding of these micro-level dynamics, interventions aimed at professionalizing or reforming Sharia policing risk being misaligned with the cultural and moral realities on the ground.

Thus, the central scientific problem this study addresses is: How and to what extent do internal, value-based drivers – such as work engagement and personal ethics – influence performance in a Sharia policing context, and whether leadership grounded in Islamic values has the capacity to reinforce these influences.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

The performance of police officers in faith-based institutions is influenced by a complex interplay of ethical commitments, psychological engagement, and leadership behavior. In religious governance contexts, especially those applying Sharia law, officers are not only tasked with maintaining public order but also with embodying and enforcing religious norms. This dual responsibility raises questions about the internal factors that shape officer behavior, particularly in regions where Islamic law is formally institutionalized.

Aceh, Indonesia, represents a unique case. As the only province with a special autonomy to implement Islamic Sharia, Aceh has developed a distinctive institutional framework of “Sharia policing,” in which officers are expected to uphold

both legal and moral standards rooted in Islamic values (Feener, 2013; Salim, 2008). While much of the literature on Islamic governance has focused on macro-level dimensions – such as law, politics, or public acceptance – relatively little attention has been given to the micro-foundations of officer performance within these institutions. This study attempts to address that gap by examining how work engagement, Islamic work ethics, and transformational leadership jointly influence Sharia policing outcomes.

Sharia policing in Aceh operates under institutional pressures that combine religious obligation with civil enforcement. Unlike secular law enforcement systems, Sharia police officers are expected to align personal values with religious doctrines. This creates a need for strong internal drivers – beyond external regulations – to sustain ethical and effective performance. Previous stud-

ies emphasize that religious motivation plays a vital role in officers' adherence to professional codes, suggesting that internal states such as engagement and ethical beliefs are central to performance (Ariel et al., 2015; Lum et al., 2020).

Work engagement has been defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). In high-stress professions like policing, engagement has been linked to lower burnout and higher job satisfaction (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Kim et al., 2013). In Islamic contexts, work engagement transcends mere emotional investment and becomes infused with spiritual meaning. The idea of *ikhlas* (sincerity) and *mujahadah* (striving in devotion) reframes work as an act of worship (Ali, 2005; Yousef, 2001). Thus, engagement in Sharia policing becomes both a psychological and a theological commitment.

Recent studies suggest that religiously motivated engagement can enhance self-regulation, moral discipline, and resilience under pressure (Mitchell & Lewis, 2017). Officers who perceive their role as spiritually meaningful tend to display higher motivation, lower absenteeism, and stronger adherence to institutional values (Mitchell & Lewis, 2017). These findings underscore the importance of engagement as a dual psychological-spiritual mechanism for sustaining effective law enforcement in faith-based systems. Among a sample of 330 Muslim university students, the study found that religious self-regulation fully mediated the relationship between self-resilience and adaptive conflict management styles, indicating an enhancement in moral discipline and interpersonal resilience (Ashraf et al., 2023).

Islamic work ethics (IWE) represent a comprehensive framework that links religious principles with workplace conduct. Rooted in values such as *sidq* (truthfulness), *'adl* (justice), and *amanah* (responsibility), IWE regard work as both a worldly necessity and a spiritual obligation (Ali & Al-Owaihian, 2008; Abdul Cader, 2017). Employees who internalize these ethics are more likely to demonstrate discipline, honesty, and social responsibility.

Empirical studies confirm that IWE correlates positively with job satisfaction, performance, and

organizational citizenship behavior (Rokhman, 2010; Kumar & Rose, 2010). In public and religious institutions, IWE fosters a culture of integrity and transparency, helping to reduce corruption and increase institutional trust (Udin, 2023; Kosmadopoulos et al., 2023). In the context of Sharia policing, these ethics not only shape officer behavior but also influence community perceptions and legitimacy of enforcement practices. (Ibrahim, 2020). This is further corroborated by Jonathan-Zamir et al. (2023), who showed that public evaluations of moral and ethical adherence – especially compliance with social-contract norms – are independently linked to police legitimacy, even beyond procedural justice considerations.

Moreover, Islamic ethical values have been linked to improved psychological well-being and moral resilience, especially in organizations with strong religious identities (Suryani et al., 2022; Atiya et al., 2024). Given that Sharia policing requires officers to enforce moral codes, adherence to Islamic work ethics (IWE) can reduce ethical dissonance and increase commitment to the institutional mission. Empirical research shows that IWE significantly enhances affective commitment and employee performance, mediated by Islamic motivation and job satisfaction, thereby creating stronger internal alignment with organizational objectives (Aflah et al., 2021).

Leadership plays a critical role in embedding and reinforcing Islamic values within institutions. Transformational leadership, which includes components such as inspirational motivation, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, has been widely applied in organizational studies (Bass & Avolio, 1994). When grounded in Islamic values, this leadership style evolves into what scholars term Sharia-based transformational leadership (Ahmad & Syed, 2020).

This form of leadership emphasizes religious integrity, ethical modeling, humility, and justice (Beekun & Badawi, 2005; Al-Aidaros et al., 2013). In law enforcement settings, Islamic leadership helps to establish an ethical climate, align individual behavior with religious norms, and enhance officers' spiritual motivation (Zaim et al., 2024).

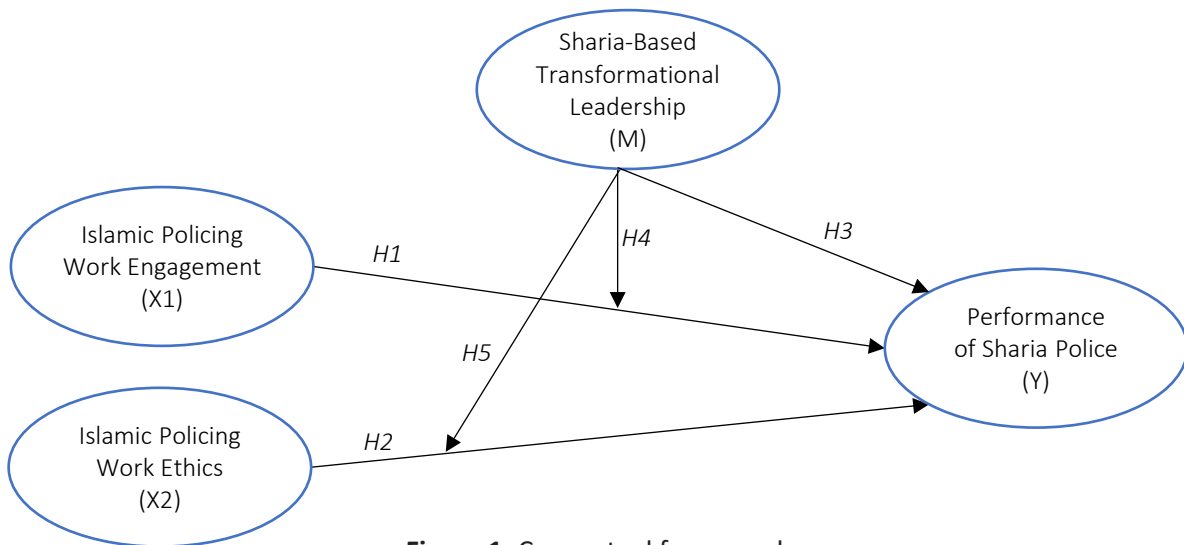


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

Leaders who embody these traits not only inspire subordinates but also build cohesive teams that internalize shared values (Rafiki & Wahab, 2014).

Recent empirical studies have shown that Islamic transformational leadership fosters employee empowerment, trust, and moral commitment in both public and nonprofit sectors (Al Halbusi et al., 2022; Sulaiman et al., 2024). In the context of Sharia policing, such leadership can reduce ambiguity in rule enforcement, enhance consistency in applying religious norms, and strengthen officers' moral clarity.

Although the individual contributions of engagement, ethics, and leadership are well documented, their interaction effects remain underexplored – especially in Islamic institutions. Scholars have theorized that the impact of engagement and ethics on performance may be contingent upon leadership behavior (Ali, 2005; Al Halbusi et al., 2022). For instance, work engagement may translate into performance more effectively under leaders who model religious virtues. Similarly, the influence of Islamic ethics may be amplified in environments where leaders uphold ethical and spiritual standards.

In summary, previous research underscores the significance of work engagement, Islamic work ethics, and transformational leadership in shaping performance outcomes in public and religious institutions. However, few studies have integrated these constructs into a comprehensive model tai-

lored to the context of Sharia policing. The existing literature also lacks empirical examination of their interdependent effects, particularly the moderating role of Islamic leadership.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the influence of Islamic policing work engagement and Islamic policing work ethics on the performance of Sharia policing officers in Aceh. It also seeks to examine whether Sharia-based transformational leadership moderates these relationships.

The following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: Islamic policing work engagement has a positive effect on Sharia policing performance.*
- H2: Islamic policing work ethics has a positive effect on Sharia policing performance.*
- H3: Sharia-based transformational leadership positively moderates the relationship between work engagement and performance.*
- H4: Sharia-based transformational leadership positively moderates the relationship between work ethics and performance.*

The conceptual framework, depicted in Figure 1, illustrates the theoretical relationships between key research variables. This framework is developed based on the premise that Islamic policing work engagement (X1) and Islamic policing work ethics (X2) are critical determinants of the per-

formance of Sharia policing (Y). Furthermore, Sharia-based transformational leadership (M) is introduced as a moderating variable, influencing the strength and direction of the relationships between X1, X2, and Y.

This framework is grounded in relevant theories of work engagement, ethical leadership, and transformational leadership within the context of Sharia policing. The hypothesized relationships (H1–H5) provide a structured approach to examining how these variables interact, offering valuable insights into the mechanisms that drive effective Sharia-based law enforcement.

2. METHODS

This study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional research design and was conducted in Aceh Province, Indonesia, the only region in the country where Sharia law is formally integrated into public governance and policing practices. Data collection was carried out between August and October 2024, covering all regencies/cities where Sharia enforcement units (Wilayah Hisbah) operate.

The population consisted of police officers assigned to Sharia law enforcement units. A purposive sampling strategy was employed using three

inclusion criteria: (1) active service in a Sharia enforcement unit, (2) at least two years of working experience, and (3) voluntary participation.

A total of 378 valid responses were obtained, which meets the recommended sample size for PLS-SEM analysis (Kock & Hadaya, 2018). Table 1 presents the demographic distribution of the respondents.

The structured questionnaire was developed using validated instruments adapted to the Islamic policing context. All constructs were reflective and measured using seven indicators each, based on well-established sources.

The measurement items for Islamic policing work engagement were adapted from the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2002) and contextualized to fit the religious and operational realities of Sharia enforcement in Aceh. The Islamic policing work ethics construct was adapted from Ali's (1988) Islamic Work Ethic scale, which emphasizes core Islamic values such as honesty (šidq), trust (amānah), justice ('adl), and work as a form of worship. The original items were contextualized to reflect the duties and moral expectations of officers involved in Sharia law enforcement in Aceh Province. The construct of Sharia-based transformational leadership was adapted from Bass and Avolio's (1994) transformational leadership model. The items were contextualized to reflect Islamic

Table 1. Respondent demographics

Characteristic	Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	234	62.0
	Female	144	38.0
Age	18 – 28 years	76	20.1
	29 – 39 years	117	31.0
	40 – 50 years	129	34.1
	Over 50 years	56	14.8
	Married	276	73.0
Marital Status	Unmarried	102	27.0
	Senior High School	122	32.0
Educational Attainment	Diploma (Associate Degree)	42	11.0
	Bachelor's Degree	192	51.0
	Postgraduate Degree (Master/PhD)	22	6.0
Years of Employment	2 – 7 years	38	10.1
	8 – 13 years	79	20.9
	14 – 19 years	76	20.1
	20 – 25 years	129	34.1
	Over 25 years	56	14.8

Note: n = 378.

leadership values relevant to the public enforcement of Sharia law, such as moral integrity, spiritual guidance, justice ('adl), and religious motivation. The Sharia Policing Performance construct was adapted from the Islamic work performance frameworks developed by Ali and Al-Owaihan (2008) and Yousef (2001). The items reflect ethical enforcement, professionalism, fairness, and religious accountability in the context of Sharia policing in Aceh. For detailed operationalization of each construct, including all questionnaire items, please refer to Appendix A, Table A1.

All items were measured on a six-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree) to minimize central tendency bias and capture more nuanced opinions (Joshi et al., 2015). The questionnaire underwent content validation by three experts in Islamic leadership and ethics. A pilot test with 30 officers was conducted to assess item clarity and reliability before full deployment.

This study adhered to ethical research principles and was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Syiah Kuala University (Number: 105/UN11.2.1/PG.01.03/SPK/PTNBH/2024).

Participation was entirely voluntary. Respondents were informed about the study's purpose, assured of their anonymity, and required to give informed consent before starting the questionnaire.

Data were analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0. The PLS-SEM approach included the following steps. Measurement model evaluated internal consistency reliability, convergent validity (AVE), and discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT ratio). Structural model assessed path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), effect sizes (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2). Finally, moderation analysis was applied using the product indicator approach as recommended by Henseler and Fassott (2010).

3. RESULTS

Given the study's emphasis on behavioral and ethical constructs within a faith-based institutional setting, PLS-SEM was deemed appropriate due to

its capacity to handle both formative and reflective indicators and to estimate parameters with high statistical efficiency even under relatively moderate sample sizes.

The empirical analysis proceeded in two major stages: (1) assessment of the measurement model, which evaluates the reliability and validity of the indicators used to measure each latent variable; and (2) examination of the structural model, which tests the hypothesized relationships among constructs, including direct effects and interaction (moderation) effects. The primary constructs under examination – Islamic policing work engagement (X1), Islamic work ethics (X2), Sharia-based transformational leadership (M), and the performance of Sharia policing (Y) – were measured using multi-item reflective indicators adapted from well-established scales and contextualized for the Sharia law enforcement setting of Aceh.

In the first step, the measurement model was evaluated to determine whether the latent variables were measured accurately and consistently by their respective indicators. This evaluation involved examining internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

As reported in Table 2, internal consistency reliability is exceptionally strong. All constructs yielded Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability (CR) values exceeding the conventional threshold of 0.70, with most values above 0.90, indicating excellent reliability. These findings suggest that the items within each construct are highly correlated and measure the same underlying concept with consistency. For instance, the composite reliability score for Islamic work ethics exceeded 0.99, a level of internal coherence rarely achieved in cross-sectional field research, reinforcing the robustness of the measurement instrument.

Convergent validity was assessed through the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct. AVE values ranged from 0.772 to 0.982, surpassing the minimum recommended cutoff of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2017), and confirming that more than 50% of the variance in the indicators was captured by the corresponding latent variable. These high AVE values are noteworthy because they suggest that the constructs not only pos-

Table 2. AVE value results on discriminant validity

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Islamic policing work engagement (X1)	0.933	0.934	0.958	0.883
Islamic policing work ethics (X2)	0.991	0.991	0.994	0.982
Performance of Sharia policing (Y)	0.964	0.968	0.974	0.903
Sharia-based transformational leadership (M)	0.941	0.942	0.962	0.895
X1 x M	0.984	1.000	0.986	0.885
X2 x M	0.976	1.000	0.968	0.772

sess statistical precision but also exhibit strong conceptual alignment. For example, the AVE for Sharia-based transformational leadership was 0.895, indicating that the leadership items consistently captured the moral, inspirational, and ethical dimensions theorized in Islamic leadership literature (Al-Aidaros et al., 2013).

The Fornell-Larcker criterion was used to examine discriminant validity, ensuring that each construct is empirically distinct from the others. As shown in Table 3, the square root of the AVE for each construct exceeded the inter-construct correlations, satisfying the condition for discriminant validity. This implies that, although the constructs are theoretically related – especially in the case of engagement and ethics, which may share motivational underpinnings – they are empirically separable in this model. This distinction is critical in models involving interaction terms (e.g., moderation), as failure to establish discriminant validity could result in biased estimates and misinterpretation of effects.

The validity and reliability of the measurement model lay a strong foundation for the subsequent structural model analysis. Ensuring that each latent variable is precisely and distinctively measured is particularly important in this study, given the culturally embedded nature of the constructs.

For instance, concepts like ikhlas (sincerity), amanah (trust), and ‘adl (justice) are not merely abstract values – they are embedded within the lived experience and institutional expectations of Sharia law enforcement. Thus, the psychometric rigor demonstrated in the measurement model enhances the theoretical integrity and empirical credibility of the study.

Following confirmation of measurement validity and reliability, the study proceeded to evaluate the structural model, which tests the hypothesized relationships among constructs. Structural model analysis in PLS-SEM includes the assessment of path coefficients, explanatory power (R^2), effect sizes (f^2), and significance of relationships through bootstrapping procedures. In this study, bootstrapping was performed using 5,000 subsamples to ensure robust estimates of standard errors and statistical significance (Hair et al., 2017; Henseler et al., 2009).

The R^2 value is a key indicator of the model’s explanatory power for endogenous variables. As presented in Table 4, the R^2 value for the dependent variable performance of Sharia policing (Y) was 0.923, indicating that 92.3% of the variance in officer performance is explained collectively by the three exogenous variables: Islamic policing work engagement (X1), Islamic work ethics (X2), and Sharia-based transformational leadership (M).

Table 3. AVE (Fornell-Larcker criterion) root values discriminant validity

Variables	(X1)	(X2)	(Y)	(M)	X1*M	X2*M
Islamic policing work engagement	0.939					
Islamic policing work ethics	0.747	0.991				
Performance of Sharia policing	0.775	0.946	0.950			
Sharia-based transformational leadership	0.717	0.862	0.890	0.946		
X1*M	-0.298	-0.114	-0.134	-0.170	0.941	
X2*M	-0.151	-0.036	-0.055	-0.111	0.871	0.879

Note: X1 = Islamic policing work engagement, X2 = Islamic policing work ethics, Y = Performance of Sharia policing, M = Sharia-based transformational leadership.

This level of explanatory power is considered extremely high by conventional social science standards, where values above 0.67 are interpreted as substantial. In practical terms, this finding implies that performance in Sharia policing is not randomly determined or shaped primarily by external political or institutional factors alone; rather, it is deeply influenced by internal factors that reflect officers' psychological engagement, ethical grounding, and exposure to value-based leadership.

This result is particularly significant in public sector and Islamic governance contexts, where performance is often assumed to be constrained by bureaucratic or procedural rigidities. The high R^2 value signals the centrality of individual and ethical agency in shaping law enforcement effectiveness, suggesting that internal transformation – rooted in Islamic values – can yield measurable improvements in public service delivery.

The path coefficients represent the strength and direction of relationships between latent variables. Table 5 summarizes the structural relationships tested in this model.

For $H1$ (Islamic policing work engagement ($X1$) \rightarrow Performance of Sharia policing (Y)), $\beta = 0.120$, $p = 0.001$. This coefficient indicates a positive and statistically significant relationship, albeit with a small effect size. The result suggests that officers who demonstrate vigor, dedication, and spiritual focus in their work are more likely to perform effectively. Although the effect size is modest, the significance implies that psychological engagement contributes meaningfully to performance. This is consistent with previous studies in public administration and organizational psychology, where engaged employees tend to be more committed, innovative, and ethically aligned (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). In the context of Islamic policing, engagement may also reflect a sense of religious duty (ikhlas) and perseverance (mujahadah), thus strengthening officers' intrinsic motivation.

For $H2$ (Islamic work ethics ($X2$) \rightarrow Performance of Sharia policing (Y)), $\beta = 0.634$, $p = 0.000$. The path coefficient for work ethics is the strongest among all predictors, indicating that officers who internalize and act upon Islamic ethical principles – such as *sidq* (truthfulness), *'adl* (justice), and *amanah* (trust) – are significantly more likely to exhibit high performance. This finding is consistent with Islamic organizational behavior literature, which posits that ethical congruence with institutional values leads to greater job satisfaction, accountability, and public trust (Ali & Al-Owaidan, 2008; Yousef, 2001). In practical terms, the strong influence of ethics suggests that enforcement of Sharia law is not only a legal task but a moral one, and that officers who embody these values are seen as more legitimate and effective in the eyes of both peers and the public.

For $H3$ (Sharia-based transformational leadership (M) \rightarrow Performance of Sharia policing (Y)), $\beta = 0.261$, $p = 0.000$. This result confirms that value-based leadership has a statistically significant and moderate positive effect on officer performance. Leaders who act as moral exemplars, provide vision, and integrate Islamic values into their management style enhance subordinate performance. This aligns with the transformational leadership literature, where leaders who inspire trust, fairness, and ethical commitment can elevate organizational outcomes. The finding supports earlier research by Bass and Avolio (1994) and Al-Aidaros et al. (2013), but contextualizes it within Islamic legal governance. This is an important contribution, as it affirms the relevance of non-Western leadership models in shaping performance in faith-oriented bureaucracies.

Hypotheses $H4$ and $H5$ posited that Sharia-based transformational leadership would moderate the relationships between work engagement/ethics and performance. In other words, it was theorized that the presence of ethical leadership would strengthen the impact of personal engagement and ethical values on job performance. However, the data did not support these hypotheses.

Table 4. R-squared value results

Variable	R-Squared	R-Squared Adjusted
Performance of Sharia policing (Y)	0.923	0.922

For *H4*, $X1 \times M \rightarrow Y: \beta = 0.020, p = 0.664$; for *H5*, $X2 \times M \rightarrow Y \beta = 0.006, p = 0.924$. Both interaction terms are statistically non-significant, with very small coefficients and high *p*-values. These results lead to the rejection of *H4* and *H5*, indicating that leadership does not function as a moderating variable in these relationships.

The lack of significant moderation effects may be interpreted in several ways. One plausible explanation is that transformational leadership already exerts a strong direct influence on performance, making its additional moderating impact redundant. In a setting where Islamic values are deeply institutionalized, as in the case of Aceh’s Sharia policing, officers may already be internalizing engagement and ethical norms independent of leadership reinforcement. Alternatively, it is possible that the influence of leadership is more diffuse and structural, shaping organizational culture rather than conditioning specific behavioral pathways.

This finding underscores the importance of distinguishing between direct effects and conditional mechanisms in leadership studies. While transformational leaders are effective in driving performance, their ability to enhance or suppress the effects of other variables may be context-dependent.

The results of this study provide robust empirical support for the proposed conceptual model that integrates psychological, ethical, and leadership-based predictors of performance within a Sharia law enforcement context. By applying partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), the study validates not only the theoretical assumptions underpinning Islamic public administration but also offers strong statistical evidence for their practical relevance.

First, the findings confirm that Islamic policing work engagement has a statistically significant positive effect on officer performance. Although the effect size is smaller relative to other predictors, its significance indicates that psychological states characterized by energy, dedication, and absorption – particularly when framed as religious devotion – play a meaningful role in enhancing how officers perform their duties. This aligns with broader organizational behavior research that recognizes engagement as a critical driver of effectiveness in high-stress and service-oriented professions. In the specific context of Sharia policing, where enforcement activities are often spiritually motivated, engagement emerges not merely as a functional requirement, but as a religious expression.

Second, the most influential predictor of performance is found to be Islamic work ethics, which exhibited a large and significant effect size. Officers who adhere to ethical values rooted in Islamic teachings – such as justice, trust, and sincerity – are markedly more effective in executing their responsibilities. This highlights the unique normative framework within which Sharia policing operates: ethics are not peripheral or externally imposed, but rather endogenous to the identity of the law enforcement apparatus itself. These results reinforce the argument that faith-based institutions derive their legitimacy and effectiveness not only from legal authority but from the moral credibility of their personnel.

Third, Sharia-based transformational leadership also demonstrated a direct, statistically significant positive impact on officer performance. Leaders who inspire through moral vision, fairness, and religious authenticity create environments in

Table 5. Hypothesis testing results

Influence between variables	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Islamic policing work engagement (X1) → Performance of Sharia policing (Y)	0.120	0.109	0.034	3.484	0.001
Islamic policing work ethics (X2) → Performance of Sharia policing (Y)	0.634	0.637	0.063	10.083	0.000
Sharia-based transformational leadership (M) → Performance of Sharia policing (Y)	0.261	0.265	0.067	3.922	0.000
$X1 \times M \rightarrow$ Performance of Sharia policing (Y)	0.020	-0.001	0.045	0.434	0.664
$X2 \times M \rightarrow$ Performance of Sharia policing (Y)	0.006	0.025	0.064	0.096	0.924

which officers are empowered and aligned with institutional goals. This finding is critical in extending transformational leadership theory into an Islamic governance framework. Rather than relying solely on Western models of charismatic or bureaucratic authority, this study supports the notion that spiritual leadership rooted in religious virtues can serve as a powerful vehicle for improving public sector outcomes.

However, contrary to expectations, the leadership construct did not moderate the relationships between work engagement/ethics and performance. These non-significant interaction effects suggest that while transformational leadership exerts direct influence, it may not function as a conditional enhancer in this particular context. This could be due to the already high internalization of Islamic norms across all levels of the institution, reducing the variability necessary for moderation effects to emerge. It may also reflect the idea that in strongly value-based environments, individual motivation and ethical orientation are stable traits, not easily swayed by contextual factors such as leadership behavior.

Taken together, the findings underscore a fundamental insight: performance in Sharia-based policing is deeply embedded in the ethical and spiritual makeup of officers, more so than in institutional mechanisms alone. Engagement, ethics, and leadership are not independent bureaucratic levers but interwoven aspects of a holistic religious-administrative identity. The high explanatory power of the model ($R^2 = 0.923$) further reinforces this notion, suggesting that internal psychological and ethical constructs are primary determinants of law enforcement outcomes in Islamic governance systems.

These results have significant implications for both theory and practice. Theoretically, they demonstrate that Islamic work psychology constructs can be reliably measured and tested using rigorous empirical methods. This contributes to the growing body of literature that seeks to develop context-sensitive models of public sector management in Muslim-majority societies. Practically, the findings suggest that training programs, recruitment criteria, and leadership development initiatives in Sharia-compliant institutions should

prioritize ethical formation, spiritual engagement, and moral leadership, rather than relying solely on legalistic or procedural competence.

The study provides a compelling empirical foundation for understanding performance in Islamic law enforcement institutions. By validating the roles of engagement, ethics, and leadership through both theoretical reasoning and statistical modeling, it opens the door to further inquiry into how faith-based values shape public administration in diverse sociopolitical contexts.

4. DISCUSSION

The results provide robust support for the theoretical model, affirming the relevance of Islamic behavioral constructs in explaining performance in religiously governed public institutions (Park & Rainey, 2008).

The findings indicate that Islamic policing work engagement exerts a positive and statistically significant, albeit moderate, influence on officer performance. This aligns with the broader organizational literature that posits that employee engagement – characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption – is positively associated with productivity, pro-social behavior, and ethical conduct (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Schaufeli et al., 2002).

However, in the context of Sharia policing, engagement takes on an additional spiritual dimension. The construct of work engagement in this study was explicitly framed using Islamic concepts such as *ikhlas* (sincerity in worship) and *mujahadah* (striving with perseverance). The fact that this construct significantly predicts performance suggests that officers' sense of purpose and intrinsic motivation are not solely driven by external incentives or supervision, but are deeply rooted in religious identity and obligations (Ibrahim, Yusra, et al., 2022; Ibrahim, Saputra, et al., 2022). This finding reinforces the idea that in Islamic governance systems, faith-based motivation can be a powerful internal driver of behavior, potentially more durable than traditional extrinsic motivators.

The most influential predictor of performance in this study is Islamic work ethics. This result corroborates a growing body of research that highlights the performance-enhancing effects of ethi-

cal commitment in Muslim-majority contexts (Ahmad & Ogunsola, 2011; Ali & Al-Owaihian, 2008; Yousef, 2001). The scale used in this study captured dimensions such as honesty (sidq), justice ('adl), responsibility (amanah), and the theological framing of work as a form of devotion.

What is particularly noteworthy is the magnitude of the effect, which far exceeds that of engagement or leadership. This may reflect the socioreligious nature of Sharia policing, in which ethical conduct is not just a matter of compliance or professionalism but is embedded in officers' moral and spiritual accountability. In Aceh's unique legal environment, where officers enforce both state law and religious norms, ethical congruence between personal values and institutional expectations is likely to produce high levels of performance (Ibrahim, Yusra, et al., 2022).

This finding also suggests that training and professional development in Sharia enforcement should go beyond procedural instruction and incorporate deep ethical education based on Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) and moral philosophy (akhlaq). Ethics in this context is not merely a set of rules to follow, but a framework for living and serving.

The results further indicate that Sharia-based transformational leadership has a statistically significant and moderate direct effect on officer performance. This finding supports the integration of Islamic leadership theory into public sector performance models (Pettit et al., 1990; Ahmad & Syed, 2020). Transformational leaders who model Islamic virtues – justice, humility, trustworthiness – appear to foster environments where officers feel motivated and morally anchored (Sulaiman et al., 2024; Rabbad & Astuti, 2024).

Interestingly, this finding extends existing literature by demonstrating that Islamic leadership is not only relevant in the private sector or educational institutions (where it is more commonly studied) but is also operationally impactful in public enforcement agencies. In settings like Sharia policing, where the line between state authority and religious legitimacy is thin, leaders who are perceived as ethical and spiritually grounded may hold more influence than those who rely solely on formal rank or procedural command.

This reinforces the view that effective public leadership in Islamic contexts must integrate administrative competence with moral and spiritual integrity. Recruitment and promotion practices in Sharia enforcement should therefore consider not only managerial skill but also character-based leadership potential.

One of the more surprising results of the study was the non-significant moderation effect of Sharia-based transformational leadership. The data do not support the notion that leadership strengthens the impact of work engagement or ethics on performance. While this may appear counterintuitive, it opens up important theoretical and contextual discussions.

One possible explanation is the homogeneity of values within the organization. If both leaders and subordinates already share similar ethical and religious orientations – as may be the case in highly institutionalized Sharia enforcement settings – the added interaction effect of leadership may be limited. Leadership may exert its influence equally across levels of engagement and ethics, rather than selectively enhancing its effects.

Another explanation is methodological. Moderation effects often require larger sample sizes and greater variance to be detected reliably. The strong direct effects of engagement and ethics left little variance for interaction effects to explain. Additionally, the impact of leadership may manifest through indirect or mediating mechanisms, such as shaping organizational culture or perceived procedural justice, rather than direct behavioral amplification.

Future research may consider testing alternative models, such as moderated mediation or longitudinal designs, to further explore the dynamic role of leadership in Islamic public institutions.

Theoretically, the findings validate the use of Islamic behavioral constructs in public administration models. By empirically testing concepts such as Islamic engagement and ethics, the study contributes to the indigenization of management theory in Muslim-majority societies. It challenges the assumption that perfor-

mance models must rely solely on secular constructs or Western-derived theories.

Practically, the study offers clear implications for public policy and organizational development in regions governed by religious law. Enhancing officer performance in such contexts may require a multi-pronged strategy that includes: (1) Fostering spiritual engagement through value-based train-

ing, (2) Embedding ethical education in formal curricula, (3) Developing moral leadership capacity through character-based promotions.

Moreover, these findings underscore the importance of aligning institutional missions with individual belief systems, especially in public institutions tasked with upholding both legal and religious norms.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to empirically examine the determinants of Sharia policing performance by analyzing the roles of Islamic policing work engagement and Islamic policing work ethics, as well as assessing how Sharia-based transformational leadership strengthens these relationships. The findings reveal that both work engagement and work ethics have a direct and positive impact on police performance, emphasizing the importance of motivation, commitment, and ethical standards in enforcing Sharia law. Furthermore, transformational leadership was found to significantly enhance policing performance, reinforcing the notion that ethical and inspirational leadership contribute to effective law enforcement.

Despite the direct positive impact of transformational leadership, the study found no significant moderating effect of leadership on the relationship between work engagement, work ethics, and performance. This suggests that while leadership remains an essential factor in policing effectiveness, other structural and organizational elements may play a more critical role in shaping the outcomes of law enforcement efforts. The findings challenge existing assumptions about leadership's moderating role, calling for further research to explore additional contextual factors that may influence Sharia policing performance.

From a practical standpoint, these results have broad implications for police personnel, decision-makers, and society at large. For police officers, the study underscores the need to strengthen work engagement and ethical standards to improve service quality. For policymakers, the findings highlight the necessity of leadership development programs and ethical training to enhance law enforcement effectiveness. For society, the results emphasize the importance of community engagement and public trust in ensuring that Sharia policing is conducted fairly and justly.

Overall, this study contributes to the existing literature on faith-based law enforcement by providing new insights into the relationship between work engagement, ethics, leadership, and policing performance. While the direct effects of these variables are well established, future research should explore additional factors such as organizational culture, legal frameworks, and community dynamics to provide a more comprehensive understanding of Sharia policing effectiveness. These findings serve as a foundation for developing more ethical, engaged, and well-led law enforcement institutions that align with the principles of justice and morality in Islamic governance.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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Project administration: Marzuki, Muhammad Adam.

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Supervision: Mukhlis Yunus, Muhammad Adam.

Validation: Mukhlis Yunus.

Visualization: Muhammad Adam.

Writing – original draft: Marzuki.

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APPENDIX A

Table A1. Scale of measurements

Variable	Statement	Cronbach's Alpha	Reference
Islamic policing work engagement	I feel enthusiastic about carrying out Sharia law enforcement duties.	.93	Adapted from Schaufeli et al. (2002), contextualized
	I am mentally resilient when dealing with the challenges of Islamic law enforcement.		
	My work in Sharia enforcement inspires me with a sense of religious purpose.		
	I feel energized when performing my duties as a Sharia police officer.		
	I am fully absorbed in my work when engaging in Sharia compliance inspections.		
	Time flies when I am doing Sharia enforcement tasks – it feels meaningful and fulfilling.		
Islamic policing work ethics	I feel proud and honored to serve Allah through my role in upholding Islamic law.	.99	Adapted from Ali (1988), contextualized
	I believe that enforcing Sharia law is a form of worship to Allah.		
	I always uphold honesty in executing my duties as a Sharia police officer.		
	I consider the trust (amānah) given to me as a police officer to be a serious moral responsibility.		
	I strive to be fair and just when dealing with violations of Islamic law.		
	I avoid delaying tasks and ensure discipline in my work routine.		
Sharia policing performance	I feel accountable to both my superiors and to Allah for the work I perform.	.94	Adapted from Ali and Al-Owaihan (2008), Yousef (2001), contextualized
	I am committed to helping others uphold Islamic values in the community.		
	I enforce Sharia law fairly and without discrimination.		
	I carry out my duties with honesty and integrity, in line with Islamic teachings.		
	I ensure that my work reflects professionalism and respect for the public.		
	I consider my enforcement role as a form of worship and moral obligation.		
Sharia-based transformational leadership	I respond to public concerns about Sharia violations with a sense of responsibility.	.94	Adapted from Bass and Avolio (1994), contextualized
	I complete my tasks with consistency, discipline, and accountability.		
	I feel accountable to both my institution and to Allah for the way I perform my duties.		
	My superior demonstrates strong moral character and Islamic values in leadership.		
	My superior provides moral and spiritual guidance in carrying out my duties.		
	My superior encourages me to seek Islamic solutions to work-related problems.		
	My superior treats every officer with fairness and justice.		
	My superior leads by example in upholding Sharia principles in the workplace.		
	My superior motivates us to see our duties as both professional and religious obligations.		
	My superior listens to my concerns and provides support consistent with Islamic values.		