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Media Framing and the Legitimazation of Sharia in Aceh: An Analisis of Serambinews.com

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ABSTRACT

Digital advances have revolutionised communication patterns and the formation of opinion, including perceptions of Islamic law. In Aceh, which has formally implemented Islamic law for over 23 years, the dynamics of online media reporting have become a crucial factor in shaping its image and the construction of religious identity. This article analyses the role of Serambinews.com in framing news coverage about Islamic law in Aceh. From 9 articles found via a search using the keyword “Syariat Islam” on the site, 7 articles met the inclusion criteria as factual news reports and were analysed using Entman’s framing model (problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, treatment recommendation). The seven articles were purposely selected from the period of November 2024. This period was chosen based on the intensity of reporting related to the evaluation of sharia implementation after more than 23 years. While existing studies have discussed media representation of Islamic law in Indonesia, limited attention has been paid to how local online media in Aceh construct framing that legitimizes sharia enforcement. This study specifically addresses that gap by offering a systematic framing analysis of Serambinews.com. The results indicate that Serambinews.com consistently frames Islamic law as a solution for moral and social order. The legitimacy of its implementation is affirmed through narratives highlighting broad public support, claims of tolerance from interfaith



figures, and institutional collaboration with educational bodies. The reporting tends to present a singular narrative without critical views, which contributes to the discursive construction of Sharia as a legitimate public norm in Aceh. However, given the limited empirical scope (seven articles from one outlet over one month) these findings should be interpreted with caution and are not generalizable to all local media in Aceh.

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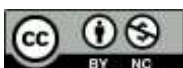
INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes in information dissemination and public opinion formation. Mass media, particularly online media, play a strategic role in shaping public perception of an issue (Nurdin and Kholil 2023), including in the context of implementing Islamic law (Syariat Islam) in Aceh.

As the only province in Indonesia that formally applies Islamic law within its legal system, Aceh has Islam-based policies that have been in place for over two decades. Since the enactment of Law No. 44/1999 on the Special Status of Aceh and Law No. 11/2006 on Aceh Governance (Huda 2020), sharia-based regulations have become an integral part of local community life. The implementation of Islamic law encompasses various aspects, from criminal law, economics, education, to social life (Hindarto 2022). However, this implementation is often subject to debate, both at the national and international levels, particularly

regarding its effectiveness, justice, and impact on human rights (Ismawardi 2018).

In this context, the media act as primary agents in framing social reality. Framing is the process of selecting and emphasising certain aspects of a news story that can influence how the public understands an issue (Sulaiman, Nurdin, and Rizha 2022). Among various framing models, Robert M. Entman's model was chosen due to its operational suitability for systematically deconstructing meaning construction through four key elements: problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation. This approach is more focused on the mechanism of meaning formation within the text as a whole compared to other models like Gamson & Modigliani or Pan & Kosicki, which emphasise discourse packages or grammatical structures more heavily. However, to move beyond a purely methodological justification, this study links framing more explicitly to legitimation theory: framing is



understood here not merely as selection and emphasis, but as a discursive strategy that can legitimize or delegitimize policies and authorities. In the context of Aceh, local media such as Serambinews.com participate in the construction of religious authority by normalizing certain interpretations of Islamic law and presenting them as common sense. Through repeated framing patterns, media discourse helps to normalize specific forms of public religiosity—particularly those emphasizing moral surveillance, dress codes, and social order—while marginalizing alternative religious or secular perspectives. In other words, the media function not only as information conveyors but also as active actors in shaping public perception of specific policies (Pratiwi, Rosalia, and Aliya 2020). News coverage regarding Islamic law in Aceh is inseparable from media construction which can either reinforce policy image, that is, the media's representation of a policy's effectiveness and legitimacy or, conversely, spark controversy.

One media outlet with significant influence in delivering information to the people of Aceh is Serambinews.com.. As a primary news portal in Aceh, Serambinews.com has a wide reader reach and serves as a key information source for the local community (Arenggoasih and Pratiwi 2023). News published by Serambinews.com is often referenced for understanding policy developments and the implementation of Islamic law in

Aceh. Therefore, analysing how this media outlet frames news about Islamic law is important for understanding the dynamics of media image, that is, the portrayal constructed and projected by the media concerning an issue related to this policy.

This study aims to analyse the construction of the image of Islamic law in Aceh through framing in Serambinews.com's news coverage. Although various studies have discussed the representation of Islamic law in Indonesia, academic attention specifically examining how local online media in Aceh particularly Serambinews.com as one of the most influential news portals in the region construct the framing of Islamic law remains limited. This condition underscores the urgency of this study, because the depiction of sharia-related issues in local media plays a significant role in shaping the everyday understanding and discourse of the public in Aceh.

In this research, framing analysis is used to examine how the media selects, emphasises, and interprets issues related to Islamic law in its reporting. By understanding how the media shapes the image of Islamic law, this study is expected to provide deeper insight into the relationship between media, religion, and public opinion in Aceh.

1. The Media's Role in Shaping Public Opinion

Mass media play a central role in shaping public opinion, especially in



societies heavily reliant on information from external sources (Alfiyani 2018). The concept of framing in the media shows that the way news is presented can influence public understanding and interpretation of an issue. In the context of Islamic law in Aceh, media framing can create diverse images, ranging from emphasis on aspects of justice and social welfare to criticism of its controversial implementation (Akbar Panigraha, Dea Azka Ramadhanti, Muhammad Faris Wilfary 2021).

Media framing is carried out through various techniques, such as word choice, the use of quotations from specific sources, and the presentation of data and facts supporting a particular narrative (Sulaiman et al. 2022). For example, in reporting on the implementation of caning punishments in Aceh, the media can present various perspectives, from those highlighting Islamic aspects and compliance with sharia law, to those criticising the punishment from a human rights perspective.

Serambinews.com, as one of the largest media outlets in Aceh, plays an important role in shaping public opinion about Islamic law. The coverage presented by this media can provide a deeper understanding of the sharia policies implemented in Aceh, as well as show how these policies are received by the public. Therefore, it is important to understand how Serambinews.com frames news about Islamic law.

2. The Dynamics of Islamic Law Implementation in Aceh within Media Reporting

The implementation of Islamic law in Aceh has become part of the region's identity, yet it is not without social challenges and dynamics. In some cases, the implementation of Islamic law in Aceh has drawn attention, both from the local community and the international community. Some aspects that often become the focus of media reporting include the execution of *jinayat* (hudud) law, the strengthening of the Wilayatul Hisbah (sharia police) institution, and the impact of sharia policies on certain groups, such as women and non-Muslims (Danial 2024). The media have the freedom to determine the perspective they wish to emphasise in their reporting. A media outlet may choose to present the positive side of implementing Islamic law, such as increased social order and the strengthening of Islamic values in society. Conversely, the media can also highlight challenges arising from the implementation of Islamic law, such as disparities in law enforcement and criticism of specific aspects of sharia policy (Tapsell 2017).

In this study, analysis using Entman's framing model is employed to see how Serambinews.com presents news related to Islamic law in Aceh. Entman defines framing as the process of selecting an issue and framing the news to highlight certain aspects, thereby influencing public perception. Information is often framed according to



the culture or beliefs of a specific audience (Hafidli, Nur, et al. 2023). Prominently presented realities can have a stronger impact in influencing the audience to accept a particular reality (Sulaeman and Islami 2024). By understanding the reporting patterns used, this study aims to identify how the moral image, that is, the representation of good-bad, right-wrong values attached to an issue of Islamic law is constructed by the media.

METHODOLOGY

This study applies a qualitative approach with framing analysis methods to examine how Serambinews.com shapes narratives related to news coverage of Islamic law in Aceh. The data collection technique used is documentation (Moleong 2007), involving searching and collecting news articles discussing Islamic law within a one-month period, namely November 2024. Data collection procedure: The news search was conducted on 30 November 2024, by accessing the Serambinews.com website (<https://aceh.tribunnews.com/>). The researcher used the search function on the site, typing the keyword “Syariat Islam” (in Indonesian). The search results were then filtered using the available “tag” filter on the site, specifically the syariat-islam tag (<https://aceh.tribunnews.com/tag/syariat-islam>). From the tag page, the researcher selected all articles published within the period 1-30 November 2024. Initially, 9 (nine) articles were found.

The inclusion criteria applied were: (1) factual news reports (not opinion pieces, advertorials, or pure video content); (2) main content discussing the implementation or enforcement of Islamic law in Aceh. Exclusion criteria: duplicate articles or short (breaking) news already developed in other articles. After selection, 7 (seven) articles meeting the criteria were obtained as the analysis corpus. All articles were archived as full-page screenshots and their URLs were saved for auditing purposes. The period November 2024 was selected not solely due to reporting intensity but because it coincided with the official public evaluation of 23 years of Sharia implementation in Aceh, a moment when media framing was most likely to explicitly articulate legitimizing narratives in response to potential criticism. This makes the period strategically meaningful for analyzing legitimation discourse, though the limited sample size means findings are indicative rather than generalizable.

Data analysis was carried out by operationalising Entman’s four framing elements (Dyczok and Chung 2022; Hafidli, Sasmita, et al. 2023) into specific coding rules, starting from problem definition which traces how the news defines an issue or violation related to Islamic law, to causal interpretation which highlights the factors or parties highlighted as the root cause. Furthermore, moral evaluation examines how actions, actors, or policies are judged morally or in terms of value, whether positively or negatively, while



treatment recommendation examines the actions or policies suggested to address the problem.

Table 1: Codebook Analisis Frame Analysis Entman’s Model

Framing Element (Entman)	Operational Definition	Coding Rule	Example Quote from News
1. Problem Definition	The way the media defines an issue or reality concerning Islamic law as a “problem” or “primary concern”.	Identify sentences or paragraphs that formulate: (a) a situation deemed problematic, (b) an ideal condition not yet achieved, or (c) a phenomenon requiring attention.	“Violators of Islamic Sharia in Banda Aceh are Predominantly Students” (Alfandi, 2024).
2. Causal Interpretation	The narrative regarding factors or actors deemed responsible for causing or influencing the defined problem.	Note explanations provided by the news, whether explicit or implicit, regarding the source or root cause of the problem.	“Students come from outside Banda Aceh... Free lifestyle factors” (Alfandi, 2024).
3. Moral Evaluation	Normative judgement (good-bad, right-wrong, fair-unfair) towards actors, policies, or consequences related to the issue of Islamic law.	Detect evaluative adjectives, normative statements from news sources, or implicit comparisons against a value standard.	“Students are considered to be performing a moral function” (Zamzami, 2024).

4. Treatment Recommendation	Actions, policies, or steps proposed (implicitly or explicitly) to address the problem or its causes.	Identify suggestions, appeals, statements of necessity, or descriptions of actions deemed as solutions.	“On-the-spot education... Plans for ongoing raids” (Wijaya, 2024).
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Source: Processed by researcher, 2025

The analysis process was conducted iteratively by applying the codebook to each article. To ensure the credibility of the findings, this study implemented several validation strategies. First, peer debriefing was conducted through regular discussions with other researchers to evaluate the consistency of interpretations. Second, reflexive memoing was used to track the logic of decision-making during coding. Third, an intercoder agreement procedure was carried out by independently testing 30% of the sample (3 articles) by two coders. The observed simple agreement rate was 86.7%. However, to provide a more robust measure, Cohen’s kappa was also calculated, yielding a coefficient of 0.79 (substantial agreement). Any discrepancies were discussed to refine the clarity of the codebook.

A note on the corpus and period selection: While seven articles from one outlet over one month may appear limited, this period (November 2024) was not chosen merely for convenience or high reporting intensity. Rather, it was selected strategically because it coincided with a publicly salient moment of policy evaluation following over 23 years of sharia implementation in Aceh.



During this month, Serambinews.com published a concentrated set of news articles directly addressing the effectiveness, enforcement, and public reception of Islamic law. This intensity makes the period analytically meaningful for capturing how the media frame sharia during moments of institutional reflection. Nevertheless, the findings are treated as indicative of a specific editorial pattern during a defined period and are not claimed to represent the entire framing tendency of Serambinews.com across all times.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Image of Islamic Sharia In Aceh within Serambinews.com's Frame

The implementation of Islamic law in Aceh has a strong legal foundation within the Indonesian legal system. The primary basis for its application is Law No. 44/1999 concerning the Implementation of the Special Status of the Special Region of Aceh Province, which grants Aceh special authority to regulate and administer religious life in accordance with Islamic law. This special status was subsequently reinforced by Law No. 11/2006 concerning Aceh Governance, which provides broader autonomy to Aceh in various aspects of governance, including the full implementation of Islamic law (Majid 2007).

Within the landscape of local news reporting in Aceh,

Serambinews.com occupies a strategic position as the primary media conveying social, political, and religious dynamics to the public. One central issue that consistently appears in this media's reporting is the enforcement of Islamic law in the Aceh region. With its special status recognised by the central government, Aceh is the only province in Indonesia that formally implements Islamic law. This policy is realised through various qanuns (regional regulations) and is supported by sharia enforcement institutions such as the Wilayatul Hisbah (WH) and the Islamic Sharia Office.

Using Entman's framing analysis approach consisting of four main elements—defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies—this study analyses seven news articles from Serambinews.com to reveal how the media shapes the image of Islamic law in Aceh.

Results

Framing analysis of the seven selected news articles from Serambinews.com reveals a consistent and dominant narrative pattern. The following is the complete analysis results table showing how each framing element is constructed in the reporting:



Tabel 2. The Data of News Framing using Entman Method

Date	News Title	Problem Identification	Causal Interpretation	Moral Evaluation	Recommendation
November 15, 2024	<p>Tokoh Agama Buddha dan Kristen: Syariat Islam Hapus Pemabuk, Judi dan Begal di Aceh (Hadi 2024)</p> <p>“Buddhist and Christian Leaders: Islamic Sharia Eradicates Drunkenness, Gambling and Robbery in Aceh”</p>	<p>Negative perceptions from outsiders towards Aceh are considered as an intolerant area in inter-religious relations.</p> <p>This assumption is not in line with the reality by religious leaders living in Aceh.</p> <p>Framing: The problem is defined as the national public's misperception of the implementation of Islamic law in Aceh, especially in terms of religious tolerance.</p>	<p>Lack of understanding or direct experience from outsiders on social life and diversity in Aceh.</p> <p>Media or outsider narratives that portray Aceh as intolerant without looking at the facts on the ground.</p> <p>Framing: The causes are lack of information and direct visits, as well as the dominance of negative narratives by outsiders.</p>	<p>Islamic Sharia is considered positive because it has succeeded in creating a social environment that is safe from criminal acts such as drunkenness, gambling, begging and prostitution.</p> <p>Non-Muslim leaders (Buddhists and Christians) supported and praised the implementation of Islamic law in Aceh.</p> <p>It is said that Aceh is a safe, comfortable and tolerant area for all religious communities.</p> <p>Framing: Positive moral judgment is given to Islamic law, which is considered an effective instrument to maintain social order and tolerance.</p>	<p>Increase positive campaigns about Aceh by local religious leaders and institutions such as FKUB.</p> <p>Invite outsiders to visit Aceh to see for themselves the reality of people's lives.</p> <p>Framing: Resolution through social diplomacy and counter-narratives promoting tolerance and security in Aceh by interfaith religious leaders.</p>
November 14, 2024	<p>Mahasiswa Demo Pemko Banda Aceh, Minta Tertibkan Hotel yang Langgar Syariat Islam (Zamzami 2024)</p> <p>“Students demonstrate at Banda Aceh</p>	<p>The practice of violating Islamic law allegedly occurs in a number of hotels and inns in Banda Aceh.</p> <p>The Government of Banda Aceh is considered to have not acted decisively</p>	<p>Lack of government enforcement or supervision of hotels/inns that violate sharia rules.</p> <p>There are still places that facilitate immoral activities.</p>	<p>Violations of Islamic law are considered to threaten public morality and hurt Aceh's identity as the “Porch of Mecca”.</p> <p>Students are considered to be performing a moral</p>	<p>Revocation of hotel licenses that are proven to violate Islamic law.</p> <p>Collaboration between government and community/students for reporting and</p>



	municipality, demand to organize hotels that violate Islamic law”	against these violations. Framing: The problem is defined as the weak enforcement of Islamic law by the Banda Aceh Municipal Government in monitoring hotels that are suspected of being places of immorality acts.	Framing: The cause is positioned as negligence or lack of assertiveness of the government and lack of community involvement in reporting violations.	function by voicing public unrest. The government gave an appreciative response, showing that student aspirations are part of positive public participation. Framing: Students are positioned as moral parties who maintain the values of Sharia, while the government is encouraged to be more active in carrying out its role.	monitoring violations. Framing: The solution lies in increasing the synergy between the government and the community in enforcing sharia and imposing strict sanctions on violators.
November 14, 2024	Pelanggar Syariat Islam di Banda Aceh Didominasi Mahasiswa (Alfandi 2024) “Violators of Islamic Sharia in Banda Aceh Dominated by Students”	The high number of violations of Sharia law by students in Banda Aceh, with a percentage said to reach 80% of the results of Satpol PP-WH raids. Framing: Students are positioned as the main group of violators of Sharia law, creating social concerns and blurring the religious identity of Banda Aceh City.	Students come from outside Banda Aceh, even from outside the province. Free lifestyle factors, living away from parents, and high lifestyle demands. Economic hardship was also cited as a trigger for student involvement in violations. Framing: The root of the problem is associated with the external environment and internal factors of students, not the local social or education system. Non-local	Students who violate Sharia are considered deviant and bring bad influence to the social and religious environment in Banda Aceh. Free lifestyles and global cultural flow are considered contrary to the values of Islamic Sharia and local morality. The government raises these violations as a serious issue that requires joint supervision. Framing: It is emphasized that students' deviant	Collaboration between the government of Banda Aceh and universities in monitoring students. Making the campus a strategic partner to prevent sharia violations among students. Framing: The solution lies in strengthening institutional social control, not just enforcement. The campus is the institution that must actively participate in enforcing sharia norms.



			students were emphasized as the negative influences.	behavior is a form of moral degradation, thus demanding collective responsibility (especially campus institutions) to overcome it.	
November 13, 2024	<p>Banyak Pria dan Wanita Berolahraga Depan SHB Banda Aceh tak Sesuai Syariat, 50 Pelanggar Terjaring (Wijaya 2024)</p> <p>“Many men and women exercising in front of Banda Aceh's SHB (Stadium) are not in accordance with Sharia Law, 50 violators were caught”</p>	<p>Many citizens (men and women) exercise and do activities in public spaces with clothes that do not comply with sharia law, such as shorts and tight clothes.</p> <p>Sharia enforcement is considered not optimal in public spaces such as in front of the Harapan Bangsa Stadium Banda Aceh.</p> <p>Framing: The news positioned clothing violations as a public and social problem that reflects the lack of awareness of <i>shar'i</i> dress, especially in public places.</p>	<p>Lack of public awareness, especially among young people and sportsmen, of the dress code stipulated in the <i>Qanun</i> of Islamic Sharia.</p> <p>There were many reports from citizens about inappropriate dress behavior in public places.</p> <p>Framing: The media presented the cause of the problem as individual negligence and lack of understanding or compliance with local laws (<i>Qanun</i>), rather than as a structural issue or universal value such as individual rights.</p>	<p>Citizens who dress in tight-fitting clothes that do not comply with sharia are categorized as violators of religious and social norms.</p> <p>Sharia enforcement by the sharia police and the Ulema Consultative Assembly (MPU) is considered a positive, wise, and preventive action because it is accompanied by socialization, religious advice, and reprimands, not by violence or physical punishment.</p> <p>Framing: The media positioned the authorities' actions as moral and educative, not repressive, emphasizing the function of guidance and awareness.</p>	<p>On-the-spot education by officials and religious scholars.</p> <p>Socialization and religious advice were given to violators.</p> <p>Instructions not to chase fleeing motorists, demonstrating a humanist approach.</p> <p>Plans for ongoing raids to raise public awareness.</p> <p>Framing: The solution offered is based on a persuasive and religious approach, not just punishment, with the hope of forming collective awareness in the community.</p>
November 11, 2024	<p>Satpol PP dan WH Aceh Amankan 2 Wanita Mabuk, 7 Pasangan Nonmuhrim dan</p>	<p>The discovery of violations of Islamic law in Banda Aceh in the form of: unmarried couples at the hotel, people getting drunk at the cafe,</p>	<p>Public activities at night in locations prone to violations such as hotels and cafes.</p> <p>Lack of supervision and the courage of</p>	<p>Drinking behavior, unmarried couple and storing alcohol are considered blatantly contrary to the norms of Islamic law.</p>	<p>Enforcement through regular joint raids in places prone to violations.</p> <p>Data collection, coaching and transportation of</p>



	<p>Miras (Mufti 2024)</p> <p>“Pamong Praja Police and Sharia Police Unit Secures 2 Drunk Women, 7 Unmarried Couples and Alcohol”</p>	<p>distribution and consumption of liquor (alcohol).</p> <p>Framing: The problem is defined as moral and religious deviations that pollute the religious identity of Banda Aceh City and threaten social order.</p>	<p>business owners who provide facilities for activities that violate sharia.</p> <p>Community reports are the main basis for the raids, showing that the community is also aware and restless about the situation.</p> <p>Framing: The cause of the problem is directed at social looseness and deviant individual intentions, as well as the tolerance of business premises to immoral activities.</p>	<p>Sharia polices and the joint TNI/Polri team are positioned as enforcers of morality and guardians of Aceh's identity as “Bumi Serambi Mekkah”.</p> <p>Citizens who report are considered part of an ideal society that cares and actively maintains Islamic values.</p> <p>Framing: The actions of the authorities are portrayed as legitimate and moral, while violators are positioned as a threat to the socio-religious order.</p>	<p>violators, rather than direct legal proceedings, demonstrates a coaching approach.</p> <p>Follow-up to community reports, emphasizing collaboration between the state and citizens in maintaining norms.</p> <p>Framing: Solutions are positioned as a combination of law enforcement, moral education, and social participation.</p>
November 11, 2024	<p>VIDEO - Razia Gabungan Penegakan Syariat Islam di Kota Banda Aceh (Anshar 2024)</p> <p>“Video- Joint Sharia Enforcement Raid in Banda Aceh”</p>	<p>The occurrence of violations of Islamic law by people in Banda Aceh, especially related to: Presence of unmarried couples in hotels and stalls, consumption and possession of liquor (alcohol), drunk women in public areas.</p> <p>Framing: The problem is portrayed as moral decay and violation of religious norms that occur latently in public and semi-private spaces in a city that upholds</p>	<p>Night-time activities in dimly lit stalls, cafes and hotels.</p> <p>Some stall/cafe owners who hide immoral activities (e.g. turning off lights, hiding alcohol).</p> <p>Lack of direct supervision of private spaces that are misused for sharia violations.</p> <p>Framing: The root of the problem is localized in the deviant behavior of individuals and establishments, not in regulations or</p>	<p>Alcohol, unmarried couples, and drunkenness in public spaces are positioned as immoral acts and violations of sharia.</p> <p>Officials (Satpol PP, WH, TNI/Polri) are portrayed as enforcers of Islamic values and guardians of community morality.</p> <p>Citizens who report are considered to be carrying out moral and religious responsibilities.</p> <p>Framing: The raid is narrated as part of upholding the noble</p>	<p>Regular joint raids in violation-prone locations such as cafes, hotels, and night stalls.</p> <p>Direct correction of violators at the location.</p> <p>Data collection and security of unmarried couples and intoxicated women.</p> <p>Actions are taken based on public reports, strengthening the public participation aspect of moral policing.</p> <p>Framing: Solutions are emphasized</p>



		the implementation of Islamic law.	structural approaches. The media also strengthened the legitimacy of the raids by mentioning that they were conducted based on public reports.	values and mandates of Islamic law, while violators are placed as a threat to the religious social order.	through repressive and preventive approaches that are legal, legitimate in religion and local law (<i>Qanun</i>), and based on community involvement.
November 4, 2024	Dukung Penegakan Syariat Islam, UIN Ar-Raniry Perkuat Kolaborasi dengan WH dan Dinas Syariat (Nasir 2024) “Supporting Islamic Sharia Enforcement, UIN Ar-Raniry Strengthens Collaboration with Sharia Police and Sharia Office”	Violation of Islamic dress code, especially by men wearing shorts in public places. The declining awareness of the younger generation towards the values of sharia, especially in terms of dress. Framing: The news framed the issue as a moral decline in the public sphere that requires a serious response from religious institutions and the government.	Lack of individual awareness, especially among men of the sharia dress code. The gap in moral education, both in the family, school and wider community. There is still a need for active socialization from Islamic educational institutions. Framing: The causes of violations are emphasized on individual negligence and lack of education, not on social structures or alternative cultural views.	The support from Ar-Raniry State Islamic University is considered a moral and religious responsibility, not just an administrative obligation. Dress violations are seen as an indication of a decline in Islamic values that must be responded to with educative and corrective action. Women are judged to be better dressed, indicating differences in gender moral perceptions of violations of sharia. Framing: The media presents the collaboration between the university and the government as moralistic and constructive, while the violations are presented as a form of personal failure.	The Collaboration of Ar-Raniry State Islamic University with Sharia police (<i>Wilayahul Hisbah</i>) and the Islamic Sharia Office in the form of education and socialization programs. Increasing the role of educational institutions as moral agents and public <i>da'wah</i> . Fashion raids as a preventive and coaching step. Framing: Solutions are directed towards a collaborative and educative approach, not merely repressive. Education is positioned as the key to building religious awareness.
November 4, 2024	Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry Dukung Penegakan Syariat Islam,	This news has the same substance as the news “ Supporting the Enforcement of Islamic Sharia, UIN Ar-Raniry Strengthens Collaboration with WH and Sharia Office ”, so researchers did not analyze it.			



	Perkuat Kolaborasi dengan WH dan Dinas Syariat (Hasyim 2024b) “Rector of UIN Ar-Raniry supports Islamic Sharia Enforcement, Strengthen Collaboration with Sharia Police and Sharia Office”	
November 14, 2024	Dilema Pilkada Aceh: Menggugah Kesejahteraan Melalui Syariat, Tantangan atau Retorika? (Hasyim 2024a) “Aceh Election Dilemma: Generating Prosperity Through Sharia, Challenge or Rhetoric?”	This news is also not being analyzed because it is an opinion piece from an observer of Islamic law in Aceh.

Source: Processed by researcher, 2025

Based on the table above, framing analysis of the seven Serambinws.com news articles reveals a consistent narrative pattern in framing the implementation of Islamic law in Aceh:

1. Problem Definition Focused on Moral Violations

The media predominantly identify and define the dominant problem as

violations against private-oriented sharia norms, such as immodest dress, interaction between non-mahram couples, alcohol consumption, and prostitution, which are seen as threatening public morality and Aceh’s Islamic identity (Hadi 2024; Zamzami 2024; Alfandi 2024). For example, news about joint raids defines the problem as “moral decay” occurring latently in public



and semi-private spaces (Anshar 2024).

2. Individualistic and Exclusive Causal Diagnosis

The interpretation of causes in this reporting is predominantly directed towards individual and specific group factors (particularly migrant university students). The causes are framed as low religious awareness, liberal lifestyles, and external cultural influences, especially those brought by university students from outside Aceh (Alfandi 2024; Wijaya 2024). Media narratives rarely highlight structural, policy, or systemic factors as root causes. This narrative creates a dichotomy of “us (native, obedient Acehnese society)” versus “them (migrants/external influences that are destructive)”, thereby overlooking structural analysis or other social complexities.

3. Dichotomous and Legitimising Moral Judgment

Moral evaluation in all news articles shows clear polarisation. Actions by sharia enforcement apparatus such as Satpol PP and the Wilayatul Hisbah (WH), as well as support from interfaith religious figures and institutions like UIN Ar-Raniry, are consistently judged positively as guardians of morality and collective identity (Hadi 2024; Nasir 2024). Conversely, sharia violators, especially youth and migrants, are positioned negatively as threats to social order and Acehnese values. Support from non-Muslim religious

figures (Hadi 2024) is also used as a primary legitimising tool to show that sharia is universally accepted.

4. Repressive-Collaborative Treatment Recommendation.

The treatment recommendations framed by the media are centred on a collaborative approach between the State (government/apparatus) and society (Mufti 2024). The solutions offered are not only repressive law enforcement like raids, but also education, socialisation, and institutional synergy. News about students demonstrating against the municipal government recommends “revocation of hotel permits” and “enhanced synergy” (Zamzami 2024), while news about dress code violations emphasises “on-the-spot education” and “persuasive-humanist approaches” (Wijaya 2024). This pattern suggests a narrative advocating norm enforcement through a combination of social control and guidance.

Discussion

The homogeneous framing pattern in Serambinews.com’s reporting cannot be separated from the context of Aceh’s post-conflict identity politics and the framework of special autonomy, which positions local media as strategic actors in a moral governance project. This finding raises a central theoretical question: Does Serambinews.com operate as a normalizing institution for Sharia? The evidence suggests yes. By consistently defining problems as moral



violations, diagnosing causes as individual deviance, and evaluating enforcement actions positively, the media normalizes a particular version of Islamic law—one focused on symbolic compliance and public order, while excluding substantive dimensions such as economic justice or legal pluralism. The reporting focus on symbolic and private aspects of sharia enforcement, such as dress code raids and monitoring social interaction, reflects a policy tendency that prioritises the regulation of the body and public space. In comparison with prior literature on local journalism in religiously regulated contexts (e.g., Tapsell 2017 on Aceh; Al-Astewani 2020 on Arab media), Serambinews.com exhibits characteristics typical of media operating under strong moral-political alignment: a tendency toward state-affirmative reporting, limited critical distance, and the strategic use of elite sources to construct consensus. This uniform framing produces an image of Islamic law in Aceh as a system that is legal, legitimate, and essential for maintaining social order. This image is constructed through a singular narrative centred on the perspective of state authorities and sharia proponents, thereby overlooking the diversity of public views. This phenomenon strengthens findings from studies on the connection between media and local government moral-political agendas in the context of special autonomy (Ichwan, Salim, and Srimulyani 2020).

By consistently framing every violation of symbolic rules as a “threat to Aceh’s identity” Serambinews.com’s reporting also reinforces a political logic that makes moral surveillance an instrument for maintaining regional distinctiveness and consolidating collective identity. This logic results in a discursive shift of sharia from its substantive dimensions related to socio-economic justice towards the surface-level regulation of individual behaviour. Furthermore, framing that positions certain groups, such as migrant students, as the primary cause of moral degradation, potentially diverts analysis from in-depth policy evaluation while simultaneously reinforcing stigmatisation and social tension. This kind of framing mechanism reflects the political economy of local media, which may be under pressure or have an interest in aligning with the regional government’s agenda (Al-Astewani 2020; Tapsell 2017).

The role of Serambinews.com as a legitimising agent is clearly evident in the construction of a highly positive image of the sharia enforcement apparatus. This legitimacy is strategically reinforced through reporting on support from various stakeholders, such as interfaith religious figures (Hadi, 2024), student actions (Zamzami 2024), and prestigious educational institutions (Nasir 2024). These symbolic supports are framed as forms of inclusive and scientific consensus, building a narrative that sharia enforcement is a common will



supported by all segments. This strategy is effective for countering critical narratives from outside while reinforcing consensus at the local level.

The absence of critical voices—such as perspectives questioning raid methods, the right to privacy, or the plurality of religious interpretations—raises important implications for pluralism and deliberative public discourse. In a democratic public sphere, media are expected to serve as arenas for equitable deliberation. The consistent omission of counter-narratives suggests that Serambinews.com functions less as a neutral forum and more as an actor within a broader governance project that seeks to consolidate religious authority and moral consensus. This does not necessarily reflect journalistic failure in a universal sense, but rather illustrates how local online journalism can operate in a highly regulated religious context where the boundaries of acceptable debate are circumscribed by regional politics and identity formation.

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CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis using Entman's framing model, it can be concluded that within the limited corpus of seven articles from November 2024, Serambinews.com systematically constructs an image of Islamic law in Aceh as a system that is legal, moral, participatory, and most dominantly presented as a definitive solution to social and moral challenges. The media functions as a key agent in reinforcing the legitimacy of sharia enforcement by consistently applying frames that highlight narratives of social stability, community participation, and institutional collaboration. Within the framework of Entman's model, this analysis reveals that the four elements problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation are structured cohesively to disseminate a singular, hegemonic message: Islamic law is positioned as a necessary and effective answer for the moral governance of Acehnese society. The conceptual contribution of this study lies in showing how framing operates as a legitimation strategy in local media, and in demonstrating the value of linking Entman's model with theories of religious governance and mediated authority. This framing leaves very little discursive space for alternative viewpoints, thus raising critical questions about the breadth of public discussion, the media's role in facilitating pluralistic discourse, and the

acceptable boundaries of public debate within Aceh's socio-religious landscape.

This study has several limitations. The scope of the corpus is limited to a single media outlet, Serambinews.com, over a relatively short period (one month) and relies entirely on textual analysis without incorporating audience reception data. Therefore, the findings should not be overgeneralized to all local media in Aceh or to the entire framing tendency of Serambinews.com across different time periods. They reflect a specific editorial pattern during a month of intensified policy evaluation. For future research, a comparative analysis with other media (local and national), a longer timeframe, and an investigation into audience reception of this framing through comment analysis or interviews are needed to gain a more holistic understanding of media dynamics and the construction of Islamic law's image in Aceh.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

We certify that there is no conflict of interest with any financial, personal, or other relationships with other people or organizations related to the material discussed in the manuscript.

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