

Islamic Teachings as an Internal Discipline System in Athlete Development: A Narrative Review and the Prophetic Athlete Discipline Model

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Abstract

Discipline underpins high-performance behaviour, and sport psychology has examined it through self-regulation, motivation, resilience, and moral behaviour. Religion has also been studied in athletes, but mainly as a coping resource, an identity marker, or a participation constraint rather than as a self-regulatory system. This narrative review examines how Islamic ethical teachings intersect with established discipline constructs in sport, and proposes the Prophetic Athlete Discipline Model (PADM), which links spiritual, behavioural, moral, and physical dimensions of athlete discipline. Scopus and PubMed were searched purposively in September 2026 using three strings covering religion and sport psychology, Muslim athletes, and Islamic ethical constructs in sport, supplemented by citation tracking from two anchor reviews. Of the ($N = 2,286$) records screened on title, abstract, and keywords, ($n = 70$) were retained. Islamic primary sources were handled separately and restricted to Quranic verses, authenticated Prophetic traditions, and established works of Islamic ethics. The retained literature is dominated by cross-sectional and qualitative designs, contains one longitudinal study ($n = 1$) and three intervention studies ($n = 3$), and is concentrated in Western settings. Across four domains, Islamic constructs correspond functionally with intention-based motivation, ritual and self-control, moral identity, and recovery behaviour. Qualifying evidence is also present: negative religious coping is associated with adverse pre-competition emotion, the protective component of religiosity appears existential rather than devotional, and Ramadan observance reduces sleep and high-intensity performance. Islamic teachings can be read as a candidate self-regulatory architecture rather than a peripheral cultural variable, but PADM is untested. Its value depends on whether its domains explain variance beyond general religiosity and existing psychological constructs. Instruments now exist to test that.

Keywords: Religiosity, Self-Regulation, Muslim Athletes, Islamic Psychology, Athlete Development, Moral Behaviour

Introduction

Long-term athletic development depends less on isolated physical capacity than on regulating effort across training cycles, holding routines under fatigue, recovering, and behaving ethically under pressure. Sport psychology analyses these capacities through autonomous motivation, self-regulation, resilience, and moral behaviour, with self-determination theory providing the dominant motivational account (Ryan & Deci, 2020). These constructs are usually treated as psychologically neutral, described apart from the value systems in which athletes form and sustain them.

Religion has not been absent from this literature. A systematic review of ($k = 56$) studies found religion and spirituality examined in relation to coping, confidence, identity, anxiety, flow, and well-being, and judged these influences consequential yet marginal within mainstream sport psychology (Noh & Shahdan, 2020). A two-decade review reached a similar conclusion and noted that causal evidence remains inconclusive (Shirvani et al., 2025). Work in Muslim-majority settings is more specific. A grounded-theory study of ($N = 21$) elite athletes produced the Religion and Sport Performance model, in which religious practices, degree of belief, and religious culture are fundamental factors (Noh & Shahdan, 2022). Among ($N = 612$) athletes in Malaysia, religious-psychological factors accounted for about 21% of variance in self-perceived performance, with religious coping the strongest predictor (Noh et al., 2024). Religiosity has also been linked to mental toughness in elite adolescents (Wandik et al., 2024) and to resiliency in collegiate football players (Slatinsky et al., 2022).

Two limitations motivate this review. The first is theoretical. Religion is operationalised as something athletes draw on under strain, not as a system that organises everyday conduct. No framework specifies how religiously grounded values might work as a self-regulatory architecture with mechanisms that map onto discipline constructs. The second is evidential. A scoping review of ($k = 157$) articles found that most research on Muslims in sport is conducted in Western countries, that qualitative methods predominate, and that the scholarship carries a Eurocentric bias (Hussain & Cunningham, 2024). The literature retained here shows the same pattern and adds a design problem: ($n = 1$) longitudinal study and ($n = 3$) intervention studies against ($n = 17$) cross-sectional surveys. This review therefore examines how Islamic ethical teachings correspond with discipline constructs in sport psychology, proposes PADM as a framework organising those correspondences, and specifies what would count as evidence for and against it. The contribution is integrative rather than empirical.

Method

Rationale

A narrative review was selected because the question is conceptual and interdisciplinary rather than one of effect size. The material spans Islamic ethics and jurisprudence, sport psychology, and sociocultural studies of sport, and differs across those fields in epistemology, method, and unit of analysis to a degree that precludes standardised extraction. Narrative reviews are appraised through transparency of scope, search justification, reflexivity, and analytic approach rather than replicability (Sukhera, 2022). The design also permits engagement with primary religious texts, which have no place in a systematic protocol.

Boundaries, scope, and definitions

The review addresses discipline as behavioural regulation in training and competition, not religious observance as an outcome. It draws on Sunni mainstream interpretation and does not represent Shia, Sufi, or minority jurisprudential positions except where a cited source does so. It concerns athletes and structured physical activity, not general-population health behaviour. Five constructs form the analytic vocabulary: *niyyah* (intention), *sabr* (active perseverance under hardship), *akhlaq* (moral character), *amanah* (the body held in trust), and *wasatiyyah* (moderation). Each has an established basis in Islamic ethical scholarship, a plausible counterpart in sport psychology, and is enacted through routine practice rather than held only as belief.

Search and source selection

Scopus and PubMed were searched on 16 September 2026. The first string combined religion, spirituality, and faith terms with sport terms and discipline-relevant psychological constructs. The second combined Muslim and Islamic terms with sport terms. The third combined named Islamic ethical constructs with sport terms, without date or language limits. Searching was supplemented by backward and forward citation tracking from two anchor reviews (Hussain & Cunningham, 2024; Noh & Shahdan, 2020).

The searches returned 2,746 records, reducing to ($N = 2,286$) after duplicate removal. Records were excluded if not in English, published before 2000, or classified as errata, notes, letters, or short surveys. Further exclusions applied where religion and sport were not both indexed in the title or keywords, where no discipline-relevant behavioural, psychological, or ethical construct was addressed, and where primary Ramadan physiology was superseded by an included review. ($n = 4$) records excluded by the indexing rule were reinstated after abstract review because the religious construct appeared only in the abstract. ($n = 70$) sources were retained. Screening used title, abstract, and keywords; no full-text eligibility assessment was conducted, consistent with a narrative rather than systematic design. Islamic primary sources were not retrieved through database searching. They were restricted to Quranic verses, Prophetic traditions graded authentic within the Sunni canon, and established works of Islamic ethics and jurisprudence. Table 1 reports the yield at each stage, and Table 2 gives the design and geographical distribution of the retained sources.

Table 1

Search yield and screening outcome

Stage	<i>n</i>
Records retrieved from Scopus (strings A, B and C)	2,328
Records retrieved from PubMed (strings A, B and C)	418
Total records retrieved	2,746
Duplicate records removed	460
Unique records screened	2,286
Excluded: not published in English	136
Excluded: published before 2000	40
Excluded: erratum, note, letter or short survey	34
Excluded: religion and sport not both indexed in title or keywords	1,341
Excluded: no discipline-relevant behavioural, psychological or ethical construct	215

Excluded: primary Ramadan physiology trial superseded by an included review	46
Excluded at title and abstract review: not informative for the review argument	404
Reinstated after abstract review (religious construct present in abstract only)	4
Sources included in the synthesis	70

Table 2

Design and geographical distribution of the 70 included sources

Study design	Malaysia	Other Southeast Asia	MENA, Turkiye and South Asia	East Asia	Sub-Saharan Africa	Western high-income	Global or not country-specific	Total
Systematic review or meta-analysis	0	1	0	0	0	0	7	8
Scoping or narrative review	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
Cross-sectional survey	2	1	4	1	1	8	0	17
Longitudinal observational	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Intervention or experimental	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	3
Mixed methods	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Qualitative	3	1	3	0	0	6	0	13
Psychometric validation	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	3
Islamic textual or jurisprudential analysis	1	0	5	0	0	0	1	7
Conceptual, theoretical or editorial	1	0	1	0	0	4	5	11
Total	8	4	14	3	2	21	18	70

Note. Region is the country or region of data collection. Reviews and conceptual work with no single setting are grouped as global. MENA = Middle East and North Africa. Values are counts of sources (n). $N = 70$.

Analysis and Sufficiency

Retained sources were read against the five Islamic constructs and against the psychological constructs to which each might correspond. Themes were developed on explanatory coherence rather than frequency, and clustered into four domains around motivation, habitual conduct, ethical restraint, and bodily care. Sources whose findings complicate the

account are reported in a separate subsection rather than absorbed into the supporting narrative. Searching stopped when further records no longer altered the four-domain structure.

Reflexivity

The author is a Muslim and a former Olympic athlete. That position supplies familiarity with the religious vocabulary and with elite competition, and also shapes which correspondences appear salient. Sources supporting a correspondence are easier to notice than sources that do not, and the four-domain structure was recognisable before the search concluded. The limitations section states the likely direction of this influence.

Thematic Synthesis

Intention and the internalisation of motivation

Islamic ethics locates the moral value of an action in the intention behind it, a principle expressed in the tradition that actions are judged by their intentions (Al-Bukhari, 1997, Hadith 1). Intention here is a standing orientation that renders routine effort meaningful independently of outcome. The psychological parallel is the internalisation continuum of self-determination theory, along which behaviour moves from external regulation toward identified and integrated regulation as the person endorses it (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Recent psychometric work makes this parallel testable. The Arabic Islamic Religious Internalization subscales, distinguishing identification from introjection, were validated in ($N = 528$) Tunisian footballers, giving a measure of whether religious commitment is autonomously endorsed or internally pressured (Yacoubi et al., 2026a). Spirituality mediates the relationship between basic psychological needs and sport motivation (Eryücel et al., 2024). Sources of meaning also differ between athletes of different faith orientations (Mocek & Franc, 2026; Schmid et al., 2025). Qualitative work describes meaning shifting over a career from performance outcomes toward existential sources (Ronkainen et al., 2015).

The only longitudinal evidence in the retained set is more equivocal than a summary suggests. Across four waves over six months in ($N = 396$) adolescent and emerging-adult marathon runners, baseline spiritual and prosocial motivation were positively related to self-control, patience, and interpersonal generosity. Change in all three motivations correlated with change in patience (Schnitker et al., 2020). None of the motivation slopes correlated with change in self-control. The study therefore supports an association at a given time while providing no evidence that motivation drives change in self-control over a season. Evidence in the same domain constrains the claim further. Among ($N = 612$) athletes in Malaysia, only three of seven religious-psychological factors related to self-perceived performance, and dependence on faith and religious flow showed no meaningful relationship (Noh et al., 2024). Religious orientation does not translate uniformly into performance-relevant motivation; the active component appears to be internalised rather than merely held.

Ritual, routine, and behavioural regulation

Islamic practice is structured around time-bound obligations performed irrespective of mood, and the Quran pairs perseverance with prayer as the means through which difficulty is met (Quran 2:153). Sabr is active rather than passive: sustained effort under hardship with ethical conduct and composure maintained. The psychological counterparts are habit, ritual, and emotion regulation, which reduce reliance on momentary motivation. Direct evidence for the

mechanism comes from outside Islam. In a pilot survey of ($N = 537$) Chinese athletes followed by an experiment with 105 participants, both universal and personalised rituals enhanced self-control under pressure. The rituals reported by skill-dominated athletes were generally unconnected to religious or superstitious content (Yun et al., 2025). Structured repeated practice can therefore support self-control independently of the religious content attached to it. Similar arguments have been made for mantra meditation (Liu et al., 2026). Religious practices have also been analysed as functional analogues of psychological skills training, with the caveat that existing instruments rest on secular foundations (Liu, 2026).

Qualitative work reports the mechanism in Muslim athletes. Interviews with ($N = 25$) professional footballers in Turkey found religious rituals used for motivational meaning-making and coping (Uysal & Akgül, 2026). Subjective experience during Ramadan among elite Malaysian archers was organised within a self-regulation framework (Roy et al., 2011a). Intervention evidence is scarce: a single-case study applying skill-oriented and spirit-oriented psychological training to ($N = 16$) elite Chinese archers reported reduced mood disturbance and burnout alongside improved confidence (Xu et al., 2024). Religiosity has been associated with mental toughness, resiliency, and coping after injury (Liu et al., 2025; Slatinsky et al., 2022; Wandik et al., 2024; Wiese-Bjornstal et al., 2020). Measurement is adequate: the two-factor structure of the Brief Religious Coping scale, separating positive from negative coping, was confirmed in ($N = 300$) athletes from three West African countries with measurement invariance across gender and nationality (Agormedah et al., 2023). What the evidence does not support is an assumption that religious coping is uniformly adaptive.

Moral character and ethical restraint

Akhlaq designates character as formed disposition rather than rule-following, and Islamic teaching treats restraint under provocation as strength rather than passivity. The psychological counterparts are moral identity and moral disengagement, both of which predict prosocial and antisocial conduct in sport. Several retained sources connect the two. Religious commitment mediated the path from personality to moral disengagement in student-athletes, alongside moral identity and prosocial and antisocial behaviour (Yıldız Çakır et al., 2024). Religiosity predicted moral content judgment in ($N = 258$) athletes (Proios & Proios, 2017). Among ($N = 27$) weightlifting and powerlifting athletes, religiousness is proposed as a protective factor against doping, though the same study reports that religious athletes tended to deny and underestimate doping within their sport (Rodek et al., 2009). Shariah reasoning reaches a similar conclusion by construing performance-enhancing drug use as fraud and as a violation of bodily integrity (Al-Dafrawi, 2020). Religiousness has also been associated with generosity among adolescents in charitable sport (Fernandez et al., 2016). Historical scholarship on the Zurkhaneh describes physical training institutionally paired with moral instruction (Azizi et al., 2021; Mohammadi et al., 2023). This domain also carries the clearest contrary finding. Religious belonging has been reported to strengthen in-group identity in ways associated with greater violence toward out-groups (Alfano et al., 2023). Religiosity is not straightforwardly restraining, and any claim that moral identity suppresses antisocial conduct must specify the conditions under which it does.

Bodily stewardship and its evidential limits

Islamic ethics treats the body as a trust and pairs this with moderation, the Quran describing the community as balanced (Quran 2:143). Jurisprudential scholarship locates bodily care

within the objectives of Shariah, specifically preservation of life (Ahmad et al., 2023). The same reasoning has been extended to sport participation and health promotion (Khan et al., 2020; Rahim et al., 2019; Shavit & Winter, 2011). Avicennan moral philosophy anticipated the connection, treating exercise, nutrition, and bodily regimen as components of virtue (Safari Jafarloo, 2025). The sport-science counterparts are recovery, load management, sleep, and injury prevention. The evidence here constrains the model most clearly. Ramadan observance is associated with reduced sleep duration and impaired sleep quality across two meta-analyses (Trabelsi et al., 2020; Trabelsi et al., 2022). Meta-analysed performance data show deleterious effects on mean and peak power during Wingate and repeated-sprint testing. Aerobic performance, strength, jump height, fatigue index, and total work were unaffected, and the authors conclude that most parameters are not influenced and that athletes can compete fasted with little impact (Abaidia et al., 2020). A review across sports reports negative effects on performance, coping, nutritional status, and fatigue, varying by sport (Ghaffar et al., 2025). Malaysian junior athletes reported perceived decrements in performance and sleep (Singh et al., 2011).

These decrements are conditional. Reviews converge on the finding that athletes who maintain energy and macronutrient intake, training load, body composition, and sleep are unlikely to suffer substantial decrements (Chaouachi et al., 2012; Shephard, 2013). Practical guidance proceeds on that basis (Chamari & Briki, 2025). What sustains performance is the scheduling, nutritional, and recovery adjustment surrounding observance, not observance itself. Athletes generate such adjustments themselves. Responses from ($N = 65$) national elite Muslim athletes in Southeast Asia yielded problem-focused coping dimensions including training modification (Roy et al., 2011b). A self-coping instrument developed with ($N = 109$) Jordanian athletes classifies adaptation across training, nutritional, psychological, self-control, and recovery categories (Djemai et al., 2020). Among ($N = 24$) Tunisian professional footballers, those combining fasting with additional religious practice differed from those fasting alone in how they perceived performance demands (Yacoubi et al., 2026b). The physical domain of PADM is therefore a claim about regulated moderation and institutional accommodation, not about religious observance enhancing physical capacity.

Evidence that complicates the account

Three findings qualify the synthesis. The first concerns the valence of religious coping: in ($N = 300$) elite student-athletes, negative religious coping was associated with anger, anxiety, and dejection before competition and is identified as maladaptive (Hagan, 2021). The second concerns which component of religiosity operates. Among ($N = 783$) collegiate athletic trainers, existential well-being negatively predicted emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, reduced personal accomplishment, and intention to leave, whereas religious well-being was not a comparable predictor (Oglesby et al., 2021). The protective element appears existential rather than devotional. The third is the doping denial reported alongside the protective finding in the same sample (Rodek et al., 2009). These findings indicate that the active ingredient is unlikely to be religiosity as such, and point instead toward internalised, autonomously endorsed commitment, the distinction that the Islamic Religious Internalization subscales operationalise (Yacoubi et al., 2026a).

The Prophetic Athlete Discipline Model

The synthesis supports four domains. The spiritual domain concerns intention and the internalisation of purpose. The behavioural domain concerns ritual, routine, perseverance, and emotion regulation. The moral domain concerns character, accountability, and restraint. The physical domain concerns bodily stewardship, moderation, and recovery. PADM proposes that these are mutually reinforcing rather than hierarchical. Internalised purpose sustains perseverance, habitual practice stabilises conduct under pressure, moral identity constrains conduct when stakes are high, and protected physical capacity sustains confidence. PADM sits alongside rather than against the Religion and Sport Performance model, which describes the factors through which religion influences performance (Noh & Shahdan, 2022). The difference is one of level: the earlier model identifies what religion supplies to athletes, while PADM proposes how religiously grounded values might operate as regulatory mechanisms and names the constructs against which each domain should be tested. Figure 1 sets out the four domains and the six reciprocal pathways the model proposes. Three of those pathways carry supporting evidence in the reviewed literature, namely spiritual to moral, spiritual to behavioural, and behavioural to physical (Djemai et al., 2020; Proios & Proios, 2017; Roy et al., 2011b; Schnitker et al., 2020; Yıldız Çakır et al., 2024). The remaining three are proposed but untested. Table 3 gives the construct mapping for each domain with the supporting and contrary evidence.

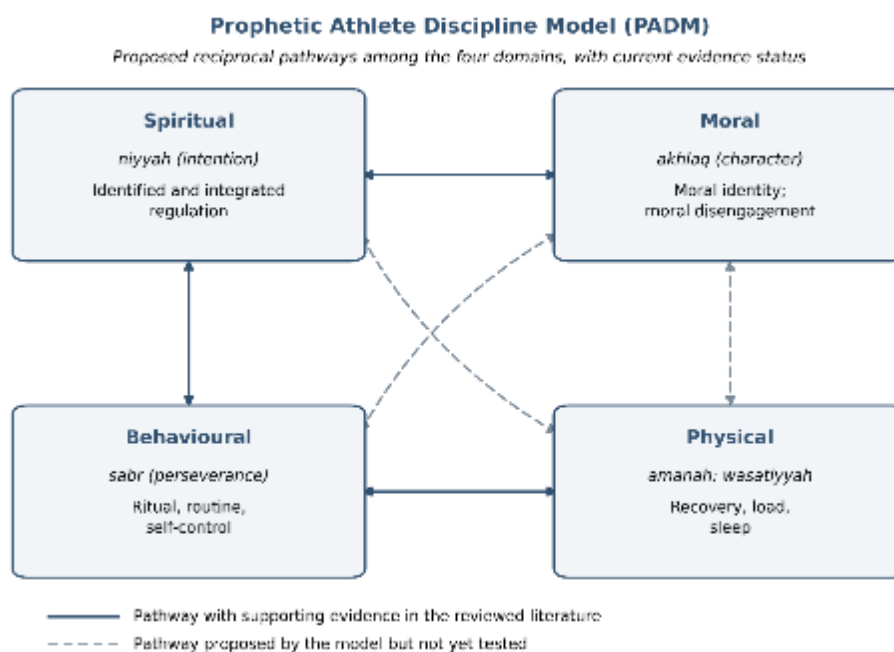


Figure 1. The Prophetic Athlete Discipline Model (PADM)

Table 3

Prophetic Athlete Discipline Model: domains, matched constructs, and evidence for and against each domain

PADM domain	Islamic construct and primary source	Matched psychological construct	Supporting evidence	Boundary or contrary evidence	Candidate measure
Spiritual	Niyyah (intention); actions judged by their intentions (Al-Bukhari, 1997, Hadith 1)	Identified and integrated regulation; intrinsic motivation (self-determination theory)	Islamic religious internalisation validated in ($N = 528$) footballers; spirituality mediates basic needs and sport motivation; transcendent motivation related to baseline self-control, patience and generosity; religious coping predicts self-perceived performance in ($N = 612$) athletes	Motivation slopes did not correlate with change in self-control over six months; only three of seven religious-psychological factors related to performance	AIRI-Identification and AIRI-Introjection subscales (PMIR); Sport Motivation Scale-II; Athletic Religious Faith Scale
Behavioural	Sabr (active perseverance); time-bound daily practice (Quran 2:153)	Self-control; habit and ritual; emotion regulation; resilience; mental toughness	Universal and personalised rituals enhanced self-control under pressure in an experiment with Chinese athletes; religious practices analysed as psychological skills; rituals used for coping and meaning-making by ($N = 25$) professional footballers; spirit-oriented training reduced mood disturbance and burnout in 16 elite archers	Negative religious coping associated with pre-competition anger, anxiety and dejection in 300 student-athletes	Brief RCOPE; Brief Resilience Scale; prospective training logs
Moral	Akhlaq (moral character); restraint under provocation	Moral identity; moral disengagement; prosocial and antisocial behaviour	Religious commitment mediates the path from personality to moral disengagement; religiosity predicts moral content judgment in ($N =$	Religious athletes also tended to deny and underestimate doping in their own sport; religious belonging has	Moral Disengagement in Sport Scale; Moral Content Judgment in Sport Questionnaire

			258) athletes; religiousness proposed as a protective factor against doping; Shariah reasoning frames doping as fraud and bodily harm	been associated with greater violence toward out-groups	
Physical	Amanah (the body held in trust); wasatiyyah (moderation) (Quran 2:143)	Recovery behaviour; training-load management; sleep; injury prevention	Maqasid al-Shariah locates bodily care under preservation of life; athletes self-generate structured coping during Ramadan; ritual engagement shaped performance perception in Tunisian footballers	Reduced sleep duration and quality during Ramadan; deleterious effects on mean and peak power in Wingate and repeated-sprint testing, though most parameters were unaffected; decrements attenuated where energy intake, load and sleep are maintained	Session-RPE and training logs; Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index; injury surveillance

Discussion

Theoretical positioning

This review repositions religion in sport psychology from a contextual variable to a candidate regulatory architecture with specifiable mechanisms. The reframing responds to a literature in which religion is studied mainly through coping and identity (Noh & Shahdan, 2020; Shirvani et al., 2025). It extends rather than displaces self-determination theory by identifying a culturally embedded source of internalised regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The reframing is also consistent with accounts in which religion supplies goals, self-monitoring, and repeated regulatory practice (McCullough & Willoughby, 2009). It also carries a methodological requirement. Islamic and psychological constructs share functional resemblance, not conceptual identity, and treating niyyah as intrinsic motivation or sabr as resilience without qualification would flatten concepts whose theological purposes exceed performance. Frameworks for integrating Islamic concepts into psychological research make the same point about explicit translation procedures (Harun & Mohd Taib, 2025).

Applied implications and their limits

Two implications follow. The first concerns institutional accommodation. Because Ramadan-related decrements are attenuated by maintained sleep, load, and nutrition, scheduling and recovery adjustment is a performance-relevant decision rather than a concession (Chamari & Briki, 2025; Chaouachi et al., 2012). Muslim collegiate student-athletes in the United States reported that institutional support shaped their experience of fasting while competing (Amjad

et al., 2024). Practitioners describe markedly different levels of adjustment in Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority settings (Fitouri et al., 2025). Structural constraints on participation in Malaysia are documented separately (Robbi & Yunus, 2024). Intervention evidence is thin and mixed: a faith-based pedometer programme in an Islamic middle school raised enjoyment of physical activity but left motivation unchanged and was associated with reduced step counts among girls (Nicaise & Kahan, 2013). The second concerns practitioner conduct. Ethical guidance for sport psychologists working with religious athletes emphasises respect, responsibility, integrity, competence, and concern for welfare, and is the appropriate frame for any applied use of PADM (Sarkar et al., 2014).

A counter-position must be stated. Religion-sport separation has been defended as the most tenable stance for coaches in public institutions, on grounds concerning the epistemic status of religious claims and the coercive potential of a coach's authority (Matz, 2023). A related critique holds that integrating faith and sport in youth settings produces a diluted religiosity subordinated to sporting ends (White et al., 2023). Neither objection is answered by calling PADM voluntary. Both place the model in athlete-led reflection and practitioner training rather than coach-delivered programming, where a power differential exists. The applied claim here is limited to settings in which the athlete, not the institution, initiates the religious framing.

Testable propositions and measurement

PADM should be retained only insofar as it explains variance beyond general religiosity and established constructs. Four propositions follow, each with a disconfirming condition, and Table 4 lists the instruments available to test them.

Table 4

Measurement instruments identified in the included sources

Instrument	Construct measured	Validation sample and method	Setting	Source	PADM domain served
Athletic Religious Faith Scale (ARFS)	Religious faith in a sporting context; seven domains including religious coping, athletic identity and religious dietary practice	Athletes; EFA and CFA	Malaysia	Noh et al. (2023)	Spiritual domain; general religiosity control
AIRI-Identification and AIRI-Introjection (PMIR subscales)	Islamic religious internalisation, distinguishing identification from introjection	528 male footballers aged 18 to 45 years; CFA	Tunisia	Yacoubi et al. (2026a)	Spiritual domain; autonomous versus controlled regulation
Brief Religious Coping Scale (Brief RCOPE)	Positive and negative religious coping	300 athletes from Benin, Ghana and Nigeria; two-factor	West Africa	Agormedah et al. (2023)	Behavioural domain

		structure and measurement invariance confirmed			
Spirituality Index of Well-Being	Spiritual well-being as a mediator of needs and motivation	Gym-attending athletes	Turkiye	Eryucel et al. (2024)	Spiritual domain
Sources of Meaning and Meaning in Life Questionnaire (SoMe)	Sources of meaning and perceived meaningfulness	Athletes grouped by form of faith	Israel	Mocek & Franc (2026)	Spiritual domain
Moral Content Judgment in Sport Questionnaire	Moral judgment in a sport context	258 Christian Orthodox athletes	Greece	Proios & Proios (2017)	Moral domain
Ramadan self-coping strategy questionnaire	Training, nutritional, psychological, self-control and recovery adaptation during fasting	109 Muslim athletes	Jordan	Djemai et al. (2020)	Physical domain

Proposition 1. Internalised religious orientation predicts more autonomous sport motivation. Athletes scoring higher on identification relative to introjection should show higher identified, integrated, and intrinsic regulation rather than greater compliance. The test pairs the Islamic Religious Internalization subscales with the Sport Motivation Scale-II (Pelletier et al., 2013; Yacoubi et al., 2026a). General religiosity should be controlled using the Athletic Religious Faith Scale (Noh et al., 2023). Internalisation predicting only controlled motivation would weaken the proposition.

Proposition 2. Behavioural-domain scores predict training consistency prospectively. Ritual and routine measures should predict planned-session completion and return to routine after disruption, beyond perceived resilience. Disconfirmation includes no prospective association, or effects disappearing once established self-regulation measures are entered.

Proposition 3. Moral-domain scores predict lower moral disengagement. The Moral Disengagement in Sport Scale offers a direct test (Boardley & Kavussanu, 2007). Conduct toward teammates and toward opponents should be tested separately, because religious belonging can accompany out-group hostility (Alfano et al., 2023). A null or positive association across repeated samples would require the mechanism to be revised.

Proposition 4. The four domains are related but distinguishable. Confirmatory factor analysis should support a four-factor structure that does not collapse into a single religiosity factor. Poor factorial separation, or redundancy with existing scales, would count against the model.

Limitations

Several limitations bound these claims, stated with their likely direction of bias. Source selection was purposive and the four-domain structure was recognisable before searching concluded, so the synthesis is likely to over-represent supportive findings. Screening was conducted by a single author on titles, abstracts, and keywords without full-text assessment or second-rater agreement, raising the risk of both inclusion and omission errors. Two retained sources draw on the same ($N = 300$) athletes from the 2018 West African University Games and are not independent (Agormedah et al., 2023; Hagan, 2021). Excluding non-English sources removed ($N = 136$) records and probably under-represents scholarship in Malay, Indonesian, Arabic, and Turkish, biasing the review toward Western framings. The model derives from a Sunni-majority interpretive frame and does not represent the diversity of Islamic traditions or of individual religiosity. Finally, PADM has not been tested; its domains are analytically derived and the propositions above are a research agenda, not evidence of validity. Translation between knowledge traditions is a further limit. Mapping *niyyah*, *sabr*, *akhlak*, *amanah*, and *wasatiyyah* onto motivation, resilience, moral regulation, and recovery creates a usable dialogue, but functional resemblance is not conceptual equivalence. Acts of worship have purposes that exceed athletic performance, and applied use of this framework must avoid implying that greater observance yields better performance, or that poor performance reflects deficient faith.

Conclusion

Islamic ethical teachings can be read as a candidate self-regulatory architecture rather than a peripheral cultural variable, organised here into four interdependent domains. The supporting evidence is suggestive rather than confirmatory and dominated by cross-sectional and qualitative designs. It also includes findings that qualify the account: negative religious coping, an existential rather than devotional locus of protection, and the physiological costs of fasted training. For practitioners in Muslim-majority settings the defensible implication is narrow, namely to accommodate religious practice in scheduling and recovery planning and to leave the religious framing of discipline to athletes. For researchers, the next step is a cross-sectional validation of a PADM instrument against autonomous motivation, resilience, and moral disengagement, with general religiosity controlled, in a Malaysian athlete sample.

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Conflict Of Interest

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